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Tuesday 22 March 2016

Mardi 22 mars 2016

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Tuesday 22 March 2016

Mardi 22 mars 2016

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

2016 ONTARIO BUDGET

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 21, 2016, on the motion that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

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

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: I'm pleased to rise in the House this morning to speak to the budget motion. I'm very proud of the budget that our government put forward last month; I think all members of this House should be proud of our budget.

I've already heard from a number of my constituents in Scarborough–Guildwood about how the measures in this budget will make life easier for them. Whether I'm speaking to the young people who will now have the opportunity to access post-secondary education—and these are young people who never thought that this would have been possible—a young professional who wants to see investments in transit and transportation infrastructure, a parent who is concerned about safeguarding the environment for future generations or a senior who wants to ensure that their grandchildren will have access to a secure retirement, across ages and income levels, this budget has something for every Ontarian. When I look at this budget, what I see is vision and leadership. In 2014, we committed to a plan to build Ontario up, and that is certainly what we're doing in this budget.

I was very fortunate to have the opportunity to lead six in-person pre-budget consultations across this province on behalf of Minister Sousa earlier this year. I travelled from Sault Ste. Marie to Hamilton, Toronto, Kingston, Peterborough and Ottawa—to every corner—and I heard from stakeholders and individuals on valuable input from hundreds of Ontarians.

Our tele-town hall conference allowed us to engage with over 30,000 people from the GTA. I heard practical ideas about ways to grow our economy and make life a little bit easier for people from across this province. I heard about the importance of making strategic investments in infrastructure.

In our cities, Ontarians want to see investments in transit to help make the commute as seamless as possible.

In our northern communities, I heard about the importance of our northern highways program to ensure that people can flow seamlessly from point A to point B. I heard about the importance of bolstering education, training and entrepreneurship opportunities to ensure that all young people can have access to the tools they need to succeed in life, and I also heard about the importance of taking action on climate change now, so that we can protect future generations—just to name a few.

I am so pleased to see the feedback incorporated in our government's plan, and I know that Ontarians will feel confident that our government listened to their concerns. This budget is about ensuring that Ontarians are able to build the confidence they need in the future they hope for.

I know that students who came forward to consult with us on the budget—to speak about the barriers to access to post-secondary education and the importance of upfront financial assistance—are thrilled about this budget. I've heard directly from those students, Speaker. Thanks to our government's plan to modernize the Ontario Student Assistance Program, students who couldn't access post-secondary education will have the opportunity to do so. We believe that all students, regardless of background or circumstances, should be able to afford to go to college and to university. That's why we're combining existing financial assistance programs into a single, upfront grant that is more generous and more straightforward for our students.

This is something that is critical for young people in my community of Scarborough–Guildwood. The average household income in my riding is below the city average and the provincial average. We have one of the highest concentrations of Toronto Community Housing units in my community. For many of these families, post-secondary education has not been an option.

I recently visited Cedarbrae high school and was speaking to students in grade 10, telling them about the Ontario Student Grant. The look in their eyes was amazing. They asked me, "You mean this is for us? We will have the opportunity?" This was actually a group of young women who were part of a choir. I said, "Yes. All you have to do is study and prepare and get the marks you need to qualify." For many of them, post-secondary education was not a thought. Now, rather than worry about how they'll pay for it, they can focus on getting the grades they need to pursue the careers they want.

This is a game-changing opportunity for so many young people in our province. It's not just young people who will benefit; mature students, married students and

students who have been out of high school for more than four years will now have access to this grant support.

At the same time, we're also investing in jobs and in the economy so that, once people complete their studies, the jobs of tomorrow will be there for them. We're investing \$30 million in the Going Global export strategy, and \$400 million will go to the Business Growth Initiative to grow the economy and create jobs. We're doing this by promoting an innovation-based economy, helping small companies to scale up and modernizing regulations for businesses as well. Small companies like Dynaplas Ltd., an auto parts company in Scarborough, will benefit from these investments.

We're also making the largest investment in infrastructure in the province's history—

Ms. Daiene Vernile: How much?

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: —\$160 billion over the next 12 years. This will help ensure that people can move to and from the places they need to be with ease.

0910

Scarborough–Guildwood residents are already benefiting from the improvements we've been making to regional express rail on the Lakeshore East line. Building the Scarborough subway is one of the most important initiatives that our government is doing to help the people in Scarborough to move seamlessly across this region and to participate in a connected network.

I recently spoke to a woman in my riding who told me about the two-hour commute, each way, that she makes for her customer service job. The investments that we're making will ensure that this woman and many others like her will have to spend less time commuting and will have more time with their family, doing the things that they love. It's about improving quality of life. For people in my riding, this is critical, and I know that this will pay dividends in the long term.

We're also taking leadership on addressing climate change. We know we have to act now to safeguard future generations. As a member who represents a lakefront community, I know first-hand the importance of ensuring that we're doing all that we can to protect the valuable resources that we hold so dear. The \$1.9 billion that we're going to be reinvesting in green projects will have a profound impact on future generations. We have a responsibility to do this.

Of course, I would be remiss if I didn't speak about one issue that is so close to my heart: retirement security. I want to thank the Premier for appointing me as the minister responsible for the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan. We know that Ontarians aren't saving enough for retirement, and that's why we're moving forward with the ORPP: to help close the retirement savings gap and ensure that people can access a predictable stream of income for life. We've seen the economic analysis that was done by the Conference Board of Canada. They were clear that accounting for all factors, consumers and the economy will be better off under the ORPP. That's the kind of leadership that Ontarians expect from their government.

These are just a few of the changes proposed in Bill 173, the Jobs for Today and Tomorrow Act (Budget Measures), 2016. This bill continues the government's plan to build Ontario up and deliver on its number one priority, which is growing the economy and creating jobs. As we make these strategic investments, we're also doing so in a responsible way to ensure that we stay on our path to balance. Mr. Speaker, this is truly an exceptional budget, with something in it for all Ontarians.

I will be sharing my time with the member from Eglinton–Lawrence. So with that, I ask the support of this House in passing this very important legislation and in supporting Bill 173, the Jobs for Today and Tomorrow Act.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you. I recognize the—hold on just a moment. Now, after station identification, back to the member from Eglinton–Lawrence to continue debate.

Mr. Mike Colle: It's a pleasure to follow the member from Scarborough–Guildwood, who comes from a part of Toronto that sometimes in the past was not given the attention it deserves. I can remember Mayor Joyce Trimmer and Mayor Gus Harris. These were amazing leaders in Scarborough who made sure that the rest of the greater Toronto area never forgot about the hard-working, incredibly patriotic people of Scarborough, who for many years were really the backbone of the GTA. The member from Scarborough–Guildwood carries on that tradition of those great leaders in Scarborough. If you ever get a chance, Mr. Speaker, I ask you to take a trip to Scarborough one day. One of the most beautiful parts of Ontario is on the Scarborough Bluffs. It's an amazing—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Bluffing is what we get from this government all the time.

Mr. Mike Colle: Well, if you think of the white cliffs of Dover, it's almost like a cousin of that beautiful scene right in Toronto. Anyway, I want to thank the member for her advocacy for the great people of Scarborough as she talked about the budget.

I would like to also refer to the budget as it relates to the middle of the GTA, the middle of the city of Toronto, and that's my riding of Eglinton–Lawrence. This budget continues to invest essentially in working people, in jobs. Without jobs, you can't have the social programs, you can't have the environmental programs and you can't have the supports in place. Having jobs is what pays for all these programs, and this budget invests in jobs.

In my own riding, we are building the largest public transit project in North America right now. That's the Eglinton Crosstown subway, which goes all the way from the area of Mount Dennis underground all the way to Laird Drive in Leaside, and then continues all the way to Scarborough, connecting basically the eastern part of the GTA to the western part.

I've been in that project. You can see the real result of these investments. These are jobs where people are tunnelling underground with these two giant tunnel borers, and the underground section of the entry points is as big as this chamber. The two giant tunnel-boring machines

are working underground, building public transit in the middle of the city of Toronto to carry people to work, to carry mothers to their children in child care. It relieves congestion; it relieves pollution.

Right now Eglinton Avenue, especially in the middle of the city, is clogged with gridlock. Sometimes you'll see up to 15 buses backed up at Oakwood and Eglinton. That's why we're putting the subway underground, so that there will be underground stations. Right now we're starting to build the underground station at Bathurst Street. We're building an underground station at Oakwood, one at Dufferin, one at Keele, and we're connecting it with the GO train so that people coming from Georgetown will be able to interconnect with the east-west subway line.

So these are the dollars in this budget that are investing not only in today's jobs, but this is the infrastructure that will keep on being part of the increased economic activity for decades to come. When they built the Yonge Street line, when Mayor Lampion opened it in 1951, they said, "Well, this is a nice little toy." But as you know, if you look up Yonge Street, you'll see all the people who work and live in the Yonge Street corridor; you'll see the incredible investment that the people of North York, with their subway, made in the Sheppard-Yonge area. It's a huge metropolis built on transit lines. When you invest in public transit, there's also housing that is built and there are commercial establishments that follow. So it's an investment that goes beyond just the transit investment.

That's what this budget is doing: It's investing for today, but also for jobs going forward. These are the jobs that pay well. Many of them are jobs where you have to have high skill. But they keep on giving beyond the job today. As you know, when Toronto is building subways, they're buying their subway cars and streetcars from Thunder Bay. So there are hundreds of people working in the plant in Thunder Bay, producing excellent subway cars and excellent streetcars, made by the people in northwestern Ontario. So there's a connection. It's not just about subways or not just about people riding them in the greater Toronto area; it's about people who work producing the steel and then the steel goes to Thunder Bay to build these wonderful low-floor streetcars and the new subway. If you ride the subway in Toronto, you'll see the new cars that have come in from Thunder Bay. They are state-of-the-art public transit vehicles.

0920

Also in this budget is an important investment in a project that I certainly feel very strongly about, and that is the investment in maternal health.

Every year, over 30,000 Ontario mothers unfortunately lose their children through stillbirth or pregnancy loss through miscarriage—over 30,000 every year. These are mothers who suffer in silence. They go to our hospitals and get medical treatment from our doctors and nurses, but many of them do not get the high-quality medical support and treatment they need, so subsequently they do not cope with the loss of a child. They do not cope mentally; they do not cope physiologically.

That's why we passed a bill in this House, Bill 141, to invest in the maternal health of women across the province who lose their children. In this budget there is about a million-dollar investment toward improving health care for mothers who lose their children. I know that is not a big amount of money compared to the whole scale of the budget, but believe me, to those families across Ontario that were not able to get the health care they needed when their daughter, their sister, their wife went through pregnancy loss, this investment in this budget toward maternal health is a critically important investment. It means that they might get the proper, compassionate care that is needed for them to recover from this traumatic, tragic loss.

Just think of it, Mr. Speaker: Over 30,000 mothers in the province go through this every year. Over 150,000 mothers go through pregnancy loss—not only in Ontario, by the way, but all across Canada—and our hospitals do not pay enough attention to the medical needs of these mothers. In this budget we become the first province in Canada to specifically invest in this part of maternal health care; that is, women who unfortunately lose their children through miscarriage or stillbirth.

I ask you to consider this budget. I think it's a very solid budget that invests in jobs that we all need and invests in health care that we all need. Thank you for listening, Mr. Speaker.

Questions and comments? The member for—

Mr. Bill Walker: Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound.

Mr. Bill Walker: I'm not normally here on Tuesday morning, Speaker; we forgive you.

It's a pleasure to speak to this budget.

Mr. Speaker, we came into this budget asking for three things. We asked the government to have a credible plan to make energy affordable in Ontario. We've heard from 85% of Ontarians saying, "Don't sell Hydro One." They're very worried about that. There's nothing in the budget to do with that.

We asked them to include a plan to properly manage Ontario's health care system and ensure that costs were at the front-line care, to actually provide services and programs significantly. There were a few baubles in there, Mr. Speaker, but at the end of the day we're hearing again that nurses are being cut, doctors are being cut and hospitals are on the block. We're very concerned there.

Then, we asked them to include a credible plan to balance the budget, including immediate action to pay down the debt. This government spends \$12 billion a year on interest payments, and that is just not something we can support and accept.

I was here at Queen's Park last week and did a media event to ask them not to go forward with their plan to double the cost of prescription drugs for seniors. It's something that I'm hearing from people across the province. They're very, very concerned that our seniors are not being respected if they're going to increase this. Up to 92% of seniors out there will see increases to their

prescription costs—this on top of the higher energy costs we have talked about in this House for the last year and a half. People are struggling. This government is making it harder for all Ontarians to be able to afford the things they do, want and deserve.

I've also pushed the government—nothing in this budget about the 30,000 long-term-care beds they have committed, in the last two elections, to redevelop and refurbish. We know that the waiting list at this point is 24,000 seniors, and it's going to double in the next six years. We wanted to see some things for that.

We want them to definitely give serious thought to reversing the decision on increasing these drugs and take those other three things into priority, or I can't support this budget.

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

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: It is always a pleasure to rise in this House and debate issues relevant to my constituency in Windsor West and across the greater Windsor area.

The member from Eglinton–Lawrence talked quite a bit about transit in the greater Toronto area. He mentioned that there are projects under way to increase capacity for transit in the Toronto area, and then he kind of segued into how that creates jobs: When you increase transit in the greater Toronto area, that makes it easier for people to get to work and it makes it easier for parents to get to their child care providers.

I'm going to touch on the jobs piece and the child care piece. What we're looking at in this budget are a lot of cuts. We're losing doctors; we're losing nurses—we've lost 169 RNs in Windsor so far—and we're looking at, potentially, job losses in the education sector across the province, not just in Windsor. We've already seen these cuts begin with a \$430-million cut to education spending—that's a lot of jobs on the line.

One of the big issues that has come up recently is accessible child care. There is a potential change coming to child care regulations that is going to adversely affect many child care centres. It's going to be expensive. Many of the non-profit child care centres may be forced to close and may have to eliminate the infant rooms in their child care centres. That's less access to child care and fewer parents being able to go back to work after whatever parental leave they're entitled to.

I have great concerns about this budget and the cuts that are in it. It's not really moving Ontario forward; it's not building Ontario up; it's actually reducing the number of jobs out there for people in Ontario.

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

Ms. Daiene Vernile: I'm very pleased to rise this morning to speak about Bill 173, the Jobs for Today and Tomorrow Act, which was led this morning by the Associate Minister of Finance.

When a budget bill is introduced, what members usually do when they go into lock-up—I know I certainly did this as the MPP for Kitchener Centre—is you get the document and you start going through it, and you look

for any references that there might be to your particular community. In the hour and a half or so that I had with the budget document, I found 13 references to Kitchener and to Waterloo region, which I was very pleased to see.

