



No. 87A

N° 87A

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)**

Tuesday 26 May 2015

Mardi 26 mai 2015

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

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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



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

Tuesday 26 May 2015

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 26 mai 2015

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MAKING HEALTHIER CHOICES
ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 POUR DES CHOIX
PLUS SAINS

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 25, 2015, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 45, An Act to enhance public health by enacting the Healthy Menu Choices Act, 2015 and the Electronic Cigarettes Act, 2015 and by amending the Smoke-Free Ontario Act / Projet de loi 45, Loi visant à améliorer la santé publique par l'édiction de la Loi de 2015 pour des choix santé dans les menus et de la Loi de 2015 sur les cigarettes électroniques et la modification de la Loi favorisant un Ontario sans fumée.

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

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Good morning. I am pleased to rise in the Legislature and speak this morning on an important bill and on an important topic, and that today is Bill 45, the Making Healthier Choices Act.

My colleague from Nickel Belt has worked extensively and been a voice through the years on these issues, and it is satisfying to see much of her commitment and passion reflected in this legislation.

This is a solid bill, but it could have been stronger, and though the Liberals didn't commit to adopting amendments that would have strengthened this legislation, we hope they will still engage in the debate and work to include them in the future as we are talking about the health and wellness of our kids, families and communities.

Let's look at this bill. It's essentially three schedules. Schedule 1 enacts the Healthy Menu Choices Act. Schedule 2 includes amendments to the Smoke-Free Ontario Act. Schedule 3 enacts the Electronic Cigarettes Act.

We support Bill 45 to help protect the health of families and young people across our communities. We supported the 17 amendments that my colleague France Gélinas from Nickel Belt proposed, and we are disappointed that the Liberals ignored 16 of them. The government missed clear opportunities to not just make

healthier choices but to make a stronger healthier choices act.

Mr. Speaker, let's break this down, shall we? Schedule 1 enacts the Healthy Menu Choices Act, which will require calorie labelling for all food and drink items at food service premises with 20 or more locations in Ontario. Think of chain restaurants, grocery stores, convenience stores and movie theatres. The basic point is that calorie labelling in chain restaurants can help families make informed decisions.

Let's look at the journey that this idea has taken. New Democrats have been pushing the government to take action on this issue for years. Our NDP health critic, France Gélinas, has been talking about this for a long time and has actually introduced at least 11 private member's bills on menu labelling and stricter tobacco control measures. I couldn't tell you why it hasn't been a government priority until now. In fact, they could have passed a bill requiring menu labelling six years ago when MPP Gélinas's Bill 156, Healthy Decisions for Healthy Eating Act, 2009, was introduced in March 2009 and would have required menu labelling in chain restaurants. However, despite the super slow process, it's good to see the Liberals finally recognize that these measures are the right thing to do.

In schedule 1, section 2, owners and operators are required to display the number of calories in each food or drink item, including combos, offered for sale, as well as any additional information required by regulations. The government says that this requirement will impact approximately 11,500 restaurant locations, 15 grocery store chains, 14 convenience store chains and two movie theatre chains in Ontario.

A few interesting thoughts go along with this: Why did the government stop short of making a healthier choice? Why didn't they include sodium labelling? MPP Gélinas proposed an amendment to mandate sodium labelling on menus, which makes sense considering the bill mandates calorie labelling. Many of the presenters at committee spoke about the need for sodium labelling, which clearly the Liberals don't agree with.

Something else that doesn't make a lick of sense: Section 5 renders municipal bylaws on caloric or nutritional information inoperative. Why are the Liberals removing the right of municipalities to create bylaws—at the discretion of the municipalities—regarding calorie and nutritional information for any food service premises, not just those with more than 20 locations in the province?

Here's another question: Why isn't the Liberal government requiring regulated food service premises to list

the recommended daily caloric intake for children, youth and adults on their menus and menu boards, as recommended by Ontario's Healthy Kids Panel and the Healthy Kids Strategy?

I'm struck every time the government decides it knows best rather than the experts or authorities from the field or the industry. I think it's ridiculous to ignore recommendations from those who are qualified to make them. Here we see more short-sighted examples. If we are mandating calorie labelling, then let's look at sodium labelling. If the government is decidedly refusing to take suggestions from the opposition parties, perhaps they could have at least committed to reviewing data and consulting on the topic as a way to make healthier choices, but alas.

Another proposed amendment was to establish a committee to review whether sodium information should be displayed and requiring that recommendations be received by January 1, 2017—another amendment that made sense: forward-thinking, healthful sense. But since it was put forward by someone from the opposition, this government put its head in the sand while shoving its fingers in its ears—just another day in the Liberal majority.

However, it isn't healthy to dwell on the negative, so we will discuss the importance of giving families more information. Families and people across the province have the right to know what they are consuming. Especially in this day and age of chemicals, carcinogens and toxic levels of sugar and sodium in our foods, every additional piece of information about what we are eating and feeding our families is helpful. People think they can judge what they are eating, but they have no way of knowing how something is prepared or the absurd amounts of additives. When we choose to eat at restaurants, we are trading healthful home cooking for convenience or experience. We shouldn't have to select menu items blindly, however.

According to the Ontario Medical Association, 82% of respondents support providing calorie information on fast-food menus to help tackle the increasing rate of childhood obesity. According to Toronto Public Health, at least 78% of survey respondents said they would use nutritional information "at least sometimes" if it were available, and a University of Toronto study found that 83% of Toronto consumers would like to see nutritional information when dining out.

However, even if you never read the menu to refer to calories, the industry has to stay competitive. It will make changes, and the average consumer will benefit. Positive changes will help everyone to benefit. Even if that individual never refers to the calorie information themselves, they will, over time, have healthier choices to choose from, as restaurants will modify their menus over time, just to stay competitive.

I would like to bring up something, however, as a caution when it comes to this government and quick fixes. Calorie information is important and recommended and, I would say, necessary for the public to make more

informed, healthful decisions. But it isn't the only piece to the puzzle. As my colleague from Nickel Belt has been pushing for, sodium is a damaging piece to the puzzle. If the government's lack of interest in broadening our health scope when it comes to other nutritional information is any indication, this is going to be a steep road to improvement ahead. But we shall endeavour anyway.

So let's talk about sugar. Sugar is toxic—full stop. I appreciate sugars as much as the next person, but I've learned along the way about different types of sugars, and, arguably more important, the glycemic index of foods. I'm not suggesting that the government start immediately labelling the glycemic index of all foods in restaurants, but I think it is important, if we're talking about health and unhealthy trends in our society, to start doing some real work in this area.

0910

We talk a lot about obesity, but we need to be talking about diabetes and the increasing number of childhood diabetics. The strain on our future health care system as more and more people are becoming diabetic is and will become immense. But let's just focus on the epidemic facing our children and our families. This government absolutely must take on sugar and glycemic awareness and find a way to educate our families—another issue, Mr. Speaker, that won't be solved by calorie labeling alone.

Again, we talk a lot about obesity, and there's a lot to talk about. I'm not minimizing the need to address that. But because often we don't see eating disorders when we look around, we don't address them. Calorie counting is one tool, but it isn't the cure-all. In fact, if this government at any point decides to teach calorie counting only in our schools, they would be doing significant harm. I would wager that students in intermediate grades and high school who are struggling with eating disorders at least rival the number struggling with obesity. Teaching children how to restrict calories without teaching them about proper nutrition, without teaching them about what is in their foods—vitamins, minerals, proteins, amino acids, healthy fats etc.—only gives them the tools to hurt and not to help. So we have to look at the whole picture when it comes to health, especially when it comes to our children. We have to look at their pressures, environments and realities, not just what we remember from our own.

To recap: Calorie labelling is appropriate and important as part of a strategy to encourage people to make healthier choices. The government should be including sodium, and eventually sugar, on its hit list. Especially when it comes to our children and a healthier future, the strategy should be a holistic one of education and information about the nutrient content of foods, not just calories. When it comes to our kids, it shouldn't be all about weight and waistline, it should be about health and wellness.

Health and wellness: Let's switch gears and look at schedule 2 of this bill. Schedule 2 includes amendments to the Smoke-Free Ontario Act which will prohibit the

sale of flavoured tobacco products while allowing the government to make exemptions by regulation. Unfortunately, the government has confirmed that menthol will be exempted from this ban for at least two years, which is quite unfortunate, but I'll come back to that.

Schedule 2 would prohibit the sale of promotional items with tobacco products, and increase the fines and penalties for individuals and corporations that contravene some sections of the Smoke-Free Ontario Act.

Mr. Speaker, tougher restrictions on smoking, including a ban on flavoured tobacco products, will help discourage young people from smoking. So let's talk about smoking and our youth. I remember when my dad used to smoke. He used to say it was really, really easy to quit because he did it all the time, sometimes once a day. But I remember that it wasn't until mid-elementary school, when we had a really enthusiastic Stop Smoking campaign on at school—it might have been a Butt Out campaign or something along those lines. We watched a video and I understood that my dad was probably going to die, and I started to cry at school when I realized, being maybe in grade 2 or so.

When dad got home that night, we had a talk. A very pointed talk, I might add; you should imagine me in grade 2. And then I took his pack of cigarettes and floated them in the toilet. Looking back, my father was probably furious, but really what could he say? I don't know if that was his turning point, but it was mine. I was relentless after that. Then he started on nicotine gum as a cessation aid. I can still recognize the smell of nicotine gum on someone who's mid-quit, and I applaud anyone in that process. My father, 25 or 30 years later, now can't believe that he ever did anything so damaging, and, touch wood, he is still healthy.

Cigarettes, Mr. Speaker, if used the way that they are designed, if used the way that they are intended to be used, have a 50% mortality rate; so if used properly and smoked fully and regularly, 50% of users will die. That is astounding. So consider kids: It's estimated that 90,000 new kids will start smoking and become the next generation of smokers. So let's do the math: 45,000 are going to grow up and die because of smoking. We need to start protecting our children—not start; we need to continue protecting our children.

We all grew up seeing Joe Camel. He was cool. All the girl camels loved him. He rode motorcycles. He played pool. And he had at least a full-page ad in every teen magazine that I used to read. And I remember Virginia Slims. They had great ads for teenage girls, as I recall.

Well, when I was doing a Google search to see the current candy-flavoured, super-cute tobacco packages for kids, I came across a great Joe Camel ad. Only, it had been redone to be Joe Chemo. He wasn't on the beach anymore. He was walking with an IV pole through the halls of an overcrowded hospital full of other sickly Joe Chemos.

It would be interesting to do a “where are they now?” feature on the Marlboro Man, Joe Camel and Virginia

Slim. I'm pretty sure that we'd find they had all died slowly and wishing they had made healthier choices.

Who remembers Big League Chew shredded bubble gum?

Mr. Todd Smith: Love it.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Well, that was packaged and marketed like baseball players' chewing tobacco.

Who remembers Popeye cigarettes? I remember when they had the red tips on the ends and I remember when they were called Popeye cigarettes. Then I remember when they were rebranded and became Popeye candy sticks. They were all-white; there were no red tips. But we weren't fooled. They were still delicious and the best fake-smoking, pretend grown-up candy that there was.

I personally never liked the black licorice pipes, but there they were on the counter for 10 cents or 15 cents or whatever.

That was candy back then, designed to get us thinking and goal-setting about how we could grow up to smoke.

Let me tell you a bit about kids' candy today, which I've seen a lot of in our schools. Candy comes in really cute, bright containers. Candy comes in Push Pops with plastic twist-up tubes, and in reusable plastic cases, cans, boxes and bags. Candy now looks like cellphones, jewellery, iPods, lipstick and toys—the brighter, bolder and bigger packaging, the better.

Parents recognize a canister of Bubble Tape gum. Parents recognize hard candy Push Pops. Parents recognize a pack of gum. Parents recognize tear packs of random candy. But the problem is that parents don't recognize snuff, which is sold in candy colours and flavours like cherry pop in a little tube just like a Push Pop. Parents don't recognize chewing tobacco in a brightly coloured Bubble Tape canister. They don't recognize strawberry cigarillos in a gum package. They don't recognize tear packs of white grape-, peach-, sour apple-, coconut-, watermelon-, mango-, strawberry-, chocolate- or licorice-flavoured cigarillos.

Also, think of those little breath strips in the little plastic snap cases that you can tuck in your pocket or your purse. They sell dissolvable tobacco strips in the exact same packaging.

So are we better understanding the concern here?

Well, there's another concern. This government has given the industry two years to maximize their future casualties by giving them two years to maximize menthol targeting. Imagine the possibilities. Big Tobacco likely has their two-year mint line ready to go: chocolate mint, orange mint, strawberry mint, maybe even mojito mint. Why is this government giving Big Tobacco two years to get their hooks into our kids?

I would also like to challenge us to not only be vigilant but to be smart. When we ban flavoured cigarettes, they develop lines of cigarillos. If we ban tobacco, they'll pick some other random toxic plant to light on fire and sell to our communities. So let's pay attention, please. Big Tobacco is not going to give up the game or their profits just because we are passing a law. Big Tobacco and nicotine pushers are crafty. Enter e-cigarettes.

Schedule 3 enacts the Electronic Cigarettes Act, which will prohibit the sale of e-cigarettes to youth under age 19, prohibit the sale of e-cigarettes in certain places and restrict the display and promotion of e-cigarettes and prohibit the use of e-cigarettes in enclosed workplaces, enclosed public places and other locations where smoking is already prohibited.

I remember when people used to smoke in restaurants and bars. I remember thinking that having a smoking or non-smoking section in a restaurant was strange when the smoke just drifted over into the non-smoking section. I remember being out at nightclubs during university—not that often, though, Mr. Speaker; I see judgment there—choking on others' smoking. And then I remember coming back to school after the summer, when there was a new bylaw that smoking was prohibited inside. It was amazing. I could see my friends again. My clothes weren't disgusting. I wasn't chronically coughing throughout the semester.

Recently, I had a throwback moment when I was in a restaurant, sitting beside a friend of a friend, who was sucking on some strange contraption. She said it was vaping. I don't care if I get in trouble for saying this, but it was such a pretentious, ridiculous thing to see for the first time—and to see a grown-up pretending to be a sophisticated grown-up was really absurd. That's how I saw it. I recognize that others see it differently.

0920

Then I came to find out that this vaping wasn't regulated and that she and others don't even know what they're sucking into their lungs. It was like watching some kid you knew in school start smoking when the rest of us knew that it was a really bad idea. So here we have a whole new trend and a new audience—a novelty without the background information. We're hearing from those who don't want them banned because of their potential as a cessation aid. Okay, but they still need to be regulated. Also, making them light up or blink, making them flavoured and candy-coloured makes them enticing to kids, and that's not okay. I think most of us in this room hate seeing our children targeted by anyone who would do them harm. So I applaud regulation of this new trend. Kids don't need to be smoking or vaping or huffing or sniffing or snorting or anything else that involves them breathing something foreign into their precious, growing systems. Once our kids are better protected, I think that we can all breathe a sigh of relief.

To wrap this up, we support Bill 45. We wish the government would have supported the important amendments suggested to make it even stronger and better. We all want to see healthier and happier communities, and I hope that this bill is a step towards that ideal. Thank you again to my colleague from Nickel Belt for her tireless commitment to the best health for the most Ontarians. It is time that we prioritize health and wellness in a tangible, active way. I appreciate the time today to speak on this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Comments and questions?

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: It really is a delight for me to once again speak on this bill, and it gives me great pleasure since I had the opportunity to lead the bill through the process in committee. My colleague from Oshawa has encouraged us to pay attention, and I think that that's absolutely very wise advice. She says that with regard to menu labelling—as you know, this legislation is going to have menu labelling and a calorie count on menus and menu boards in restaurants with 20 or more facilities. But our member from Oshawa says that we're not going to be looking at the glycemic index right away, and that's absolutely correct. But I think that what we need to focus on in that comment is that this legislation is flexible and we will be able to make changes in regulation, and we will certainly look at the possibility of looking at sodium—salt—in the future.

The other thing that I wanted to point out is that the member opposite has said that menthol is exempt for at least two years, but it's not "at least" two years; it's "up to" two years. These are details that I think are extremely important, and again I would suggest that this is a very flexible and well-rounded bill that will certainly look at all of the options in the future.

We do need to do what we can to be supportive for Ontarians to have the best possible health. This is a bill that is very proactive, and I am looking forward to seeing it passing.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mrs. Gila Martow: I did listen intently to the member from Oshawa's comments, and I applaud her for her efforts when she was just a child to come home and to speak to her dad. I think that it would be wonderful if parents felt comfortable speaking to their children about all of these life choices, because too often we just make too many assumptions.

I think that we have to also be cognizant of peoples' individual rights in the province. We want to attract tourists to our province, we want to be a hub of entertainment in the province, so we have to keep that in balance with the fact that we do have a publicly funded health care system. When people are smoking and drinking, and drinking and driving, this can result in expenses that the taxpayers have to incur. We have to find that right balance and the fact is that, as the member from Oshawa mentioned, industry always finds that wiggle space whenever we come out with new government regulations. So it's not really enough to just focus on the regulations. We have to focus on the public, on how to encourage all of our friends and neighbours and all of our constituents to enjoy life to the fullest while making healthy choices as much as possible, while also recognizing that people want to have some individual rights and people want to be enjoying the great outdoors, not necessarily as smokers, but the people who are experiencing the second-hand smoke—I think still, to this day, too many people find it hard to believe how irritating their smoking is to the non-smokers around them. So I applaud everybody who is joining in today on the discussion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments? The member from—okay, you got in just in the nick of time. I recognize the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have to say I really enjoyed the speech and the comments from the member from Oshawa. I think one of the first things I have to do is also acknowledge the efforts of our member from Nickel Belt, who was integral in ensuring that this bill came forward through her years of advocacy around what I would call food literacy, in fact. That's going to be the topic of my minute and a half in terms of my comments.

What we need to encourage, broadly speaking, is that people need to be aware of what is in the food they eat. This could start absolutely in our education system with youth. The idea is that the more we know about what we're consuming in terms of the calories, the nutritional value, the more we can be aware of the impacts it will have on our health.

Looking at the health care system in Ontario and looking at the health care system in Canada, what we see is rising costs, and that's the trend. But that rising cost can be challenged because many of the illnesses that we suffer from are preventable. Prevention is an area that we haven't really put enough effort into. It's an area that will pay back in terms of return on investment in high, high value. It's something that we really need to focus on.

One of the areas of prevention is nutrition and how we eat and what we eat. The other area is how we can encourage people to be more active. While this bill is absolutely important, there are things that could have been improved. I loved the line that the member from Oshawa mentioned, that the government could have made a healthier choice by including more amendments that would have made this bill, this Making Healthier Choices Act, stronger. I would have loved to have seen some of those amendments.

In general, the next area of health prevention is encouraging physical activity. We need to look at strategies where we can encourage physical activity, make it easier, make it more accessible. Often we find that if we make the healthier choice the easier choice, more people will make that choice.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Mike Colle: It's a great pleasure to make a comment on this very interesting bill, which is really a compilation of three or four bills, some brought by members on the other side.

Some people say, "You should have included sodium count." Some people say, "Include sugar count." Some people say, "Include a series of things." Gluten: A lot of people in Chatham-Kent, I'm sure, are worried about gluten nowadays. You hear everybody say, "The solution to everything: Eat quinoa and kale. You're safe: Eat quinoa and kale."

It's kind of difficult for people writing the legislation, the researchers and the people in the ministry, to try and

figure out: What is the optimal level of action we can take in this bill? In the bill—and I sat through many of the committee hearings—it's really wide-ranging. It ranges from control of e-cigarettes—not allowing it for young people under 18—and then you've got the calorie counts in restaurants. But it's an attempt by government to try and direct people's behaviour towards healthier outcomes. This is by no means a silver bullet, a perfect bill, because you can't control what people eat or how they behave totally. This is just an attempt.

As they say—Mr. Speaker, you'll be glad to hear this—sitting is the new smoking. So maybe we should do something to get people to stand more and not to sit so much, because the average Ontarian sits for eight hours a day and that contributes to obesity and poor health. We have to do something about sitting so much too. Thank you, and I'll sit down.

0930

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the member from Oshawa for final comments.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I would like to thank my colleagues from Kingston and the Islands, Thornhill, Bramalea–Gore–Malton and Eglinton–Lawrence for their thoughtful comments this morning.

To further the comments made by the member from Kingston and the Islands, she corrected me and said that menthol is exempt for up to two years. Okay. But as she said, it's a flexible and well-rounded bill. I'm hoping that is something they opt not to enforce, that we don't exempt menthol for two years. As we said, there's an entire product line waiting to be launched.

To the member from Thornhill, I appreciate that she appreciated my youthful passion for my father's health and those around me, and I think that really does come back to the importance of discussing healthy lifestyles in school. There were so many anti smoking campaigns year after year when I was a student, and that really did help to form the basis of my understanding of what good health was and to make healthier choices—usually—for myself.

But as she pointed out, if we give the industry wiggle room, they will take it, and they will do damaging things. Back to my earlier point, I think that we need to not just be vigilant but we need to be smart, because, as I said, they're crafty.

To the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton, bringing it back to that education piece: food literacy and starting to focus on our youth and giving them the right information, giving them a full, holistic picture of health, teaching them about what they're eating and what's in the food that's good for them, not just focusing on what's bad for them.

As the member from Eglinton–Lawrence said, you can't control what people eat entirely. But I would say that our next big challenge should be to take a look at focused, targeted advertising that's directed at our kids for them to make poor choices when it comes to food. I think that's maybe the next direction that we should go.

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

Mr. Yvan Baker: It's an honour to speak to this bill this morning, and it's particularly an honour to have Chris Yaccato with us from the Ontario Lung Association, who has been a strong advocate on this issue and also a great friend.

This bill before us contains three pieces of proposed legislation. I had a chance to speak to this bill last night, I think it was around 9 p.m. or 10 p.m. last night. I really appreciated the comments made on all sides that—

Mr. Todd Smith: That's past your bedtime

Mr. Yvan Baker: It was past my bedtime.

It was a pleasure to have a chance to join the debate and consider the comments that have been made by all sides. I know a lot of comments have been made over a longer period of time on this particular bill.

Like I said, the bill contains three pieces of proposed legislation. While each schedule of this bill is distinct, all of them are predicated on the idea that if you eat better, exercise more and smoke less, up to 90% of type 2 diabetes, 80% of coronary heart disease and a third of all cancers can be avoided.

Last night, when I debated the bill—and I know a number of the members who are here were there last night—I spoke to my personal experience. I spoke about my mother and how careful she was as to what we ate as children. She obviously made it clear that we shouldn't smoke. My mom had been a smoker when she was young and quit and made sure we never smoked. She made sure that we exercised; we participated in a lot of physical activity. She made sure we ate healthy. To me, that's in part why this bill resonates so much with me, and I know it resonates with a lot of members on both sides of the aisle.

I would like to first provide a little context on Bill 45. This bill was originally introduced in February, 2014, but died on the order paper when the election was called last June. The bill was reintroduced in November, 2014. At second reading, Bill 45 had 11 hours of debate and, by my count, approximately 65 members had the opportunity to speak to it at that stage. The bill then was passed unanimously by all three parties at second reading. At the committee stage, there was considerable public input and rigorous debate; we had three days of public consultations with 38 presenters appearing before the committee. There were also two committee days of clause-by-clause examination and debate.

Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House we believe that prevention is better than the cure, so it's in that context that we've introduced this bill. We can help ensure that Ontarians have the information they need to make better choices about staying healthy. I think about the comments from the member from Eglinton—Lawrence. He was just commenting on how this allows people to make better choices. We're not changing people's behaviour, but we're giving them the information they need to make appropriate decisions or better decisions. We can also help to protect Ontarians, especially the youngest among us, from dangers to their health and their well-being.

This legislation is looking to ban flavored tobacco products, including menthol. Flavoured tobacco products

have proved to be a gateway to tobacco use and addiction for our young people. When I think about why we're here, I think about why I'm here. I'm here to help improve the quality of life for the people of Ontario today, but also in the years and for the generations to come. Protecting our young people from something that is dangerous is truly important, and so I think this bill helps to do that.

In 2012-13, the Canadian Youth Smoking Survey found that one in four high school students who reported smoking have smoked menthol cigarettes in the past 30 days. And recent research in Ontario shows that menthol's cooling effect can reduce the harsh taste of tobacco, making it more tolerable for new smokers and making youth more likely to become habitual smokers—precisely what we're trying to avoid, precisely what we're trying to protect our young people from.

This piece of legislation also deals with menu labeling, and I had a chance to speak to that last night. We know that menu labels at the point of purchase have been shown to increase awareness of nutritional information and directly influence the choices that people make. They influence consumer behaviour. Again, we can't change the way people behave, but we can give them information to make the informed choices. If passed, this legislation would require the posting of calories on menus and menu boards. And it will raise public awareness about calorie content of foods eaten outside the home—I know that the member from Oshawa spoke about that in her remarks just a few minutes ago—making it easier for people to make healthier choices when dining out, and encourage industry to offer healthier items and reformulate high-calorie menu items.