Specifically to my region, to those people who are watching right now at home, I can tell you that there is good news there for our two local universities, Wilfrid Laurier and the University of Waterloo, and for Conestoga College with our piece for free tuition for students who come from families earning less than \$50,000. You've heard it said this morning, and you've heard it said over and over again, that this is a game-changer. Let me tell you, it is. In my community, I've had several young people come to me and say, "I wish that we'd had this when I was going to school." But now, here it is, and this is going to change the way that people are going to have access to university.

In my community, we're also seeing an advanced manufacturing consortium being established at the University of Waterloo. They're doing this along with Western and McMaster. I chatted with the head of government relations at U of W to find out what this is going to look like. They're essentially going to be connecting with industry to find out what they need to help train manufacturing leaders for tomorrow. There's also renewed funding for the Perimeter Institute for Theoretical Physics in Waterloo, and they're very happy to get that funding.

Most importantly, in my region we're seeing renewed funding and continuing funding for infrastructure. Our transportation minister has committed to a significant announcement before the summer on all-day, two-way GO train service.

This is a progressive budget. It is building infrastructure and creating jobs, and I'll certainly be supporting it.

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

Ms. Laurie Scott: It's a pleasure to rise today to make comment on the budget that has been brought forward by the Liberal government. I can just tell you that the people in Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock weren't happy. They saw this budget as taking more money out of their pockets, making it more expensive in everyday life.

0930

The minister who started off today's debate talked about the ORPP. Nobody that's over the age of 26 is going to get any benefit from this ORPP that has been introduced. The government's own ministry said that it's going to cost at least 54,000 jobs. It's a job killer. I can tell you that small businesses in my area say they're going to lay people off. They just can't afford to hire people with this extra pension plan that the government is making mandatory upon them. The people that actually do have a job can't pay their hydro bills, and now you're taking another 1.9%, so essentially 2%, off their paycheques.

We talked about health care—which I could talk about forever, but I have a short period of time. Look, the hospitals are not getting the money they need to operate, especially with our aging senior population. I have a sig-

nificant seniors' population in my riding. They have been frozen for four years, and this is really a cut. Ross Memorial Hospital is fighting a \$3-million shortfall in what they need. The Minden and Haliburton hospitals need more money to provide the services that we think they deserve.

Long-term-care: I have the lowest ratio of beds available to demand in the province in my Central East LHIN. I've talked about Peterborough county having lists of 2,700 on the wait-lists. My own riding has close to 1,000 on wait-lists. That doesn't even include all of the Central East LHIN. And mental health: I've seen mental health cuts in my riding, and I have the second-highest demand in the province for that in my Central East LHIN.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on and on, but there are lots of reasons not to vote for this budget.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the member for Eglinton–Lawrence for final comments.

Mr. Mike Colle: I want to thank the members from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, Windsor West, Kitchener Centre and Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock for their comments.

I just want to say that most Ontarians and people in my riding like to talk about how hard-working the people of Ontario are, how proud they are of this great province and how they are leading Canada in economic growth. They talk about the cranes in the sky; we have got more cranes in the sky in the GTA than all other North American cities combined. That means jobs. I know it's the job of the opposition to talk down Ontario, but I think I prefer to talk up the people of Ontario. That's what it's all about.

When there's a proposal from the minister of financial affairs—the member from Scarborough–Guildwood—she talks about the need for pensions for people who work their whole life. It is just incredible that in this day and age, the Conservative Party is still opposed to giving people who work their whole life a decent pension when they retire. They're going to flip-flop on this, too, I guess.

This budget has an investment in the hard-working people of Ontario, whether you work in construction or whether you work in the health care field—there's an increase of a billion dollars in health care funding. All they say is, "There's less money." Well, there's a billion dollars more. There's \$345 million more for hospitals. There is more for children with autism and their services.

There's never enough, obviously. Obviously we've got to plug up some more holes, but generally speaking the people of Ontario want to build up this province. They don't want to drag it down.

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: I really appreciate the opportunity this morning to speak to this budget.

It's funny: The government comes here, and they've got their talking points and their way of putting forth what they think is every positive aspect of the budget, and it never really meshes with reality. In fact, I couldn't

find my copy of the budget. The one thing that the government did this year—maybe that's the extent of their austerity plan—is that they printed fewer copies, so it was harder to get copies in the hard paper version.

I couldn't find my copy, so I went to the library to find a copy. I was really finding it difficult, because I did what I thought I should do: I looked for it in the fiction section, and I couldn't find it. Finally, do you know where we found it? In the fantasy section. That's where we found a copy of the budget, Speaker: in the fantasy section. Yes, the fantasy section of the library. I knew I'd find it somewhere. I knew it wasn't going to be in the non-fiction or the reality section. Finally, I found it in the fantasy section.

But, as I say, the government members get up there and—do you know what I find really funny? The ministers will stand up here in question period and they'll say, "Why isn't the member from the third party" or "Why isn't the member from the official opposition telling about this wonderful"—what they see as this wonderful aspect of the budget. Well, you see, Speaker—and I'll say this in fairness—in every budget, there are going to be some good things and some really not good things. But, you see, it's not my job as a member of the opposition to talk about the things in the budget that I might even agree with. They're right: There are a few things in there. But that's not my job.

Do you think the government members are going to get up, the trained seals that they are, and talk about the parts of the budget that are wrong for Ontario? Of course not. That's our job: to speak about what's wrong in this budget and in every piece of legislation that this tired old government brings to this House. And we're going to do our job; as opposition, we're going to do our job. If it was left to the government members and their spin doctors, the people out there, the public in Ontario, would wake up and think, "My goodness gracious, what a wonderful world we live in, governed by Kathleen Wynne and the Liberals." Well, I beg to differ. Before I go on, I wanted to open up with that salvo.

But I did want to take a moment to pass on our deepest sympathies to the people in Brussels this morning. There were more terrible terrorist attacks in Brussels. I hope that our Prime Minister, having the big federal budget today, actually understands what a threat terrorism is and what a threat ISIS is, and he starts to take that seriously. He has been ignoring it and trying to pretend that we can't be affected by it here in Canada, and I hope that he changes his tune after these terrible attacks in Brussels today. As I say, our hearts go out to the families of those killed in the Brussels attacks—at least 28 dead and over 100 injured today.

This also brings me to another point. I'm very pleased, and I want to give my congratulations to my colleague our deputy leader, Steve Clark, the member from, as he says, the great riding of Leeds–Grenville. He understands that it's almost as great as the greatest riding of Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. I want to take my hat off to my colleague Steve Clark for showing leadership and keep-

ing the pressure on to ensure that our security force here at the Legislative Assembly was also fitted with firearms. It's long overdue, and thankfully the decision—

Interjection.

Mr. John Yakabuski: It was done by committee—overdue but, thankfully, now our security forces here at the Legislature also, as the ones in other Legislatures, have weapons to defend not only the public who's here but the people who live and work here at this Legislature. Anyway, I did want to make those points here this morning.

Back to the budget: I see the finance minister sitting here this morning. He's sitting in on these budget debates. He's pleased as punch with this budget. Why shouldn't he be? It's his budget. But at the end of the day, it's a question of what the impact is, the actual impact to Ontario—not the talking-point impact, not the spin-doctor impact that he's got all his minions here fanned out all across the province spreading the word about, the wonderful gospel of Sousa, that Ontario has never been better but will only continue to get greater under his fiscal tutelage.

Well, Speaker, it's not that way. I just jotted down a few things. We had a grandson born in December. Little Leo was born in the Northwest Territories, but I'm confident—and I don't think Emily and Tom are listening here. We're confident that they're going to come back to Ontario someday when it has some strong leadership and the future looks brighter. So I think they're going to come back to Ontario someday.

0940

But, you know, when little Leo comes back to Ontario—and I don't know how old he'll be at that time but, as soon as he crosses that border between here and Manitoba, he's going to assume a debt of \$22,000. The poor lad is going to cross that border and Emily and Tom are probably going to wonder why Leo started to cry when he crossed the Manitoba-Ontario border. The reason is because he just assumed \$22,000 of debt.

Under this government's leadership—leadership, Speaker—that debt has more than doubled in the 12 years they've been in power. In fact, it has gone from \$137 billion to \$308 billion. From \$137 billion to \$308 billion—one government. Well done. I hope you're proud of that—\$137 billion to \$308 billion. Can you believe it, Speaker? I can. Believe it; it's true. We have to accept that that's the one factual thing about the budget. The line items in the budget, the ones that are not projections or forecasts, are real—\$308 billion. The third-largest line item in that budget—the third, after health care and education spending—

Mr. Grant Crack: Interest?

Mr. John Yakabuski: The member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell has even heard it in the coffee shops up in Rockland. He has heard it; they told him. “Do you realize,” they said, “Mr. Crack, the third-biggest line item in the budget is interest on the debt? What are you people doing down there?” And what do you do? You keep

adding and adding to the debt. Can you imagine, Speaker? Can you just imagine? We are—

Interjection.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Thank you very much. Oh, look at that: The finance minister sent me another copy. Did he run down to the fantasy section?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Open it up.

Mr. John Yakabuski: He says, “Open it up.” Look at that; it's signed. Oh, what does it say? I don't have my glasses on, but it probably says something like, “Read this before I completely destroy Ontario.” Something like that, it says.

Anyway, that debt that they just keep building and building: What is the effect? They're worried about 2018. This is how this government looks ahead. They look ahead to only one thing: the next provincial election.

What about my little Leo? What about that generation? What about these pages sitting here in front of you, Speaker? What kind of Ontario are we going to bestow on them when we leave this place and maybe guys my age leave this place entirely, you know? What kind of Ontario are we going to leave them when we're building with this kind of debt?

Speaker, as I was beginning to say before I received the gracious gift from the minister, what about if interest rates climb? We are living through a period of some of the most historically low interest rates that we have ever experienced. But what would happen to Ontario if those interest rates increased? We're looking at almost \$12 billion in interest payments on the debt today. What would happen if those interest rates were to go up a couple of points or three points? Oh, my goodness gracious. You do not want to think of the calamity that would envelop Ontario—not just this government but everybody in it—because, historically, low interest rates have also led to a significant boom in housing sales and things like that. So the government is teetering on the thin edge of a knife, and hoping. Everything that they do is predicated on interest rates remaining low.

Let's talk about some of the things that they don't talk about in the budget. You see, they want us to do their job as well as doing ours, so we'll leave it with this: We'll be glad to start doing your job right after the June 14, 2018, election. We'll start doing your job in a completely different way than you have failed to do it for the last 12 years. We'll start doing the job that puts Ontario first. That's the job we're going to do after 2018. But let's talk about the job they have—and I understand.

As I said, they fan out all across the province and they sing the praises of the gospel of Charles I. Then they tell everybody that Ontario has never been in better shape and it's going to get better. Then you see a little trickery with numbers—I can say “trickery,” can't I, Speaker?—a little sleight of hand.

Mr. Arthur Potts: It's not a scheme, though.

Mr. John Yakabuski: It is a scheme. It's worse than a scheme, I say to the member from Beaches–East York. It's more like a scam. Can I say “scam”?

Interestingly enough, here's how they have fun with numbers: A month ago they were talking about their 10-year, \$130-billion infrastructure plan. They come out with a budget and, in order to fool the people once again, it's no longer a \$130-billion infrastructure plan; it is now a \$160-billion infrastructure plan. All the members on the other side are going, "Isn't that great? Isn't that great?" They're all applauding the minister, "Wow." Then we find out there's not another plug nickel going into infrastructure; they're just extending it to a 12-year plan. The Toronto papers probably had a thing, "\$160-billion plan for infrastructure highlights Liberal Ontario budget." Not a thing. There's not another nickel going into infrastructure; they're just extending it by two years. It's really scandalous.

But what would I know about scandals? These are the experts on scandals. My God, they wanted to add to one yesterday. They wanted to buy helicopters that don't work from an Italian firm that's already in court—leasing two more helicopters because they didn't learn enough from the Ornge scandal. So when I say "scandalous," I really don't have as much experience with the word as these people have. I've said it; they've lived it.

We don't want to talk about scandals because, my goodness gracious, I look up at the clock and the next thing you know I'm running out of time. Let's talk about something here that the Liberals don't want to talk about: seniors.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Talk about the budget; that's what you're here for.

Mr. John Yakabuski: That's exactly what I say to the member from Kitchener Centre. You know what? If you sit there for a few more minutes you're going to have a chance to respond to this.

Let's talk about seniors' drug costs. I really want to give credit to my colleague who sits next to me, the member for Nipissing, our finance critic, Vic Fedeli, who brought in his Fedeli Focus on Finance, volume 3, number 2, February 2016. He does a great job as our finance critic. He also highlights the chicanery and the sleight of hand in the Liberal budget talking points.

Here are a couple here: seniors' drug costs. The Minister of Finance and the Minister of Health are going on about how this is a great deal for seniors and how more people will be getting their drugs for free under this plan, according to the government. But they've got a cut-off of at around \$19,000 annual income. If you make over \$19,000—now, in 1950 that was a pretty good wage, but I hate to break it to the Minister of Finance but we're living in 2016, and if your income is \$19,000 in 2016, I don't care how frugal you are; that's not a lot of money. That's not a lot of money. So what's going to happen to our seniors, our most vulnerable, the generation that helped build this country? They're going to pay more. They're going pay more for their prescription drugs under this plan, and the Liberals are getting hammered on this.

Interjection.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I say to the member for Davenport: The Liberals are getting hammered on this when

they go home to their constituencies. She knows it and they all know it.

0950

People are fed up, especially rural people. In fairness to the member from Davenport, she may not experience it as much as I do. I know my colleague for Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock—we live in some of the ridings that have some of the highest percentage of seniors in the province, and some of the lowest average incomes. I think the county of Haliburton is the only one that might be lower than Renfrew county, as far as average income in the province of Ontario. A lot of those people—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The member made a comment a few moments ago—

Mr. John Yakabuski: I withdraw.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I would ask that the member withdraw.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Speaker, I withdraw. Whatever it was, it was so long ago it may never be remembered, but I withdraw anyway. Out of respect for the Chair, I withdraw.

We have some of the lowest incomes and the highest percentage of seniors, so when we go home to our constituencies we hear about it, because we're being affected. Our people are being affected, and they are not being helped by this budget.

Hon. Charles Sousa: They're getting it for free.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Oh, "free." Interestingly enough, the finance minister pipes up across the aisle. He says "free." "Free" is what he claims—excuse me. My throat is getting dry; I may need more water. "Free" is what he said was going to be "free tuition," as he chimed out proudly on budget Thursday. And the Liberals caucus—spontaneously, of course—applauded with glee.

Well, there's always a caveat. There's always the fine print and the asterisk—you know, like they used to put beside Roger Maris's name in the record books when he hit 61 home runs? They used to put an asterisk there because he broke Babe Ruth's record. Babe Ruth did it in a 154-game schedule; Roger Maris did it in a 162-game schedule. Not that that's pertinent to this budget, but I just thought I'd throw the story of the asterisk in there. That was probably the most famous asterisk we ever read about in history.

So there's a little bit of asterisk around that "free tuition." It's sort of like when you go on to the Internet and you want that free credit score. Then, when you look into it, you've got to sign up for this, this, this, this and this. There's a buy-in.

Oh, my goodness gracious, I'm looking at that clock; I need more time, Speaker. I need more time.

There's a buy-in for the free tuition. Can you believe it? A buy-in. But doesn't a buy-in actually cost something? This is the kind of messaging that they expect their people to go out and spread across Ontario as good news.

I want to talk about that for the few seconds I've got. You look at the fairness. Even in their words, if the

family makes under \$50,000, the average tuition is covered—if you make \$50,000 and you’ve got one child in post-secondary. But if you make \$84,000—that’s \$34,000 more on the gross; not the taxable, on the gross—and you’ve got four children in post-secondary, who do you think actually needs the help more? Are they against families with children?

I say to the minister: Do you want one-child families? Come on, now. We’re not going to institute a one-child rule here in Ontario, are we? What about families that have four kids? What are you going to do with them for post-secondary education? The finance minister has to stand up and straighten out this mess. If free is free, then make it free.

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

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I’m so excited to follow the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. That is a tough act to follow, so I’m not going to try to compete. I’m just going to comment.

I definitely appreciate learning from the members in the room and hearing their opinions. I also appreciate what the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke remarked at the beginning about our role in the opposition benches versus the role of the government: that with every budget, there are plums and barbs, and that perhaps we’re going to highlight different parts of the budget.

As I’m sitting here and reflecting on this grand chamber, I’m reminded of the eagle that is carved up there facing the opposition bench and the owl that is facing the government. We’re supposed to keep an eagle eye on the government, and we do that. Sometimes we do that enthusiastically. Of course, the owl reminds them to be wise, so I would remind them to be reminded by the owl.

I also appreciated his reference to minions, just as a fun thing on a Tuesday morning. Learning about the member’s—little Leo; his grandson little Leo and imagining little Leo’s life in Ontario when he comes back and crosses the border. It is upsetting to know that children are going to be shortchanged—\$430 million out of education just this year alone, and \$1.1 billion in the past three years. So imagine little Leo’s journey as this continues; imagine his journey through the health care system. In Windsor and Oshawa, we face terrible unemployment, and I certainly hope that we can work to remedy that situation so that all children, not just little Leo, will grow up in a healthful environment full of opportunity in Ontario.

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

Mr. Arthur Potts: I’m delighted to have an opportunity to respond to the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. I had the opportunity to be in his riding on many occasions over my life—up to the Ottawa River, where we go whitewater rafting. The member is always so entertaining. It reminds me, actually, of going down the Ottawa River in a whitewater raft. There are many ups and downs. There’s spray coming out everywhere. It’s exciting and it’s exhilarating, but it’s not very edify-

ing. It really is just a lot of enthusiasm, but so little substance from a learning perspective.

But there were some things he had an opportunity to talk about that were very intriguing. His characterization of the members opposite as trained seals: I would have thought, Speaker, that you might have found—if it’s okay to talk about trained seals on this side of the House—I’m reminded of Margaret Atwood, who once talked about there being no such thing as a male chauvinist pig in Canada. She was speaking to an audience at the Empire Club of Canada. All the business owners—businessmen—of Toronto were there, and she said that there’s no such thing as a male chauvinist pig. Everyone there up in thunderous applause, and then they waited. And she said that we prefer to refer to them as “moose,” because the moose is bigger and dumber and easier to fool—male Canadian moose.

So I’m thinking, if we’re the seals on this side of the House, what does that make the member on that side? Maybe a manatee, the mythical mermaid creature of lore; the manatee, which is large and thunderous and mills about.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I’d like to remind the member from Beaches–East York that comments and questions need to be directed regarding the budget, which is what we are debating today. We’re not getting into characterizations of individuals or of any opposition parties or government, as that pertains as well. I would ask that you stick to the—

Mr. Arthur Potts: Fair enough.

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

Mr. Arthur Potts: The point is, we just had a big announcement, and the member from Huron–Bruce—\$3.3 million to the Blyth theatre. It’s fantastic. There’s great enthusiasm from that side of the House, and it’s because we’re spending that money on infrastructure. You should be saying thank you.

Interjection: In your ridings.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At least you got all my riding names in there.

I think the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke told you how it is out there. Why don’t you listen to him? You don’t think you can learn anything? Maybe you should listen not only to the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, but to the rest of us on this side, because we’re not making it up. We’re hearing it from our constituents.

Interjection.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Yes? Baby Leo is going to cry when he comes across the border because he just inherited a \$22,000 debt on every child. We all should be crying because it’s disgraceful that the third-largest budget item in the province of Ontario is throwing money out the window on interest. It’s a \$308-billion debt you have—\$1 billion a month. You should be ashamed that

you're wasting taxpayers' money on that. It's the worst record in Canada.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: You wanted to fire 100,000 people.

Ms. Laurie Scott: You have fired over 1,000 nurses over there, if you want to talk about firing people. How many civil servants have you fired? You have fired them. You guys are the spin doctors supreme; I give you that. There is no question. You say, for the poor seniors, that you're going to give them a break, so you raised it to \$19,000. That's not really a rich senior. And guess what? The shell game continues, because you've increased their hydro rates so high, they can't stay in their houses. That's the number one thing in my riding that has sent people into poverty.

1000

You have a so-called poverty reduction plan. What's the plan? You put more people into poverty than ever before in my riding. The seniors get out of their houses if they can because they can't afford to heat them during the day; they have to get out. Mr. Speaker, this budget has just put more people into poverty in the province of Ontario.

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

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: It is a pleasure to rise again to add my two cents' worth—or in this case, two minutes' worth—to the debate on the budget. I wanted to talk about some of the things that the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke spoke about. I'm going to try to get through it even if there are interjections from the government side, because there seems to be a lot of back and forth between the official opposition and the government side.

The budget is called Jobs for Today and Tomorrow. My concern with this budget is that we're not going to see an awful lot of jobs past tomorrow, based on some of the items in the budget. As I said to you before, there is no money for child care. They're looking at making changes to child care, potentially making it less accessible and more expensive, and we're going to see fewer parents having access to child care, which means they're not going to be able to go to work—assuming, based on this budget, that they still have a job.

We've seen their commitment to taking \$430 million out of the education system. That's on top of \$500 million. So we're seeing job losses as a result. We're seeing now that they're doing consultations to close provincial and demonstration schools in order to save money. We are talking about some of the most vulnerable students, those with severe learning disabilities, those who are deaf or hard of hearing. These are the most vulnerable children, and they're now targeting them in order to save money, in order to meet their budgetary requirements. Apparently, those requirements are to cut and cut and cut services.

We've lost money for health care providers and for nurses in our hospitals. I have great concerns about their

so-called free tuition, which, according to the Premier herself, is not really free tuition.

I'm sure my colleagues will have more to add in depth on the budget. I appreciate the opportunity to speak.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke for final comments.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I'd like to thank the members from Oshawa, Beaches–East York, Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock and Windsor West for their comments on my address this morning. Three were quite complimentary and talked of other issues that affect them, but of course, the gentleman from Beaches–East York always takes this to a personal level. Where one person refers to the collective, another member has to try to degenerate it into a personal debate, but that's his style. I don't think it garners much interest in this chamber, to be quite honest with you, Speaker, but I've got big shoulders and thick skin. I can take that kind of stuff.

Let's talk about the budget itself. My colleague from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock has done it. We bring our rural perspective to this House on a daily basis. As much as you might think you can understand rural Ontario by rafting on the Ottawa River—which is a wonderful experience, by the way, but if you really think you can understand rural Ontario by spending a few hours there, you're mistaken.

We garner that perspective from our people on a daily basis and bring it to this Legislature. When they look at how rural Ontario is affected by this budget—and the member for Kitchener Centre said something about a grant for work being done in one of our ridings. Well, are we not supposed to expect that a government does work in all ridings? Are we supposed to expect that only government members would have something done in their riding? How ridiculous is that? We don't thank the government. We thank the people in our ridings for making sure that the case for that project was made, and we'll continue to make that case in every one of our ridings, in every government program, to see that rural Ontario continues to try to get a fair share from this patently unfair government.

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

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I'm glad to add my voice to this debate. One of the major issues with this budget is that in terms of the marketing, in terms of the messaging, this budget sounds like it addressed issues that really matter to the people, but when you actually delve into details, what often occurs with this government is that the details really show something very different.

The member who just spoke talked about one of those issues, which is the notion of free tuition. It's absolutely irresponsible of this government to make a claim that tuition is going to be free and then backtrack from that claim when the reality is not that. It's irresponsible because people depend on these types of announcements. It might impact people who look forward to attending post-secondary education, thinking that it'll actually be

free, thinking that it'll actually not cost them anything because that might be a barrier for some people.

The fact is, this government claimed it was free and then backtracked and said, "Oh, well, it's not totally free." Now we have the Premier herself admitting that maybe that was the wrong language to use. It's absolutely irresponsible, because the reality is that paying \$3,000 a year up-front is not free when by Statistics Canada the tuition fees are close to \$8,000 and the amount that the government is talking about is closer to \$7,000, which is at least a \$1,000 gap. This government is making claims that they're simply not supporting. What they're actually doing is reorganizing the existing grants and pulling them together, which is good. If they would have announced that and said, "Hey, what we're going to do is reorganize existing grants and put them together," that would have been accurate, and that would have been the right, responsible thing to do.

What this government did is something very irresponsible, very hurtful, by making a claim that's not actually true. The government themselves have admitted that they made the mistake. That's irresponsible to do that. It sets a false hope and it's not what we want to see. What that does is that it results in more cynicism in politics. That's absolutely the wrong direction, and this government is to blame for doing that. It's absolutely unacceptable.

In addition, there is a particular problem that's been going on for a long time in the region of Peel, and this budget does not address that. There are a number of members from the Liberal Party who represent the region of Peel, and they know this is a major issue. There is an organization that talks about a fair share for Peel. The reality is that Peel has been underfunded chronically, and it's in all areas. Whether it's poverty reduction or whether it's issues around homelessness and housing affordability, this government has consistently underfunded the region of Peel, and it is something that's not addressed in this budget.

If we talk about health care: Health care is tremendously important. This budget is an additional cut to health care. It's going to be a cut to services, particularly in Peel region. We have in the city of Brampton, a city that's over 500,000 in population, only one hospital. There's been broken promise after broken promise by this government to ensure that there are two hospitals. The previous hospital that was initially promised not to be torn down was torn down. Then there was a promise to rebuild it, and it was not fulfilled. As it stands, there's no clear funding with respect to that hospital being built—again, a failure in this budget to address that serious concern around health care.

When it comes to the poverty reduction component, there are some troubling statistics in the Peel region—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I have to interrupt the member from Brampton–Gore–Malton. Pursuant to standing order 58(d), I'm now required to put the question.

Mr. Sousa has moved, seconded by Ms. Wynne, that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of

the government. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I believe I heard a no.

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

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

A recorded vote will be required, deferred until after question period.

Vote deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Since it is now almost 10:15, this House will stand recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1010 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Bill Walker: I'd like to introduce Mr. Noa Mullin from Feversham in the great county of Grey. He's with the Beef Farmers of Ontario leadership group.

I would like to also introduce Ms. Meredith Closs from Shawville, Quebec, on behalf of Lisa Thompson, and Ms. Cindy Morrison from Lucknow, Bruce county, on behalf of Lisa Thompson.

Hon. Reza Moridi: It's a great pleasure for me to welcome Dr. Brian Stevenson, the president of Lakehead University, as well as Dr. Angelique EagleWoman, who is the new dean of the school of law at Lakehead University. Please join me in welcoming them.

Mr. Todd Smith: It's a pleasure to welcome Amanda MacKenzie and Nikki Smith from the Ontario Dental Association today.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I'm pleased to introduce Jennifer Howe and William Loewith, the mother and brother, respectively, of the ADFW page, Madeline Loewith. I'm pleased to welcome them here today.

Mr. Ted Arnott: I'm very pleased to welcome representatives from the Build leadership program: Rob Black, Joe Lennox from Kenilworth, Chloe Gresel from Erin and Barclay Nap from Puslinch.

Welcome to the Ontario Legislature today.

Ms. Soo Wong: I have a couple of guests visiting Queen's Park today: Lai Chu, Pat Sherman and Betty Wu-Lawrence. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm very excited to welcome some guests from the Montessori Jewish Day School: Melissa Lalic; Leah Switzer, whose mother, Dana, I know very well; Jaeli Schnoor and Malka Toldstein.

As well, we have family and friends of the late Mr. Robert Frankford attending the tribute that we'll be doing shortly: Helen Breslauer, his widow; Rachael Frankford, his daughter; John Cummings, a friend; Tyrone Turner, a friend; Rona Abramovitch, a friend; Jonathan Freedman, a friend; Beatriz Milner, a friend; Cary Milner, also a friend; and David and Pat Warner, the former Speaker and spouse.

Hon. Mario Sergio: We have some 40 seniors from across the GTA joining us here today. I would like to introduce Elizabeth Macnab, the executive director of the

Ontario Society of Senior Citizens' Organizations; Kenny Dayal of the Trinidad and Tobago 50plus and Senior Association; Sandra Cardillo of the Loyola Arrupe centre for seniors; Donna from the Mississauga individual seniors' group; Valerie Steele from the Jamaican Canadian seniors' association; and Anita Kumar, also from the Ontario Society of Senior Citizens' Organizations.

Speaker, I'd like to welcome them all here at Queen's Park.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I'd like to introduce Mr. Joe Lennox and Mr. Jack Chaffe. They are here with Beef Farmers of Ontario.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I would like to welcome 35 seniors visiting the Legislature today from the Cantinho da Amizade, the Portuguese group from the Davenport Perth Neighbourhood and Community Health Centre in my riding of Davenport, accompanied by their coordinator, Maria Guimarães.

I want to extend a warm welcome to them here today at Queen's Park. Enjoy your visit. Bem-vindos.