If you think about what this is going to do, with calories posted on a menu, industry will have to think about what they're putting on their menu, the calorie content and how they may want to change or adapt their menus accordingly, to make sure people are healthier, to adapt to those healthier choices.

We've seen that happen in the food industry over the course of the last few decades, in particular, to more positive health outcomes and healthier foods on shelves and in stores. I think that's something that we all strive for and want to achieve.

Finally, this legislation proposes to regulate the sale and the promotion of e-cigarettes. Look, I understand that e-cigarettes are an emerging trend in Ontario. There is concern about the possible health effects of e-cigarette use, particularly on our young people, as well as the implications for tobacco use prevention and cessation.

When it comes to the health effects of e-cigarettes for good or for ill, the jury is still out. That's just the reality. In the meantime, the idea behind this bill is to take a precautionary approach, and with our proposed e-cigarette legislation we're trying to protect youth and Ontarians from what may be an emerging harm.

Now, when I think about why I'm here in the Legislature, why I ran for office, why we all ran for office—when I talk to members on both sides of the aisle, the

response I hear most often from folks, and certainly what I tell people when they ask me in my community of Etobicoke Centre as to why I ran for office, is because I came here to make a difference. I came here to impact the lives of the people of Ontario, people in my community in particular. I know we all feel that way. That's why we're here.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make a difference, and as you know, this bill, I think, will make a difference. But as you know, we introduced this piece of legislation in November 2014. We allowed the debate to continue when we reached six and a half hours of debate on this bill so more members could speak to the bill and share their views. We've heard some excellent views and some excellent feedback from both sides of the aisle. Combined with second and third readings, this bill has seen 17 hours of debate and, according to my count, which may be off by a few members, about 77 members have either spoken to the bill or participated in the debate during questions and comments.

I believe there has been considerable debate on this bill, and we've heard a wide range of viewpoints, opinions and perspectives. My personal belief is that it's time that this bill be put to a vote on third reading and proclaimed into law as soon as possible. All sides support this bill, and there's a lot of work that we want to do. I want to make a difference. We all want to make a difference, and to do that, there are a lot of pieces of legislation that I know we all, on both sides, want to get to and debate so that we can make that difference for our constituents and for the people of Ontario.

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If we do this, if we can pass this bill and move on to the next piece of legislation to be debated here in the House, we can move on to a number of really, really substantive matters. I know that a lot of them touch all our communities. They certainly touch my community of Etobicoke Centre. There are a number of pieces of important legislation already introduced which—I know on this side and, I'm sure, on the other side—we would love to debate and move through the legislative process. Just a few examples:

- Bill 9, Ending Coal for Cleaner Air Act;
- Bill 31, the keeping Ontario's roads safe act;
- Bill 37, Invasive Species Act;
- Bill 40, Agriculture Insurance Act;
- Bill 49, Ontario Immigration Act;
- Bill 52, Protection of Public Participation Act;
- Bill 66, Great Lakes Protection Act;
- Bill 73, Smart Growth for Our Communities Act;
- Bill 80, Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment Act;
- Bill 100, Supporting Ontario's Trails Act;
- Bill 103, Protecting the School Year Act.

I'd like to get to those bills as soon as we possibly can. I think we'd all like to spend some time debating some of those important pieces of legislation currently before the House, but we really can't until Bill 45 is dealt with. And so, as a result, I move that this question be now put.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Mr. Baker has moved that the question be now put. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Thank you. This vote will be deferred until after question period.

Third reading vote deferred.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Point of order, Speaker.

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: I called for the point of order before the vote was taken. I do not believe that the—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I cannot accept your point of order. The vote has, in fact, been taken and we have, in fact, deemed that a deferred vote will take place following question period.

Orders of the day. I recognize the Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

Mr. John Yakabuski: This used to be a democracy.

Mr. Mike Colle: He's challenging the chair.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I'm challenging this group over there. I'm challenging you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Order. I will not take that as a direct attack or a comment toward the Speaker.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Not to you, sir; not to you in any way, shape or form.

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

Now that we have order resumed, back to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines on orders of the day.

AGRICULTURE INSURANCE ACT
(AMENDING THE CROP INSURANCE
ACT, 1996), 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR L'ASSURANCE
AGRICOLE (MODIFIANT LA LOI DE 1996
SUR L'ASSURANCE-RÉCOLTE)

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 25, 2015, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 40, An Act to amend the Crop Insurance Act (Ontario), 1996 and to make consequential amendments to other Acts / Projet de loi 40, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1996 sur l'assurance-récolte (Ontario) et apportant des modifications corrélatives à d'autres lois.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: Once again, it's an honour to be able to stand in the House to talk about agriculture on behalf of my constituents in Timiskaming-Cochrane and many of my farmer friends throughout the province.

Actually, it's a good segue into this bill because the Making Healthier Choices Act, on which debate was just closed, is talking about making healthier choices. The

way to have the ability to make healthier choices is to be able to buy good Ontario food. One of the ways to ensure that good Ontario food is available is to make sure that the producers who grow that food have the ability to be protected by insurance programs, and that's what this bill basically talks about.

Some of you will recall that this is my 15-minute closure on my hour lead-in. The take-away message from yesterday from the hour lead-in, for those not involved in the agricultural sector, is: If you're thinking about having barbecues this summer, the time to buy your beef is now.

Interjection: Oh, is it?

Mr. John Vanthof: Yes.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Why is that?

Mr. John Vanthof: Because after years of punishingly low prices, the beef industry has rebounded, and producers needed it. But once that expensive beef gets through the system, you're going to see huge sticker shock for beef in the stores. It's starting, but this is just the start.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I'm a vegetarian.

Mr. John Vanthof: My colleague from Bramalea–Gore–Malton is not worried about that sticker shock, Speaker, because he's a vegetarian. More power to him. But for those of us who really do enjoy a good cut of beef, as I do, if it comes on sale, this is the time to buy it.

That was the take-away message from my last 45 minutes for the people at home.

This is an important bill. It's an enabling piece of legislation. But I'd like to make it very clear that by itself, this bill makes no difference to any producer. I believe now there are 90 crops that can be covered under a provincially mandated insurance program. This bill has the potential to increase those numbers, not only of crops but of other agriculture commodities, like livestock. This bill allows the negotiations to begin. But the bill by itself doesn't do that.

This bill in Ontario has been a long, long, long time coming. Crop insurance—or agricultural product insurance is I believe what this bill is dealing with now, Bill 40. This concept that it should cover a wider variety of agricultural production was agreed to at a federal-provincial agriculture minister conference in 2003, Mr. Speaker. Every other province in the country has moved ahead already; in fact, many have programs.

I can distinctly remember when this bill was brought to the Legislature. Some of the members on the government side were moving with lightning speed. Well, 2003 to 2015 is not lightning speed. That could suggest that there are some management issues in how this government organizes the bill process. I think we're seeing this now in these last two weeks. They seem to be complaining that they can't get their bills through, but instead of focusing on the bills that they really want to get passed, they keep pushing more on top of the pile. Some of these bills were introduced last week—the week before last. Last week was constituency week, so the week before last. On the farm, we try to get some jobs done before we put more jobs on the list. This government doesn't seem to be focused on that.

But I digress, Speaker. In my last few minutes, I'd like to focus on possibly the most important part of the process for the development of this bill, and that's committee hearings. We did have people come to present regarding this bill. We had a day of committee hearings in Toronto, which is kind of par for the course for this government; they like to have committee hearings in Toronto. For an agricultural bill, it makes absolutely no sense to have committee meetings only in Toronto. Actually, the committee held a day in Guelph, which makes more sense. Committee hearings are probably the most important part, certainly one of the most important parts, of developing legislation. The people who present at committee actually deal with the industries on a day-to-day basis.

I'd like to go through a few of the presenters and what their main points were. They were very valid points.

The first presenter in Toronto was Amy Cronin. She's the chair of Ontario Pork. Amy and her family know a lot about pork, about the hog sector. They have a 3,500 sow farrow-to-finish operation. For those of you who are not familiar with that terminology, that's a substantial farm. Those who are not familiar with agriculture would maybe term that as a factory farm. Well, it's not; it's a family farm. Family farms in modern commercial agriculture need to be big enough so the family can afford a standard of living equivalent to any other business person. That's why farms are getting bigger.

Amy was very well spoken regarding her industry, and she was in favour of this bill. One of the things that Amy brought forward, which I didn't know, is that the hog industry—and hopefully I get this terminology right—across Canada has been looking at this because in some places they have these programs, and they're quite far along in this process. They've got a national hog mortality insurance task team looking at this because we're talking about big numbers, and they're looking at actual numbers with actuaries who are looking at how this insurance program would work.

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What I got from that is that they're past the conceptual part and they're going to need to know numbers, because part of this bill, part of agricultural product insurance, is that the producer pays 40%, the province pays 26% and the federal government pays 34%. I believe the administration costs are half and half. But anyway, for the majority, that's the way it goes. So if the province is going to put forward a program to insure the hog sector, which is very important and would be very beneficial to the hog sector, that 26% of provincial money is going to have to come from somewhere. The hog sector is fairly far along in this program, so they would need to know where that 26% is going to come from. That was a point that kept coming through over and over with the presenters, and there's a reason.

I'd like to go to the last presenter, who was Scott Persall from the Grain Farmers of Ontario. The Grain Farmers of Ontario are already covered because their commodities are covered by the current regime, and they

will continue to be covered. But they're worried—not that they begrudge the other commodity sectors; not at all—that if the government doesn't come up with some new money and they try to simply rob Peter to pay Paul and dilute other programs, it will be a net loss to the other commodities. This could very well happen, because there's another program—agriculture is a very complicated sector, and the government programs that work within that sector are very complicated. I could list the whole group of them. A very important one is the Risk Management Program. With risk management, you can manage price volatility, because agriculture is very cyclical. Remember when I talked how now is the time to buy beef? In the last 10 years, the beef sector, because of BSE, was devastated, and they should have had some kind of program in the last 10 years. But it's very cyclical.

They created commodity groups, and the provincial government came together and put forward a risk management program. It's a very good program. Originally, it didn't have a cap, so a farmer could insure himself with the government and you could take that to the bank. One of the great things about that program was that it was bankable and predictable, until the government put a cap on it. It was calculated that the program, in the worst-case scenario, in the worst years, would take \$200 million, and they put a cap at \$100 million. That program no longer became bankable and predictable. It's still a good program. It's not the program that was originally envisioned.

The program works because this year it's predicted that it won't even use the full amount of money. Actually, if you look in the budget that was proposed, one of the major savings that the government is trumpeting is the fact that they are predicting putting much less money into agriculture programs, which, to a farmer, isn't good news—but also to a government that rightfully trumpets the importance of agriculture, because agriculture is number one or two in the province for creating jobs. A lot of people wouldn't know, Speaker, that 760,000 jobs rely on agriculture in this province. But for that sector to be stable, the farmers have to have good programs. So the Risk Management Program was a good program until the government capped it. It was a great program; now it's an okay program, but it's not the program that it was.

Where I'm leading to is that with this agricultural insurance program, which basically insures you against weather and against disease, if you would like to participate, since they capped the risk management, there is no guarantee that they wouldn't simply take that money out of another agricultural program to help fund an insurance program for the pork sector or an insurance program for the beef sector.

We were talking last night, as we were debating among ourselves during the real debate in night sittings, that the government could conceivably try to close Ridgetown College to take some money to create a new agriculture insurance program. Or they could cut out half of Guelph.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Don't suggest it.

Mr. John Vanthof: I'm not trying to suggest it; I'm trying to put it on the table so people know what could happen. That's not the intent of this and it shouldn't be, but there has been no money attached. In the budget, it says we're going to spend a lot less money on agricultural programs.

So here we're talking about increasing agricultural programs, which should be done. Other provinces have done it. The pork sector should be covered. The beef sector should be covered. There are all kinds of sectors that should be covered, and there seems to be no money.

Another issue that hasn't been brought up yet—we brought it up at committee, and I brought it up in the technical briefings. I'd like to thank the ministry for providing us technical briefings. I brought up supply management, and right away they said, "No, no, supply management isn't covered because supply management is a whole different system." I said, "Whoa, wait a second. Supply management is an income program." It's the best marketing and management program, bar none, in this country. That's why we have stable prices for milk and poultry products in this country, and that's why we can guarantee what's in the milk in this country, because the milk consumed in this country is produced in this country with very high standards and very high regulations.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: You were a dairy farmer?

Mr. John Vanthof: Yes.

An example: We recently had avian flu where farmers lost their whole cycle. So their poultry flock is wiped out because of avian flu. That's not covered by supply management.

So once again, will they be allowed to negotiate with the government to create a program for supply-managed sectors? The answer we got right away was a no. But I'd like to ask the Ministry of Agriculture and the minister to really think that through, because supply management—if you have a dairy herd that's wiped out with—it used to be that we'd have a whole herd wiped out from brucellosis. We've eradicated brucellosis because if brucellosis was detected in a dairy cow—boom—your herd was gone.

They had ad hoc programs to try and help the farmer, but again, if the dairy industry would like to negotiate an insurance program to ensure against calamity, which that is—catastrophe or disease—they should be allowed to do so. It shouldn't be a flat no because you're supply managed. So far, all I've heard from the technical people at OMAF is it's a flat no because it's supply managed. Your income is already regulated. Your daily income might be regulated if you produce your quota but that doesn't insure you against catastrophe.

So in closing, we are in favour of Bill 40. Bill 40 is enabling legislation that allows commodity groups to negotiate with the government to create individual commodity insurance programs to insure against disease and weather, because farmers have to deal with that on a daily basis. There was a frost this spring, and I saw on the news this morning that it wiped out a lot of grapes. So

it might not be a great time for Ontario wine in the next little while.

It wiped out a lot of crops. It wiped out crops indiscriminately. In my area we had frost. Some crops that should have been frozen didn't freeze, and other crops that are relatively frost-hardy froze.

In closing, this is enabling legislation, legislation we're in favour of, but, as always, the devil is in the details. There used to be a Wendy's commercial—"Where's the beef?" Well, the question for this program is, "Where's the money going to come from? Where is the money?" In your budget this year, you are specifically saying there is less money for agricultural programs, so where's the money coming from for this one?

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The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Han Dong: I'm very pleased to respond to the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane's point of view on this particular bill. I was listening carefully to what he had to say and I realized that I just wanted to, for the record, point out that in my riding, which is an urban riding—downtown Toronto—this bill is also very important to the residents, because farmers feed the cities.

We eat, and in my riding, just so you know, there are a lot of newly established farmers' markets. Whether it's CityPlace—now they have a permanent farmers' market throughout the summer—or Liberty Village, there are farmers' markets. It's a very trendy thing to do now because people's demand for raw food is on the increase.

I know the beef farmers will be here this week. I look forward to that. It's always a great feast. It's very kind and very smart of them to actually come to Queen's Park and advocate on behalf of their members. I look forward to that. Every year I get great conversations out of that.

This bill, if passed, will give some more tools, more coverage and more protection for our farmers. That's what we need because we're in a time that's not looking at just feeding Ontarians; our product has a good reputation around the world. It's in high demand around the world. Our Minister of Agriculture just recently joined a delegation led by the Minister of International Trade to China. From that trip they promoted the Ontario agricultural sector and they closed a lot of deals, they signed a lot of agreements. I look forward to that.

I appreciate the member's comments and I look forward to his support. I'll be supporting this bill personally.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Ted Arnott: The member for Timiskaming-Cochrane made some very interesting points this morning with respect to the crop insurance legislation, Bill 40. I think it's important to point out that the government, unfortunately, is routinely using closure motions and, in some cases, time allocation to shut down debate.

When you think about our agri-food industry in the province of Ontario, I think that farming and agriculture

has to be the most important economic activity in the province. We all need to eat; we all love to eat.

We need to spend more time debating and discussing agricultural issues. Of course, as we know, on the opposition side of the House we represent rural Ontario in the Ontario Legislature and the government side of the House represents, largely, urban Ontario. We have lots to say about these issues, but unfortunately, when the government uses time allocation, or in the case of Bill 40 at second reading, when they move a closure motion to curtail debate, we don't all get a chance to speak.

I think it's important also to point out that we have something very exciting happening in Wellington county this week. We are opening a new dairy facility in the community of Elora. I know that the Minister of Agriculture and Food is going to be joining us in the celebration. The provincial government has invested a significant amount of money in what we're calling the new Livestock Research and Innovation Centre dairy facility. It's a partnership with the University of Guelph. The federal government is also putting in some \$3 million.

It will ensure that the Ontario dairy industry will have a state-of-the-art, world-class dairy research facility to be built to address the research, education, training needs and priorities of Ontario and Canadian dairy sectors. I said to my friend the member for Oxford that this really makes Wellington county the centre of the universe when it comes to milk production in the province of Ontario.

Interjections.

Mr. Ted Arnott: I hesitate to start a war in the Legislature with my colleague, but I think manifestly that it is true that the research and development that will take place in this community will show what Wellington county can do. We really look forward to this exciting event this coming Thursday.

I want to again congratulate the member for Timiskaming-Cochrane for his presentation this morning.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I'm pleased to be able to rise in the Legislature and make comments on the comments from my colleague from Timiskaming-Cochrane. I'm always struck when I really look around this room and recognize the diverse backgrounds and talents and stories that we draw from in this room. Certainly, to have a farmer speaking about farming and about the agricultural industry, we are all richer for it.

Some of his points, that if the government doesn't come up with new money but rather if it moves or shifts money from one bucket to the other, we're not getting any further ahead—I think that's a huge question that needs to be addressed. As my colleague pointed out, the government is trumpeting agriculture on the one hand, and the importance of it, but then pats itself on the back that it is putting less money into agriculture with the other hand. I wouldn't say that is the way to grow.

In Oshawa, as the member across the way was talking about, there are some communities that may not have farms, per se, but they benefit from the farmers' markets, and in Oshawa I'm surrounded by Durham region and

many farms in the area, and we, of course, have vibrant farmers' markets.

We spent time this morning talking about making healthier choices, and I think that these two topics are connected because as we're encouraging our communities to eat healthier, I think we also need to be having the "buy local" conversation—not just about supporting the local economy or supporting our local friends and farmers but really looking at why local food is better for you: that it ripens on the vine, it ripens on the tree and it doesn't just ripen in a box in the back of a truck; that we let food grow the way it's supposed to just up the road, we buy it locally and we're all that much healthier for it.

I thank you very much for having the opportunity today, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I'm pleased to rise today and speak about the Agriculture Insurance Act, 2014. I also want to commend the other members for the comments that they made earlier.

In my riding of Halton, we have a number of different types of growers. Of course we have crop growers, fruit growers and all kinds of specialty crops and so on, but we also have people who are livestock owners and growers, and people would have bee farms. So I can't tell you how important business risk management programs like production insurance are for the producers in my riding. This really helps them all deal with situations that are outside of their control.

As we all know, the weather lately has been very unpredictable and people are dealing with all kinds of sudden and dramatic changes in the weather that really we haven't had in past years. In addition to that, there's of course disease and extreme market fluctuation. What this insurance does, really, is make timely payments to producers and eliminates the need for costly, ad hoc responses to some of these adverse conditions.

Essentially, what we're saying is that we shouldn't be in a situation where we're managing things with crisis management. People need a plan. They need to know that they are going to have something there that will help them in times of need. That's exactly what this is, because our producers, our grain growers, our fruit growers, our livestock growers, they all need that peace of mind as they're planning for the years ahead.

We know that many of these people have lots of challenges on a daily basis as it is with their daily lives, so making it easier for them allows them to better manage risk, encourages greater innovation, job creation and, really, growth in the sector. It helps them plan for the future so that we can make sure that our agri-business is as strong as it should be in this province.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane for final comments.

Mr. John Vanthof: I'd like to thank the members from Trinity–Spadina, Wellington–Halton Hills, Oshawa and Halton for their thoughtful comments. The basic issue with this bill is that it's enabling legislation—by

itself, it doesn't change anything. There are good insurance programs for crops currently. There are good risk management programs available for crops and other live-stock sectors. This bill would allow commodity sectors that aren't currently covered by production insurance to negotiate with the government to try to come up with insurance programs for commodities like beef and pork that are not covered now. That's good.

The member from Halton said that producers need to be able to plan. That's very true. But what producers also need to know is where the government is going to come up with their portion of the money, the 26%. Producers know where 40% of the program cost is going to come from. That comes from the producer. That's the producer's part of the insurance. But the 26% that comes from the province—there is no mention of where that's going to come from. That will come later in negotiations. But there has been no indication from the government where that money is going to come from. It certainly wasn't indicated in the budget.

The fear of the producers—the ones who are now covered by the programs that already exist—is that if new programs are developed, money will simply be shifted from other agricultural programs, which in effect could be a net loss to producers.

Do we support this legislation? Yes. But the devil is in the details. Where is the money going to come from?

Third reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I'd like to thank all members for the debate this morning.

Since it is almost 10:15, this House stands recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1012 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I'm delighted to introduce Cheryl Fullerton, from the Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association—a frequent visitor.

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'd like to introduce a good friend of mine, John Cruickshank, from Grimsby, father of Duncan Cruickshank, one of our pages today.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I would like to introduce Star Jewell Martin; she's a page here at the Legislative Assembly. Her grandmother, Gaydonna Baker, is visiting. Our page Star is from Kenora–Rainy River.

Hon. David Zimmer: I'm pleased to welcome to the House today the family of today's page captain, Emma Wai: Evelyn Wai, Tsang Wing Wai, Trevor Wai and David Wai. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Miss Monique Taylor: I'd like to welcome, once again, the father of one of our pages, Bridget Le Donne. Her dad, Dino Le Donne, is here with us again.

Hon. Bill Mauro: I also have a page from my riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan here this week, also a page captain today: Emma Schubert. Her mother, Andrea Schubert, is here in one of the galleries. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It's my pleasure to welcome Paul Kossta, from the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, also a frequent visitor; someone who is watching what's going on in the benches.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: It's my pleasure to introduce, in the east gallery, a former MPP, former minister of the province of Ontario and currently the mayor of the city of Ottawa, Jim Watson, here for Ottawa Day at Queen's Park, headed up by Invest Ottawa. I'd also like to introduce Bruce Lazenby, president and CEO of Invest Ottawa, and the entire delegation of business people from the city of Ottawa. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Norm Miller: It's my pleasure to welcome Shena Terry, who is here visiting her daughter, Jessica Terry, a page from Parry Sound–Muskoka. Welcome, Shena.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Mr. Speaker, I'm sure we've noticed that another member of the assembly—you're going to do it? All right. I'm going to sit down.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Davenport.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to introduce to the Legislature this morning a group of seniors who are visiting from the Abrigo Centre, a fantastic organization in my riding of Davenport. I'd like to especially welcome Marilia dos Santos and Gerry Luciano, who are leading this group today. Welcome, seniors.

M^{me} France Gélinas: J'ai de la grande visite aujourd'hui. Je commence avec Lucas Egan et Éric Desrochers, qui sont venus ici pour le lancement de l'Université de l'Ontario français—

Applause.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Merci—Jérémie Spadafora et Caroline Gélinault—pas « Gélinas »—de la FESFO; et, bien sûr, Alain Dupuis du RÉFO. Bienvenue à Queen's Park.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: As part of Invest Ottawa day at the Legislature, j'aimerais présenter M. Dina Epale, executive director of the Orléans Chamber of Commerce; and a constituent of mine, Ian Faris, who also happens to be the executive director of the Ottawa Chamber of Commerce.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I'm going to invoke a loophole today in recognizing a former member of this assembly indirectly. I'm pleased to say that Brayden Sterling is the page from Nepean–Carleton this year. His grandfather, of course, is known, but I'm only allowed to introduce his lovely wife, Joan. It's really nice to see you here, and I will not usurp the powers of the Speaker.

L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Je voudrais présenter, ici avec le groupe d'Ottawa, Mona Fortier, qui est membre de mon comité aviseur sur les services en français.