Mr. Mike Colle: I'd like to welcome to the Legislature the father of page Maya Treitel, Natan Treitel. Welcome, Natan Treitel.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I'm thrilled that the page captain today is from Pickering–Scarborough East. Her parents are here. Her name is Christina Vadivelu. Her mother is Ramya and her father is Clement. They're here in the gallery. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: I'd like to welcome the family of page captain Joshua Kim, from Etobicoke–Lakeshore: his mother, Tina Chan-Kim; his father, David Kim; sister, Sarah Kim; brother, Alexander Kim; grandmother, Guat Ee Chan; and grandfather, Foo Kheong Chan. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I'd like to welcome to the chamber today, from my riding of Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, with the Build leadership program, Bruce Sawbridge, who is a beef farmer. He's also a 27-year veteran of the Ontario Provincial Police: Sergeant Bruce Sawbridge. Welcome to Queen's Park.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I would ask all members to join me in welcoming this group of pages. Would they assemble for their introduction, please?

From Scarborough–Agincourt, Aarbi Krishnakumar; from Bramalea–Gore–Malton, Amelia Naidoo; from Welland, Ariel Wendling; from Willowdale, Barton Lu; from Halton, Chandise Nelson; from Pickering–Scarborough East, Christina Vadivelu; from Durham, Cooper Stone; from Burlington, Deanna Clark; from Scarborough Centre, Diluk Ramachandra; from Oakville, Harry Blackwell; from Scarborough Southwest, Jack Beverly; from Toronto–Danforth, Jierui Jiang; from Etobicoke–Lakeshore, Joshua Kim; from Huron–Bruce, Khushali Shah; from Don Valley East, Lauren Creasy; from Kitchener–Conestoga, MacFarlane Benham; from Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale, Madeline Loewith; from

Eglinton–Lawrence, Maya Treitel; from Oak Ridges–Markham, Sabrina Arcuri; from Markham–Unionville, Samantha Su; from Mississauga South, Sohan Van de Mosselaer; from Mississauga–Brampton South, Terry Kuang; from Etobicoke Centre, Vanessa Russell; and from Parkdale–High Park, Zachary Gan. Welcome.

ATTACKS IN BRUSSELS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Deputy Premier on a point of order.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Mr. Speaker, I believe you will find we have unanimous consent that we observe a moment of silence before question period and that staff of the Legislative Assembly be directed to fly flags at half-mast in honour of the victims of the terrorist attacks in Brussels today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Do we agree? Agreed.

Would we all stand, please?

The House observed a moment's silence.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We will see that staff ensures that the flag is flown at half-mast for the day.

WEARING OF PINS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Attorney General on a point of order.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent that all members be permitted to wear Franco-Ontarian pins in recognition of francophone week.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Attorney General is seeking unanimous consent to wear the Franco-Ontarian pins. Do we agree? Agreed.

1040

ROBERT FRANKFORD

Hon. James J. Bradley: A point of order: I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent to pay tribute to Robert T.S. Frankford, former member for Scarborough East, with a representative from each caucus speaking for up to five minutes.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The deputy House leader seeks unanimous consent to pay tribute. Do we agree? Agreed.

Before we begin, I'd like the members to please join me in welcoming the family and friends of the late Robert T.S. Frankford, MPP for Scarborough East during the 35th Parliament, who are seated in the Speaker's gallery: his wife, Helen Breslauer; his daughters, Rachael Frankford and Elizabeth MacKay; and friends John Cummings, Tyrone Turner, Rona Abramovitch, Jonathan Freedman, Beatriz Milner and Cary Milner. Also, at their request, his late daughter, Emma, is here in spirit. Welcome, and thank you for being here.

Also in the Speaker's gallery are Mr. David Warner, MPP for Scarborough–Ellesmere during the 30th, 31st, 33rd and 35th Parliaments, and Speaker, and his wife, Pat; Mr. Steve Gilchrist, MPP for Scarborough East during the 36th and 37th Parliaments; Mr. Edward Fulton, MPP for Scarborough East during the 33rd and 34th Parliaments; Mr. Tony Rizzo, MPP for Oakwood during the 35th Parliament; and Mr. Dave Neumann, the member for Brantford. Thank you very much for being here, gentlemen.

It is now time for the tributes.

Ms. Soo Wong: Speaker, I rise today to recognize and remember Dr. Robert Timothy Stansfield Frankford, a physician, former member of provincial Parliament and community activist.

Bob was educated at the University of London, England, and trained at the St. George's Hospital Medical School. Bob emigrated to Canada in the late 1960s and settled in the city of Toronto. Bob was affectionately known as Dr. Bob.

As a practising physician, Dr. Bob advocated for the reform of the primary health care system in Ontario. He supported universal primary care registration, capitation payments for physicians, and requiring primary care physicians to work in a team environment with other health professionals. I think Dr. Bob would have supported our current minister's Patients First report.

When Bob started his health service organization in the 1980s, few physicians in Ontario were paid by capitation or worked in teams. Since 2005, there have been 184 family health teams in over 200 communities across Ontario. Currently, over three million Ontarians are enrolled in family health teams. If Bob had had his way, he would have registered all Ontarians in family health teams.

Throughout his life, whether as a physician or an activist, Bob was a visionary who felt a duty, an obligation and a mission in life to help those who would benefit from his help, to oppose injustice and to work for the common good. Dr. Bob was also well known in the community as a champion for access and equality for health needs in Ontario and for his belief in the Canada Health Act.

Besides advocating for the right to health care and access to health care, Dr. Bob was also concerned about racism, homelessness and inequality. He was known to read daily newspapers and, when he saw something he either strongly agreed or disagreed with, he would either write to the reporter or the columnist or send a letter to the editor.

Dr. Bob was generous with his time. He was a volunteer at a number of community groups, councils, boards and non-government agencies. I first met Bob in the late 1980s when he was elected and then served as co-chair of the community advisory board of the city of Toronto's board of health for the eastern area. I believe my colleague from Beaches–East York was also on the same board. He and I worked on a number of projects, including championing school breakfast programs and advocating for members of racial and ethnic minorities.

Bob had a long interest in the plight of foreign-trained health care professionals like physicians and nurses. He mentored many foreign-trained doctors seeking to practise their professions in Ontario. Dr. Bob also wrote many medical reports for refugee claimants referred by the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture.

From 1990 to 1995, Bob was elected to the Ontario Legislature, representing the Toronto riding of Scarborough East. He was a parliamentary assistant to two Ministers of Health, Evelyn Gigantes and Frances Lankin. This role framed much of Bob's advocacy work in the community before and after Queen's Park.

After leaving Queen's Park, Dr. Bob continued to work as a general practitioner in the east end of Toronto and as attending physician at Seaton House, the largest shelter for homeless men in North America.

He championed a number of health causes. Dr. Bob worked collaboratively with the Chinese Canadian Nurses Association of Ontario and co-founded the Healthy Inner City ESL Families, a community clinic offering services for the uninsured. This clinic was founded in 1999 in Alexandra Park and has been relocated to Scadding Court Community Centre in the riding of Trinity–Spadina.

As a firm believer in social justice, Dr. Bob also served on the board of directors of the Riverdale Immigrant Women's Centre, a non-governmental agency in the east end of Toronto. He gave his time and energy in supporting the centre's work to achieve gender and racial equality and offer services ranging from skills development to support for women affected by domestic violence.

When this government created the 14 Local Health Integrated Networks across Ontario, Dr. Bob was the first chair of the Central East LHIN collaborative committee.

Since retiring from clinical work, Dr. Bob continued his social activist work. He focused his time and efforts on the Sickle Cell Association of Ontario, an initiative that he championed when he was an MPP. Sickle cell disease is a severe, hereditary form of anemia which affects primarily black and South Asian communities.

Dr. Bob served on the board of the Sickle Cell Association of Ontario. He advocated for universal newborn testing and genetic counselling aimed at stopping the spread of the disease. He was pleased when our current government implemented this action, leading to reduced death and disability.

I remember two occasions when I met Dr. Bob—at the Toronto District School Board and again here in Queen's Park—to talk about sickle cell anemia. As indicated earlier, Bob read somewhere in a newspaper about the TDSB launching the first type 1 diabetes management protocol in 2010. He contacted me, as I was the chair of the health committee, and requested a meeting to talk about sickle cell disease and how this disease affects many children's learning. I believe if I had remained at the TDSB I would have worked with Dr. Bob to create the first TDSB sickle cell management protocol, similar to that of type 1 diabetes.

When I was elected in 2011, Dr. Bob visited me here in Queen's Park, along with members of the Sickle Cell

Association of Ontario. In one of our last conversations, I told Bob that the Minister of Education is currently reviewing and consulting the health experts to improve the current protocol to address various chronic diseases like sickle cell anemia, diabetes and asthma.

He challenged our government, myself and the Minister of Education, to establish a comprehensive health strategy to improve the lives of all our students. Bob was involved with the Sickle Cell Association right until the end of his life.

Dr. Bob was dedicated to Canada, Ontario, his community and his profession. He will always be remembered for his work in helping the less fortunate, fighting for justice and promoting equality.

Mr. Speaker, as I conclude my remarks, I want to thank Bob's family: his wife, Helen, and his daughters, Rachael and Elizabeth, as well as his five grandchildren, Malcolm, Lila, Sebastian, Olivia and Theo, for sharing Bob with all of us.

Thank you, Bob, for your contributions in making this world a better place for all of us.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further tributes?

Mrs. Gila Martow: Since I've been elected I've heard many tributes, and this is the first tribute that I have had the honour of giving.

One of the things that I think is so interesting for all of us is that we often didn't know the person personally. We may know the name of the person who we are giving the tribute for, but we certainly get to know them afterwards, and we're very honoured for this time that we can spend getting to know the former members of the House. I think it makes us all better for it.

Robert T. S. Frankford was born in Nottingham, England, the son of Margaret, an English Quaker mother, and Walter, a Viennese Jewish father. As the only member of the Jewish community on this side of the House I have to wonder why—it's just a coincidence. I wasn't aware of that, and it sort of sparked my interest in digging a little deeper.

1050

He did his medical training at the University of London in England and at St. George's Hospital Medical School. He immigrated to Canada in the late 1960s, settling in Toronto.

He was very proud of his heritage and just as proud of his legacy: his three very accomplished daughters, Rachael Frankford, Elizabeth MacKay, and the late Emma Frankford, who died too young to realize her full potential. He is also survived by five grandchildren: Malcolm, Lila, Sebastian, Olivia and Theo, and he was very proud of their great accomplishments, and wishes them much happiness, I'm sure. He will never be forgotten by his wife, Helen Breslauer, who is with us today.

He was a New Democrat member and served in a majority New Democrat government. He was responsible for inaugurating the first health service organization in Toronto. He served as parliamentary assistant from 1990 to 1991 and used his medical training to advocate on be-

half of health care issues, travel insurance, and specifically, as we just heard, the Sickle Cell Association.

For Dr. Bob, as we know he was affectionately called, practising as a physician brought with it other responsibilities to his profession and to the reform of the primary health care system in Ontario. He was known for his advocacy of universal primary care registration, capitation payments for physicians, and working as a primary care doctor in a team together with other health care professionals. When he started his health service organization in the 1980s, very few physicians in Ontario were paid by capitation or worked in teams. As we heard, that has changed since then. Although the current arrangements were not yet to his satisfaction, it should be noted that many family doctors are now working in those teams. I think that the patients are the better for it.

Dr. Bob worked for his country, his province, his city, his community, his neighbourhood and his profession by volunteering his time to be a member of committees, councils, boards and other non-governmental organizations with missions focused on the good works in which he believed.

When he left the Ontario Legislature, he worked for three years as attending physician at Seaton House, and during and after that time he worked on behalf of the homeless in Toronto.

He had a special long-term interest in the plight of foreign-trained professionals, doctors and others, and he mentored foreign-trained doctors seeking to practise their professions in Ontario.

Since his days as an MPP, when he first encountered the Sickle Cell Association of Ontario, he remained involved with them and attended a telephone conference meeting a little more than 48 hours before his death. I have reflections from the Sickle Cell Association of Ontario, through Marie Boyd, whom I spoke with last week:

"Many years ago, Dr. Robert Frankford, affectionately known as Dr. Bob, became involved in the Sickle Cell Association of Ontario, SCAO. It was while being at SCAO that Dr. Bob learned about sickle cell and saw how sickle cell patients were not being treated fairly. That was when he felt the need to advocate for the sickle cell population in the hope of changing people's attitudes.

"Dr. Bob was a board member and public policy committee chairperson and held that position until his passing. With Dr. Bob's commitment to SCAO we were able to achieve newborn screening in 2005. He enlightened fellow physicians here in Toronto to increase their knowledge by approaching the College of Physicians and Surgeons to have sickle cell disease included in their curriculum.

"He also mentored international student doctors on the importance of sickle cell and beta thalassemia disease. In Dr. Bob's efforts for sickle cell he was often accompanied in his advocacy work at Queen's Park to highlight the sickle cell plight."

I know they've had receptions here.

I'm just going to end by reading one of Dr. Bob's many online letters to the editor, and that's what's so fan-

tastic about the computer and the Internet. On September 21, 2014, in the Toronto Star, Dr. Bob wrote:

“WHO stats on Ebola contain reassurance that the disease is not universally fatal and there are hundreds of survivors. Sierra Leone has 1,361 cases and 509 deaths.

“This is an opportunity to research whether survivors share some common factor. It is known that carrying the sickle cell gene produces lower rates of malaria and related deaths. The sickle cell gene is carried by about 40% of West Africans.

“It would not be difficult to see if there is an increased incidence of so-called heterozygotes among survivors.

“Dr. Bob Frankford, Toronto.”

I just want to mention that sickle cell—it is interesting—if you’re a carrier, you don’t necessarily, obviously, have the disease, but it makes you somehow resistant to malaria. That was something I learned when I was back in university in optometry school.

I want to thank the family for joining us today. I want to thank the family and friends for sharing Dr. Bob with all of us. I want to just mention to the family that Dr. Bob and all of us doing the tributes here remind us of why we’re all here.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further tribute?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I’m honoured to rise on behalf of the Ontario NDP caucus to reflect on the life of Dr. Robert “Bob” Frankford, who passed away on August 1 last year.

Last September, I was honoured to join with his family, friends and community at a memorial service to remember and celebrate his life and his work—his great contributions to making his community and our province a better place. He’s remembered by those who served with him for his soft-spoken nature, but particularly remembered for his intelligence, his thoughtful insight and for his willingness to reach out to people all across this Legislature to talk about how they were solving the problems that they and their constituents were facing.

As the NDP member for Scarborough East, he served his constituency and his constituents with modesty, pride and the force of his convictions. Whether it was the expansion of a seniors’ care home or organizing physicians to provide health care to new Canadians, he worked tirelessly to make the world a better place for all, no matter what their circumstances. His priority was always first and foremost the people of Scarborough and making sure that his work made life a little better for the people in his community.