And the best lawyer in Ottawa: Grant Jameson, with Norton Rose, who is a constituent of mine.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Mr. Speaker, I'd like the assembly to recognize John Cruickshank, who is in the gallery today, and his son, who's here as a page: Duncan.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, as you've heard, there is a great delegation from Ottawa that is visiting Queen's Park. Today, I want to welcome Peter Ricketts, Saad

Bashir, Warren Creates, Jeff Westeinde, Don Grant, Leopold Lax, Noel Buckley, Kathryn Moore, Ryan Kennery, Ian Faris, Doug Wotherspoon, Tofy Mussivand and Steve West. I welcome them to Queen's Park and encourage everybody to come to the reception tonight in the Legislative dining room.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: It's my pleasure to introduce to the Legislature Rajiv Kaushal from First Derivatives. Thank you so much. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Dipika Damerla: I just want to introduce some stakeholders: Cristin Napier, Nadia Formigoni, Nicole McInerney, Sara Trotta, Kalasian Kalaichelvan, Rubina Kharel, Chris Yaccato, Monica Sarkar, Gemma Styling and Stephanie Lear. They're here from the Heart and Stroke Foundation, the Canadian Cancer Society and the Ontario Lung Association. They're here to support us on Bill 45.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, as I mentioned, we've got a really big delegation visiting from Ottawa, so I want to introduce a few more people and welcome them to Queen's Park: Ritch Dusome, Blair Patacairk, Sonya Shorey, Maria Pugh, Jonathan Bartlett and Richard Chase. We welcome them to Queen's Park.

Hon. Reza Moridi: It's my great pleasure and honour to welcome my good friend Professor Mussivand, the inventor of the artificial heart from the University of Ottawa, visiting the House.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I forgot to name a dear friend, Don Grant. We have been friends—I was there working in the delivery room when his two sons were born, so welcome, Don, to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Last call for introductions: the Minister of Education.

Hon. Liz Sandals: Yes, point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'm asking for unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice respecting the speedy passage of the bill that was introduced yesterday that would ensure that schoolchildren are back in school tomorrow—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That particular motion, unless I am informed of any other issues that are changeable in its result—I've ruled on it twice. This will be the last time.

There's a request to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? I heard a no.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

Even though it was stepped on, I would like to introduce, as is the tradition of the Speaker, former members: The member from Ottawa West–Nepean in the 38th and 39th Parliament, Mr. Jim Wilson—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Jim Watson.

1040

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You guys are only giving me enough time to think about my comeback. See how soon we forget?

My apologies, Jim.

Also, respecting the member from Nepean–Carleton’s respect for the fact that I was allowed to introduce, we have with us the member for Carleton–Grenville in the 31st, 32nd and 33rd Parliaments, the member from Carleton in the 34th, 35th and 36th Parliaments, the member from Lanark–Carleton in the 37th and 38th Parliaments, and the member for Carleton–Mississippi Mills in the 39th Parliament, Mr. Norm Sterling.

I hope you noted that I got your name right.

ANNUAL REPORT, INFORMATION AND PRIVACY COMMISSIONER

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that I have laid upon the table the 2014 annual report from the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): At this time I would ask all members to join me in welcoming the new pages for this session and ask them to assemble: Vaughan, Mr. Ram Ahuja; Niagara West–Glanbrook, Duncan Cruickshank; Nickel Belt, Abby Deschene; Ottawa–Orléans, Robert Heckbert; Trinity–Spadina, Julien Jouan; Hamilton Mountain, Bridget Le Donne; Nipissing, Sheila MacDougall; Kenora–Rainy River, Star Jewell Martin; Toronto–Danforth, Madeleine Randmaa; Timmins–James Bay, Jany Scherer; Thunder Bay–Atikokan, Emma Schubert; London West, Maya Scott; Scarborough–Agincourt, Philip Shen; Nepean–Carleton, Brady Sterling; Mississauga–Streetsville, Megan Sweetman; Parry Sound–Muskoka, Jessica Terry; Willowdale, Emma Wai; Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale, Dale Whitmore; Sault Ste. Marie, Katelyn Woods; Etobicoke Centre, Luke Woolcock; and Mississauga East–Cooksville, Kerry Zheng.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Finally, I would like to introduce, in the Speaker’s gallery, two friends of mine, one a very long-term friend and a trustee from the Brant Norfolk Haldimand Catholic District School Board, Mr. Bill Chopp; and the chairman of the board, Mr. Rick Petrella. Welcome.

CONTEMPT OF PARLIAMENT

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I have received notice of an intent to raise a point of privilege from the member from Leeds–Grenville. I am prepared to hear the point of privilege at this time. However, since the notice is quite detailed, I would ask the member to summarize his argument.

The member from Leeds–Grenville.

Mr. Steve Clark: I want to thank you for allowing me the opportunity to present, pursuant to standing order

21(c), the notice and my intent to now present a point of privilege. It’s concerning a possible breach of privilege with regard to the Ombudsman’s report released yesterday, entitled *In The Dark*, and Hydro One’s actions when questioned regarding their billing practices.

Speaker, misleading the House is a charge that I don’t make lightly, and I take the likelihood that Hydro One may have intentionally misled the House very seriously. I am concerned that the behaviour shown by Hydro One, as documented in the Ombudsman’s report, could amount to contempt of this Legislature.

Parliamentary authorities are unanimous about the House being misled and state that the House may treat the making of a deliberately misleading statement as contempt. Deliberately misleading the House is an affront to every single member of this House, no matter whether they’re in government or in the two opposition parties.

I will try to summarize my brief. First, I wanted to talk about McGee’s Parliamentary Practice. It states, “In order to establish a prima facie case finding that a breach of privilege and contempt has occurred, three elements must be present: One, it must be proven that the statements were misleading; two, it must be established that the member at the time knew the statement was incorrect; and three, in the making of the statement, the minister intended to mislead the House.” I am confident, Speaker, that all three elements are present in this case that I’m bringing on the floor this morning.

Regarding McGee’s first criterion, that it must be proven that the statements were misleading, the Ombudsman’s report made it clear that the statements and actions of Hydro One were misleading. While specifically misleading statements were made by several officials at Hydro One, it was truly, in my opinion, a systematic response to all issues designed with an intent to mislead.

You’ll note that on page 6, I outlined four specific points from the Ombudsman’s report, passages where we became aware of the systematic issue, the fact that statements were made to the Ombudsman’s staff to the contrary, and the fact that these staff were encouraged and directed to do so. Again, I’ve outlined the four points to you on page 6 regarding the CEO’s response. While he remained positive, as in the report, an internal email from other senior officials in December referred to the company entering into crisis mode.

All of the four points that I made, Speaker, were misleading. An internal email communication from July 2013 discussed accounts that have not been billed under the new system, noting the need for “ensuring we do not go to the media” and that “senior executives undertook to raise the issue with the board’s” regulatory and other public policy bodies. I’ve outlined that on page 6.

The second criterion that I believe is satisfied is that Hydro One knew the statements were incorrect, and I’ll reiterate some from passages that were in that report. The one thing that I do want to highlight is that on December 18, six months after Hydro became aware of the serious nature of the issue, Hydro One’s CEO responded to an inquiry from the Minister of Energy’s office and gave the

impression that the issue was minimal, stressing the “low number of customers who had submitted complaints.” I’ve outlined how this has satisfied that second criterion.

The final criterion is also satisfied in this case, that the statement must have been made with the intention to mislead the House. While the statements were not made in the House or in committee, they were made to mislead the minister’s office, which was relaying that misleading information to this House and members of the Legislative Assembly.

Hydro One was being questioned by the Ombudsman, who was acting upon 180 requests from members who were advocating on behalf of our constituents. The House, its members and our independent officer of the Legislature—we were all looking for accurate and honest information to do our jobs, to represent our constituents and to help them, many of whom were most in need, our vulnerable residents. We were trying to get answers, and we were being blocked, deceived, at every step.

I want to remind you and members of the House that the CEO made misleading statements to the minister’s office when he knew they were in crisis mode. In particular, I want to highlight an exchange between a staffer and his or her supervisor when they discussed “holding the line with messages” after a call from the Ombudsman and to report back if they “get the feeling that” the Ombudsman was “going to investigate more aggressively or escalate....”

I would like to again mention a statement from an internal Hydro One email: “I know corporate communications does not recommend responding to these types of articles, but this one may need us to do something to repair damage to our reputation.”

1050

Speaker, these responses clearly confirm that third section.

O’Brien and Bosc note, “Misleading a minister or a member has also been considered a form of obstruction and thus a prima facie breach of privilege.” They cite a specific example where Speaker Jerome made a ruling in which he said, “I can interpret that testimony in no other way than meaning that a deliberate attempt was made to obstruct the member in the performance of his duties and, consequently, to obstruct the House itself.”

I believe that the statements made by Hydro One officials to the minister, to members of this House and to the Ombudsman can only be interpreted as an attempt to deliberately obstruct us and those officers from carrying on their duties.

I’m going to wrap up by quoting from page 8 of my response. In 1987, Speaker Fraser stated, “The privileges of a member are violated by any action which might impede him or her in the fulfillment of his or her duties and functions.”

By misleading the Minister of Energy—the ability to fulfill his duties was seriously impeded.

Once again, I respectfully request that you consider my point of privilege, the ruling precedents and the facts that are presented by the Ombudsman’s report. I believe

that you’ll find a prima facie case of breach of privilege and contempt. I would ask that you consider it and, if your ruling is favourable, that the House investigate the matter further.

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

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I rise to respond to the point of privilege raised by the member from Leeds–Grenville today. We received his submission, I believe, around 9 a.m. this morning.

Speaker, as the member himself mentioned earlier, in order to establish that the House has been misled, Speakers’ rulings are clear that three tests must be met:

(1) The statement was misleading;

(2) It must be established that the person making the statement knew at the time that the statement was incorrect;

(3) In making the statement, there was an intention to mislead the House.

Speaker, in this case, it is difficult to even address this point of privilege, because the member has not demonstrated any instance when statements were made to the House that could have been misleading.

There is absolutely no evidence that this House or a member of this House has been misled in the discharge of their duty.

Indeed, the process that the member complains of occurred wholly outside this House.

I understand that members of this House filed a complaint with the Ombudsman and that the Ombudsman, in his official capacity, investigated as a result of those complaints.

In any event, the CEO of Hydro One, Carm Marcello, addressed this issue in the media yesterday. He accepted the Ombudsman’s recommendations and went on to say, “Last year I wrote to my 1.3 million Hydro One customers and I told them I was sorry. I wrote to them and explained that the poor service they experienced was not warranted. I wrote to every one of my customers, including the 95% who have never experienced a problem. In that time we fixed our billing issues. We focused on fixing technical issues but we had failed to appreciate how those issues would impact our customers.”

Speaker, he advised that Hydro One provides regular updates to their board of directors and management team and that they provided all the updates to all of the agencies, including the ministry.

Additionally, I understand that the Minister of Energy has asked the chair of Hydro One to report back publicly within 40 business days with an action plan to ensure that all of the Ombudsman’s recommendations in this report are acted on.

It is abundantly clear that there was no breach of privilege or contempt in this case. As a result, I request that you dismiss the member’s point of privilege. In the event that you do not rule today, Speaker, I request that you provide us time to submit detailed written submissions to you.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank the member from Leeds–Grenville and the House leader for their

input. I will reserve my ruling and get back to the House shortly.

It is now time for question period.

ORAL QUESTIONS

TEACHERS' LABOUR DISPUTES

Mr. Jim Wilson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm still here. I thought maybe you talked to Patrick Brown and knew something I didn't know this morning.

My question is for the Premier. The day after this government introduced back-to-work legislation for members of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario has now announced it is ramping up its work-to-rule campaign.

Elementary teachers will not write transition reports or participate in transition meetings for grade 8 students, they will not plan future field trips and they will not participate in professional development. This is just the next step before a full-blown strike.

Premier, will you guarantee the parents of elementary school students that they won't see province-wide strikes this September in their sector?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The member opposite is making a huge leap. The fact is that there is a collective bargaining process that is under way and we need to let that unfold, and I know that the Minister of Education will want to comment.

I believe in the collective bargaining process. That's a fundamental difference between us and the party opposite. We actually believe that it's important to have a process in place and it's important to follow that process. There will be times when it works better than others, I acknowledge that, but that does not negate the importance of having a process that is respectful, in which everyone has a role and everyone understands what that role is, and that's what is in place in Ontario.

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

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Back to the Premier: This government has failed in negotiations with Durham, it has failed in negotiations with Rainbow in Sudbury, and failed in negotiations with Peel. The Premier and the education minister couldn't keep students in the classroom all because of a pathetic, cumbersome Bill 122 bargaining system.

Premier, these boards are just three of the 72 boards we have in Ontario. Parents and students could see this chaos and disruption spread one board at a time across the province because of this Liberal government's dysfunctional bargaining process. Our young leader Patrick Brown and the PC caucus know that Bill 103 is simply a band-aid solution.

Premier, how—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock, please. Order. Start the clock.

Finish, please.

Interjection.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: He will be sitting right over there in 2018. Premier, how many more back-to-work bills will you have to introduce over the coming months?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Let me just speak to the process, because I said that it's important to have a process in place that everyone understands. The fact is that we worked with our partners, with the teachers' federations, with the unions—so teachers and support staff—and we worked with boards to put in place a process that reflects the reality that the provincial government is the funder of publicly funded education in Ontario, and there are issues that have to be resolved at a provincial table. It also reflects the reality that there are local issues that need to be bargained locally.

A number of years ago, when I was Minister of Education, there was an informal process that kind of reflected the reality that actually was a result of funding changes that had been made by the previous government. Those funding changes are in place. The province funds education, so that means you have to have a collective bargaining process that reflects that reality. That's what is in place.

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

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Premier, it's a cumbersome mess you have on your hands. The three boards on strike this school year are just the beginning. Your government's mismanagement and flawed two-tier system have created education chaos for parents and students. You have dithered and dragged along the negotiations, meanwhile using the students as pawns.

Premier, Bill 122 is definitely the problem; the boards have said so, the teachers have said so. The Education Relations Commission said as much in yesterday's letter as well. Don't just bring in back-to-work legislation, bring in a fix to your flawed bargaining process so we don't see this disaster happen again and again and again across this province.

Interjections.

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

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: As I said, the process that is in place reflects the reality that the province is the funder of the education system, and that there are local issues nonetheless that need to be addressed at the local level. But there is a provincial discussion that has to happen.

1100

You know, we have built into this process a review, so when we go through this round of bargaining, if there are changes that need to be made to the process, we will look at that. But the fact is that there has to be a process that reflects the reality. I don't believe that there shouldn't be a discussion at the local level, because I believe in school boards. I think it's important to have school boards

working with their employees. At the same time, I don't believe that school boards should have to take the full responsibility for negotiating the financial issues that the province is actually responsible for. If the members opposite had a suggestion that was constructive, we'd be happy to listen to that once this round is through.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Mr. Jim Wilson: Again to the Premier: The current Minister of Energy has held the hydro file for just over two years now. In that short amount of time, he has succeeded in having the Auditor General tell him that the government wasted \$1.1 billion on the gas plants relocations, another \$2 billion on smart meters, and now the Ombudsman has revealed that because of the minister's lack of action he has spent another \$88.3 million of taxpayers' money in an attempt to correct poor billing practices at Hydro One.

Added together, this almost \$4 billion in wasted money is only a few million shy of what this government is claiming it will net from the sale of Hydro One. My question to the Premier is, don't you think it's irresponsible to sell Hydro One just to make up for the mistakes of your incompetent minister?

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I will not accept interjections when I'm standing.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: To the Minister of Energy.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: The question is precipitated by the Ombudsman's report yesterday. We have indicated that as a result of the new IT billing system, an unacceptable number of Hydro One customers over an extended period of time received an unacceptable level of service. The CEO of Hydro One and the government have apologized for the impact. While we know that Hydro One has been working hard to resolve outstanding issues and Hydro One has outlined that work in detail, further work and remediation is clearly required. I therefore asked the chair of Hydro One, David Denison, to report back to me within 40 days with a detailed action plan describing how Hydro One can further address the recommendations in the Ombudsman's report. I'll provide more details in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary? The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

Interjection.

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

Mr. John Yakubuski: Back to the Premier: Not only did Hydro One waste millions of dollars, but their incompetent and callous actions have led to countless headaches and quite frankly unnecessary anxiety for ratepayers across this province. Ordinary residents had money incorrectly taken from their bank accounts, while

businesses were being overcharged millions of dollars. Yet with all of that systemic waste and lost money in the energy file, you're telling Ontarians that Hydro One no longer needs the oversight of the officers of this Legislature. You pushing through your budget bill will remove that oversight.

Premier, will you reverse your decision and remove any reference to Hydro One from your budget bill?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Hydro One is transforming from a crown corporation to a TSX public company. That will require changes. The legislation includes a provision that requires Hydro One to establish an ombudsman—an embedded ombudsman. What we have done is we have engaged, and he is engaged at this time, the former Auditor General of Canada, Denis Desautels, to oversee the embedding of that ombudsman in Hydro One to ensure and assure the public and the members of this House that the ombudsman will be accountable and will be transparent and will be meaningfully going forward.

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

Mr. John Yakubuski: Back to the Premier; maybe she'd like to answer this: Ontarians don't trust your government and they don't trust your energy minister.

Without the investigations of the officers of the Legislature, none of this waste, abuse and deceit would have ever seen the light of day. The public has no confidence that Hydro One can govern itself in the best interests of the ratepayers of this province without the oversight and the accountability that these legislative officers bring to bear.

Premier, you need to seriously reconsider your plan to privatize Hydro One. Why won't you remove any reference to Hydro One from your budget bill?

Interjections.

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

Mr. Paul Miller: Don't forget Harris.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, second time. Minister?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Speaker, the members know that in last year's budget, we indicated we were going to study all of our enterprise assets, to repurpose them for infrastructure purposes. What we are doing now is taking 50% of the proceeds of sale and putting it on debt, and approximately 50% to invest in infrastructure.

This morning, the Premier was in Hamilton announcing a billion dollars of infrastructure for an LRT project. That is going to come from the proceeds of sale which are not coming from increased taxes, which are not coming from cutting services, nor are they coming from new debt. It's a responsible way to move forward, and this morning—

Interjection.

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

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: This morning, the members of Invest Ottawa asked for more infrastructure. It's a priority everywhere in this province.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Slowly catching up, I wanted to make sure that the member heard me. I said to come to order, and the member from Nipissing, come to order.

New question.

TEACHERS' LABOUR DISPUTES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. Negotiations with high school teachers began months ago, and for months the Minister of Education has been sitting on the sidelines. She's watched as talks stalled, and instead of doing anything, she was "perplexed" and "confused."

On Thursday, we expect the Premier to legislate teachers back to work, but she's still going to have the same minister who failed to bring people together, the same minister who failed to get a deal, the same minister who failed to get our kids back into the classrooms.

Will the Premier fire her minister and show that she's serious about getting a deal and ending the chaos in our education system?

Interjections.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the leader of the third party understands the collective bargaining process. I know that she understands that it would be impossible for her to know exactly what the minister has been doing. The minister has been working extremely hard to keep everyone at the table, to keep the issues moving and to try to get a deal. That's as it should be, because that's where the deal has to be found, is at the table.

The point we're at right now is that the Education Relations Commission, which has been in place for many decades, has ruled on jeopardy of the year for the students who have been out of school. What is surprising to me is that the leader of the third party doesn't understand that the interests of the students are at stake right now. We have been part of a collective bargaining process. That process—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): One wrap-up sentence, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: That collective bargaining process will continue, but we must get the students back into school. I would have thought that the NDP would have wanted that.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, on Thursday—

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I am not sure that anyone wants to take that chance when I'm standing.

Supplementary, please.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: On Thursday we expect the Premier to legislate teachers back to work, but the prob-

lems will not go away. The minister has blamed teachers. She's blamed boards of education—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. The member from Trinity-Spadina and the Minister of Economic Development, come to order.

Please finish.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: She's blamed teachers, she's blamed boards of education, and these days she's blaming the opposition. The truth is that, for months, this minister has watched from the sidelines and just passed the buck. She was given a job: Get a deal. She hasn't done that.

If the minister can't get the job done, then it's time for a new minister. So will the—

Interjections.

1110

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport—and I just might jump to warnings. This is insulting.

Please finish.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: If the minister can't get the job done, it's time for a new minister. Will this Premier do the right thing, fire her Minister of Education and appoint someone who can actually do the job?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, the students who have been out for a number of weeks could be back in school today had the NDP worked with us.

I know that this is a difficult round of collective bargaining. I understand that. I understand that the collective bargaining process has to go on and that the deal is going to be found at the table. I understand that it's obviously going to take a bit more time. That doesn't mean nothing has been happening; it has been. It's going to take a bit more time. But in the interim, what's important is that we get the kids back into the classroom. That collective bargaining process can go on.

But the leader of the third party, in the past, has been part of a party that has supported getting workers back to work. Howard Hampton stated in 2002, "The government has done a wise thing here. Four days of debate, five days of debate, six days of debate would not have left anyone in a winning position." They voted to end the garbage strike—

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

Final supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The only real solution to the chaos in the education sector is to actually bring people together. So far, this minister has only been pushing people away. She's perplexed by the issues. She blames everyone but herself. Her job was actually to get a deal, but she has failed at that spectacularly. It's the students, the parents and the teachers who are all paying the price.

The Premier needs to show that she's serious about a solution. She needs to fire her Minister of Education and appoint a minister who can actually bring people together and get a deal done. Is the Premier ready to get serious, or is she going to stand by her perplexed, confused and ineffective minister?

Interjection.

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

Interjections.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Well, I don't actually think that personal attacks get us anywhere.

I really believe that the people who are engaged in the collective bargaining process need to do their work. I believe that, and they're going to need a bit more time. In the interim, students in Oshawa, in Bramalea and in Nickel Belt could be in school today if the NDP had supported our back-to-work legislation in the first instance.

The fact is, the collective bargaining process is going—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order. Thank you. One sentence wrap-up.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Just to say, Mr. Speaker, that we want those kids back in school. We want the collective bargaining process to continue.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, the truth hurts, Speaker.

My question is for the Premier. The Premier likes to say that she respects municipalities, but the proof is in the pudding. The Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association says that northern communities are going to be hit hard by the Premier's Hydro One sell-off. Their president says, "There has been no consultation with these communities, which is in our opinion unfair.... We feel this decision to sell off Hydro One assets is merely short-term gain for long-term pain."

Will the Premier take Hydro One out of her Stephen-Harper-style omnibus budget and give groups like NOMA, the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association, an opportunity to have their say in some kind of public process? It's the least they deserve.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, it's interesting: The very first time I had a really in-depth conversation about northern infrastructure, I was Minister of Transportation, and I was meeting with mayors from northwestern Ontario. I can remember the mayor of Kenora, Dave Canfield, saying to me, "We need a consistent investment in roads and bridges." I think there are 19 bridges in Kenora. He was asking for predictable infrastructure funding.

In 2010, when I was the Minister of Transportation, that planted a seed that made it clear to me that we needed to do something that would provide infrastructure funding over the long term. That's what we're doing, Mr. Speaker: \$130 billion over the next 10 years. We are making investments across this province, including in northwestern Ontario, to make sure that communities, municipalities have what they need to thrive economically.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It's not just NOMA, the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association; northern

municipalities are speaking out as well because they do not want to have to pay the price for this Premier's selling off of Hydro One. In fact, in the city of Kenora, Dave Canfield had a motion at his council, and they unanimously voted to send the Premier a letter, calling for her to pull the plug on selling Hydro One. That's what Dave Canfield has to say today.

The city of Fort Frances is supporting NOMA's resolution. Councillor Paul Ryan said, "I think they're going ahead kind of recklessly here."

These municipalities deserve to have a say. Will the Premier take Hydro One out of her Stephen-Harper-style omnibus bill and let the municipalities of Fort Frances and Kenora have a public hearing to have their say?

Interjections.

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

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You're not even in your seat.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I had the pleasure to be in Hamilton this morning. I just want to talk about what we were talking about in Hamilton, because it's directly related to this issue of having the funding to be able to invest in infrastructure.

We were pleased to announce that we will provide \$1 billion for capital costs to build a new LRT in Hamilton, and it was received very, very well.

What this LRT will do is it will offer service from McMaster University through downtown Hamilton to Queenston Circle. It will ultimately extend to Eastgate Square. The question I would ask that the leader of the third party is, which part of that project would she cancel if we did not have the funds to invest in infrastructure?

Interjections.

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

Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It's not just northwestern Ontario. The city of Hamilton, the city of Brantford, Prince Edward county, the city of Toronto—all are entertaining motions calling on this Premier to stop the sell-off of Hydro One, and more are coming.

They know that she's playing a game of false choices here. The Premier says that she respects municipalities, but respect means more than just lip service; it means actually listening to what people have to say.

Will the Premier take Hydro One out of her Stephen-Harper-style omnibus budget and let Ontarians have a say?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I would ask the leader of the third party again: The LRT in Hamilton will ultimately extend to Eastgate Square. It will connect directly to the new West Harbour GO station, and that station will be ready in time for the—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek is warned.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, second time.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: That station will be ready for the Pan Am Games. We're also going to extend the GO rail from West Harbour station to a new GO station at Centennial Parkway in eastern Hamilton.

Mr. Speaker, I would say to the leader of the third party, which part of those projects—or would she cancel the whole project? Would she just say that Hamilton doesn't need that connectivity to the rest of the greater Toronto and Hamilton area, that Hamilton doesn't need that new LRT so that it can thrive with its diverse economy? If we don't have the funds, we can't make that investment, and that's exactly what the leader of the third party is suggesting.