A general practitioner by trade, his passion was health. Those who knew him speak highly of his intelligence, his pragmatic determination to improve the delivery of health care in this province and his willingness to explore out-of-the-box solutions to meet that end. He was a champion for accessible public health care, for the expansion of pharmacare for all and for social justice.

Dr. Bob practised his beliefs and never stopped serving his community and his province. After leaving the Legislature, he resumed practising medicine so that he could assist those who were struggling on the margins

of our society. This included taking a number of locums in northern Ontario to help address the shortage of doctors in northern communities. He’s fondly remembered for the many years he dedicated to Seaton House, the Ontario Medical Association and the Sickle Cell Association of Ontario, where he fought for the best possible care for sickle cell patients and their families. Dr. Robert Frankford is a proud example of someone who dedicated his life to the service of others, and he will be warmly remembered by everyone who knew him.

I had an opportunity to know Bob. I enjoyed his company. To those of you who sit here—Ms. Wong, you spoke about this—Bob didn’t stop talking to politicians to get them to do the right thing. He was, in a very gentle and determined way, relentless. For that, all of us who worked with him, knew him and talked to him will remember him.

He was one of the good guys. I was very sad to hear of his passing, and I know that his family and friends assembled here feel the same way. To his family and friends, on behalf of Ontario’s New Democrats, our most sincere condolences.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their thoughtful and heartfelt comments. To the family, we offer our collective condolences. As well, we will make sure that this is available to you as a DVD and copies of Hansard for you to have as a token of our affection for Dr. Bob. Thank you very much for being here. Again, I thank the members for their heartfelt comments.

ORAL QUESTIONS

AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Premier. It was very clear yesterday from the non-answers we heard from the government that neither the health minister nor the Premier had any idea what was happening at Ornge Air. We in the PC caucus didn’t learn about Ornge’s plan to lease a helicopter from AgustaWestland through a freedom-of-information request. We didn’t learn about it from a whistle-blower. We learned about it just through a search, through a public website on the Internet.

1100

Can the Premier explain how neither she nor the health minister, the very people responsible for oversight of Ornge, had any idea that Ornge was planning to do business with the very same company being investigated by the OPP?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care will want to speak to the details. The Leader of the Opposition received a letter before the end of question period yesterday outlining what was happening. Obviously, as I said yesterday, Ornge is well into a new chapter. The governance has been

changed. Ornge has been working both with communities who are supportive of the measure to lease an AW139 aircraft to replace the SK676 helicopters at its Moosonee base.

But, Mr. Speaker, what's really important is that, despite what the member opposite is inferring, this RFI is still open. It continues to be open for companies until March 29. In fact, there have been no decisions made, despite what the Leader of the Opposition implies.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That will do. I will deal with anyone who decides that that's funny.

Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Back to the Premier: At the end of question period yesterday, the health minister gave me a copy of a letter from his assistant deputy minister about Ornge, dated February 10 of this year, advising the minister that it planned to lease a helicopter from Agusta-Westland. So it's pretty obvious that the letter was only brought to the minister's attention after I asked the question here in the Legislature about Ornge's shady business deal.

Mr. Speaker, isn't the Premier concerned that neither she or the health minister knew anything about Ornge's sole-sourced deal with AgustaWestland? Where is the oversight that this government promised? Or is this business as usual under the government of Kathleen Wynne?

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

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Well, with these wild accusations, Mr. Speaker, I think we're finally beginning to see the true colours of the Leader of the Opposition, and the smear campaign that he's trying to introduce here.

Here is the truth, and what a difference a day makes: As the Premier mentioned, there are two Sikorsky helicopters in Moosonee that are reaching end of service. A decision was made, after consultation, by Ornge to replace those Sikorskys with a leased AgustaWestland helicopter, so that we would have a single fleet across the province, because there were challenges to getting pilots who were also trained on the Sikorskys. Having a single fleet makes absolute sense.

So an RFI, a request for information, was introduced in February. Despite what the member is inferring, the RFI continues to be open until the end of the month. In fact, I understand that several companies have expressed interest on the lease. Should there be an indication that a company or companies—

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

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'll continue in the—

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

Final supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Back to the Premier: When a serious public policy question is asked, the government chooses to attack. The Auditor General completed his 2012 report into Ornge Air and said the scandal was a textbook example of what happens when a ministry fails

to properly oversee a government agency. The public accounts committee report said the ministry missed a number of red flags. You should have been alerted to bad things that were happening at Ornge.

Getting a letter from Ornge announcing that they're sole-sourcing a contract from the very same company under a criminal investigation by the OPP should have raised one gigantic Liberal red flag. Mr. Speaker, can the Premier explain, after seeing this letter, why they didn't cancel the shady contract?

Interjections.

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

Minister?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: First of all, there is no contract. As I was mentioning, should a company or companies express interest between now and the end of the month, it will move forward to a request for proposals. In the event of a request for proposals, an RFP, a fairness commissioner will oversee the process to ensure fairness and transparency. I would hope this would make it abundantly clear to the opposition just how important and how proper this process is.

I know the member is concerned about the relationship with AgustaWestland, and AgustaWestland is co-operating fully with the OPP on the investigation. However, Ornge currently has a relationship with Agusta for maintenance of their helicopters and for replacement of parts; they need to get them from the parent company. So the Leader of the Opposition is suggesting either buying an entirely new fleet—if he doesn't want Ornge to have a relationship with AgustaWestland for maintenance of the current helicopters—or he's talking about danger to the pilots who have to fly these if we're unable to service them properly.

AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Premier. Mr. Speaker, the CEO of Ornge kept up his end of the bargain. He sent a letter to the health minister and told him that Ornge was getting back into bed with Agusta-Westland. He waved that big red flag. The failure here is with the minister and the Premier.

Yesterday, when I asked the Premier about Ornge's shady deal with AgustaWestland, she responded, "I do not know the nature of this particular decision." Can the Premier explain why she knew nothing about such a controversial deal? Can the Premier tell us why she isn't doing her job to protect patients and taxpayers in the province of Ontario?

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

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I find this unbelievable. I would suggest that the leader of the party just understand that there is no way he is going to win this argument. When you look at the facts behind this, the wild allegations that he made yesterday and that he continues to make today—he's besmirching the reputation of Ornge, including great

individuals like Ian Delaney, like Charles Harnick, the former Attorney General of this province and a member of the Progressive Conservative Party. I can't believe that he continues.

But to suggest, as the member opposite seems to be suggesting, that we cut off all business ties with AgustaWestland, that would require the purchasing of an entirely new fleet. Or, alternatively, it would require putting our first responders and our patients—18,000 patients a year—at risk by not properly servicing these aircraft.

We don't have a contract before the lease ends with AgustaWestland. We have an RFI that may lead to an RFP, and a number of companies have expressed interest.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Back to the Premier: What the government did—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That's it. I'm going to go to the individual. I asked you to try to keep it calm; you're not. I'm going to deal with the individuals, even if you chirp something quick.

Finish, please.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, we've obviously touched a nerve. The government got caught, and they got caught with the exposure of an advance contract award notice. That is what we found and that is what we're trying to expose.

I do not understand why the government is doing business with a company under a criminal investigation here in the province of Ontario. But it gets worse. This same company, AgustaWestland, the same company that wined and dined disgraced Ornge CEO Chris Mazza, got charged in October 2014 by the Indian government for shady deals. And actually, more recently, Sweden's anti-corruption authorities launched an inquiry into the sole-source purchase of AgustaWestland helicopters.

There are criminal investigations into this company across the world, and this government is doing business with it. Why are you doing business—

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

Interjections.

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

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Now we know why Harper didn't give you any jobs.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Excuse me. I'm trying to get in, and I'll deal with it, but you're not helping me.

The Minister of Energy will withdraw.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Withdraw, Speaker.

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

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand that the member opposite is expressing concerns about a company that is fully co-operating with an OPP investigation—an investigation that centres on the previous administration, a number of years ago, at Ornge.

However, as I mentioned, and what the member opposite seems to be implying, I'm not prepared to abandon

an entire fleet. We have to maintain a relationship with the parent company, with AgustaWestland, for spare parts, for things like the gearbox of a helicopter. What the member is suggesting is cutting off all ties with AgustaWestland, which is completely inappropriate and impractical, because either we stop servicing these aircraft, putting patients and pilots at risk, or we would have to spend millions and millions of dollars and purchase an entirely new fleet. That's completely inappropriate.

What is happening is that Ornge is co-operating with the OPP, the ministry is co-operating with the OPP and AgustaWestland is co-operating with the OPP, and that will continue.

1110

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

Mr. Patrick Brown: Back to the Premier: I'm hoping, rather than spin, we can get a serious answer to a serious question.

This is a company that's being investigated worldwide—in Sweden, in Cyprus, in India—for trying to influence governments, for shady deals. For some reason, the Liberal government here in Ontario chooses to do business with them again, despite the fact that the Auditor General said that we don't need additional helicopters.

If you do not want to answer on the question of protecting taxpayer dollars, how about we talk about patients, about the health concerns associated with these helicopters? The report from the Auditor General said that there's not enough room to perform CPR. There's not enough room to lift patients' heads, forcing paramedics to insert a breathing tube. A July 2013 coroner's report said that operational issues with these helicopters contributed to the deaths of eight patients.

So my question for the Premier—and please don't pass the buck. It's not right for patients; it's not right for taxpayers. Why are they doing business with a company that's being criminally investigated?

Interjections.

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

Minister?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Again, I'll repeat that we have two aging Sikorsky helicopters in Moosonee that are nearing the end of their serviceable period. They need to be replaced. They're going to be replaced with what's most appropriate, another AgustaWestland, which will turn our fleet from having two different types of helicopters into a single fleet. It's much better for pilots. They support this. We don't have to be concerned about having pilots specifically trained for the Sikorsky and the challenges of getting pilots on staff at Moosonee for that reason. It's better for reliability as well.

We have an RFI which is open until the end of the month. There are a number of companies, including AgustaWestland's parent company, which has expressed interest in holding that lease. If there is a company or a number of companies that move forward with that RFI,

we'll move to an RFP. We'll have a fairness commissioner who will oversee that entire process. It will be consistent with the broader public sector procurement directive.

This is as open and transparent as it gets. The member opposite wants to actually dismantle the fleet, buy an entire new fleet and put patients and pilots at risk.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: My question is to the Premier. Did the Premier or her staff sign off on the budget before it was sent to the translators?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I want to answer the question, but I just want to acknowledge what I think people are seeing on their social media, that Rob Ford has died. I just want to express the sadness of this Legislature. We'll have a moment of silence at the end. I believe we're going to ask for a moment of silence at the end.

In terms of the budget, I just want to make sure that the member opposite understands that we listen to people from around the province constantly. I travel the province. I hear from people year-round. The issues and the concerns that I hear and that we hear are reflected in the decisions that we make and are reflected in our budget.

On the specifics in terms of the timing, there were a number of groups, for example, who appeared before the committee, and their ideas are reflected in the budget. I will come back to those in the supplementary, but there was a lot of information that flowed well after the translation had already begun.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Just before I ask my question, I also want to acknowledge, on behalf of New Democrats, the sadness in the loss and the death of Mr. Ford. It's a tragic loss. I just want to acknowledge that as well.

Mr. Speaker, the budget was written and sent for translation on January 27. That was before pre-budget consultations heard from the following: the Ontario Health Coalition; the Canadian Federation of Students; the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care; the Ontario Federation of Agriculture; the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario, the Nurse Practitioners' Association of Ontario and ONA; OPSEU; the Toronto district labour council; the Ontario Hospital Association; craft brewers and winemakers; the Chiefs of Ontario; and Fix Our Schools.

Can the Premier explain why she went ahead with the budget before hearing from these Ontarians?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, it's completely false and untrue, what the member has just said. We had done all the consultations. All that was achieved. We did over 20 of them.

Translations of portions of the budget are done continuously. The one that mattered most is what happened on Saturday, February 20, the day that I sat in my office here in Toronto, reviewing the budget, making amend-

ments to it still. That translation was what mattered. That was the final product. That's what went to print and was produced here in the House on the 25th of February.

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

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: The Premier loves to talk about consultations and conversations, but that means listening as well as talking. But while people were presenting, the Liberal government had already written the budget, finalized it and sent it for translation.

Will the Premier apologize to Ontarians for treating their consultations as a PR exercise?

Hon. Charles Sousa: The work that SCOFEA does, the work that all of us in this House do to consult with our constituents, to enable us to populate the budget document with priorities and responsibilities of the people of the province, is critical.

I sat on SCOFEA for many years. I recognize all too well why we should do it and need to do it. It is why I appeared before SCOFEA on the final submissions of consultations. I had the opportunity to express what the government wanted to do, and to hear from both the NDP, the Liberals and the PCs on their reflections of those consultations.

The very people the member opposite just cited are included in this budget, are cited in this budget. In fact, I can relate some of the very issues: \$3 million for Bio-industrial Innovation Canada, in Hamilton, on page 10; \$1 million to the issue of pregnancy and infant loss, on page 115—that happened after those consultations—and \$17 million to the Toronto Atmospheric Fund, on page 30.

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FISCAL POLICIES

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: The next question is again to the Premier. The Premier says she is a partner in the federal government. Does that mean the federal budget will ensure that Ontario will receive enough infrastructure funding so that the Premier can finally agree to stop the sale of Hydro One?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I have no idea what is in the federal budget. We will all have to wait until this afternoon.

Now that we actually have a federal government that understands that investing in infrastructure and working with provinces is important, that having a price on carbon is important—now that we have a federal government that is willing to work in partnership with the provincial governments across the country—I'm hopeful that we will see those things reflected in the budget. I'm very optimistic about that.

But I don't know the specifics of the budget. We'll have to wait until this afternoon.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: In the fall of 2014, Liberal MPPs supported a motion calling for national, universal and affordable child care. Unfortunately, there was nothing in

this Ontario budget for child care. Liberal MPPs made a promise here in the Legislature to partner with the federal government so that mothers and fathers can get the child care they can afford, and families would stop seeing cuts to child care across this province.

Given that there was nothing in the Ontario budget for child care, has the Premier received any assurances from the federal government that they will pick up where the provincial budget failed and actually support affordable child care in Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Again, I don't have information about what is in the federal budget. I know that we have a federal government now that, unlike the previous federal government, actually shares a value system with our government, and that understands it's important to work with provincial governments and that it's important to invest in people and their talent and their skills and in infrastructure, and is willing to have those discussions that the previous government wasn't willing to have. But I have no information about the specifics that are in the budget this afternoon.

What I do know is that we have been working to invest hundreds of millions of dollars in child care. We have worked with the child care sector. We're modernizing the child care sector so that we can assure safety and security for children who are in child care across the province. We'll continue to do that, but we'll have to wait for the federal budget this afternoon.

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

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: For years, the Liberals insisted that all their problems came from Ottawa. Now they talk about the strength of their federal partnership. Does that mean that after this federal budget, they will stop closing demonstration schools, they will stop closing hospital beds, they will stop firing nurses, and finally stop the sale of Hydro One?

1120

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We have made investments in this province. The member opposite talks about the infrastructure investments—well, he doesn't talk about the infrastructure investments. He talks about Hydro One, but he doesn't support infrastructure investments. His party somehow, out of whole cloth—

Hon. James J. Bradley: Magic.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: —magical thinking, would create the opportunity to build infrastructure. There is absolutely no evidence that they have any idea how they would do that.

We actually have a plan that we're implementing. That plan is part of our budget. I hope, given what the member opposite has said, that maybe he's looking at our budget once again and is considering supporting parts of our budget.

ANIMAL PROTECTION

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Speaker, allow me to just have a quick moment. On behalf of the Ontario PCs, we would

again like to express our sincere condolences to the Ford family on the passing of Rob Ford early this morning.

My question is to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Twenty-one dogs were seized from a dogfighting ring in my riding. They've been locked up in cages for over five months, while their alleged abusers remain free on bail. I've requested the OSPCA to allow me to see the dogs, just to see how well they're doing, but to date, they have not returned my call.

The animal sanctuary Dog Tales Rescue has offered to take them in immediately, as an interim measure, at no cost to the province, but they need the minister's help. They require his approval.

I understand the minister has a rescue dog just like me and will be visiting Dog Tales. The province can either pay to have these dogs killed or take action and save them at no cost. Only the minister has the power to save these dogs. To the minister: Is the minister willing to provide special designation—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. When I stand, you sit. Thank you.

Minister.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much again, Speaker. I want to thank the member opposite for asking this question. I very much appreciate his sincere passion on this issue.

I think all of us in this House have an affinity towards protecting the most vulnerable, the pets in our communities, who, in many respects, are voiceless. But as I have stated before in the House, what the member is asking is about a court process, which is under way, involving the OSPCA.

We do understand that this is a very challenging issue, and many individuals and organizations are concerned. But as the member knows, there is currently an application to the court by the OSPCA for permission to euthanize 21 of the 31 pit bull dogs seized from an alleged dogfighting operation, citing risks to public safety. However, the remaining dogs are being rehabilitated for re-location outside of the province. It's up to the courts to decide as to the next steps.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Back to the minister: This government just doesn't get it. In his responses to questions on this issue, the minister claims he can't do anything. This is unacceptable.

Minister, you do have the authority. The Dog Owners' Liability Act permits these dogs to be given to a designated body. This could be done without a formal regulation. In other words, your ministry's approval is all that's required.

If either one of us were told that our dogs were sick and they had to be put down, I'm sure that we would seek a second opinion. We'd fight to save their lives. These dogs cannot speak for themselves, so I will be their voice. The next court hearing is April 18, and I'm asking you, Minister: Don't leave these dogs in cages for another month.

Speaker, to the minister: Will you move quickly and grant a special designation to Dog Tales Rescue to give these suffering dogs a second chance at life?

Interjections.

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

Minister.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Again, contrary to the member's assertion and public reports, the government of Ontario does not currently have legislative or regulatory authority to direct the OSPCA to take or not take any action, or to exempt a private facility from the requirements of the Dog Owners' Liability Act for the purposes of transferring ownership of the dogs to such a facility.

The OSPCA is an independent charitable organization that provides a number of services such as animal shelters, veterinary and spay-neuter clinics and public education about animal welfare. Additionally, the OSPCA Act authorizes SPCA inspectors and agents to enforce any law pertaining to the welfare of animals. Police may also enforce these laws.

There's a reason that these decisions are being made by the experts who have the capacity under the legislation to make those determinations. It's not up to this Legislature or to the government to intervene.

AIR-RAIL LINK

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: My question is to the Premier. Yesterday we learned that the president of the Union Pearson Express, Kathy Haley, is being fired. Her crime: She did what the Premier ordered her to do.

We need a history lesson here. Six years ago, the Premier, who was then the Minister of Transportation, ordered Metrolinx to take over the UP Express after the private partner dropped out of the project because they knew it wouldn't make any money. Even so, the Premier ordered Metrolinx to implement the same flawed business model. Kathy Haley was hired a year after the Premier made this decision.

Why is the Premier not taking any responsibility for her own bad decision?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I appreciate the member's question. I'm not going to comment on personnel matters specifically to Metrolinx or on any other personnel matters.

I know that questions similar to this one came up yesterday regarding the Union Pearson Express. What I said yesterday stands: I've had the opportunity to speak with board chair Rob Prichard. I've had the opportunity to work with the board chair, board members and senior staff at Metrolinx for close to two years now. What we are focused on on this side of the House, working closely with Metrolinx, is to make sure that we can deliver on the transit progress that the people of the greater Toronto and Hamilton area expect. That's the mandate that they gave this Premier. That's the mandate that this Premier has

given me. I look forward to continuing to work with Metrolinx to make sure that we deliver on our commitments.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Again back to the Premier: The original private partner knew that the UP Express could not make money as the exclusive boutique express service for the executive class travellers demanded by this Liberal government. When the private partner dropped out in 2010, the Premier, who was then the Minister of Transportation, could have fixed this problem. She could have changed the UP Express into a true public transit service with affordable fares, more stations and more public access. She could have electrified it from the start. This is what the public has always demanded and wanted. Instead, she forced Metrolinx to build what her government wanted.

Why must Kathy Haley take the blame for the Premier and this Liberal government's bad decision?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: One thing I think is important to note: Just a couple of days ago, or a few days ago, we announced, in time for the March break, that we were making the fares for the Union Pearson Express more affordable for people who are visiting this region and for people who live in this region. Preliminary numbers and analysis show that since we have made that change to the fares, ridership has dramatically increased, which I think is good news.

In the first half of her question, the member from Parkdale-High Park referenced a history lesson. I think it's most important for people watching, people here in this chamber and watching at home, to remember that over the last couple of years, at least, as this Premier and our government have put forward plans to build the province up through budgets and other initiatives, the NDP in this chamber has consistently voted against and resisted every opportunity to support the transit investments that they claim they so desperately want. It's unfortunate—

Interjections.

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

New question.

SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

M. Grant Crack: Ma question est pour la ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones.

Dimanche—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thought I gave him a chance, but the member from Essex will come to order.

Carry on, please.

M. Grant Crack: Encore, monsieur le Président, ma question est pour la ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones.

Dimanche dernier, le 20 mars, tous les francophones de l'Ontario et à travers le Canada, ainsi que dans les pays francophones du monde entier, ont célébré la Journée internationale de la Francophonie.

1130

Rappelons-nous qu'en Ontario nous comptons plus de 600 000 francophones, soit 5 % de la population dans la province, la plus large communauté francophone hors Québec. Aujourd'hui, les Franco-Ontariens peuvent vivre en français grâce à l'accès à l'éducation en français, aux services de santé, mais également grâce aux services multidisciplinaires offerts par les organismes communautaires et culturels francophones.

Monsieur le Président, est-ce que la ministre peut nous expliquer ce que le gouvernement fait pour soutenir la communauté francophone?

L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Merci au député de Glengarry–Prescott–Russell pour sa question. Je sais qu'il appuie beaucoup la francophonie et représente beaucoup de francophones.

Alors, j'en profite pour souhaiter à tous les francophones et les francophiles de l'Ontario une belle Semaine de la Francophonie. En cette semaine spéciale, nous pouvons nous réjouir des efforts que le gouvernement a faits pour améliorer les services en français.

Depuis 2003, ce gouvernement a fait beaucoup par l'entremise de différentes initiatives pour améliorer les services en français. On peut penser à la création du Commissariat aux services en français. On peut penser à l'établissement d'une cible de 5 % pour l'immigration francophone. On peut penser à l'adoption de la Loi sur le Jour des Franco-Ontariens et des Franco-Ontariennes. On peut penser aussi à l'ouverture de nombreuses écoles—plus de 90 écoles—en français en Ontario, et, en terminant, au plan d'action en matière d'éducation postsecondaire en langue française dans le sud-ouest de l'Ontario.

Le Président (L'hon. Dave Levac): Une question?

M. Grant Crack: Je remercie la ministre pour sa réponse.

La diversité est un élément clé dans notre province. En effet, 10 % des francophones de la province sont issus des minorités visibles. Dans le budget de 2016, une nouvelle catégorie a été créée pour attirer les travailleurs qualifiés francophones qui souhaitent venir vivre en Ontario.

Monsieur le Président, je souhaiterais que la ministre nous en dise plus sur les différents programmes qui soutiennent la communauté francophone.

L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Merci encore une fois au député de Glengarry–Prescott–Russell. Le député a bien raison. L'Ontario est la première juridiction à lancer un volet francophone pour le Programme ontarien des candidats à l'immigration—et oui, c'est une première.

Pour ce qui est des autres programmes qui permettent d'améliorer l'accès aux services en français, nous pouvons compter sur le projet pilote, par exemple, sur les services en français dans le palais de justice d'Ottawa, un projet qui permet de renforcer l'accès à la justice en français.

On peut penser à l'investissement dans le système d'éducation qui permet aux étudiants d'avoir des cours en français, du jardin d'enfants à la 12^e année, et offre

également des cours en français dans six universités et trois collèges à travers la province.

Pour terminer, le gouvernement soutient les divers organismes francophones de la province. Ces organismes jouent un rôle essentiel dans plusieurs domaines dont la santé, l'emploi, l'immigration et la culture.

Je suis très fière des progrès qui ont été faits ici en Ontario et qui contribuent à l'épanouissement de la communauté francophone. Merci, monsieur le Président.

DOCTOR SHORTAGE

Mr. Bill Walker: My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. I'd like to read a quote from the minister: We aim to "make it easier for patients to find a doctor." And from his mandate letter: "Ensure that every Ontarian ... has a primary care provider."

This Liberal government has been in power for 13 years, and yet my riding has two high-physician-needs communities: Owen Sound and South Bruce Peninsula. The reality that the residents of my communities remain in high physician need and that my constituents have not had access to family doctors is simply inexcusable.

Minister, why is your government denying this primary health service to families in my riding?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I appreciate the question. It is a very important issue, that we continue to increase the availability of physicians and other health care providers—our nurse practitioners, for example, who form part of our primary health care teams—and we make sure that we're increasing access to them. Currently, 94% of Ontarians have such access, which does demonstrate not only how far we've come, a significant improvement since a decade ago—in fact, it's one of the highest in the country.

But there is more work to be done, and that's part of the reason why I released in December a discussion paper that calls for further reforms to our primary care systems, specifically for that reason: so we can go that extra mile, that extra distance for that additional 6% who do want a health care provider but are unable to find them.

The member opposite alluded to the fact that much of his riding is designated high-needs. I'm happy to talk in the supplementary about the benefits of that as well.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Bill Walker: Back to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care: Minister, your government has been in charge for 13 years, yet 300 communities remain underserved. This is a deplorable and indefensible record. We're talking about the very important work of putting doctors in areas of high needs.

What's worse, the minister has recently cut off South Bruce Peninsula from the high-needs program, denying local families access to doctors. The minister has cut off a community in need, one with a significant burden of poverty; a high proportion of vulnerable, frail seniors; an at-risk First Nation population; and a community identified by your own—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Well, that's not helpful at all, when you're the one who is complaining that I'm not standing.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We've got you on tape. And I don't consider that a challenge to the Chair.

Finish your question, please.

Mr. Bill Walker:—an at-risk First Nation population and a community identified by your own ministry as underserved.

This isn't the time to make excuses and talk platitudes. Access to a family physician is not a stretch goal. This is not an extra mile. Given the evidence, the families in South Bruce Peninsula expect your Liberal government to reinstate their high-needs designation. Minister, will you do that today?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: The high-needs designation is an extremely important designation. For example, it gives access to physicians in a family health team model.

In fact, two of his colleagues, the member for Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock and the member for Chatham–Kent–Essex, will agree with me that just recently in the past days, both of their significant portions—in the case of Chatham–Kent–Essex, his entire riding—has now been designated high-needs. Same with the member from the Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock. What I would ask the member opposite, as his two colleagues have done, is work with me if he's got concerns about designation or if he's got concerns about access to doctors.

But it's rich coming from this party, who fired 9,000 nurses, who closed 28 hospitals, who so disrespected physicians that they were fleeing the province. We can't take lessons from the history that they provide us. What we're doing is we're continuing to provide that access. I hope the member opposite would work with me to provide access to his riding.

ANIMAL PROTECTION

Ms. Jennifer K. French: My question is to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Two weeks ago, I called on the minister to intervene in the OSPCA's application to put down 21 dogs rescued from a dogfighting ring in Tilbury and to spare their lives. Two weeks later, and the courts have denied the application of the dog rescue to rehabilitate these animals. Their lives remain in the minister's hands.

These dogs should be going to a rescue organization, and the only barrier is the OSPCA court application and the breed-specific legislation that bans them. Will the minister commit to saving these dogs and end the breed-specific ban in Ontario?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: This question was already asked—an identical question—and my answer really does not change as well. Contrary to the member's assertion, contrary to the public reports, the government does not currently have legislative or regulatory authority to direct the OSPCA to take or not to take any action, or to exempt a private facility from the requirements of the Dog Own-

ers' Liability Act for the purposes of transferring ownership of the dogs to such a facility.

The OSPCA, as we know, is an independent charitable organization that provides a number of services. A lot of those services come as a result of the OSPCA Act that has been passed by this Legislature. Part of that legislative requirement is for the SPCA inspectors and agents to enforce any law pertaining to the welfare of animals. Of course, police could also enforce those laws.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Just to be clear, this wasn't a repeat of the same question. We are asking for an end to the breed-specific ban.

The minister claims that there is nothing he can do, but he is the minister responsible for the administration of the OSPCA Act that governs the group seeking to euthanize these dogs, so he does have a say. The breed-specific ban is a provincial ban, and this government is choosing to continue on with this discriminatory legislation.

Speaker, I will ask again, just to be clear: Will the minister end the breed-specific ban and allow animal welfare agencies the chance to rehabilitate these 21 dogs instead of condemning them to die?

1140

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you again to the member for the question. Again, that particular piece of legislation has been put in place by this Legislature to ensure public safety and security. We have heard of many instances where a particular breed of dogs has resulted in serious injuries to children in particular, and that is something, of course, we all take very seriously.