JUSTICE SYSTEM

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My question is to the Attorney General. Suraiya Gangaram was killed when she was stabbed by her former boyfriend, Lascelles Allen. He was out on bail, released with the condition that he could have no contact with her. Clearly, Lascelles Allen did not follow his bail conditions, and it led to the tragic death of Suraiya Gangaram, leaving three children without their mom.

This tragedy could have been prevented had someone tracked Allen while he was on bail to ensure he was complying with his conditions.

1120

Minister, why aren't you tracking those who are out on bail and whether they are complying with their bail conditions?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: First of all, when I hear about such an unfortunate incident, my heart goes out to the family. Domestic violence is a problem, not just in Ontario. It's a real problem that we try to address as a government. In my previous position as the Minister of Community Safety, we did a lot of work because the majority of those in our correctional institutions are there—a lot of them—for domestic violence, so there is a lot of work that is being done.

The bail system in Ontario is a program that has been in place for a long time. To say that someone is out on bail and nobody is following what they're doing is incorrect, because police officers do know who is out on bail and they do follow what they are doing.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Minister, the victims aren't looking for sympathy; they're looking for action. Victims must have confidence that when judges set bail conditions there is a process in place to ensure that they will not be re-victimized. Clearly your ministry has failed to do this.

Christopher Husbands was under house arrest when he shot a child in the Eaton Centre. Lascelles Allen bail conditions included no contact with Suraiya Gangaram when he went to her home and killed her.

I will ask you again: For the victims who need to know they will be protected if they report a crime, for the

families trying to protect their children from further victimization, for the public who expect bail conditions to be respected and offenders punished when they are ignored, when will you start tracking offenders released from jail to ensure they comply with their bail conditions?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Again, this is a tragic incident. I cannot believe how a family that is faced with such a tragic incident—and I'll say that my ministry and the Ministry of Community and Social Services and the women's directorate, we work together and we do everything to make sure that this does not happen.

Again, I'll say that when these people are out on bail, there is a follow-up done by the police. When someone is found to have violated their bail conditions, they are back in jail.

My heart goes to the family. In my ministry and in this government, we'll do everything we can to prevent this from happening.

TEACHERS' LABOUR DISPUTES

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: My question is to the Premier. Speaker, our schools have been thrown into chaos due to more than a decade of chronic underfunding of education in the province. Instead of ensuring that all students with special needs have the services they need, the Premier and her government have cut \$6 million from Toronto schools. Instead of fixing the systemic problem of underfunding, this government chose to cut \$250 million over 2014-15. Speaker, page 230 of their budget outlines it.

Then the Premier and her minister say they are perplexed about the ongoing unrest in the education sector. The Liberal government made this mess. Instead of fixing the problem they are again—recall Bill 115—choosing to legislate instead of negotiate.

Premier, will you recognize the failure of your Minister of Education to get a deal with teachers and fire her immediately?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Education.

Hon. Liz Sandals: I really think what we all need to focus on today is the fact that we have heard from the Education Relations Commission that the school year is in jeopardy for 72,000 children, for 72,000 students. What we really need to focus on is, how do we get those kids back in the classrooms and get them there right away?

Now, if we'd had the co-operation of the NDP yesterday, we could have had those kids back in the schools today. Every day we don't get co-operation on speedy passage of the bill is another day that students are out of school.

I remember a day in 2008 when there was a TTC strike, and the NDP, the Conservatives and the Liberals all worked together to pass back-to-work legislation in one day.

We could do that for the 72,000 students who are out of class. We could do that, but we need to work together.

My priority now is to get the kids back in class.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: What the minister should be focusing on is actually trying to negotiate a deal, not legislate.

Back to the Premier: The Premier and her minister have had months to get a deal with teachers that would put students first, and this doesn't mean—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: —to keep class sizes manageable and doesn't mean a further reduction of services in the classroom. Students and families should not be shouldering the brunt of the cost of Liberal scandals. It's obvious that the minister has failed students and families by not really trying to get a deal with teachers.

Speaker, will the Premier force her minister to take responsibility for making students pay the price of her failings by firing her immediately?

Hon. Liz Sandals: Actually, there are negotiations going on this week. Negotiations do continue, because we believe we should get a negotiated settlement. But sometimes that doesn't work. Sometimes there's a strike.

I think the party opposite needs to remember that when they were the government, they actually asked the ERC for advice three times. Three times the ERC gave jeopardy rulings when they were government.

In the first case, the parties agreed voluntarily to go back to work and to have binding arbitration, which is actually what is in the bill. But in the other two cases, the parties didn't agree to go back to work when there was a jeopardy ruling, the NDP government tabled back-to-work legislation and everybody in the House came together to pass it.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Mrs. Laura Albanese: My question is for the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure. Since the global downturn, Ontario's economy has not only recovered but is projected to lead the country in economic growth. Since the recession, Ontario has created more than 500,000 jobs—510,200 jobs, to be exact. Nearly 98% of the jobs recovered since the recession are full-time positions, 73% in above-wage industries. In fact, our job recovery rate since the recession is 187%, well outpacing the United States, at 134%. However, youth unemployment rates remain too high, and our government recognizes that.

Speaker, through you to the minister: Could you please explain to this House what is being done to tackle youth unemployment?

Hon. Brad Duguid: While Ontario's economy remains poised to lead the country in growth this year, and probably next year as well, the fact is that youth unemployment remains far too high. That's why we announced the youth jobs strategy in 2013 that is investing \$295 million over two years to help 30,000 young people from across the province gain necessary job experience.

Since the fall of 2013, more than 26,000 young people have seen opportunities and work experience that they've been able to obtain through this program. However, there's still more work to do. That's why, in this year's budget, we're renewing the youth jobs strategy by providing an additional \$250 million. This will bring our total investment in youth employment programming to more than \$565 million. Through these investments, we're helping our province's youth succeed and get good job experience.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I would like to thank the minister for that answer. I appreciate being part of a government that is making smart, strategic investments to tackle the province's youth unemployment rate. In fact, last week I announced how our government's investments are benefiting some of the youth in my riding of York South–Weston.

Through the Youth Skills Connections Program, \$125,000 is being invested so that youth from the Weston–Mount Dennis area will be able to gain relevant job experience. These young constituents will gain critical employment skills that would allow them to transition into Ontario's job market.

1130

Can the minister please explain how the Youth Skills Connections Program is helping youth across the province to gain the experience they need to succeed?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I want to thank the member for the work she's doing in her own community when it comes to some of these youth employment programs, and working with some of her local groups to ensure that the young people in her community get access to these very important programs.

The Youth Skills Connections Program promotes partnerships among business, labour, educators, not-for-profits and youth to identify and solve skills development issues. In the first intake, the Youth Skills Connections Program invested more than \$13 million to support 51 programs across the country. Some 3,400 young people have already received employment training through this program. Currently, the province is investing over \$11 million to launch the second intake of the Youth Skills Connections Program. The second intake will involve 45 programs that will be selected to help young people get the skills and training they need to succeed.

Interjections.

Hon. Brad Duguid: Rather than heckling on our efforts to provide youth employment opportunities, the opposition should be supporting our budget—

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

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Mr. Bill Walker: My question is to the Minister of Education. Minister, as a result of 12 years of mismanagement and waste by your government, people are

suffering. Special education is in need of adequate levels of investment; vulnerable children are in need of educational assistants so they have proper support to learn and achieve success in the classroom. This is why no parent and no student in Bluewater District School Board can accept that you're sitting on your hands—

Interjection.

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

Mr. Bill Walker: —as 50 special education EAs are removed from the classroom. Making vulnerable kids pay the price for your mismanagement and waste is wrong and, frankly, it's unconscionable.

Minister, I ask you: How do you justify cutting 50 educational assistants at Bluewater District School Board under your watch as Minister of Education when the number of needy children has not decreased?

Hon. Liz Sandals: Obviously, special education is very important to us. It might interest the member opposite to know that when I was a trustee I served for years on my board's special education advisory committee, so this is actually an area that I feel quite strongly about: special education.

Because we feel very strongly about it—both my predecessor, the Premier, and myself—our special education funding has actually gone up over \$1.1 billion, by 68%, since 2002-03. So we're actually spending \$2.72 billion on special education. That's not a reduced number. The special education funding remains steady, just like all the other areas of the funding model—

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

Mr. Bill Walker: Back to the Minister of Education: Here's the truth. Kathy Cotter's seven-year-old daughter is bearing the brunt of your cuts. She has retinal dystrophy and is legally blind. With her EA gone, there will be no one to Braille her books. Candice Huber's eight-year-old son has type 1 diabetes and hypoglycemic episodes. With his EA gone, there will be no one to watch and help keep him safe.

Kathy, Candice and many other parents with children with learning, mental, physical and a myriad of health issues have lost faith in you, your Premier and your government. You're sitting on your hands while blind, autistic and diabetic students are losing the critical school support they need. These students are frustrated, their parents are stressed out and your only answer to them is, "Not true"? Minister, how can you put the Liberal Party's political fortunes ahead of Ontario's vulnerable children?

Hon. Liz Sandals: As I said before, the fortunes of our special needs children are very important to us. In fact, one of the things that we've been doing through the recent labour disruptions is making sure that the most vulnerable children still continue to receive community services.

To go directly to your question, one of the things that has happened in Bluewater, in the board that is in your area, is that the number of children in Bluewater has dramatically decreased. Despite the fact that the enrolment has gone down over the last 10 years, the

funding has actually gone up by 40%. Think about this: The funding has gone up 40%; the number of children in Bluewater has gone down. So the amount of special needs funding in Bluewater—

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

ONTARIO ENERGY BOARD

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, my question is to the Premier. The government insists that the Ontario Energy Board will protect Ontarians from higher hydro rates when the Premier sells off Hydro One. It doesn't make any sense.

Now the government is stacking the OEB with people from the energy sector. The government just appointed Paul Pastirik, a former senior VP of Aecon, to the Ontario Energy Board. Aecon shares the mega-contract to refurbish the Darlington nuclear plant with SNC-Lavalin. The Premier is putting the fox in charge of the henhouse.

Is the Premier ready to admit that the OEB isn't going to stand up to a privatized Hydro One?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, the Ontario Energy Board and all of the crown corporations and agencies have very strict conflict-of-interest regulations. There are a tremendous number of people out there with experience who can contribute, and because they are engaged in the community or engaged in the economy, that should not disentitle them to serve. There are people in this room who declare interest on particular issues that come before this House. It's part of doing business. It's part of government.

Mr. Speaker, the appointments are tremendous appointments, and we recognize the quality and experience of those people.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, again to the Premier: The government also named Victoria Christie to the OEB. She spent 10 years as an electricity industry lobbyist. They've appointed Susan Frank, who spent her career lobbying for higher rates on behalf of Hydro One. The OEB is being turned into a rubber stamp for industry. It's called regulatory capture. It means the regulator gets filled with industry people who are more interested in the industry than in the ratepayers, and it means that if the Premier sells off Hydro One, the OEB won't even be a speed bump in the way of higher rates.

Is the Premier ready to admit that selling Hydro One is going to mean higher hydro bills and that this new OEB won't do anything to stop that?

Interjections.

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

Minister?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, we know there's a lot of high drama in the question that has been asked.

The answer is quite simple: The board has conflict-of-interest guidelines that the appointees would be required to adhere to. I repeat everything I said in my answer.

Regarding the oversight, the Ontario Energy Board is an independent regulator with a mandate to protect the interests of Ontario ratepayers. They have reviewed applications. For example, in 2010, Hydro One asked for a rate increase for distribution and received a 9% reduction for its capital request. In 2012, Hydro One asked for a rate increase for transmission and received a 3% reduction for its capital request.

Mr. Speaker, the CEO of the Ontario Energy Board was before committee last week. She made a strong case for its independence and for the tremendous improvements in legislation that will be forthcoming to protect the ratepayers in Ontario.

GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: My question is to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

We're all affected by regulations every day. Whether it's a farmer applying for municipal water access or a renovation permit for a local downtown store, every industry is governed, in part, by regulations.

Ontario's stringent and internationally respected regulatory systems result in standards that are world-class and products that are recognized as safe, effective and top-quality.

At the same time, the agri-food sector faces regulatory-related challenges to the timely introduction of new food products, processes and technologies that keep pace with scientific advancements and the global business environment.

My constituents and people across Ontario recognize the need to develop a robust regulatory environment.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister please inform the House on what our government is going to do to eliminate excessive regulations that make running agri-food businesses—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. The Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

Hon. Jeff Leal: I want to thank the member for Barrie for that question this morning. She's a great champion of agriculture in the Barrie area.

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As Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, I'm committed to building a business climate that encourages the next generation to pursue opportunities in the agri-food sector and that allows producers to earn a living, raise a family and, indeed, contribute to Ontario's economy.

Just recently I hosted an Open for Business forum with leaders of Ontario's agricultural organizations, representing the entire value chain. This was the eighth forum hosted by my ministry and the second since I was named Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Open for Business forums are an excellent opportunity to learn what is working for the industry and where we can collaborate in areas that may need improvement.

Since 2008, Mr. Speaker—an important statistic—Ontario has eliminated 17% of all the regulatory requirements, or 80,000 regulatory burdens. But we also know that there's more work to do. By working together, we'll reduce the regulatory burden for agriculture in Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Thanks to the minister for his answer. It's great to hear that progress is being made by working together with the agri-food sector. Reducing red tape for farmers in the agri-food sector creates a more competitive environment for businesses while supporting Ontario farm families, and that's good for business.

I know that by bringing together multiple ministries and a wide range of agriculture industry leaders, we can create significant opportunities for improving the productivity and economic impact of our agri-food sector. That's why, as a government, we must continue advocating for our family farmers to ensure that policy is sensitive to their needs.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister update this House on some of the tangible policy outcomes that have been achieved through Open for Business so far?

Hon. Jeff Leal: I want to thank the member from Barrie for her supplementary. I know she's a regular visitor to farmers' markets in the Barrie area, acquiring that great local food that's grown in Ontario.

In a short time, we've achieved several successes because of work we've done together, including: providing greenhouse operators more options to deal effectively with waste water; streamlining approval for the on-farm anaerobic digester operators; and meat regulation amendments that create a more flexible approach to compliance, clarifying regulatory requirements and promoting competitiveness and innovation for industry without compromising food safety.

We've also made changes to the tax classification for grain elevators that is estimated to save elevator owners \$3 million based on projected 2016 tax rates; and, at the request of the industry, we de-linked the requirement to enrol in AgriStability to participate in Ontario's Risk Management Program.

EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS

Mr. Todd Smith: My question this morning is for the Premier. Premier, on the Friday before the Victoria Day long weekend, your government announced the cancellation of an extremely successful program that assists and creates jobs and new businesses in Ontario. The self-employment benefit has existed for 23 years and has outstanding results in Prince Edward and Hastings counties and across the province. Over 400 new businesses have been created in Prince Edward and Hastings counties in the last five years as a result of this program.

Premier, can you explain why your government would kill one of the only tools that it has at its disposal to create jobs in rural Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

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

Ontario's workforces are our greatest asset. As the Premier keeps saying, our people are our greatest asset. That's why we have been investing heavily in our people in Ontario. Ontario invests \$1.2 billion annually in Employment Ontario's various programs. We serve one million Ontarians every year just to make sure they get the right training so that they can find jobs and contribute to our economy. We remain committed to investing in a range of high-quality programs through Employment Ontario services to various people across the province of Ontario.

In order to deliver the highest quality of training programs, we wanted to streamline the Ontario Self-Employment Benefit. That's why we have been working on it to make sure that Ontarians get the best-quality service from the government.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Todd Smith: I'm not sure I got an answer there, Mr. Speaker. I can smell a late show coming.

Premier, in the last five years, the OSEB has created 424 businesses in my riding alone, hundreds more in Northumberland county, hundreds more in Barrie—right across the province. In my area there's a completion rate alone of 90%. This is a program that was working.

Local economic development officials tell me that roughly 70% of the businesses stay in business well after completing this program.

As hydro rates and new payroll taxes place additional burdens on small businesses, you're making it harder to even become self-employed in Ontario. Premier, why are you killing a program that's clearly an economic success when it's used well, instead of reforming it so that self-employed people across Ontario can have the same success that people in my riding have had? Why are you throwing the baby out with the bathwater with this program?

Hon. Reza Moridi: I want to thank again the member for that question. Our government is committed to ensuring that Ontario's tax dollars are spent in a more responsible way. The reality is that the program, the Ontario Self-Employment Benefit, is a very costly program. Only half of the clients complete the program. That's why we're diverting part of the funding from that program to the Ministry of Economic Development and Infrastructure so that they can invest more on Small Business Enterprise Centres.

We have 57 small enterprise centres across the province of Ontario. Through these centres, small businesses receive the best advice in order to improve their businesses.

The winding down of this program is the right and responsible thing to do.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. This morning we learned two things. First, we

learned that at long last, the government actually knows how to spell "LRT" when it comes to Hamilton. But we also learned the neighbourhoods near Eastgate Square have been shut out of the government's LRT plans.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Please finish.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Neighbourhoods around Eastgate Square have been cut out of the government's plans. These are the same areas that would have benefited greatly from the economic uplift that the LRT would bring, but instead of connecting to these neighbourhoods, the LRT will connect to a traffic circle.

Why did the government break its promise to connect the LRT in Hamilton to Eastgate Square?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know the Minister of Transportation is going to want to comment in the supplementary, but I just want to draw attention to what's happening right now. In the early part of question period, the leader of the third party had nothing to say about funding transit and only wanted to undermine the plan that we have in order to put funding into transit. Now what she wants is she wants more. She wants to fund more transit. She now has a question about the efficacy, the particular route, the investment that's going to be made in Hamilton.

What I would say to the leader of the third party is you can't have it both ways. You've either got to have a way to fund transit or you can't fund it. We have a plan, we're putting that plan in place and because of that, Hamilton is getting an LRT.

Interjections.

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

Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It's really too bad that this generation of Ontarians and all generations going forward have a Premier—the only Premier in the history of Ontario—who hasn't figured out how to keep hydro public and build infrastructure at the same time.

The bottom line is that this LRT isn't even being constructed until 2019, even though it was promised back in 2007. Yet back then, this Premier was the Minister of Transportation. She took \$4 billion out of transit funding that shortened all kinds of projects. Some were cancelled—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Education will come to order. Minister of Energy, come to order, second time.

Please finish.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: As a result of these cuts, other LRT projects in the GTHA, as I mentioned, were either cancelled, deferred, shortened, or had their funding cut.

What guarantee can this Premier offer Hamiltonians that this now very shortened and delayed LRT line will actually begin construction four long years from now?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Transportation.

1150

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I was delighted to join with the Premier and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing earlier today in the leader of that party's own hometown to announce the landmark historic commitment that our government has made to build an LRT for that community.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Come down to my hometown. Come to Essex.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Essex is warned.

Carry on.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: The province will cover 100% of the capital costs of building this LRT in Hamilton, which will help grow the economy, reduce travel times and connect people. This LRT will offer speedy service from McMaster University through downtown Hamilton to Queenston circle and will connect directly to the new West Harbour GO station that this government is currently building, which will be open in time for the Pan Am/Parapan Am Games. The LRT will ultimately extend to Eastgate Square.

This is a clear—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. The Minister of Transportation has learned that when I stand, you sit. If it happens again, you'll be named.

New question.

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Ms. Daiene Vernile: My question is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Minister, I've heard you say many times here in the Legislature that you are committed to the transformation of corrections in our province, but there remain problems at the Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre such as capacity issues, violence and contraband. In this environment, it could be difficult to rehabilitate inmates and to reduce rates of reoffending.

Ontarians need to see concrete action from you to tackle these very important challenges. Recently, you announced the construction of a regional intermittent centre at the Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre, and this is designed to house intermittent offenders. This is a very important step in your goal of building safer communities in Ontario.

Could the minister please explain to this House how the construction of a regional intermittent centre is going to address the problems that I've mentioned here?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I want to thank the member from Kitchener Centre for asking a very important question. Our top priority is the safety and security of all our correctional staff and inmates at our facilities. Recently, we began construction on 112-bed regional intermittent centre on the grounds of the Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre in London, Ontario.

This new centre builds on the success of the Toronto intermittent centre and is the next step in our strategy for intermittent offenders. These are inmates who are serving

90-day sentences, typically on weekends. Housing intermittent offenders in their own facility will help to alleviate many of the concerns that we are seeing at EMDC. For example, it's an efficient and dedicated way to address capacity pressure by increasing the number of available beds, cutting down on overcrowding and reducing violence.

It also means that inmates at EMDC will no longer need to be regularly moved around to accommodate the influx of those serving weekend sentences.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Daiene Vernile: I'd like to thank the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services for that answer. I know that Ontarians, specifically those who are in southern Ontario, are going to be very happy to hear about this new facility being built at the Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre as part of a larger strategy for intermittent offenders.

But when we hear about the issues at the EMDC, it's hard to believe that just building a new facility is the answer. The minister talks about a transformation of corrections and his pledge to build stronger and safer communities, but I'd like to hear more about how this new centre is going to serve the people of southern Ontario and the role that it's going to play in the transformation of corrections.

Could the minister please speak further on how the new regional intermittent centre is going to help ease tensions and transform corrections to build stronger and safer communities in Ontario?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: First of all, I also want to note that building a separate facility will also prevent contraband from being introduced into the main facility by intermittent offenders who return to their communities during the week. That's an important step to keep our detention centres safe, particularly our correctional staff and other inmates.

The member from Kitchener Centre is absolutely right. Simply building a new facility will not fix the correctional system in Ontario, and this alone cannot build strong and safer communities. But right now we are seeing a revolving door in the correctional system. That is why it is important that we take steps to rehabilitate and reintegrate those in our system: so we can stop the cycle of re-offence.

Part of that, Speaker, is aided by separating lower-risk offenders from more serious offenders, which is exactly what centres like this one will do. We firmly believe that this new centre will help to alleviate pressures and issues at EMDC and have made—

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

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr. Tim Hudak: My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources. Minister, Blanding's turtle is a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. Where it exists in Ontario, it lives in shallow waterways and wetlands, including the Niagara peninsula. They are

uniquely vulnerable to extinction because it takes 20 years before females start to reproduce.

The Ontario courts made the decision recently that set a precedent: When choosing between industrial wind turbines and a threatened species, Blanding's turtle, they sided with the turtle, tossing out a wind farm application. It was the right decision. It was the right thing to do.

My question simply is, if it's right in Prince Edward county, shouldn't we protect the Blanding's turtle environment everywhere in the province of Ontario?

Interjections.

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

Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry.

Hon. Bill Mauro: I want to thank the member for the question. Before he concluded, I was gathering my thoughts—and the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, who I know would love to weigh in on this as well as having a similar thought and lobbed it over to me. He found it, I think, as I did, very interesting that the official opposition is asking a question in this regard.

The member posed a question. He seems to be supportive of what has happened in this case. I would assume that in the supplementary, he's going to come forward with some information that suggests that in another instance the Blanding's turtle did not carry the day. I would assume that's the point of the question that's coming forward. I look forward to hearing exactly what he has to say.

I'm happy to hear that in the first question he was happy that the Endangered Species Act, which we brought into place, actually did have an effect to protect endangered species. I'm happy to hear that you're pleased with the legislation, although I don't think it's legislation that you supported when it was originally introduced into the House.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Tim Hudak: I thank the minister for anticipating my question. I just would hope to get a single answer from the minister about how he's going to protect the threatened species in the province.

You got it exactly right: The courts have determined in the decision that steel turbines 500 metres tall cemented in 40 truckloads of concrete in a wetland should lose out to a threatened species, the Blanding's turtle. I agree with that decision; I'm sure you agree with that decision as well.

My point is, Minister, why was it that it was the courts that had to force your hand? Where were you? You're the minister. You need to know your role and play it. You have the lead on the Endangered Species Act in the province of Ontario. Instead of waiting for the courts to intervene in the Niagara peninsula, will you do the right thing? Your choice is between the turtle or more steel. What should be in the wetlands, the endangered species or—

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

Interjections.

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

Minister.

Hon. Bill Mauro: Speaker, with the legislation in place, there is a committee called COSSARO, the Committee on—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It's never too late. Finish, please.

Hon. Bill Mauro: Under the legislation—that I don't think the opposition supported and they seem to be loving now—COSSARO stands for the Committee on the Status of Species at Risk in Ontario. They make a decision on when a species is listed. Once it's listed, it receives protection, and the habitat for the species also receives protection. Through that—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Niagara West, I'm standing. You should know that.

Finish, please.

Hon. Bill Mauro: Through that process, once the species is listed and the habitat is protected and a project is overlaid on that particular species and its habitat, there is a process in place called overall benefit, where if the contractor or the proponent can come forward and provide a way to accommodate the species—

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

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Children and Youth Services on a point of order.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: A late introduction, Speaker, if I may: I notice my very good friend and mentor, Mark Holland, is here from Heart and Stroke. He's been my chair for two elections and he is the federal Liberal candidate in Ajax. Welcome.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Nickel Belt on a point of order.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Just a quick introduction also: Michael Perley from the Canadian Cancer Society, as well as all of the other ladies—Joanne Di Nardo—from the cancer society here. They have been pushing for a ban on flavoured tobacco for a very long time.

DEFERRED VOTES

POOLED REGISTERED PENSION PLANS ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LES RÉGIMES DE PENSION AGRÉÉS COLLECTIFS

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

Bill 57, An Act to create a framework for pooled registered pension plans and to make consequential amendments to other Acts / *Projet de loi 57, Loi créant un cadre pour les régimes de pension agréés collectifs et apportant des modifications corrélatives à d'autres lois.*

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1201 to 1206.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Would all members please take their seats.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'll wait.

On May 25, Mr. Sousa moved third reading of Bill 57. All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Harris, Michael	Miller, Norm
Anderson, Granville	Hillier, Randy	Moridi, Reza
Arnott, Ted	Hoggarth, Ann	Munro, Julia
Bailey, Robert	Hoskins, Eric	Murray, Glen R.
Baker, Yvan	Hudak, Tim	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Balkissoon, Bas	Hunter, Mitzie	Naqvi, Yasir
Ballard, Chris	Jaczek, Helena	Nicholls, Rick
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Jones, Sylvia	Orazietti, David
Bradley, James J.	Kiwala, Sophie	Pettapiece, Randy
Chan, Michael	Kwinter, Monte	Potts, Arthur
Chiarelli, Bob	Lalonde, Marie-France	Rinaldi, Lou
Clark, Steve	Leal, Jeff	Sandals, Liz
Coteau, Michael	MacCharles, Tracy	Sergio, Mario
Crack, Grant	MacLaren, Jack	Smith, Todd
Damerla, Dipika	MacLeod, Lisa	Sousa, Charles
Del Duca, Steven	Malhi, Harinder	Takhar, Harinder S.
Delaney, Bob	Martins, Cristina	Thibeault, Glenn
Dhillon, Vic	Martow, Gila	Thompson, Lisa M.
Dickson, Joe	Matthews, Deborah	Vernile, Daiene
Dong, Han	Mauro, Bill	Walker, Bill
Duguid, Brad	McDonnell, Jim	Wilson, Jim
Dunlop, Garfield	McGarry, Kathryn	Wong, Soo
Fedeli, Victor	McMahon, Eleanor	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	McMeekin, Ted	Yakubuski, John
Fraser, John	McNaughton, Monte	Yurek, Jeff
Gravelle, Michael	Meilleur, Madeleine	Zimmer, David
Hardeman, Ernie	Milczyn, Peter Z.	

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

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gélinas, France	Sattler, Peggy
Bisson, Gilles	Gretzky, Lisa	Singh, Jagmeet
DiNovo, Cheri	Hatfield, Percy	Tabuns, Peter
Fife, Catherine	Horwath, Andrea	Taylor, Monique
Forster, Cindy	Mantha, Michael	Vanthof, John
French, Jennifer K.	Miller, Paul	
Gates, Wayne	Natyshak, Taras	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 80; the nays are 19.

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

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

Third reading agreed to.

MAKING HEALTHIER CHOICES ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 POUR DES CHOIX PLUS SAINS

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

Bill 45, An Act to enhance public health by enacting the Healthy Menu Choices Act, 2015 and the Electronic Cigarettes Act, 2015 and by amending the Smoke-Free Ontario Act / Projet de loi 45, Loi visant à améliorer la santé publique par l'édiction de la Loi de 2015 pour des choix santé dans les menus et de la Loi de 2015 sur les cigarettes électroniques et la modification de la Loi favorisant un Ontario sans fumée.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We have a deferred vote on the motion for closure on the motion for third reading of Bill 45.

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

The division bells rang from 1210 to 1211.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On May 13, Ms. Damerla moved third reading of Bill 45, An Act to enhance public health by enacting the Healthy Menu Choices Act, 2015 and the Electronic Cigarettes Act, 2015 and by amending the Smoke-Free Ontario Act.

Mr. Baker has moved that the question be now put. All those in favour of Mr. Baker's motion, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

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

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

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Harris, Michael	Natyshak, Taras
Arnott, Ted	Hatfield, Percy	Nicholls, Rick
Bailey, Robert	Hillier, Randy	Pettapiece, Randy
Bisson, Gilles	Horwath, Andrea	Sattler, Peggy
Clark, Steve	Hudak, Tim	Singh, Jagmeet
DiNovo, Cheri	Jones, Sylvia	Smith, Todd
Dunlop, Garfield	MacLaren, Jack	Tabuns, Peter
Fedeli, Victor	MacLeod, Lisa	Taylor, Monique
Fife, Catherine	Mantha, Michael	Thompson, Lisa M.
Forster, Cindy	Martow, Gila	Vanthof, John
French, Jennifer K.	McDonnell, Jim	Walker, Bill
Gates, Wayne	McNaughton, Monte	Wilson, Jim
Gélinas, France	Miller, Norm	Yakubuski, John
Gretzky, Lisa	Miller, Paul	Yurek, Jeff
Hardeman, Ernie	Munro, Julia	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 56; the nays are 44.

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

Ms. Damerla has moved third reading of Bill 45, An Act to enhance public health by enacting the Healthy Menu Choices Act, 2015 and the Electronic Cigarettes Act, 2015 and by amending the Smoke-Free Ontario Act. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1215 to 1216.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Ms. Damerla has moved third reading of Bill 45. All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Gravelle, Michael	Miller, Paul
Anderson, Granville	Gretzky, Lisa	Moridi, Reza
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Hardeman, Ernie	Munro, Julia
Arnott, Ted	Harris, Michael	Murray, Glen R.
Bailey, Robert	Hatfield, Percy	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Baker, Yvan	Hoggarth, Ann	Naqvi, Yasir
Balkissoon, Bas	Horwath, Andrea	Natyshak, Taras
Ballard, Chris	Hoskins, Eric	Nicholls, Rick
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Hudak, Tim	Oraziotti, David
Bisson, Gilles	Hunter, Mitzie	Pettapiece, Randy
Bradley, James J.	Jaczek, Helena	Potts, Arthur
Chan, Michael	Jones, Sylvia	Qaadri, Shafiq
Chiarelli, Bob	Kiwala, Sophie	Rinaldi, Lou
Clark, Steve	Kwinter, Monte	Sandals, Liz
Coteau, Michael	Lalonde, Marie-France	Sattler, Peggy
Crack, Grant	Leal, Jeff	Sergio, Mario
Damerla, Dipika	MacCharles, Tracy	Singh, Jagmeet
Del Duca, Steven	MacLaren, Jack	Smith, Todd
Delaney, Bob	MacLeod, Lisa	Sousa, Charles
Dhillon, Vic	Malhi, Harinder	Tabuns, Peter
Dickson, Joe	Mantha, Michael	Takhar, Harinder S.
DiNovo, Cheri	Martins, Cristina	Taylor, Monique
Dong, Han	Martow, Gila	Thibeault, Glenn
Duguid, Brad	Matthews, Deborah	Thompson, Lisa M.
Dunlop, Garfield	Mauro, Bill	Vanthof, John
Fedeli, Victor	McDonnell, Jim	Vernile, Daiene
Fife, Catherine	McGarry, Kathryn	Walker, Bill
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	McMahon, Eleanor	Wilson, Jim
Forster, Cindy	McMeekin, Ted	Wong, Soo
Fraser, John	McNaughton, Monte	Wynne, Kathleen O.
French, Jennifer K.	Meilleur, Madeleine	Yakabuski, John
Gates, Wayne	Milczyn, Peter Z.	Yurek, Jeff
Gélinas, France	Miller, Norm	Zimmer, David

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

Nays

Hillier, Randy

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 99; the nays are 1.

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

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

Third reading agreed to.

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

The House recessed from 1219 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Yvan Baker: Speaker, I ask your indulgence, as I have a number of guests here in the gallery today from the Ukrainian-Canadian community. They'll be joining us at 4 o'clock for a reception as well.

And I beg the indulgence of the guests in case I miss anyone, but I hope I have all your names correctly.

We have with us Chrystyna Bidiak, Nadia Gereliouk, Stepan Horlatsch, Mihajlo Hucman, Daria Luciw, Mykola Lytvyn, Roman Medyk, Irka Mycak, Borys Mykhaylets, Marta Olynyk, Anna Romanyshyn, Oleh Romanyshyn, Lesia Shust, Halyna Vynnyk, Krystina Waler, George Yakovitch, Sonia Holiad, Daria Diakowsky, Victor Hetmanczuk, Alexandra Hetmanczuk, Marie Setnyk, Ana Semotiuk and Bozhena Gembatiuk-Fedyna. Thank you all for joining us.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

MIKE TOTH

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate a constituent of mine, Dr. Mike Toth, on becoming the new president of the Ontario Medical Association. Dr. Toth brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to his role representing Ontario's 28,000 doctors.

Dr. Toth is a family physician who lives and has practised for the past 30 years in Aylmer, a small town in my riding of Elgin–Middlesex–London. In addition to his busy schedule, Dr. Toth is the medical director of a long-term-care facility and a member of the medical advisory committee at the St. Thomas Elgin General Hospital.

As a family physician in a small town, Dr. Toth has had the privilege of treating a range of ages and a variety of ailments. His youngest patients are newborns, while his oldest patients are over 100 years old. He's extremely proud to represent his colleagues as president of the Ontario Medical Association.

Dr. Toth will be the 134th president of the OMA, as he takes over from Dr. Ved Tandan, whom we thank for his service.

Mr. Speaker, I know that Dr. Toth is excited about the year ahead. In addition to his many OMA-focused initiatives, he would like to see this government come back to the table to work with doctors to continue to provide the health care system that Ontarians deserve and want.

On behalf of the PC Party of Ontario, my colleagues and especially my constituents from Elgin–Middlesex–London, I would like to wish Dr. Toth all the best in his new role. We are proud of him. Congratulations.

MINING FATALITY

Mr. John Vanthof: I would like to take this time to inform the House of a tragedy that happened in my riding on the weekend.

On Sunday, May 24, 2015, tragedy struck at the St. Andrew Goldfields Holt Mine, near Matheson, Ontario. Alexie Dallaire-Vincent was fatally injured in an underground rail accident. Alexie was only 22. Our thoughts and prayers are with her family, her friends and her co-workers at the Holt Mine.

Alexie lived in the village of Virginiatown, where the entire community is mourning the loss of one of their own. The people of Virginiatown, the surrounding towns of Kirkland Lake and Larder Lake, and the Wahgoshig First Nation in Matheson have a rich mining heritage, but they well know the dangers of working in a mine.

Miners are proud. We have miners here. Miners are a proud people. We are looking for the results of the investigation. Mining has become much safer, but with each accident we look to hopefully improve safety to have fewer and fewer accidents and hopefully, someday, eliminate fatalities.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to Alexie's family this afternoon.

NELSON MANDELA

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I am pleased to rise today and speak about a special event that took place in Toronto earlier this month. Recently, I joined Mayor John Tory, the consul general of South Africa, the Nelson Mandela Legacy Committee and students from Nelson Mandela Park Public School to rededicate a stretch of University Avenue as Nelson Mandela Boulevard.

For those of you who may not know, the naming of this street has important roots. During a visit in 1990, a few months after he'd been released from prison, Mandela led a march along University Avenue from city hall to Queen's Park. He gave a passionate speech in front of thousands of people.

The timing of this naming ceremony coincided with the anniversary of Mandela's installation as President of South Africa in 1994. It was inspiring to see so many people of different backgrounds and ages gather together to honour one of my personal heroes. It was also touching to hear students from Nelson Mandela Park Public School share some of their stories about the impact that Mandela has had on their lives.

We have made great strides in promoting diversity in Ontario. We must continue to work together to eradicate discrimination and inequality in all of its forms. This ceremony was a powerful reminder of the achievements of a great man and of our commitment to building a more inclusive society.

Together, we will all walk on Nelson Mandela Boulevard and make this a stronger province for all of us.

HOLODOMOR

Mr. Bill Walker: Last year, I had the solemn privilege of taking part in the Holodomor commemoration events to honour the victims of the famine in Ukraine, now recognized as a genocidal famine by Canada and 70 other governments worldwide.

This horrendous crime against humanity happened 83 years ago when Joseph Stalin and his henchmen orchestrated severe rationing, seized all grain and finally locked all borders to stop starving Ukrainians from searching for food elsewhere. I've read that during that year, 17 people were dying per minute, with one third of them being children. Although we may never be able to exact the true loss of life of the Holodomor, it is estimated the total demographic losses could stand as high as 10 million people.

Mr. Speaker, I also wanted to recognize you for your work and efforts in bringing awareness about the Holodomor to Queen's Park, as well as many MPPs from all three parties for their support in shedding light on this forgotten chapter in world history.

We are now tasked with ensuring that our young generation is educated and informed about the mistakes of the past, and that these mistakes be their reminder of the need to always remain vigilant in defence of freedom and human rights.

On behalf of our 350,000 Ukrainian friends and the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, I ask the House to stand here today to commemorate the Holodomor, to continue to honour the victims of this horrific tragedy and to remember those who survived.

POLICE CARDING PRACTICES

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Today I rise to address the issuing of carding. Carding is the procedure or process by which police officers stop individuals, question them and collect that information. Most often these individuals are not under specific investigation. They are not arrested, nor are they eventually charged. This is simply an attempt to collect information.

In fact, what makes this such a horrible process is that it targets racialized people. A 2013 report indicated that of all the people carded in Toronto, 25% were black, even though black people make up only 8.5% of the population. This is a specific targeting of racialized people. The Law Union points out that both black and brown people are specifically targeted, and they are made to feel unwelcome in society.

Desmond Cole wrote a very telling article and shared his experiences of being stopped numerous times, and how that impacts one's sense of feeling and belonging in society—how it negatively impacts that.

I myself have experienced carding. I have been stopped numerous times. I assure you I was not doing anything wrong whatsoever. I was stopped while I was riding my bike. I was stopped while walking down the street. It is a practice that the Canadian Civil Liberties Association has denounced, demanding its end.

I stand here today in the House calling on this government to put forward a provincial policy on this practice—to end this practice. This is a violation not only of our human rights, our charter rights, but our fundamental freedoms. It's something that must be ended.

BURLINGTON'S BEST AWARDS

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: I am pleased to stand in this House today and thank and recognize some outstanding citizens in my community of Burlington. On May 14, I had the pleasure to attend the Burlington's Best Awards, an annual celebration in my riding to honour our community's most outstanding citizens.

1510

This year's awards featured seven winners from among 22 nominees. All were extraordinary, but I'd like to highlight in particular the contributions of this year's citizen of the year, Ron Foxcroft.

Best known as the inventor of the Fox 40 peales whistle, Ron is a prominent local entrepreneur and philanthropist. More recently, he's become known to many as the man who mobilized Burlington after last year's devastating flood. On August 4, 2014, in a matter of hours 200 millimetres of rain fell on our city. Thousands of families were left looking for help as they tried to salvage their belongings, clean up the mess and repair their homes and their lives. In all, over 3,000 homes were impacted.

It was Ron's genuine compassion and dedication to his community that compelled him to say yes when asked by Burlington Community Foundation CEO Colleen Mulholland to chair the Burlington flood disaster relief committee, a role to which he devoted over 650 hours of volunteer time.

Within 100 days, Ron was instrumental in raising \$905,000 from the community for families in need. I'm proud to say this amount was matched two-to-one by the Ontario government. As a result, a total of \$2.7 million was made available to support flood victims and their families.

Acting as a key spokesperson for the campaign, Ron played a major role in keeping flood relief efforts going in the media throughout the months that followed. But he did not stop there. He picked up the phone and persuaded donors to contribute, and he led a committee of dedicated volunteers who helped adjudicate and process hundreds of claims.

It was a privilege to work alongside Ron during Burlington's time of crisis and need. Our community is richer because of him and all of the volunteers and folks nominated. Our city is stronger because of all of them.

My sincere congratulations to Ron and all of the winners and nominees of this year's Burlington's Best Awards.

THE PITT

Mr. Toby Barrett: On any given night the population of the rural hamlet of La Salette is nearly doubled as children, teens and adults gather at The Pitt. The Pitt is a basement where local martial arts coaches Mike Hill and Greg Rockefeller are creating active, strong competitors through kick-boxing. Their equipment is used—it's minimal—and yet they effectively train.

For some, it's a place to escape the schoolyard bully and deal with anxiety in a safe, positive environment; for others it's a place to get the adrenaline pumping and discover new muscles. Regardless, students leave The Pitt proud and simply can't wait to return.

My executive assistant, Bobbi Ann, is one of those students. She calls The Pitt home and the other students her family.

Recently, a group of these students of various ages entered the World Karate and Kickboxing Commission provincial qualifiers. As a result, The Pitt earned the right to compete over the holiday weekend at the nationals in Ottawa. This group brought back gold, silver and bronze. Next stop is Orlando in November for the world championships.

In order to now compete globally they need better equipment, uniforms and some help with travel expenses.

It's truly a story of the little engine that could, and I would ask anyone inspired by these accomplishments to help them get to Orlando to represent Canada on the world stage.

HEMOCHROMATOSIS

Mr. Chris Ballard: I'm pleased to rise today, representing my riding of Newmarket–Aurora, to recognize May as national Hemochromatosis Awareness Month. Hemochromatosis is the most common genetic disorder affecting one in 300 Canadians—that's about 40,000 Ontarians. Hemochromatosis causes the body to store excess iron which can become toxic.

This national awareness month provides a valuable opportunity to raise awareness of this common disorder, which is frequently not diagnosed.

People with hemochromatosis absorb four times more iron from their daily diet than the average person. The body cannot rid itself of this extra iron and it accumulates over time in critical organs and joints. Left untreated, too much iron can increase the risk of diabetes, heart problems, liver cirrhosis, depression, infertility, cancer and other conditions. Too much iron can be fatal.

Despite hemochromatosis being the most common genetic disorder in Canada, few people or doctors know about it. The good news is treatment is relatively simple, rarely requires drugs and involves monitoring iron levels through routine blood testing and donating blood on a regular basis.

New technologies such as the app Iron Tracker make it easy for people with hemochromatosis to monitor their health. The app has been downloaded from the Canadian Hemochromatosis Society website thousands of times and is being used by people in 38 countries around the world.

Generating awareness in Ontario about the importance of screening for early detection is crucial to ensuring early diagnosis and effective treatment. Awareness is the cure.

HOLODOMOR

Mr. Yvan Baker: We have a number of guests from the Ukrainian Canadian community here today, and I'd like to speak about the Holodomor.

Mr. Speaker, the Holodomor was a genocide that occurred in 1932 and 1933 in Ukraine. It was perpetrated by Joseph Stalin when he closed Ukraine's borders and confiscated grain. He did so to destroy the Ukrainian population that was opposed to his rule. That's the same freedom and independence that the people of Ukraine are fighting for today. During that time 17 people per minute, 1,000 per hour and 25,000 per day were dying of famine. The world was silent and millions died as a result.

In the gallery today we have two survivors of the Holodomor. My grandmother was a survivor of the Holodomor. She once told me that she hoped that the victims of the Holodomor would not only be remembered but honoured. "Honoured" means not just remembering and commemorating, but learning from our mistakes as a global community and taking the steps to make sure something like this never happens again. That is why it is so important that young people in Ontario learn about the Holodomor.

That's why I'm so proud to stand here today with leaders of the Ukrainian Canadian community who worked towards that goal for so long, with you, Mr. Speaker, and other members of the Legislature who co-sponsored a bill to recognize the Holodomor; and with our Premier and our Minister of Education, who have ensured that the Holodomor will be in the Ontario curriculum so that every young person learns about the Holodomor.

Today, I hope we take this opportunity to commemorate and remember, but also redouble our efforts to ensure that a tragedy like this, a tragedy like the one that's happening in Ukraine right now, never happens again.

Let us do as my grandmother would have asked, as all of the survivors and victims would ask if they were here today: Let us remember the victims. Let us commemorate the victims. Let us honour them.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Point of order, the member from Etobicoke Centre.

Mr. Yvan Baker: I'd like to extend my apologies. There were a number of guests who I didn't introduce. As soon as I sat down after introducing a number of folks, I realized there were a number who weren't on my list.

I'd like to apologize to those of you and I hope I have you all.

We have in the gallery with us a few more guests I'd like to introduce. We have Oksana Rewa, who is up at the top there, Oksana Struk, Theodore Pucak, Stephen Ostafichuk, Mary Szkambara, Andrey Genyk-Berezowsky, Walter Kish, Tamara Ivanochko, Daria Diakowsky, Ariadna Ochrymovych, Ludmilla Holo-

wacki, Bohdan Holowacki, Nina Bulska, Marta Baziuk, Tatiana Dzulynsky, Yuriy Kus, Larisa Kus, Irene Mycak, Alex Sidnyk, Andrew Gregorovich and John Moskalyk. To the others I have missed I apologize, but we look forward to introducing you at the reception at 4 o'clock. Thank you.

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

Mr. Chris Ballard: I would just like to acknowledge members of the Canadian Hemochromatosis Society who joined us just before I gave the member's statement. We have Ian Hilley from King City, Simone Hilley Bland, Kay Easun, Marta McIlroy, Ian-Patrick McAllister, Professor Gary Grewal, Andrew D'Angelo, Cara Worthington and Jane Nimigon.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Welcome. It is now time for reports by committees.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL POLICY

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Social Policy and move its adoption.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): Your committee begs to report the following bill without amendment:

Bill 80, An Act to amend the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act and the Animals for Research Act with respect to the possession and breeding of orcas and administrative requirements for animal care / *Projet de loi 80, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Société de protection des animaux de l'Ontario et la Loi sur les animaux destinés à la recherche en ce qui concerne la possession et l'élevage d'épaulards ainsi que les exigences administratives relatives aux soins dispensés aux animaux.*

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

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to the orders of the House dated April 22, 2015, April 30, 2015, and May 6, 2015, the bill is ordered for third reading.

1520

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

NIAGARA CENTRAL DOROTHY RUNGELING AIRPORT ACT, 2015

Mr. Hudak moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr20, An Act to amend The Welland-Port Colborne Airport Act, 1976.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

WEICHE ESTATES INC ACT, 2015

Mrs. McGarry moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr21, An Act to revive Weiche Estates Inc.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

UNIVERSITÉ DE L'ONTARIO FRANÇAIS ACT, 2015 LOI DE 2015 SUR L'UNIVERSITÉ DE L'ONTARIO FRANÇAIS

M^{me} Gélinas propose la première lecture du projet de loi suivant :

Bill 104, An Act to establish the Université de l'Ontario français / Projet de loi 104, Loi constituant l'Université de l'Ontario français.

Le Président (L'hon. Dave Levac): M^{me} Gélinas propose qu'il soit permis de déposer un projet de loi intitulé An Act to establish the Université de l'Ontario français, and that it now be read for the first time.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: La langue française joue en Ontario un rôle historique et honorable depuis plus de quatre siècles. La Constitution reconnaît au français le statut de langue officielle et le français est reconnu en Ontario comme une langue officielle devant les tribunaux et dans l'éducation. De plus, la Constitution reconnaît à la communauté franco-ontarienne le droit à la gestion scolaire, et cette communauté gère déjà un réseau de 450 écoles primaires et secondaires, 12 conseils scolaires et deux collèges communautaires. Les Ontariens et Ontariennes d'expression française n'ont cependant, pour l'instant, que l'accès à un nombre limité de programmes universitaires en français.

L'Assemblée législative reconnaît l'apport du patrimoine culturel des francophones à l'Ontario et désire le sauvegarder pour les générations à venir. Le projet de loi constitue l'Université de l'Ontario français, dont la mission spéciale est d'offrir une gamme complète de grades et de programmes universitaires en français, et d'offrir aux étudiants francophones l'occasion de suivre

tous leurs cours universitaires et de faire toutes leurs études dans cette langue.

Merci beaucoup, monsieur le Président.

MOTIONS

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon. James J. Bradley: I move that, pursuant to standing order 6(c)(ii), the House shall meet from 6:45 p.m. to 12 midnight on Tuesday, May 26, 2015, for the purpose of considering government business.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Bradley moves that, pursuant to standing order 6(c)(ii), the House shall meet from 6:45 p.m. to 12 midnight on Tuesday, May 26, 2015, for the purpose of considering government business.

Does the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1525 to 1530.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Everyone take their seats, please. Thank you.

Mr. Bradley has moved that, pursuant to standing order 6(c)(ii), the House shall meet from 6:45 p.m. to 12 midnight on Tuesday, May 26, 2015, for the purpose of considering government business.