In this particular instance, as we know, there is currently an application to the court by the OSPCA for permission to euthanize 21 of the 31 pit bull dogs seized from an alleged dogfighting operation, citing risks to public safety. That is the key, Speaker. One of the reasons why the OSPCA is seeking this application is because they feel that 21 of those dogs pose a serious risk to public safety. The other dogs have been rehabilitated, but in this particular instance, a determination has been made.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: My question is to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, and it's not about the OSPCA—let's be clear.

Minister, yesterday you hosted a consultation for your new Strategy for a Safer Ontario in my community of Cobourg—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That's not helpful either, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.

Finish, please.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Minister, yesterday you hosted a consultation for your new Strategy for a Safer Ontario in my community of Cobourg. There, we heard passionate ideas from a number of our local community members

about how to modernize policing across our province for the 21st century. Many of my community members provided feedback on how policing can be modernized in the 21st century to better serve Ontarians.

But Ontarians across the province, and those with us in this Legislature today, need to have a further understanding of what these consultations and the Strategy for a Safer Ontario are all about.

Speaker, through you, to the minister: Please explain the purpose of these consultations.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I want to first thank the member from Northumberland–Quinte West for his hospitality yesterday, when I was in his community of Cobourg. We had a very fruitful day in terms of visiting Rebound Child and Youth Services and seeing the incredible work they do in helping at-risk youth in Northumberland county. It was encouraging to see the work that they're doing.

In addition, we had the opportunity to meet with the chiefs of police from Cobourg and Port Hope, and the OPP detachment commander and members of the police services board about the excellent work they're doing in Northumberland county in keeping the community safe.

We ended the day with a consultation on the Strategy for a Safer Ontario at the Cobourg Community Centre. Speaker, there was an incredible turnout. In fact, the room was smaller than we had hoped for, and we had to bring in more chairs and tables. It was great to see the active participation of the community in how we can build a safer Ontario. In my supplementary, I'll speak to some of those findings.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Thank you, Minister. I'm pleased to hear that you are consulting so broadly on this new strategy, with a clear focus on evidence-based outcomes. After all, as many of us here today already know, while our police officers work hard every day to keep our communities safe, the current model of community safety is no longer sustainable. We need a made-in-Ontario approach to community safety that focuses on addressing the problems in our communities, not just from an enforcement perspective but, rather, through a more coordinated effort from multiple different types of services. That way, communities will be able to respond to crime and social issues in a more lasting and cost-effective fashion.

Mr. Speaker, through you, can the minister please explain how the Strategy for a Safer Ontario will improve community safety outcomes across the province?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: This is a very exciting time in the history of policing in Ontario as we are looking at ways to modernize and build 21st-century policing in the province of Ontario. In fact, Speaker, this is an opportunity for our province to be a leader in Canada and in North America.

The consultations are exactly about that. We want to hear from communities as to how we ensure we move away from a reactive, enforcement-based model of policing to one that is more proactive and community-focused. How can we ensure that local communities are

able to develop community safety and well-being plans? How can we better utilize community safety hubs to ensure that our communities are safe? What kinds of roles and functions does a 21st-century police officer play, and how can we ensure that we're providing the right response, at the right time, by the right personnel?

These are the kinds of questions we're asking members of the public. We ask them to join our consultations or go online at ontario.ca/safercommunities for our public consultation document.

LANDFILL

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: My question is to the Minister of the Environment. As you know, there's a proposal for a landfill in my riding. I know the minister has received thousands and thousands of letters, postcards and emails from my constituents who are concerned about the impact on their drinking water. The mayor of Ingersoll has been very vocal about the fact that our community does not want to take another municipality's garbage, both by going to these municipalities and in speaking to the government at ROMA.

To make it clear, we are not a willing host. At ROMA, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the Minister of Agriculture stated that a municipality would not be forced to take the garbage if they are not a willing host. Can the minister confirm that this government will not force our community to take another municipality's garbage?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I just want to be very clear about where we are in the process right now, because there's a legal process to ensure we protect the rights of communities, but we also have a fair process for siting landfills. I think we'd all appreciate that it's not a matter of taking other people's garbage. We have a system in Ontario where we share those burdens of disposal.

What has been approved are terms of reference that the proponent in this case has to follow. As we go through this process, all aspects are looked at. Detailed studies are done on risks to water supplies—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Blah, blah, blah. Will you, or will you not?

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

Finish, please.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: So it's an evidence-based, public, transparent process.

I wrote into the amendment for the terms of reference that we have to consider cumulative effects. I think there was some confusion there, because that actually includes human health effects. I just want it to be very clear on the record: We don't actually have a health category, but that's included in cumulative—

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

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Thank you very much, Mr. Minister. As you know, the people in my community are worried, not just about where the garbage could come

from but the risk to our drinking water from a landfill located on fractured bedrock near the Thames River and one of Ingersoll's main municipal water supplies. They're concerned that this government doesn't get it.

Today is World Water Day, and to mark this occasion, the people of my riding are looking for a commitment from the Minister of the Environment. Can the minister give us his assurance that the landfill will not be approved if it puts our drinking water at risk?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: The short answer is yes, and that's what the terms-of-reference policy is.

While I have great respect for the member from Oxford—he's been a friend and I think we have worked well together on these issues, and I know he and I share a concern. I would even go further, Mr. Speaker: I would say that Oxford county is one of the leading counties, if not the leading county in Ontario, on environmental sustainability, zero waste and low carbon. This is a remarkable community with a remarkable environmental group. So we are very concerned, because there are not that many communities—each of us as MPPs would not put in our election literature that we're running for re-election by putting a waste facility in our communities. It is one of the more difficult decisions. So we want to make sure that the standards are some of the highest.

I commit to work with your community, with your mayor and with yourself to ensure that if the decision, in the end, is to site a dump there, it meets every single standard. I think we've put in place, with cumulative effects, the highest standard possible.

1150

SPECIAL-NEEDS STUDENTS

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: My question is to the Minister of Education. Children and families across the province continue to inundate my office expressing concerns that provincial and demonstration schools may be forced to close. Students who have had positive, life-changing experiences are coming forward and sharing their stories. Parents have seen their children grow, thrive and succeed. Experts in the sector have spoken publicly about the value of these schools. Even pediatricians are coming forward.

These schools help our most vulnerable kids. Some children, particularly those who thrive in ASL or QSL environments, will be left with no other local alternatives.

My question is clear: Will the Minister of Education ensure that no provincial or demonstration school is closed as a result of consultation, yes or no?

Hon. Liz Sandals: Of course, as we've said many times, no decisions have been made. The consultation is continuing.

We really do need to think about how we best serve our children with special needs. We know that the children who are in the demonstration schools are served very well by the demonstration schools. Nobody is arguing that. They have very good programs. But what we are

looking at is the availability of those programs, the accessibility of those programs, and we are reviewing the demonstration schools.

I want to assure people that that review will happen as quickly as possible. But we do want to hear from everyone involved, and no decisions have been made at this point.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: These are critical programs for students who go into the provincial and demonstration schools, as the minister herself has acknowledged. Perhaps she should lift the caps on enrolment and reopen enrolment, rather than keeping it closed.

Speaker, it was a yes-or-no question. Even though the minister herself continually rises in this House and speaks with certainty about the positive impacts of these schools, it is clear that the government will not commit to keeping these specialized schools open.

On this side of the House, we believe that all children deserve equal access to education that allows them to thrive. If families want to benefit from these schools, they should have every right to do so. This government should not be balancing the books on the backs of vulnerable children and families.

I'll ask again. Will the minister tell concerned families today that no provincial or demonstration school will be closed as a result of consultations?

Hon. Liz Sandals: I think that the member opposite actually hit on the issue here in her question: We believe in equal access for all students with special needs. We are committed to reviewing special education programs and making sure that, in fact, we are meeting the needs of special education students, not, as she said, "locally"—these aren't local schools. They're schools where people literally fly in from around the province.

We need to look at what the availability is of programs in all boards throughout the province, in all regions throughout the province. What's the availability of programs for children with very severe learning disabilities? That's what we're having a look at: equal access.

APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

Mrs. Laura Albanese: My question is to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Ontario's apprenticeship system is a key part of building the highly skilled workforce our province needs to compete in today's global economy. Many constituents in my riding of York South-Weston often ask me about the different ways our government is supporting people entering the skilled trades in Ontario.

I understand that the minister was recently at George Brown College to announce additional funding in two apprenticeship programs that will help the next generation of skilled tradespeople access the training, equipment and facilities they need to get high-quality jobs. Some of my constituents are particularly interested to know how this funding will help those who face barriers start an apprenticeship and access promising careers in a skilled trade.

Speaker, could the minister please inform the members of the House how this funding will help people access apprenticeship programs in the province of Ontario?

Hon. Reza Moridi: I want to thank the member from York South–Weston for that very timely question.

I recently visited George Brown College to announce that our government is investing \$36 million in two apprenticeship programs as part of Ontario's renewed Youth Jobs Strategy. We are investing \$23 million over two years in the Apprenticeship Enhancement Fund and \$13 million in Ontario's Pre-apprenticeship Training Program.

One example is the Central Ontario Building Trades Hammer Heads Program, which is an excellent program that provides life-changing training opportunities to youth. Our government will continue building Ontario up by ensuring our people have the skills to get good jobs.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take this moment to thank all instructors at our 68 training centres run by our colleges and the unions, and employer-based training centres. I want to thank the instructors, journeypersons and the mentors for—

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

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Thank you to the minister for that answer. It is reassuring to know that our government is committed to helping people access apprenticeship programs in the province of Ontario. Our Hammer Heads Program is a tremendous program. They operate in my riding and they have helped many young people.

Many of my constituents who are new to Canada often tell me that they face challenges in finding good jobs because they lack the training and the experience to work in the skilled trades in our province. I understand that one of the minister's priorities is to support newcomers to Canada to enter apprenticeship programs. Could the minister please inform the members of this House on the progress that he and his ministry are making in helping new Canadians through Ontario's Pre-apprenticeship Training Program?

Hon. Reza Moridi: The hard-working member from York South–Weston is absolutely right. Almost one in five new jobs in Ontario over this decade is expected to be in trades-related occupations.

I am pleased to say that Ontario's Pre-apprenticeship Training Program is funding projects that will support newcomers to Canada and to Ontario to access apprenticeship programs. I am proud to say that this year, we are investing nearly \$3 million toward 13 pre-apprenticeship projects that will help new Canadians enter the skilled trades.

Mr. Speaker, our government will continue investing in our people by supporting a high-quality skilled trades and apprenticeship system in our province of Ontario.

WIND TURBINES

Mr. Jeff Yurek: My question is to the Minister of Energy. Last week, a wind project was awarded to Inver

Energy in Dutton Dunwich, even though this municipality is not a willing host. In fact, 84% of the residents of Dutton Dunwich voted against this wind project. Another municipality in my riding, Malahide, was a willing host, but was not awarded a contract.

This government has stated that municipalities will have a say on wind projects. However, in this latest round of contracts, this does not seem to be the case.

Speaker, will the minister explain to the municipalities in my riding why they are ignoring their voices?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: We have a process for large, renewable procurements. That was consulted on very broadly across the province of Ontario, including with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, AMO, and with individual municipalities. We produced a handbook for municipalities and distributed it to every municipality in the province, setting out what the process was.

It was very clear that no municipality would have a veto, but it did require the proponents to have a very, very broad engagement with the municipalities. We provided incentives for them to have agreements with municipalities. Of 16 contracts awarded, 13 of them had willing host communities.

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

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Back to the minister: Even your own words back in—

Interjections.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Speaker, using the testimony from the minister in committee in November 2013, he said that municipalities wouldn't be given a veto over projects, but it would be "very rare indeed" for any to be approved without municipal backing. "It will be almost impossible for somebody to win one of those bidding processes without an engagement with the municipality."

Speaker, either the minister doesn't know what's going on in his ministry or he just wasn't telling the truth in committee.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member will withdraw.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I withdraw.

Will the minister keep his word and stop the contract from coming to Dutton Dunwich?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: There was very significant engagement in this particular file. We have a quote here from Laurie Spence Bannerman, CAO of Dutton Dunwich, who recognized the efforts of the company to set up a monthly meeting with the working group: "The wind energy company has to show that they're doing things to engage the community and so they were hosting regular monthly meetings. A working group is one of those things that shows that you're engaging the local community." That quote is from Laurie Spence Bannerman, CAO of Dutton Dunwich.

ROB FORD

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Leader of the Opposition on a point of order.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Toronto councillor and former mayor Rob Ford passed away this morning following a hard-fought battle against cancer. This House sends its condolences to his wife, his children and his loved ones. As a sign that the entire province mourns the loss of Rob Ford, I believe you'll find we have unanimous consent to observe a moment of silence.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Leader of the Opposition is seeking unanimous consent to do a moment of silence for the passing of Rob Ford. Do we agree?

I would ask all members to please rise and observe a moment of silence.

The House observed a moment's silence.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for that kind gesture.

DEFERRED VOTES

2016 ONTARIO BUDGET

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We have a deferred vote on the motion that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

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

The division bells rang from 1202 to 1207.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Would all members please take their seats? All members, please take your seats. Please? I wonder if there's a competition to see who's the last to sit. I can't figure that one out.

On February 25, 2016, Mr. Sousa moved, seconded by Ms. Wynne, that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

All those in favour, 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.
Ballard, Chris	Hoskins, Eric	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Hunter, Mitzie	Naqvi, Yasir
Bradley, James J.	Kiwala, Sophie	Oraziotti, David
Chan, Michael	Lalonde, Marie-France	Potts, Arthur
Chiarelli, Bob	Leal, Jeff	Qaadri, Shafiq
Colle, Mike	MacCharles, Tracy	Rinaldi, Lou
Coteau, Michael	Malhi, Harinder	Sandals, Liz
Crack, Grant	Mangat, Amrit	Sergio, Mario
Damerla, Dipika	Martins, Cristina	Sousa, Charles
Dei Duca, Steven	Matthews, Deborah	Takhar, Harinder S.
Delaney, Bob	Mauro, Bill	Vernile, Daiene
Dhillon, Vic	McGarry, Kathryn	Wong, Soo
Dickson, Joe	McMahon, Eleanor	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Dong, Han	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.	Gretzky, Lisa	Nicholls, Rick
Arnott, Ted	Hardeman, Ernie	Pettapiece, Randy
Bailey, Robert	Harris, Michael	Sattler, Peggy

Barrett, Toby	Hatfield, Percy	Scott, Laurie
Brown, Patrick	Hillier, Randy	Singh, Jagmeet
Campbell, Sarah	Hudak, Tim	Smith, Todd
Clark, Steve	Jones, Sylvia	Tabuns, Peter
Coe, Lorne	MacLeod, Lisa	Taylor, Monique
DiNovo, Cheri	Mantha, Michael	Vanthof, John
Fedeli, Victor	Martow, Gila	Walker, Bill
Forster, Cindy	Miller, Norm	Wilson, Jim
French, Jennifer K.	Miller, Paul	Yakubski, John
Gates, Wayne	Natyshak, Taras	Yurek, Jeff

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 53; the nays are 39.