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

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Hardeman, Ernie	Moridi, Reza
Anderson, Granville	Hoggarth, Ann	Murray, Glen R.
Baker, Yvan	Hoskins, Eric	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Balkissoon, Bas	Hudak, Tim	Naqvi, Yasir
Ballard, Chris	Hunter, Mitzie	Nicholls, Rick
Barrett, Toby	Jaczek, Helena	Potts, Arthur
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Kiwala, Sophie	Qaadri, Shafiq
Bradley, James J.	Lalonde, Marie-France	Rinaldi, Lou
Chiarelli, Bob	Leal, Jeff	Sandals, Liz
Clark, Steve	MacCharles, Tracy	Sergio, Mario
Coteau, Michael	Malhi, Harinder	Smith, Todd
Crack, Grant	Martins, Cristina	Sousa, Charles
Damerla, Dipika	Martow, Gila	Thibeault, Glenn
Delaney, Bob	Matthews, Deborah	Vernile, Daiene
Dhillon, Vic	Mauro, Bill	Wilson, Jim
Dickson, Joe	McDonell, Jim	Wong, Soo
Dong, Han	McGarry, Kathryn	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Duguid, Brad	McMahon, Eleanor	Yakabuski, John
Dunlop, Garfield	McMeekin, Ted	Yurek, Jeff
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	McNaughton, Monte	Zimmer, David
Fraser, John	Meilleur, Madeleine	
Gravelle, Michael	Milczyn, Peter Z.	

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

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gélinas, France	Natyshak, Taras
Bisson, Gilles	Gretzky, Lisa	Sattler, Peggy
French, Jennifer K.	Hatfield, Percy	Vanthof, John
Gates, Wayne	Mantha, Michael	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):

The ayes are 64; the nays are 11.

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

Motion agreed to.

PETITIONS

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Todd Smith: “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 plant scandal, 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;

“Whereas the soaring cost of electricity is straining family budgets, particularly in rural Ontario, 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 essential for families in rural Ontario who cannot afford to continue footing the bill for the government’s mismanagement;

“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 agree with this, will sign it and send it to the table with page Katie.

TEACHERS’ LABOUR DISPUTES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I had the great surprise today to receive this petition signed by 2,600 students on strike from the Rainbow board, and it reads as follows:

“Whereas Ontario teachers in three different regions have been striking for over four weeks;

“Whereas there is now” back-to-work legislation in place;

“Whereas this legislation takes away our teachers’ right to strike;

“Whereas in the name of helping students, I believe in negotiation and the right to strike;

“Whereas we are the province’s future workers and voters and will remember the effects of this strike;”

They petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to (1) stop the back-to-work legislation and (2) ask the government to “focus on making meaningful strides in negotiations with the OSSTF.”

That comes from 2,600 young people in my riding. I support it and give it to page Robert.

TERRY FOX DAY

Ms. Soo Wong: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas on March 26, Bill 61, the Terry Fox Day Act, passed second reading with unanimous support from the Ontario Legislature;

“Whereas if passed at third reading before the Legislature rises in June, Bill 61 will proclaim the second Sunday after Labour Day in 2015, September 20, as Ontario’s first Terry Fox Day;

“Whereas the second Sunday after Labour Day is the day on which the Terry Fox Run is traditionally held, and September 20, 2015, marks its 35th anniversary;

“Whereas on November 27, 2014, Terry Fox’s home province of British Columbia passed similar legislation proclaiming this same day as Terry Fox Day starting this year;

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

“That the Legislative Assembly move quickly to pass Bill 61 at third reading before the end of the current session, ensuring that on September 20, 2015, Ontarians can celebrate Terry Fox Day.”

I fully support the petition and will give my petition to page Dale.

LANDFILL

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas many of the resources of this planet are finite and are necessary to sustain both life and quality of life for future generations;

“Whereas the disposal of resources in landfills creates environmental hazards which have significant human and financial costs;

“Whereas all levels of government are elected to guarantee their constituents’ physical, financial, emotional and mental well-being;

“Whereas the health risks to the community and watershed increase in direct relationship to the proximity of any landfill site;

“Whereas the placement of a landfill in a limestone quarry has been shown to be detrimental;

“Whereas the placement of a landfill in the headwaters of multiple highly vulnerable aquifers is detrimental;

“Therefore be it resolved that we, the undersigned, humbly petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To implement a moratorium in Oxford county, Ontario, on any future landfill construction or approval until such time as a full and comprehensive review of alternatives has been completed which would examine best practices in other jurisdictions around the world;

“That this review of alternatives would give particular emphasis to (a) practices which involve the total recycling or composting of all products currently destined for landfill sites in Ontario and (b) the production of goods

which can be practically and efficiently recycled or reused so as to not require disposal.”

Thank you very much for the time to present this petition. I shall affix my signature, as I agree with it.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario titled “Privatizing Hydro One: Another wrong choice.

“Whereas once you privatize hydro, there’s no return; and

“We’ll lose billions in reliable annual revenues for schools and hospitals; and

“We’ll lose our biggest economic asset and control over our energy future; and

“We’ll pay higher and higher hydro bills just like what’s happened elsewhere;

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

“To stop the sale of Hydro One and make sure Ontario families benefit from owning Hydro One now and for generations to come.”

I fully agree with this petition. I’m going to sign my name to it and give it to Robert to bring up to the desk.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Mr. Arthur Potts: What a pleasure to be recognized in this House. I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas a growing number of Ontarians are concerned about the growth in low-wage, part-time, casual, temporary and insecure employment; and

“Whereas too many workers are not protected by the minimum standards outlined in existing employment and labour laws; and

“Whereas the Ontario government is currently engaging in a public consultation to review and improve employment and labour laws in the province;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to implement a decent work agenda by making sure that Ontario’s labour and employment laws:

“—require all workers be paid a uniform, provincial minimum wage regardless of a worker’s age, job or sector of employment;

“—promote full-time, permanent work with adequate hours for all those who choose it;

“—ensure part-time, temporary, casual and contract workers receive the same pay and benefits as their full-time, permanent counterparts;

“—provide at least seven (7) days of paid sick leave each year;

“—support job security for workers when companies or contracts change ownership;

“—prevent employers from downloading their responsibilities for minimum standards onto temp agencies, subcontractors or the workers themselves;

“—extend minimum protections to all workers by eliminating exemptions to the laws;

“—protect workers who stand up for their rights;

“—offer proactive enforcement of laws, supported by adequate public staffing and meaningful penalties for employers who violate the law;

“—make it easier for workers to join unions; and

“—require a \$15 minimum wage for all workers.”

I have great empathy for this petition. I sign my name and leave it with page Jany.

1540

PERSONAL SUPPORT WORKERS

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

“Whereas personal support workers are the largest group of unregulated health care workers in Canada; and

“Whereas PSWs take care of society’s most vulnerable citizens including seniors in long-term care, home care, hospitals and retirement homes, and adults with disabilities in supportive housing; and

“Whereas there is an increasing demand for PSWs and they are a key component of a sustainable health care system; and

“Whereas PSWs do not have a set scope of practice, standards of practice or curriculum; and

“Whereas PSWs are left to perform one of the most important jobs in health care without proper tools;

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

“To designate personal support workers as a regulated health profession and enact according legislation.”

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

ONTARIO DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the \$100 ODSP Work-Related Benefit provides a critically important source of funds to people with disabilities on ODSP who work, giving them the ability to pay for much-needed, ongoing work-related expenses such as transportation, clothing, food, personal care and hygiene items, and child care; and

“Whereas the Ministry of Community and Social Services plans to eliminate the Work-Related Benefit as part of a restructuring of OW and ODSP employment benefits, and has said that ongoing work-related expenses will not be covered by its new restructured Employment-Related Benefit; and

“Whereas eliminating the Work-Related Benefit will take approximately \$36 million annually out of the pockets of people with disabilities on ODSP who work; and

“Whereas a survey conducted by the ODSP Action Coalition between December 2014 and February 2015

shows that 18% of respondents who currently receive the Work-Related Benefit fear having to quit their jobs as a result of the loss of this important source of funds; 12.5% fear having to reduce the amount of money they spend on food, or rely on food banks; and 10% fear losing the ability to travel, due to the cost of transportation; and

“Whereas people receiving ODSP already struggle to get by, and incomes on ODSP provide them with little or no ability to cover these costs from regular benefits; and

“Whereas undermining employment among ODSP recipients would run directly counter to the ministry’s goal of increasing employment and the provincial government’s poverty reduction goal of increasing income security;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to stop the provincial government’s plan to eliminate the ODSP Work-Related Benefit.”

I sign my signature and deliver it to page Sheila.

STUDENT SAFETY

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I have a petition 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.”

Speaker, I agree with the petition, affix my name and give it to page Julien.

AIR QUALITY

Mr. Todd Smith: It’s an oldie but a goodie.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario’s Drive Clean Program was implemented only as a temporary measure to reduce high levels of vehicle emissions and smog; and

“Whereas vehicle emissions have declined so significantly from 1998 to 2010 that they are no longer among the major domestic contributors of smog in Ontario; and”

“Whereas the overwhelming majority of reductions in vehicle emissions were, in fact, the result of factors other than the Drive Clean program, such as tighter manufacturing standards for emission-control technologies; and

“Whereas from 1999 to 2010 the percentage of vehicles that failed emissions testing under the Drive Clean program steadily declined from 16% to 5%; and

“Whereas the environment minister has ignored advances in technology and introduced a new, computer-

ized emissions test that is less reliable and prone to error; and

“Whereas the new Drive Clean test no longer assesses tailpipe emissions, but instead scans the on-board diagnostics systems of vehicles, which already perform a series of continuous and periodic emissions checks; and

“Whereas the new Drive Clean test has caused the failure rate to double in less than two months as a result of technical problems with the new emissions testing method; and

“Whereas this new emissions test has caused numerous false ‘fails’, which have resulted in the overcharging of testing fees for Ontario drivers and car dealerships, thereby causing unwarranted economic hardship and stress;

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

“That the Minister of the Environment must take immediate steps to begin phasing out the Drive Clean program.”

I will sign this and send it to the table with page Dale.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I have a petition that reads,

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Privatizing Hydro One: Another Wrong Choice.

“Whereas once you privatize hydro, there’s no return; and

“We’ll lose billions in reliable annual revenues for schools and hospitals; and

“We’ll lose our biggest economic asset and control over our energy future; and

“We’ll pay higher and higher hydro bills just like what’s happened elsewhere;

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

“To stop the sale of Hydro One and make sure Ontario families benefit from owning Hydro One now and for generations to come.”

I agree with the petition, will affix my name to it and send it to the Clerks’ table through page Emma.

CREDIT UNIONS

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

“Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario support our 1.3 million members across Ontario through loans to small businesses to start up, grow and create jobs, help families to buy homes and assist their communities with charitable investments and volunteering; and

“Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario want a level playing field so they can provide the same service to our members as other financial institutions and promote economic growth without relying on taxpayers’ resources;

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

“Support the strength and growth of credit unions to support the strength and growth of Ontario’s economy and create jobs in three ways:

“—maintain current credit union provincial tax rates;

“—show confidence in Ontario credit unions by increasing credit union-funded deposit insurance limits to a minimum of \$250,000;

“—allow credit unions to diversify by allowing Ontario credit unions to own 100% of subsidiaries.”

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

TAXATION

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

“Whereas the Liberal government has indicated they plan on introducing a new carbon tax in 2015; and

“Whereas Ontario taxpayers have already been burdened with a health tax of \$300 to \$900 per person that doesn’t necessarily go into health care, a \$2-billion smart meter program that failed to conserve energy, and almost \$700 more per household annually for unaffordable subsidies under the Green Energy Act; and

“Whereas a carbon tax scheme would increase the cost of everyday goods including gasoline and home heating; and

“Whereas the government continues to run unaffordable deficits without a plan to reduce spending while collecting \$30 billion more annually in tax revenues than 11 years ago; and

“Whereas this uncompetitive tax will not impact businesses outside of Ontario and will only serve to accelerate the demise of our once strong manufacturing sector; and

“Whereas the aforementioned points lead to the conclusion that the government is seeking justification to raise taxes to pay for their excessive spending, without accomplishing any concrete targets;

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

“To abandon the idea of yet another unaffordable and ineffective tax on Ontario families and businesses.”

I agree with this petition and will be passing it on to page Luke.

1550

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PROTECTING THE SCHOOL YEAR ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LA PROTECTION DE L’ANNÉE SCOLAIRE

Mr. Flynn moved second reading of the following bill:
Bill 103, An Act to resolve labour disputes between the Durham District School Board, Rainbow District School Board and Peel District School Board, and the

Ontario Secondary School Teachers’ Federation / Projet de loi 103, Loi visant à régler les conflits de travail entre les conseils scolaires de district Durham District School Board, Rainbow District School Board et Peel District School Board et la Fédération des enseignantes-enseignants des écoles secondaires de l’Ontario.

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

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I’ll be sharing my time this afternoon with the Minister of Education.

Speaker, I’d like to start speaking to the proposed legislation we have before us today and outline how I think it will accomplish its purpose.

The Protecting the School Year Act would, if passed, end the labour disruptions at the secondary schools of the Durham District School Board, the Rainbow District School Board and the Peel District School Board. These disruptions have put students’ education and their school year in jeopardy, as was recently determined by the Education Relations Commission. It should be obvious by now to all members in this House that the time to act on this issue is now.

We must be aware that the most profound negative aspects of these labour disputes have very severe implications on those who are not directly involved in it. That, of course, is the students. They have no control over the course of this dispute. We in this House, must ensure that these students’ studies are not put at risk by the continuation of these strikes. We must get them back to class. They know they are the ones most affected by this dispute, yet they are unable to do anything about it. They are looking to all members of this House for assistance.

The Education Relations Commission has consulted the affected parties in this regard, and they’ve concluded that there’s no early prospect of a settlement of the local agreements in each of the three school boards that are listed—certainly none that can likely be achieved within sufficient time to avoid jeopardizing the school year of the affected students. In one board, I think they’ve been out for over six weeks now.

As responsible legislators, we have no choice. We must act as soon as possible, and we must act because it’s necessary to protect the interests of these students. The continuation of this dispute and the resulting disruption in education and its corresponding effects give rise to very serious public interest concerns.

But I want to outline exactly how the proposed legislation would work. A lot’s been said about the legislation, some of it accurate, some of it simply inaccurate.

The act would terminate any lockout or any strike involving members of the secondary school teachers’ bargaining unit at the Durham, Rainbow and Peel school boards. The boards would then be required to resume normal operations of the school. The employees would be required to report for work and perform their duties as soon as the act is in force.

The act would prohibit both parties from engaging in any further strike or any further lockout in connection with the current round of local negotiations—emphasis on the local, Speaker.

While we fully expect all parties to comply if the act is passed, a failure to do so would constitute an offence which is punishable by a fine of up to \$2,000 for an individual and up to \$25,000 for a school board or for the union. Each day of non-compliance in this regard would constitute a separate offence.

Any strike or any lockout in contravention of the act would also constitute an illegal strike or lockout under the Labour Relations Act for the province of Ontario. This would then put the issue under the jurisdiction of the Ontario Labour Relations Board, which is a quasi-judicial body with significant enforcement remedies in the case of illegal strikes or lockouts.

If the respective school boards and the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation have not resolved the local issues in dispute before the day that the act receives royal assent, all outstanding local issues would immediately be referred to fair and balanced binding mediation and arbitration. The school boards and the OSSTF would have five days to appoint a member to the board of arbitration. If either party failed to appoint a member within those five days, as Minister of Labour, I would appoint one upon request of either party.

Within 10 days of the appointment of the second member, the two members would then appoint a third member to be the chair of the board. If they fail to do so, they must notify my office. If they notify my office in this regard, we would then appoint the chair.

The board of arbitration would be required to begin the mediation-arbitration proceedings within 30 days of appointment and must make an award within 120 days of appointment. Throughout that time, the parties will continue to have the opportunity to work on outstanding issues with the support of the mediator and the arbitrator panel. If they cannot work those issues out in 120 days with the assistance of the panel, then the panel will provide a decision. That decision, the arbitration award, would address all matters in dispute that are necessary to reach a memorandum of settlement on local terms. In making the award, the board of arbitration would be required to take into consideration certain criteria. That includes the employers' ability to pay, for example, and the economic situation here in the province of Ontario. The school boards and the OSSTF would be also required to share the cost of the mediation and the arbitration process.

We respect collective bargaining in this province. I want to assure the members that nothing in this act would prohibit the boards and the union from continuing to bargain today. In fact, we encourage them to do so. If they resolve their issues in dispute, they would then be required to inform the mediator-arbitrator, and the mediation-arbitration process would be terminated.

We believe it would be best for the parties to reach an agreement themselves and achieve a quick ending to the labour negotiations. We want school boards and their employees to be able to negotiate fair and reasonable contracts, but this absolutely must be done without jeopardizing the education of students.

Like parents, the government does not want children's education further disrupted because of an ongoing dispute. We want Ontario students to benefit from their time in the classroom with their teachers so they can fulfill their potential and learn in one of the best education systems in the entire world. We have, in my opinion, some of the best teachers in the world here in the province of Ontario.

Negotiations are tough by nature, and they're supposed to be tough. Collective agreements are achieved in Ontario, with tough negotiations, in over 97% of cases. That's why we're continuing to put students first by introducing the proposed Protecting the School Year Act. That's why I believe all members of Legislative Assembly should support this legislation.

Speaker, I want to thank you for the time. I would urge all members of the House to pass this bill as soon as possible.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Continuing along, I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Liz Sandals: I rise today to speak on behalf of Ontario students and their families, and in support of the proposed Protecting the School Year Act. Our decision to introduce legislation has not been taken lightly. We have tremendous respect for the importance and professionalism of teachers, just as we also respect the collective bargaining process.

The proposed act is, both in its spirit and writing, a legislative tool designed to ensure tens of thousands of Ontario secondary students are back in classrooms so that they can complete their studies and move on to the next chapter in their education. So while we greatly respect teachers and their right to strike, the time has come for our government to balance this respect with the increasing needs of students—and the expectations of parents and taxpayers—so that students can return to school and complete their studies.

As you know, on May 15, our government asked for advice from the Education Relations Commission, the ERC, on whether the strike action in the Durham, Rainbow and Peel district school boards by the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation had placed the school year for students at risk in those boards.

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When we asked the ERC for an advisement, our government was concerned about a number of issues that would put the students' school year at risk, including, for example, the loss of significant time in grade 12 for students preparing for first-year university courses, particularly in engineering and maths and science, where we know that when those students go on, a gap in their grade 12 learning can seriously impact the continuity and the expectation in their first-year engineering or science courses.

We are also concerned about students in grade 10 who may have only completed one of the mandatory half-credit courses in civics or careers prior to a strike. For example, in Durham, if the half-credit started about mid-April—the strike started on April 20—there would be

very little of the content of that half-credit that has been covered by the student, and of course the impact on students with special education needs, who in general are more dependent on their teachers and are less able to compensate for a loss in instructional time.

Yesterday, the Education Relations Commission—the ERC—advised our government that after weeks of strikes by the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, secondary school students in the Durham, Rainbow and Peel school boards are in jeopardy of losing their school year.

The ERC has been part of the school board collective bargaining landscape for over 40 years. When teachers were given the right to strike, the ERC was created to balance the right to strike with the right of students. I'd like to read some of the ERC's advisement and give you a sense of what the ERC said in their advice to me.

This is the ERC speaking: "The commission sees the teachers' constitutional right to strike as balanced by the public interest expressed in the act that students' courses of study be capable of completion. In other words, the act places teachers' right to strike between that of those who have a complete right to strike and those who work within essential services (such as police, firefighters and hospital staff), whose right to strike is replaced by interest arbitration. Rather than providing a fixed period of time during which a strike will be protected—that is, the right to strike—"the ERC is the mechanism to appraise when the public interest in the right to strike should yield to the public interest of ensuring that students have a fair opportunity to complete their courses of study."

There's been a lot of comment over the last few days about who the ERC are and what their role is, so that outlines who they are and what their role is.

They then went on to say, "We have considered the circumstances of each of the three school boards separately. We have consulted the affected parties and we have concluded that there is no early prospect of a settlement of the local agreements in each of the three school boards, certainly none that can likely be achieved within sufficient time to avoid jeopardizing the school year of the affected students. We have noted that the duration of the strike in each of the three school boards is different (Durham the longest, then Rainbow, then Peel), but the impact of each of the strikes is such that, for the reasons expressed in the request," by my deputy, "the teachers' return to work is necessary to ensure that the students can endeavour to complete their courses of study. Our advice is therefore that, in our opinion, the successful completion of courses of study of the affected students in each of the affected school boards is in jeopardy."

They then go on to describe that if back-to-work legislation is going to happen, which is the most normal occurrence following a jeopardy advisement, in that event we would need to replace the right to strike with another mechanism, which is binding arbitration. The Minister of Labour has fully explained how that replace-

ment mechanism for the right to strike is actually captured in this back-to-work bill.

So the ERC's advice is, in fact, in accord with our own assessment and the assessment of 72,000 students and their parents, who have increasingly made their voices heard.

We respect our teachers and their right to strike, but this is about our government prioritizing, above all else, the needs of our students so that they can return to school to complete their studies. With the advice from the ERC, our government is taking the difficult but necessary step to introduce legislation which precisely follows the ERC advice to ensure that students are back in the classrooms quickly, because they are in jeopardy of falling behind their peers, of being delayed in their advancement to the next grade or even to post-secondary education and training in the workforce.

The ERC's advisement was important to our decision-making process, but it was not the only voice that influenced this course of action. Other voices have also been important: the voice of students, the voice of parents, the voice of communities across Durham, Peel and the Sudbury areas. These voices were also heard by our government and helped inform our decision to introduce legislation to protect the school year, to prioritize students' education.

The need for urgent action in the affected school boards is persuasive. As of this moment, more than 22,000 Durham school board students have been out of school for 26 instructional days, and about 7,500 of those students are in grade 12. Almost 5,500 students in the Sudbury area have lost 21 instructional days, and about 2,000 of those students are in grade 12. And more than 45,000 Peel students have fallen behind by 16 instructional days, and nearly 10,000 of those students are in grade 12.

The students have shown tremendous resilience, and they have been eagerly awaiting a resolution to this situation. The students are keenly aware of their teachers' right to strike, but subjecting students to further undermining of the quality of their education is wrong and is something we cannot ask of our young people. It's time to get students back into class so that they can complete their school year. Ontario students deserve and expect a world-class education system. They deserve to advance to the next grade based on their merits, and they deserve to graduate to the next stage in their life, be it college, university, apprenticeship or the workplace.

To ensure that students get everything they deserve out of the school year, our government has taken the difficult but necessary step to introduce the proposed Protecting the School Year Act. I call on all members of this House to stand united with us to quickly pass this act and get our students back to school. They deserve nothing less.

Of course, students and parents are obviously not the only parties affected by the proposed legislation. Supporting student achievement and well-being is our government's foremost priority. Ultimately, the striking

teachers and their federations will be directly impacted by the outcome of this act. I would like to take a moment to address them specifically, and in doing so, I hope to send a clear message to all our education partners.

Despite the challenges of this round of bargaining, despite the tensions and the rhetoric, we will get through this together, because we do have a shared commitment to student achievement and well-being.

By introducing the Protecting the School Year Act in order to get students back into the classroom, our government continues to respect and value the important work that all teachers do every day in our schools across the province. I know that teachers want their students to succeed and achieve to the best of their abilities. We share this aspiration and recognize that the time to act is now. This proposed Protecting the School Year Act is about getting students back in the classroom and continuing their education.

By introducing this act, we have not compromised teachers' bargaining positions in the central negotiations or the right to strike in those central negotiations. In fact, it has no impact on local negotiations at any of the other boards.

1610

Teachers have exercised their right to strike for weeks. During that time, just as we have heard the voices of students and parents, we've also heard the voices of teachers. We will continue to listen to teachers at the central bargaining table and through our ongoing partnerships, but now is the time to listen to the voice of students and to address their needs.

We've proven in the past that we are able to work through difficult issues with all of our partners. I remain committed to continuing to do so. After all, we know it is teachers who are the ones who are going above and beyond to ensure students' success and well-being. It is that very depth of professionalism among teachers that has led Ontario's publicly funded education system to where it is today: one of the best in the world.

For over a decade now, our partnership with teachers has delivered important, measurable results. For example, at the secondary level in 2014, 84% of students graduated from high school. That's up from 68%, and it means that 163,000 more students have graduated than would have if the graduating rate had remained at the 2004 level. These are important achievements for which we owe a debt of gratitude to our teachers, because we know that we have worked with the teachers to elevate our graduation rate.

In elevating our publicly funded education system to one of the best in the world, we have placed on ourselves the greatest burden an educator and an education system can be tasked with: the expectation that we will keep doing better.

Working with teachers, we have made a commitment to students, parents and Ontarians that we will do better, that we will take our publicly funded education system from great to excellent. That promise was codified in Achieving Excellence, our new vision for education in Ontario. At the core of our mission, alongside the success

and well-being of every student and child, is our collective commitment to cultivate and continuously develop a high-quality teaching profession, realizing that commitment and continuing to work closely together in the best interests of students is what awaits us on the other side of the collective bargaining process.

Our education sector has a bright future, but today we are focused on the immediate needs of thousands of secondary students. The proposed legislation is for them. It's not to thwart our partnership with teachers or to undermine their right to strike, but it is the right thing to do at the right time to get students back into the classroom and back on track with their lives. We, however, do remain committed to reaching a negotiated settlement with OSSTF at the central table.

I understand that local boards are equally committed to reaching local agreements in the other school boards. So what we have to do now is to protect the school year. To do that, I need all of your help. If we are going to end this strike now, if we're going to get kids back in the classroom now, if we're going to do this quickly, I need the support of each and every member of this Legislature to act quickly and to get the students back into class.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments?

Mr. John Yakabuski: I want to thank the minister for her very flowery words. She's just brimming with optimism here today. Look, we're here because we want to see our students back in school too. Unfortunately, they've been out for six weeks. And unfortunately, when I read this bill, this bill is only going to address the challenges in three boards. There are 72 boards across this province. So I hope that we're not going to go through this another 20 times or so in order to address the problems all across the province of Ontario that you people have created. You've created chaos in the education sector because of your mismanagement. But we are going to be here. The minister said you need our help. We're going to give you our help, because our students deserve it. We're here to help the students. We're not here because we really want to help you get out of the mess you've created, but we do share one thing with you, and that is that the most important thing is that our students get back to class as quickly as possible.

Our education critic, Garfield Dunlop, the member for Simcoe North, will be talking here shortly, and I'm sure that he will be reiterating our position as a caucus. But as one member who—I no longer have children in the school system, but I have grandchildren in the school system. None of them are in the boards that are on strike right now but, based on the failure of this government, they could be on strike at some time in the future.

So they've got their problems. They've got this Bill 122 that is a real dog's breakfast. They need to not only work on this back-to-work legislation; they need to clean up the mess that they created with Bill 122, because until we have a better way of working to ensure that our students aren't caught up in the crossfire between a teachers' union and a board or the central bargaining unit, we're going to continue to have problems. We've

got a lot of things to solve here. We are going to help you on this one, Minister.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I can't say I'm really happy to be debating this particular motion, because it's a sad commentary that this mess has come to this. This government does need to fix their own problems that they have created. Having students and families and teachers all divided isn't really helping the issue.

This minister—today, our leader asked the Premier, if she's not effectively doing the work, if maybe she should step aside and let someone fill her shoes in there and get back to that table and negotiate and not legislate.

I know there are some teachers on that side, and there are some teachers on this side, and everybody's got family and students who go to school. This needs to be fixed by this Liberal government. They need to get serious about negotiating. They need to take the interests of families, students and teachers to heart and stop these political games and the chaos that they've made of this system. These things are something that they have to be responsible for as a government.

You have a majority government now; you're responsible for this. Fix it. Get back to the table and negotiate in good faith. Negotiate, don't legislate. Legislation isn't, obviously, a solution to this problem. You made the mess. You've got people up in arms—families and students and teachers. You need somebody to get in there and get back to the table and negotiate in good faith and make sure there's an effective way to get over this.

I just want to put that out there, that we do have to make sure that this gets resolved, but it needs to be resolved at the level where people can talk it through.

Thank you, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Glenn Thibeault: I'm happy to be able to rise to speak to this, especially since we're talking about 5,500 students from my riding in Sudbury who have been out for 21 days.

One of the things that I know we all did last week was spend a lot of time in our ridings. There were many events that we all go to as MPPs. I saw this one young woman kind of eyeing me out of the corner of a room. She looked a little nervous and a little apprehensive at first, but she found the courage to be able to come up and speak to me. She wanted to talk to me about what she wants to do with her life. She was very excited to talk to me about climate change, because that's what she wants to go to school for. She wants to be able to get a degree in the environmental services area. So we were talking about climate change and about other things, and one thing she said to me was that she was really concerned that the students were being overlooked in all of this, that there was going to be finger pointing from one side to the other.

1620

From the mouth of babes, so to speak—when you have a young woman saying, “I really want to get back to

school.” I think the ERC decision yesterday really put the nail on the head with that because they are not letting the students' year be jeopardized.

I know the minister has talked about it in depth, about how the teachers have their constitutional right to strike. That is so important. We've seen that over the last little bit, and we've been encouraging them to try and get some resolution. But when I had that young woman speaking to me, it really drove home what we need to do as MPPs: make sure that this young woman can actually go to university. I think the ERC decision is the most important decision that we've heard out of this right now.

I hope the board and the teachers get back to work negotiating as soon as possible, because that would be the best way to do it. That's something we've talked about all along. But I'm very happy to see that the ERC, right now, is talking about protecting the year for the students.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Ted Arnett: I'm pleased to have this opportunity to respond briefly to the presentation that was made by the Minister of Labour as well as the Minister of Education this afternoon in support of Bill 103, which would have the effect of ending the teacher strikes that are currently taking place in the Durham District School Board, the Rainbow District School Board and Peel District School Board, and create a system of binding arbitration to resolve the disputes.

Before the teachers went out, I sent out a public message via Twitter. I said that all sides involved in the negotiation process needed to remember one thing: that is, no one wins in a teachers' strike, and it's the students who lose out. Students who have lost five or six weeks of school, especially high school kids—my own son Phillip is in grade 12, and he's looking forward to going to university in September. He wasn't directly affected. But this isn't about him; this is about the many thousands of students who are in grade 12, in high school, who wanted to continue their education over the course of this second term, hopefully finish up their school year in June and then get summer work so that they can afford to pay for their tuition when they go off to college or university—those who are not going directly into the work world.

Clearly, we have to find a better solution to this problem. The government's approach with the two-tiered negotiating process—I think the government would have to admit that it has not worked out as the government would have expected and hoped. I think that we need to take another hard look at the overall negotiation framework.

For my part, I support this bill today. I wish that it didn't have to come to this. Obviously, it has taken many, many weeks.

As many members know, my wife, Lisa, is a public school teacher; she has taught for more than 25 years. I know a lot of teachers, her colleagues, socially. The fact is, the vast majority of teachers just want to teach. I think that the union leadership needs to understand that better, too.

I hope we can pass this bill as soon as possible and get those students back to the classrooms.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the Minister of Labour for final comments.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I'd like to thank the members from Wellington–Halton Hills, London–Fanshawe, Sudbury and Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke for the remarks that they brought to the debate that we're having today.

I think it's important to remember that the track record of Ontario over the years has been that, in about 98% of cases where collective agreements are involved, they are reached at the table. I think we have to look back at the history of all three parties: All three parties in this House, at some point in their history, have decided to introduce back-to-work legislation for a variety of reasons.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Surely not the NDP.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: The NDP, the Conservatives and ourselves, Speaker—all of us have had to do that.

We also have to remember that this is a dispute between the school boards and the local unions. It's not a dispute between the central bargaining people and the government of Ontario. It's between the school boards and the local unions.

As much as the NDP might wish that was not so, it is so. So in this case, we haven't had that agreement between the local boards and the local unions. A strike has deprived both the teachers and the students of six weeks of education.

Now with the firm opinion in hand that the Education Relations Commission has given us that these students' school year is in jeopardy, how can you sit on your hands and not support this bill? How can you allow those children to be out of school when the will of the House is simply that they be in school?

Speaker, it's incumbent upon us as a Legislature, as MPPs from three different parties here, to implement an alternative system. The strike system has not worked. It has led to six weeks of students being out of school. The mediation-arbitration system is being made available to both parties. The idea is that they can use that system to reach local agreements in both Durham, Peel and Rainbow.

I implore all members of the House to support this bill.

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

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'm pleased to rise today to speak to Bill 103, the Protecting the School Year Act, 2015. I want to say right up front, Mr. Speaker, that Patrick Brown and the PC caucus will be reluctantly supporting this piece of legislation, and I say "reluctantly."

Interjections.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Why? Well, we know right off the bat that there are 72,000 secondary school students out of—

Interjections.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Mr. Speaker, if I can just say something: I didn't heckle at all when you folks were

speaking, and I expect the same courtesy. This is very serious business here.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I haven't been heckling.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: No, but there has been heckling on the other side.

This is a very serious piece of legislation. We have 72,000 students out of school right now. In Durham, that works out to 600,000 student school days. In Rainbow, it's 105,000 school days and, in Peel, already 700,000 lost school days. In some ways, that saves the government money. No one is bringing that up; right? But that's a total of 1.4 million school days that we've lost already.

Many of those students are in grade 12, and they are going on to university, college and trades. They have careers ahead of them. We simply cannot sit back and have that in jeopardy. In fact, our caucus has been asking for weeks now to take action more quickly because of the importance of this and the importance of the school year, the graduation ceremonies, all the activities that take place—proms etc. It's very important that we deal with that.

I've been critic since last June. It's one of the most amazing jobs I've ever had here at Queen's Park. I've had the education portfolio and the training, colleges and universities portfolio, and I've put a lot of effort into it. One of the efforts I've made a great deal of headway on is in stakeholder relations. I've met with, I would say, 50% of the stakeholders—I've had meetings with them—in the education and training, colleges and universities field since I've been the critic. It's an amazing job, and there are some wonderful people in it.

One of the things I've learned in dealing with people like President Paul Elliott and with Paul Kossta, who is here every day—I think we've gained a lot of respect for each other's opinions on different topics, and there's certainly also a trust factor. One of the things I found out is that these negotiations—this Bill 122 two-tiered bargaining system is a complete flop. There have to be changes made to that. Why do I say that? What's happening is, at each end there's no bargaining taking place. It doesn't matter who you talk to—if you talk to people from the school boards—and it was interesting just now that the Minister of Labour is blaming the school boards and the unions for not negotiating and somehow making the Ministry of Education and Kathleen Wynne—none of their responsibility. Of course it's their responsibility. She's responsible for the \$22-billion budget. She's also responsible for the cuts that have taken place. We know that.

What we're finding out with the two-tiered bargaining system is, first of all, they're trying to break up a lot of the collective agreements that have been made. Why don't they just admit that? That is actually happening. If you talk to the trustees, if you talk to the people who are members of the administration on the school boards, if you talk to the union people, they'll all tell you that that is what's happening.

I know that the teachers aren't asking for a lot more money. That's not what they're asking for. They're just

trying to protect what they have in place. So at least admit what the issues are.

As the critic here—we get to hear very, very little. Liz Sandals's office doesn't call me up and say, "You know what? Here's what's happening today."

Sorry.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Excuse me. I'd like to just remind the member that when we're referring to other members, please refer to them, if they're a minister, as "Minister," if it's Premier Wynne or however; not just by first and last name. Thank you.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: My apologies. I know Minister Sandals is the MPP for Guelph, and I apologize for that. Sometimes I get speaking too quickly and I forget, okay? So I apologize for that.

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The reality is that the negotiations are going nowhere. You can bring in arbitration, you can bring in conciliation and all that sort of thing. Nothing is happening. Three of the 72 boards are out on strike. All we're doing today is putting a finger in a dam.

I understand the third party is going to debate this till 1 o'clock in the morning if they have to, or they're going to continue on to fight the back-to-work legislation. However, we cannot, on behalf of the—

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Parents.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Particularly the 150 emails I received today from parents and students in the Peel and Durham boards—I have to say we have to support the bill, reluctantly, and then we have to deal with what's happening next.

What's happening? This all started last September 1 when negotiations were to take place on this two-tiered bargaining system. Well, nothing really happened. Nothing at all happened at either end, either at the provincial negotiations or at the board level, until the teachers, the OSSTF in Durham, finally said, "We've got to walk. We've got to go on strike." That's what happened. So nothing happened.

But today in the scrum, the Minister of Education said—they were saying, "What's going to happen in the fall?" She said, "We've got three months to figure that out." That's 14 weeks right now. They got nothing done from September to May and now in 14 weeks magic is going to happen.

What is actually happening? That's the problem. What will happen? I know what's going to happen. OECTA will be out. The English Catholic teachers will be out by probably—there's a really good chance they'll be out by September 1. The two francophone boards, the Catholic boards, the public boards will be out. There are 12 of those boards altogether. The remaining groups—the elementary teachers' federation, they're already on—

Interjection: Work-to-rule.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: —work-to-rule for administration duties. They can step that up at any given time.

We have turmoil, Mr. Speaker. That's what's happening here. You've got the summer and everybody's going to want a few weeks off, including the people

under negotiations. What's going to happen on September 1? We don't get back here until about September 10.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Chaos, more.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: We're going to have more chaos unless some kind of a miracle happens. The only miracle I can see happening is for the government to take responsibility. Take those 1,000 people who work over there at the Ministry of Education and find a better system. It shouldn't be up to the third party and it shouldn't be up to the official opposition to come up with a system that will work so the government can be saved.

We're saving them today. What we're doing today is, we're going to help them get this bill passed as quickly as possible, to get those 72,000 students back in the classroom. That's our prime concern right now. We're doing this very, very reluctantly because I can tell you this has been the worst—we call it a disaster—two-tiered bargaining disaster we've ever imagined.

The government that claims they're so wonderful in education—Dalton McGuinty was the education Premier and all this kind of thing. You know what? Give me a break. Everything's come home to roost right now. The problems are here. Twelve years of fiscal mismanagement has allowed the province to get into a debt of a billion dollars a month. They have no money. Now, of course, they're going to take it out on anybody they possibly can. Health care cuts, education cuts; those are the two major areas they're going to cut, unless, of course, they can blame someone else.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Oh, they're good at that.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Surely they'll find a way to blame Stephen Harper. That's got to be the first guy. You always blame Stephen Harper.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: John Robarts.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Then you go to John Robarts and—

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Bill Davis.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: —Bill Davis and go back as far as Sir John A. Macdonald. If there's a Conservative on the planet, they'll find that guy to blame before they'll actually take the responsibility themselves. That's what I'm imagining, what I'm saying here today.

We're not going to put up a lot of speakers on this thing. We'll do the questions and comments. We want this bill passed immediately. We want those students back in the classroom. We want the teachers to grab some of the time they've had to be able to help those students at graduations and proms, and then get those young men and women out there getting jobs as they get careers at colleges or universities or trades, because you know what? We need people working in Ontario to pay some of the debt off that these guys have accumulated over here.

I can go on for a long time. I know you like to hear me speak, Mr. Speaker, because I don't read those long notes.

The reality is we that have a problem in education, a serious, serious problem. I don't know how, even after—say the bill is passed by Wednesday or Thursday, I don't

know how we're going to correct this mess by September 1, when our students go back to class. That includes these young men and women who are pages here today.

Everyone in this room probably has some kind of an interest in education. Whether you have a child or a grandchild in the school system, or a spouse who may be a teacher, a son or daughter who is a teacher, a mother or a father, we all have a stake in this. This is very, very important. We've got to get this thing right.

I can only say, again, on behalf of Patrick Brown, our new leader—we are excited to have him. He's been well organized already.

Interjection.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Well, you know what? I can tell how excited you are to have him. I could tell the day he spoke when the Premier of Quebec was here. You were so humiliated, you couldn't believe what was happening. He was humiliating you with your own facts. The Liberal Party tried to take away the enthusiasm of our new leader, elected a couple of days before, by bringing in the Premier of Quebec—and God only knows why they brought him in—and it backfired on them. They can heckle us all they want. I'm very proud to see that Patrick Brown is our new leader and I can tell you right now, he will do a wonderful job. In 2018, he's going to be sitting right over there, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Comments and questions? The member from Welland—Niagara Falls.

Mr. Wayne Gates: It's in that area, Speaker, somewhere in that area.

First of all, I think we should change the name of Bill 103 to the "attack the teachers act." I think that might be something you might want to look at.

How did we get here? I think that's important. The Liberals created the crisis with the school boards, make no mistake about it. The Minister of Education really set up what's going on right across the province of Ontario when she stood up and said that teachers wanted to go on strike. Think about that. I don't know of any teacher—and I'm going to give you some background on how I know teachers—who I've ever met or talked to who ever said, "I want to go on strike." So I think they kind of set up the bargaining process.

I kind of look like I know a little bit about the teaching profession. My daughter Chantel is a teacher. She goes to school at 7:30 in the morning, comes home at 5, 6 o'clock at night, marks papers, works extremely hard. My daughter Tara works in the special-needs education sector. My wife is a teacher of 30 years, and do you know what she did for the last five years that she was teaching? They had a breakfast club because the school that she had—there were a lot of single moms, single dads, low income. So every morning they had a breakfast club that started at 7:45, and guess who was there every single day for the breakfast clubs? Those same teachers, those same teachers who care about their kids.

I've gone out socially with teachers. My good friend Mr. Bradley from St. Catharines knows that. When you

go out with teachers, it's one of the most boring nights in history. It's true. What do the teachers talk about? They talk about their kids. They talk about little Johnny. If you ask them the score in a hockey game, they have no clue. They just keep talking about little Johnny.

That's all the time I have; I'm sorry.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Clearly, this is a decision to move forward with this legislation that has not been taken lightly. When you have the Education Relations Commission, after, obviously, some real consideration, recognizing that the year is in jeopardy for the students in Durham, Sudbury and Peel, and the fact that they may not be able to successfully complete the school year, this kind of action needs to be taken. It's not action that any government wishes to take. It certainly continues to leave the opportunity for a positive collective bargaining opportunity, and I think that's really, really important.

I stand here as well, as my colleagues who have already spoken have, recognizing the extraordinary work that our teachers are doing all across the province of Ontario. Minister Sandals indicated the significant increase in graduation rates, which is so important. That's been part of the partnership that we've seen between the teachers of our province, the educators and our government working together in a positive way. But this is a challenge, particularly for those students who have been affected in Durham, Sudbury and Peel. There needs to be an opportunity for them to complete their school year.

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We've come together in the past in this chamber to support back-to-work legislation. We've come together, all three parties agreeing to it, and obviously we're not in that situation today. But again, this is something that I think is extremely important. Immediate action was needed. This is something that we feel strongly about, recognizing how difficult it is in terms of an atmosphere, but co-operation is still extremely important. We want to see that happen. But it's important, I believe, that all parties of this Legislature allow the opportunity for students to get back to school.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Todd Smith: It's a pleasure to join the debate this afternoon on Bill 103. I'd like to congratulate our critic on education and post-secondary education, the member for York-Simcoe, who has been doing a fantastic job since taking over the portfolio—Simcoe North; sorry—since last June.

I recall, though, that our previous education critic and I were on the committee that studied Bill 122—Rob Leone from Cambridge when he was here. At that time, we had a lot of difficulty with Bill 122. We were debating it continuously at the committee level and talking about the fact that this two-tiered system wasn't going to work. Professor Leone—as he is now known—had some really good information as to why this system wasn't going to work. However, the government of the

day and the third party and all of the big unions really wanted to rush this through. They wanted to get this done, and they actually time-allocated Bill 122 and had the vote here in the Legislature. This was going to solve all of the problems that we were seeing and bargaining in our education system. Clearly, now that we've had a sober second look at how this is working, it's not working.

As the member from Simcoe North spoke very passionately about, we have to fix this situation. We have to fix Bill 122. He talked about the fact that we're sticking a finger in the dam right now. We're putting a Band-Aid on something that is going to erupt in the fall. We know it is going to erupt in the fall. This government, though, won't admit that they're the ones that caused the problem. I know we have a member on our side who always says, "When you mess up, fess up." This government isn't doing it. They need to fess up, admit that they made a mistake and fix the problem.

But right now, we're going to help this government out and get these three school boards back in the classroom so that the kids can get back to school, hopefully on Friday morning.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Let me say that no one in this House wants to see the school year in any jeopardy for the students. No one. But on the other hand, the Liberal government has created a mess. Now they're throwing it across the aisle and saying, "Help us out. It's up to you. You have to help us save face here." They had all the time in the world to bargain; they didn't bargain.

Speaker, I know you're not allowed to bring props in here, but I thought the education minister should have had a wash basin and some soap, because she's washing her hands of any responsibility that she thinks she doesn't have because of the situation she created. The Liberals have created a situation that has caused great chaos—a crisis in education. They're looking across the aisle and saying, "Help us out."

No one is going to jeopardize the school year, but there is democracy at stake. You need to be told what's wrong with the system if you're ever going to fix the system. The way you hear those arguments is, you listen to debate. That's why there's no unanimous consent. You have to be told what you're doing wrong if you ever expect the system to be fixed.

Nobody in this House wants to jeopardize the school year for students in Ontario. That's not going to happen. They have the votes, they have the support—they don't even need the support; they have their own votes. By Thursday, they can pass the bill, after they go through the process of allowing other people, other voices—we heard earlier today about students in the Rainbow board, 2,600, who petitioned, saying, "Don't legislate the teachers back. Negotiate with them. Come up with a fair deal." That's from their own students, 2,600 students in Nickel Belt, in the Rainbow board. There are other voices that have to be heard.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the member from Simcoe North for final comments.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'd like to thank the member from Welland, the Minister of Northern Development and Mines, the member from Prince Edward–Hastings and the member from Windsor–Tecumseh for their comments.

I also want to thank the member from Nickel Belt for bringing forward the private member's bill on the francophone university. I actually did a notice of motion back in November on that as well. I'm just going to read what it says: "That, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario and its Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities should take steps toward the establishment of a French-language university to be established in the Greater Toronto Area." I filed that back in November. I'll be onside with her on that because with the 700,00 francophones in Ontario and the fact we have English-language universities in Quebec, I think it's fair that, someday, we actually make that happen here in Ontario.

But in the end, I wanted to sum up the fact that, again, our party will be supporting Bill 103. I say that again, and we say it reluctantly. I hear the comments coming from the third party. I completely understand where they're coming from. The reality is that every day now, I think, is important. We wouldn't have been asking those questions for the last five weeks if we didn't think the young men and women should be in the classroom.

I've actually visited a number of the picket lines. I think we've had a good understanding of what the problems are. I just go right back to what the main problem is: It's Bill 122. Bill 122 is flawed. There need to be changes made to that so that we're not going to have turmoil in the education system next fall.

I want to thank my caucus members. I want to thank our new leader, Patrick Brown, for the support on this. I think it's safe to say that we'll be supporting this bill as fast as it can go through. Again, we're not putting up speakers, just doing questions and comments. But the reality is that we want those young 72,000 students who are out of the classroom now back in the classroom so that they can graduate and have their proms and all the things that young men and women do as they go towards graduating and into college and university.

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

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Today I rise to speak to Bill 103, the Protecting School Year Act, 2015. Put very simply, this bill legislates education workers at the secondary level in Durham, Sudbury, Manitoulin and the Peel region back to work for the remainder of the 2014-15 year.

I'll be leading the debate on behalf of my caucus and speaking for an hour this afternoon. I could talk a lot longer than that because I was a public school board trustee. I still have kids in our public education system, and I understand the importance of public education. I know first-hand what the Liberals' mismanagement of education has done to our public education system.

That being said, I think the debate on this bill deserves several hours. In fact, the topic of legislating terms of work for teachers is an issue that has been before this Legislature before. Not too long ago, a Liberal government under then-Premier Dalton McGuinty tabled Bill 115, legislating terms of work for teachers, stomping on the collective bargaining process and stifling the voices of the professionals working in our classrooms and those of elected school board trustees.

While the Liberals paid lip service to creating a collaborative environment for collective bargaining to take place, the bill before this Legislature makes it clear that they are more interested in legislating teachers back to work than fostering collaborations, much like what we saw in the McGuinty years with Bill 115.

While the Minister of Education and the Liberal government have utterly failed students and families in all aspects of the education file, they continue to skirt responsibility for the chaos that they are causing in our schools. From cuts to school closures to their inability to work collaboratively now with our education workers, this government has failed Ontarians.

Today I've got a chance to debate the culmination of Liberal failures on the education file, Bill 103. Rather than accept accountability for the mess that they made in our education system, the Liberals are skirting responsibility. Rather than focusing time and attention to negotiate with education workers, the government dragged their heels on the file and is now attempting to force teachers back to work. Rather than fulfill its commitment to create the conditions for smooth negotiations, the Liberal government is forcing teachers back to work.

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An examination of these past few months helps us understand what the Premier had in mind when she committed to open and collaborative negotiations with education workers, all in the best interests of Ontario families. In March of this year, the government announced major cuts to the Grants for Student Needs funding allocation. The GSN funding envelope provides the bulk of funding for education in Ontario. This year, the government made across-the-board cuts to the funding envelope.

Ontario families were appalled to learn that 38 school boards will see less funding for special education next year. I'd like to reiterate: 38 boards received less funding for special education, regardless of what the minister likes to say. This includes over \$6 million in special education cuts in Toronto alone. Across the province there will be \$36 million less in funding for textbooks, classroom supplies and in-classroom supports.

Yes, our education Premier was quick to show Ontarians what she meant when she claimed to be committed to improving education in this province.

Along with announcing these colossal cuts to education funding, the government also changed the Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline. The Pupil Accommodation Review Guideline, also known as PARG, outlines the standardized province-wide process by which local school boards conduct reviews to determine the

future of local schools. The Liberals cut the number of public meetings required before a school can be closed and created a loophole where no consultations will be done by a community committee. These changes restrict community input on school closure decisions.

The concern here is that this is a government that closed over 88 schools across the province between 2011 and 2014. Ontario families are worried that their good neighbourhood schools will be closed. These are the schools that are woven into the fabric of the community. The closure of these schools ripples across the neighbourhoods that house them.

Along with cuts to education and forcing the closure of neighbourhood schools across the province, this government is forcing boards to shed staff. We're losing qualified, dedicated and professional education workers across the province from Windsor to Peterborough and to the Bruce-Grey area. In fact, today in question period we heard that the Bluewater board will also be losing some staff.

Let's recap: Since March, the government has made historic funding cuts to education, specifically targeting special education funding at 38 school boards across the province; taken measures to reduce public consultation in the process of school closures; and forced dedicated education workers out of a job.

Throwing our education system into chaos is no easy task. But given the actions of this government over the past few months, you can't say they aren't trying their hardest. Parents and families across the province have a right to be frustrated with this government's constant failure in our education system. Ontarians know that broken Liberal promises, cuts and forced school closures created this mess in our education system. The government's refusal to overturn any of their ill-conceived cuts or admit that they are even cutting education funding perpetuates the chaos in our schools. What I find most troubling is that all of this was done by a Premier who claims to have cut her teeth on education issues. Given all the cuts, Ontarians are now seeing how sharp those teeth really are.

After breaking promises made just 11 months ago, cutting education funding and forcing school closures, this government began what they refer to as negotiating with our educational workers. Here is the result: Secondary students at public schools have been out of the classroom in Durham since April 20, in northern Ontario's Rainbow District School Board since April 27 and in Peel region since May 4. In Ottawa-Carleton and Halton, secondary students will not receive comments for learning skills on their report cards, along with several other administrative functions that will be reviewed. Combined, over 100,000 secondary students in our public education system are impacted.

In our public elementary schools, 76,000 education workers across the province are undertaking an administrative strike, omitting comments from report cards and not undertaking any administrative obligations. Today, we learned that this job action will be increased as of June 1 and throughout the summer.

Education workers in the Catholic system at both the elementary and secondary levels voted overwhelmingly in favour of a strike.

With students out of class and chaos in our schools, Ontario's students and families should be able to look to their government for leadership and direction. Instead, the Premier and Minister of Education denied all their ill-conceived cuts to education and blamed local boards and trustees for school closures that were forced by shortfalls in government funding.

When dedicated education workers and parents showed up at the minister's office to voice their concerns with the government's failures on the education file, the Minister of Education actually went as far as to say that she has had protests outside of her office before, in the last election, and she seems to have gotten re-elected.

Understandably, Ontarians demanded answers for the chaos in our schools, but when they asked the government for answers, the Minister of Education went as far as to claim that she found this situation "perplexing."

Families in Ontario want leadership from their government. Leadership is grounded in taking responsibility and defending your actions. While it was this government that threw our schools into chaos, they are now attempting to make up for their shortcomings on the backs of hard-working education workers, parents and students in Ontario.

This morning I called on the Premier to fire her Minister of Education. It's time for this government to accept accountability for the chaos they caused in our schools. Ontarians deserve a Minister of Education who can work collectively with professionals, who stands by commitments made to keep class sizes manageable, and, at the very least, actually admits when hundreds of millions of dollars are cut from education funding.

Ontarians deserve a Minister of Education who accepts responsibility for ill-conceived cuts to education. In fact, Ontarians deserve better than a minister who proposes short-sighted cuts and then walks away when things go wrong. Instead of bringing people together to get a deal done, the Minister of Education blamed teachers, blamed boards of education and drove the sides apart.

The minister was given a job to do, and her failure to work collaboratively with educators falls solely at her feet. As a result, and because of her continued failure to serve Ontario families, the Premier should fire her minister immediately, before her Liberal government rams through legislation to force education workers back to work in an attempt to quiet the outrage she has caused in our education sector.

I will say again that the Premier must fire the minister and encourage all sides back to the bargaining table immediately. Respectful, collaborative collective negotiations are the only way to ensure long-term stability in our education system. The bill up for debate today is not the answer.

The purpose of the bill being debated today, the Protecting the School Year Act, is simple, yet its impact

will be cited for years to come. The bill legislates striking public and secondary school teachers in Durham, Rainbow and Peel back to work for the duration of the 2014-15 school year. Rather than working collectively to negotiate a fair deal with education workers, the Liberals have demonstrated once again that they would rather legislate than negotiate.

Back-to-work legislation demonstrates that the Minister of Education and Premier have failed to bring people together and resolve the issues and chaos in our schools, whether the government will admit this or not.

This legislation does nothing to fix the actual problems. Students may be going back to class, but what quality of classroom are they returning to? Let's remember that it's this Liberal government that cut \$248 million from education in 2014-15, forced the closure of good neighbourhood schools and handed out pink slips to our dedicated education workers.

The government threw our education system into chaos and, like everything else, Ontario families are now paying the price. It's clear that the Liberal government does not respect teachers, families or students. This government went from wanting a fair, negotiated deal last week to ramming through back-to-work legislation today.

The remainder of my remarks today are going to focus on how we got here. How did a government that touted itself as a stark contrast to the Harris era cause Harris-era labour unrest? How does a government that imposed contracts on teachers through Bill 115, repealed this bill and promised a better way forward, think that it's acceptable to legislate teachers back to work? How arrogant is a government that won't admit to their role in making a mess of our education system but asks for the unanimous consent of this Legislature to cover their inability to work with education workers and keep their promises to families?

1700

No, we did not support a unanimous consent motion on this bill. We will force this government to defend its actions. They created this mess in our education system. It's their ill-conceived cuts to education that are throwing our schools into chaos, and it's their inability to take responsibility for their actions that see so many of our students missing class.

Maybe, just maybe, through the course of the debate, this government will actually show Ontarians a hint of contrition. Maybe they'll admit that underfunding education is a mistake and that forcing neighbourhood schools to close is not in the best interests of Ontarians.

Speaker, it starts with firing the Minister of Education and getting all sides back to the bargaining table. Unfortunately, this Liberal government has done little to show that they are ready to own up to their actions, and the bill before us today proves it.

As I stated in the introduction, the bill before us today, Bill 103, forces teachers back to work and circumvents the collective bargaining process that this government set up so that they won't have to take these actions.

Bill 103 deals specifically with secondary school teachers currently on strike in the public boards of Durham, Rainbow and Peel districts. This bill requires the termination of any strike or lockout and provides a mechanism for achieving a memoranda of settlement of local terms. The scope of the bill is limited to these three boards and applies to the 2014-15 school year.

This bill is made up of several components. As I've stated, there is the back-to-work component, which ends work stoppage at the three boards or any strike action at these boards. The bill goes on to state that the parties would be prohibited from beginning any new strike or lockout in connection with the current round of local bargaining. The act would also prohibit strikes and lockouts by the employees and school boards in respect to central bargaining for the remainder of the 2014-15 school year. Terms and conditions of employment with respect to local matters that existed as of the day before the first day the work stoppage became lawful are to continue to apply until there is a settlement of local issues, unless both parties agree otherwise. Any administrative strikes, such as a work-to-rule mandate, would also likely be prohibited by these three locals under this act.

Bill 103 includes an enforcement component, with failure to comply resulting in a \$2,000-per-day fine for individuals and a \$25,000-per-day fine for the union. There are also dispute resolution components outlining that all outstanding local matters in dispute would be referred to mediation-arbitration. Local parties would have the opportunity to appoint the members of an arbitration board. Each party will select one member of the panel and then will need to agree on a chair. If the parties fail to make the required appointments within the required time, the Minister of Labour would be in a position to make appointments.

Even in legislation that cripples collective discussion, leave it to the Liberals to include provisions—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Point of order.

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

On a point of order, the member from Nepean-Carleton.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I think it's important to note that the Ontario Labour Relations Board just recently ruled that the three local OSSTF strikes are unlawful.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you very much. That's not a point of order.

Back to the member from Windsor West.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): On a point of order, the member from Windsor-Tecumseh.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I believe the member who just raised the point of order was in violation of the rules of the House by reading from her BlackBerry.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): That is a point of order. Back to the member from Windsor West.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Thank you, Speaker. Even in legislation that cripples collective discussion, leave it to

the Liberals to include provisions that give themselves even more authority.

If a settlement with respect to local matters were reached, any mediation-arbitration proceeding that was under way would be terminated. Time limits for the mediation-arbitration process commence within 30 days of appointment. The time allocations for a decision could be extended if all parties agree. Any costs associated with mediation-arbitration would be shared by the parties.

Moving to some provisions under the term "award components," the award would include all local matters in dispute between the parties. The board of arbitration could not have jurisdiction to determine any matter within the scope of central bargaining at the central table. If there was a dispute between the parties on this point, the issue would be referred to the central table by the board of arbitration, and the board would only be required to consider any relevant factors as well as specified criteria generally consistent with other interest arbitration and back-to-work legislation.

By tabling this act, the Liberals are showing Ontarians once again that they would rather legislate than negotiate. Sure, before talks began, this government trumpeted their commitment to fair and open negotiations across Ontario. They spoke at length of the values of this new collective bargaining process, which was their antidote to the damage caused by former Liberal Premier Dalton McGuinty's Bill 115. Of course, Premier McGuinty promised not to be like his predecessors Harris and Eves when it came to our education sector, only to force a contract upon teachers with Bill 115 once elected.

Now, with our current Premier, we are seeing a repeat of the McGuinty strategy of making promises, breaking promises, and blaming everyone else. It was this government that promised not to cut education. Not surprisingly, they cut education funding early on in their mandate and are now blaming professionals in the education system for the chaos their cuts have had in our schools. The Liberals promised to keep class sizes manageable in our schools, but they are now flip-flopping on this commitment and, not surprisingly, are blaming our education workers and families across Ontario for defending class caps. Rather than choosing to negotiate collectively, this government has again chosen to impose legislation.

What do our education workers have to say about this—the very professionals the government should be fostering a good relationship with? A release from the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation reads as follows:

"The Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF/FEESO) is extremely disappointed that the government of Ontario has decided to legislate an end to teacher and occasional teacher strikes at the Durham, Rainbow and Peel District School Boards.

"Nothing positive can ever come out of a legislated curtailment of a union's fundamental right to bargain freely and to withdraw services when necessary," said OSSTF/FEESO president Paul Elliott. "This government

created the current bargaining process, and we have made every effort to make it work. It's disappointing that the Premier and the education minister are so eager to subvert that process with legislation rather than roll up their sleeves and take an active role in helping to make the process work.'

"Elliott continued, 'It's clear to us that the minister's decision to ask the Education Relations Commission for a recommendation was nothing more than political cover for a government that has no real commitment to the bargaining process. Like their predecessors who introduced Bill 115 in 2012, this minister and this Premier would clearly rather legislate than negotiate.

"We will continue to work for negotiated local agreements with all of the other school boards around the province, and for a fair, negotiated agreement at the central bargaining table. But this action by the government today has done nothing to help move negotiations forward,' Elliott concluded."

It's clear that this government's adversarial and top-down approach to bargaining has soured relationships with our education professionals and failed families who want the highest-quality education system for their children. It is essential that the government maintain public confidence in their ability to work collectively with their employees, but this government has failed on every front. Our public elementary school teachers are currently undertaking an administrative strike. Though this bill before the Legislature does not apply to them directly, it shows that the government is not interested in working collaboratively with our education partners. While the government has had months to negotiate with our education workers, they dragged their feet, only to now legislate secondary school teachers back to work.

In a release announcing their job action, Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario president Sam Hammond stated: "After eight months of bargaining, it is entirely disingenuous of Minister Sandals to plead ignorance of how these and other issues have forced us to take this strike action."

Speaker, statements such as this underscore the inability of the Minister of Education to hold the public trust and work in collaboration with our education partners and with the best interests of students in mind. The Premier must fire her minister before she causes more havoc in our education system. The minister has failed students, failed families and failed to maintain a relationship with professionals in our education system. The Premier must fire her Minister of Education and get back to the central bargaining table. She must also work to create conditions for fair negotiations at local tables.

I've compared this government's handling of the education file to that of the Harris era several times since I took on the portfolio of education in March. This bill is certainly something out of the former PC Premier's playbook, but I think it's important to spend some time comparing this government's approach to education to that of the Harris era. I don't want to spoil the point I am about to make, but you will not believe the similarities.

1710

Let's begin with the differences, since there are far less of them. Former Premier Mike Harris was a Progressive Conservative; our current Premier is a Liberal. The PCs were governing in the 1990s and, of course, the Liberals are governing—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): We have a point of order.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I do apologize to the member. I didn't mean to interrupt, but given the fact that the Ontario Labour Relations Board has deemed that this strike is illegal, would this legislation not therefore be redundant?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I don't believe that is a point of order.

Back to the member from Windsor West.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Thank you, Speaker.

The PCs were governing in the 1990s and, of course, the Liberals are governing today. At the time, the PCs campaigned to cut education spending. The Liberals, on the other hand, promised not to cut education and continuously committed to fair and open negotiations with our education workers. Of course, we now know that they intended to do the complete opposite. In terms of their stance on education, it seems that this pretty much sums up the differences.

In 1997, then-Premier Mike Harris proposed massive changes to teachers' prep time and class sizes. These decisions resulted in 126,000 Ontario public and Catholic school teachers staging a two-week strike in protest of these changes. At the time, the strike affected more than two million students and was the largest in North American history.

When Liberal Premier Dalton McGuinty was elected in 2003, right through to his resignation in 2013, Ontarians were told that the quality of education would improve. It's amazing. When a Liberal government is making grand commitments about improving education, they tout their plan, advertise it and plug it in any speech they deliver in this chamber. When they fail to live up to these commitments and break the promises that they used to get them here, all of a sudden the blame is laid at someone else's feet.

During contract negotiations in 2012, the McGuinty government spent eight months negotiating with educators. Again, to make up for his government's inability to work collaboratively with education workers, the Liberal Premier of the day chose to table the now infamous Bill 115 on January 3, 2012. This bill was an insult to the fair collective bargaining process. New Democrats opposed Bill 115 and oppose Bill 103 today.

Bill 115 sought to severely limit the right to strike by education workers in Ontario by imposing a two-year restraint period that commenced on September 1, 2012, for collective agreements expiring August 31. The bill banned strikes and lockouts during this two-year restraint period and deemed these actions unlawful. It gave the province the power to force employees to pay back any

money they received that contravened the act. The act prohibited the Labour Relations Board and any other arbitrators from either inquiring into or making decisions about the constitutionality of the act or whether the act is in conflict with the Human Rights Code. The bill allowed the government to impose a two-year contract on teachers. Perhaps most controversially, the bill gave the government the power to end a strike or lockout without debating the issue in the provincial Legislature.

In September 2012, the government passed this draconian legislation in the Legislature. It faced legal challenges by October 11 and province-wide protests throughout the remainder of the year and into 2013. At the time, the Liberals insisted that the bill was necessary and contained “tools within it to respond to provincial work-to-rule circumstances.” That was a quote from then-Minister of Education Laurel Broten.

Since then, the bill is remembered for what it was: not only a failed attempt by the government to unilaterally impose contracts on education workers and circumvent an established collective bargaining process, but a piece of legislation that stifled the voice of other elected officials, both at the provincial and municipal levels. It took away the voice of education workers, parents, students and elected school board trustees. The Liberal actions in tabling Bill 115 in 2012 showed their arrogance and great disrespect for an established bargaining process, the professionalism of our education workers and Ontario students and families by souring our relationship with education workers. This was their government bill. They crafted it, introduced it and enforced it.

Once the gas plant scandal surfaced and McGuinty resigned, our current Premier won the leadership of her party. Like so many before her, she promised not to cut education, to keep class sizes manageable and respect collective bargaining. The Premier appointed the member from Guelph to be her Minister of Education in both the 40th and 41st Parliaments. On September 24, 2014, the Premier wrote to her newly reappointed minister with a mandate letter that reads as follows:

“Dear Minister Sandals:

“I am honoured to welcome you back to your role as Minister of Education. We have a strong cabinet in place, and I am confident that together we will build Ontario up, create new opportunities and champion a secure future for people across our province. The people of Ontario have entrusted their government to be a force for good, and we will reward that trust by working every day in the best interests of every person in this province.

“As we implement a balanced and comprehensive plan for Ontario, we will lead from the activist centre. We will place emphasis on partnerships with businesses, communities and people to help foster continued economic growth and make a positive impact on the lives of every Ontarian. This collaborative approach will shape all the work we do. It will ensure we engage people on the issues that matter the most to them, and that we implement meaningful solutions to our shared challenges.”

The letter goes on to list some of the ministry priorities. Among these priorities, under the heading “Respecting Collective Bargaining,” the letter states:

“—Continuing to respect the collective bargaining process, as demonstrated by our introduction and passage of the School Boards Collective Bargaining Act. Collective bargaining enhances the ability of responsible employers and bargaining agents to increase productivity, deliver services and ensure fiscal sustainability. Any modest wage increases that may be negotiated must be absorbed by employers within Ontario’s existing fiscal plan.”

I don’t see anything in this mandate letter that calls on the minister to impose cuts to education, I don’t see anything that calls for the closure of good neighbourhood schools across the province, and I know that the heading “Respecting Collective Bargaining” did not indicate that the government was going to force teachers back to work.

I hope the Premier spends today writing a new mandate letter for the Minister of Education. I’ll even get it started for her. It could read something like this:

“Dear Minister:

“It seems that cutting \$248 million from education was not in the best interest of Ontarians. Creating the conditions that force good neighbourhood schools to close and dedicated educators out of a job was also ill-advised. It seems that Ontario families understand the value of special education and will not stand for it to be cut. Finally, your mandate very clearly laid out that the collective bargaining process was to be respected.

“Minister, you were given a job to do and failed on every front. I regret to inform you that, effectively immediately, you will cease to be the Minister of Education. Best of luck in your future endeavours.”

Speaker, the Premier has my permission to use this as a framework letter to inform the Minister of Education that she has been fired. With any luck, this can be done before the end of the day.

My point in all of this is to highlight the differences in what the Liberals promise and what they actually do. Today, education workers and stakeholders across the province are asking what happened. What happened to this government that was supposed to be committed to open negotiations? What happened to this government that promised not to cut education funding?

Today we see the Liberals’ true colours. We see just how committed they are to the collective bargaining process. We see just how much ownership they are willing to take for the chaos that they have created in our schools. If this government was truly committed to all that they promised to be committed to, each member would vote against Bill 103. Each member of the government caucus would admit that their government undervalued our education system and cut from vital programming, like special education.

I cannot stress enough that the actions of this government have created the chaos in our schools. When they announced the major funding envelopes for education

this March, the Minister of Education claimed—and to this date, continues to claim—that education funding is stable. If this was the case, the overall funding level would have been adjusted for inflation, but as all members in this chamber know, it was not. That is to say, while the minister claims that funding remained at \$22.5 billion from last year to this year, we know that real funding levels went down once rising costs were accounted for.

Let's look at a few in-depth examples:

- the Pupil Foundation Grant, which covers the cost of salaries, textbooks and classroom supplies, will be \$36 million lower this year. Government blames this on declining enrolment;

- 38 school boards will receive less funding under the Special Education Grant next year, including a \$3.5-million cut for the Toronto District School Board and a \$2.7-million cut for the Toronto Catholic District School Board;

- the high needs allocation will be frozen for the next four years at \$1.05 billion overall;

- there are significant cuts for school facilities operation and renewal, impacting underutilized, small and rural schools;

- base top-up funding for under-capacity schools will be eliminated over the next three years. It is being cut by \$38 million this year, or roughly one third;

- the Declining Enrolment Adjustment, which provides schools with a three-year transition period to align costs with lower enrolment, is being cut by half, which is about \$33 million, and it's being shortened to two years;

1720

- the Geographic Circumstances Grant to support small schools, rural boards and isolated communities is being cut by \$7 million, which is roughly 3.5%.

When this year's budget was released, we largely thought we knew what would be in it from an education perspective. As I stated before, the GSN funding was released prior to the budget. Just when we thought the government had cut all that it could from education funding, you can imagine our surprise when we discovered what was in store in this year's budget, the same budget that also outlined plans to sell off our major publicly owned hydro utility, which, according to the Minister of Education's own account, will deprive our education system of much-needed resources.

In the budget, we discovered a \$248-million, 2014-15 in-year cut to education funding. When I questioned the minister on this, when I asked her to admit to this and accept responsibility—and, Speaker, I can tell her exactly what page in her budget that number is on—I was told repeatedly that this is not a cut; it is money that's not being spent. Speaker, I don't know the difference between money that's cut and money that's not there to actually be used. If it walks like a duck and it quacks like a duck, I would say it's a duck. With their logic, the government would have you call it a rabbit.

The \$248 million could have funded special education programs in several of the school boards that received

less funding this year. It could have gone towards providing more in-classroom supports and resources for students or have been spent on repairing our neighbourhood schools.

The Minister of Education and Premier seem content to spin their answers when my New Democratic colleagues and I rise several times a week and ask them to stop their cuts to education system.

Personally, I've called on the government to stop the cuts, reverse the cuts and even to simply acknowledge that these cuts are taking place. Unfortunately, the government continually claims that there are no cuts. Tell that to the parents of students at the 38 school boards who won't get the special education resources they need to provide their child with the highest-quality education that we can and should offer.

Let's be clear. Special education includes supports for students who are struggling with classroom material and students who are not being challenged enough. That would be students who struggle and students who generally excel. Valuable resources dedicated to special education help students perform to the best of their ability and ensure that no student falls through the cracks in our education system. It is shameful that this government is depriving 38 school boards of the resources they need to provide quality education in Ontario.

As a result of Liberal cuts, we are also losing dedicated professional education workers. This includes full-time and occasional teachers, educational assistants, early childhood educators and all support staff. Unfortunately, when this government goes looking for savings, they always do it on the backs of hard-working Ontario families. Across the province, government cuts have forced school boards to shed jobs in one or several categories. Eliminating educational worker positions negatively impacts students. We know this, Speaker. We know the value of in-classroom support positions like early childhood educators or education assistants, yet these positions are always first on the chopping block for this government.

This is how short-sighted their approach to education is. They dramatically underfund our education system and create the conditions that have put our educational workers out of a job and deprived students from benefiting from dedicated staff. Speaker, 21 ECEs are on the chopping block in my riding of Windsor West. The Greater Essex County District School Board is considering eliminating these positions, no doubt due to funding shortfalls from the province. This is how their short-sighted cuts manifest at the local level.

The Toronto District School Board lost 215 teachers, 100 ESL educators and eight secretaries because of \$22 million in cuts.

The theme in all of this, the theme in my remarks today, is that the government sets the priorities for education in this province. However, whenever an issue arises in the education sector in Ontario—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Excuse me.

Point of order? The member from Timmins–James Bay.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Mr. Speaker, the Ontario Labour Relations Board has ruled on this particular matter. I would ask that the House be adjourned for a bit so that the House leaders can have a discussion in order to decide how we proceed from here.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Sorry, but that is not a point of order.

I refer it back to the member from Windsor West to continue.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Speaker, I'd like to move adjournment of the debate so that the House leaders can talk about the recent ruling.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Ms. Gretzky has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour say "aye."

All those opposed say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

It will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1725 to 1755.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Can I ask the members to take their seats, please?

Ms. Gretzky has moved adjournment of the debate. All those in favour please rise.

All those opposed, please rise.

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 0; the nays are 70.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Please be seated.

Interjections.

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

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The member from Nepean–Carleton.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Oh, sorry, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The ayes being 0 and the nays being 70, I declare the motion defeated.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Since it is now close to 6 o'clock, this House stands recessed until 6:45.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The House recessed from 1757 to 1845.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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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	
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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)	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
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)
Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
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)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	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 President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGarry, Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	
McMahon, Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	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
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	Deputy Leader, Recognized Party / Chef adjoint du gouvernement
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**

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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**

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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**

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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

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la justice**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Bob Delaney
Jack MacLaren, Michael Mantha
Cristina Martins, Indira Naidoo-Harris
Arthur Potts, Shafiq Qaadri
Todd Smith
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tamara Pomanski

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

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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**

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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
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