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

Motion agreed to.

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

The House recessed from 1211 to 1500.

RESIGNATION OF MEMBER

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that a vacancy has occurred in the membership of the House by reason of the resignation of Bas Balkissoon as the member from the electoral district of Scarborough–Rouge River, effective March 22, 2016. Accordingly, I have issued my warrant to the Chief Electoral Officer for the issue of a writ for a by-election.

It is now time for members' statements.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

FRANK KINSELLA

Mr. Steve Clark: I rise today to pay tribute to former mayor Frank Kinsella. Leeds–Grenville lost a champion when Mayor Frank, as he was affectionately known, passed away this month at age 75. As an educator, director of education, Rotarian, councillor and mayor of Leeds and the Thousand Islands, Frank left an indelible mark on countless lives.

Frank knew that being a leader could be difficult, but he never flinched in the face of a challenge. Even those who disagreed with him never doubted that Frank had his community's best interests at heart.

Indeed, even after he lost a bid for re-election in 2010, the community turned to Frank in a time of crisis two years later and he was reappointed mayor. Frank held no grudge. He rolled up his sleeves and inspired others around him to be better. And with Frank leading the way, they were better.

I had the privilege of knowing Frank as a friend, and later he was my boss, because he hired me as a CAO for the township. I can tell you that Frank was the same behind closed doors as he was in public. He wanted to build a stronger, more connected community by empowering people to step forward and do great things. Frank set out to be a community builder, and that's exactly what he leaves as his legacy.

On behalf of everyone in Leeds–Grenville and the province of Ontario, I want to extend my most sincere and deepest condolences to Frank’s wife, Mary Lou, his children and his grandchildren. We’re all so blessed that they shared Frank with us. We loved him a lot. We’re going to miss him.

AGRICULTURE IN WINDSOR-ESSEX

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I am so happy to use my member’s statement today to give a shout-out to our province’s agricultural workers and our farmers. Today, obviously, being two days after the first day of spring of this year, we know that farmers are busy in the preparation for planting the food which we all appreciate, enjoy and are sustained by.

Of course, we can’t forget the economic impact that farmers have in Ontario—being our number two industry in the province, contributing billions of dollars to our GDP every year—and of course, the role they play in the small communities and rural communities in which they operate.

Speaker, in my region of Windsor-Essex, we have one of the longest growing seasons: 212 days per year. Our region is home to North America’s largest greenhouse industry, with over 1,700 acres under glass or plastic. With 328,000 acres of farmland, Windsor–Essex generates \$1.2 billion from agricultural activity. Of course, Essex also tops southwestern Ontario when it comes to employment, with 18,487 full-time equivalents in the sector. Only Niagara region is a close second, with 18,400.

Thank you to the farmers who are busy preparing the food that we’re going to enjoy. We appreciate and acknowledge your efforts and look forward to supporting you. Have a safe and prosperous and productive season.

COMMUNITY AWARDS

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: I rise today to recognize 12 women who recently received Leading Women, Building Communities awards at an event in Mississauga–Brampton South this past Saturday. These awards celebrate those women who demonstrate exceptional leadership in working to improve the lives of others through their work, activism and volunteer activities. They are role models for everyone in our communities, especially for young women.

Despite a lot of progress for women in Ontario, they are still under-represented in private business and leadership roles. Far too often, women are victims of gender-based harassment and violence.

These women are inspirational and worth celebrating, and I thank them for their service to our community.

Congratulations, Judy Yeung, Helene Burrowes, Puneet Chawla, Angela John, Lilian Kwok, Anna Mazurkiewicz, Arifa Muzaffar, Nav Singh, Norma Nicholson, Nira Rajpal, Anu Srivastava and Arpana

Vora. Kudos to all of you. I’m very proud of your work. Keep up the good work.

FOOD AND BEVERAGE INDUSTRY

Mr. Toby Barrett: Today I’d planned on responding to the minister’s comments on Food and Beverage Ontario’s Taste Your Future campaign, but the minister’s statement has been cancelled.

I want to start by quoting Norm Beal, CEO of Food and Beverage Ontario: “We are launching a major campaign called Taste Your Future because there aren’t enough people trained in our industry to take these jobs. We need young people and new Canadians interested in our sector for jobs ranging from millwrights to food scientists and marketing people.”

Further to CEO Beal’s numbers, he indicates that the food and beverage sector has 132,000 direct jobs. There are another 172,000 indirect full-time positions. He touts it as the largest manufacturing/processing sector in the province, bigger than automotive, and a sector that generates \$40.7 billion in revenue.

Following the recession, we know Ontario was hard hit, primarily because of automotive, yet the food and beverage sector grew by 11% from 2007 to 2012. We’re second only to Chicago.

I just wanted to point this out. I’m not sure why the statement was cancelled. We’ve seen a cut to the ministry’s budget. Maybe that was one of the reasons. I’ll just leave that with the Legislature.

ETHICAL BUSINESS PRACTICES

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I rise today to recognize two exemplary London companies that received global recognition this month for ethical business practices and for redefining business success.

On March 4, London tech firm rTraction announced its official designation as London’s first Certified B Corporation. B Corps is an international program to recognize for-profit companies that meet rigorous standards of social and environmental performance, accountability and transparency; in other words, companies that use business as a force for good.

Since its founding in 2001, rTraction has been making a difference for its clients, its employees and the London community. As a certified B Corp, rTraction’s two brands, Ellipsis Digital and Engine SevenFour, have joined more than 1,400 certified B Corps from 42 countries and over 120 industries.

The same week, on March 7, the US-based Ethisphere Institute named 3M one of the world’s most ethical companies for a third year in a row for its ethical business standards, its alignment of principle with action, and its impact in shaping future industry standards.

Londoners are very proud of 3M’s long history in our community. Since 1951, London has been home to 3M’s Canadian operations, and 3M employs almost 1,000 employees at its head office and manufacturing plant.

To earn the designation of an ethical company, 3M was assessed in multiple categories. This year, 131 honorees were named, spanning 21 countries, five continents and more than 45 industries.

Congratulations to rTraction CEO David Billson and to Paul Madden, 3M Canada's president and general manager.

I'm proud of the leadership shown by London firms to demonstrate that good ethics is good business.

ATTACKS IN BRUSSELS

Mr. Mike Colle: Today I would like to pay tribute to the innocent people who were killed and slaughtered in cold blood in Brussels this morning, and the people of Belgium who saw this act of terrorism rip their city and their airport apart. Innocent people going to work this morning on the metro in Brussels—men, women and children—were killed by these sadistic, cowardly terrorists.

1510

This is just to let the people know in Belgium and all over the world that we stand together with those who are totally in opposition to the type of cowardly, dastardly act that occurred this morning, and that this is not something that we condone or want to see repeated.

We should encourage all citizens in every part of this great country of Canada to stand up to this cowardly terrorism that rips apart this world and contributes to nothing but destruction and hate. It's our time to stand in solidarity with the people of Brussels and the people of Belgium.

MAPLE SYRUP

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: This spring, along with the wonderful member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, I had the privilege of attending the Grey-Bruce first-tapping ceremony at Klein's Maple Syrup, near Mildmay. This particular event highlights the beginning of the maple syrup season.

I must say, Mr. Walker particularly showcased his knack for hammering in the spigot—something to be seen, ladies.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Wow.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Yes.

But in all seriousness, in terms of the maple syrup season, since the earliest settlers arrived along the coastline of Lake Huron, the sugaring season has brought together family and friends to celebrate the transition from winter to the early days of spring. Many of us share fond memories of visiting our local sugar shack to collect sap, enjoying the early springtime and devouring taffy and pancakes at our local festivals.

This season is particularly meaningful for farmers in my community, as it marks the first harvest of the season and the start of an agricultural year.

In addition to its cultural importance, the maple syrup industry is important to Ontario's economy. Last year alone, the syrup producers in my region produced an

impressive 3.9 million gallons of syrup and contributed \$41 billion to our province's GDP. Even better, the maple syrup industry is only expected to grow as Ontarians seek a healthy alternative to traditional sugars.

Maple syrup is one of Ontario's most iconic products. I encourage all my colleagues in the House to visit their local sugar shack or their local festival and enjoy and celebrate one of our delicious snacks in this province.

COMMUNITY AWARDS

PRIX COMMUNAUTAIRES

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: This year, in celebration of International Women's Day, I was delighted to host a breakfast event in Orléans which was such a success, with over 100 great women from our community in attendance. The objective was to meet and celebrate these women, their work and their successes, while giving them an opportunity to engage and get to know one another.

Our event represented Canada's 2016 theme of "Women's Empowerment Leads to Equality." This is why I took the opportunity to present this year's Leading Women, Building Communities recognition awards to 14 deserving women.

Je suis tellement fière, comme députée d'Orléans, d'avoir pu reconnaître ces 14 femmes exceptionnelles pour leur engagement, leur dévouement et leur leadership dans notre communauté. Félicitations encore à chacune d'elles, et j'aimerais utiliser l'opportunité de les nommer en Chambre : Alicia Krolak, Anne-Marie Sisk, Colleen Dupuis-Strong, Jennifer Babe, Karina Potvin, Cassandra Tannouri, Kelsey Lett, Lisa Whittleton, Michelle Desrochers, Rachelle Lecours, Sandra Stefanik, Teresa Whitmore, Victoria Powell and Yasmine Fathers.

Thank you, and congratulations to all these wonderful women.

ROB FORD

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I just want to say a few words on Rob Ford, not as the mayor but as a human being and as a person that I knew on city council.

Rob was first elected to city council in the year 2000. I was a councillor at that time as well, and we hit it off pretty well, right from the beginning. I remember that his grandfather lived in my riding, and when his grandfather passed away, he came to me and he said, "Can you say a few words about my grandfather?" I said, "Sure, Rob."

So at the start of the council meeting, I said a few words about his grandfather. I looked across from me and I could see Rob's eyes welling up and tears coming down. After I finished my speech, he came over, shook my hand and was not even able to speak. He was so emotionally moved by the fact that I had spoken about his grandfather. He was a very sensitive and emotional person.

I remember as well that we were debating the budget one day in council and I said, "I don't want my Metro-

pass. I don't want it. I'll pay my own way on the subway." I started arguing with some members of council. All of a sudden, Rob stood up and goes, "I don't want mine either. It's wrong that we get free Metropasses." He became more passionate than I did. Just to see him in his passion and the way he felt strongly about an issue—he didn't care whether he was on the right or wrong side; he did that.

With the permission of the Speaker, I may go a few minutes over, but I just wanted to say that when I was elected, I wanted to be chair of the administration committee in 2000, which was a big committee. I phoned him and I said, "Rob, can you vote for me tomorrow to support me to become admin chair?" He goes, "You can't phone me. That's illegal." I said, "Well, it's not illegal; I'm just asking you to vote for me."

He had a friend and a mentor, Doug Holyday, former member here and former councillor as well. Doug Holyday said to me, "Don't worry, I calmed Rob down. He's going to vote for you." So Rob voted for me and he was on the committee.

He was always opinionated, but honest, and a very emotional human being who loved his job and loved his family. He loved his wife, Renata, and his children, Stephanie and Doug. He was very close to his mum, Diane. I had many chances to meet them and talk to them. He had birthday parties at his house, and I would go with my wife. He would get emotional during his birthdays and say, "Thanks for coming to my birthday party." He was very happy.

There's another side to him that I'm really going to miss and we're all going to miss. It's too early, perhaps, to eulogize him, but I just thought it was appropriate today to say a few words about a wonderful human being who will be missed deeply by his family and even us, his friends here at the Legislature. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I knew better than to cut him off.

I thank all members for their statements.

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-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum): Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

Bill 163, An Act to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 and the Ministry of Labour Act with respect to posttraumatic stress disorder / Projet de loi 163, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la sécurité professionnelle et l'assurance contre les accidents du

travail et la Loi sur le ministère du Travail relativement à l'état de stress post-traumatique.

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

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to the order of the House dated March 2, 2016, the bill is ordered for third reading.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I beg leave to present a report on Education of Aboriginal Students, section 4.05, 2014 Annual Report of the Auditor General of Ontario, from the Standing Committee on Public Accounts and move the adoption of its recommendations.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Hardeman presents the committee's report and moves the adoption of its recommendations.

Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: As Chair of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, I'm pleased to table the committee's report today, entitled Education of Aboriginal Students, section 4.05 of the 2014 Annual Report of the Auditor General of Ontario.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts: Vice-Chair Lisa MacLeod, Han Dong, John Fraser, Percy Hatfield, Harinder Malhi, Julia Munro, Arthur Potts and Lou Rinaldi.

The committee extends its appreciation to officials from the Ministry of Education, the Algoma District School Board, the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board and the Lakehead District School Board for their attendance at the hearings.

The committee also acknowledges the assistance provided during the hearings and the report-writing deliberations by the Auditor General, the Clerk of the Committee and staff at legislative research.

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

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

Debate adjourned.

1520

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

CORPORATION OF MASSEY HALL AND ROY THOMSON HALL ACT (TAX RELIEF), 2016

Mr. Dong moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr39, An Act respecting The Corporation of Massey Hall and Roy Thomson Hall.

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.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

LA FRANCOPHONIE

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Monsieur le Président, it is with great pride that I open my remarks by reminding you that in this House on February 22, the Premier offered an official apology from the Ontario government regarding regulation 17, which prohibited the use of French as a language of education in Ontario schools.

Premier Wynne said the following: “The tremendous courage and tenacity of Franco-Ontarians has not gone unnoticed.”

This historic declaration resonated to an even greater extent here in Ontario on the International Day of La Francophonie, which took place on Sunday, March 20. Ontario’s Francophonie shines brighter than ever, and we have every reason to seize all opportunities to recognize the immense contributions of Franco-Ontarians to the province’s social, economic, cultural and political prosperity.

Partout dans le monde, 80 États et gouvernements francophones et francophiles célèbrent aussi en ce moment la Semaine de la Francophonie, qui a pour thème « Le pouvoir des mots ». Les excuses officielles du gouvernement de l’Ontario, des excuses que cette Assemblée a accueillies avec enthousiasme et sincérité, démontrent justement le pouvoir des mots.

Je tiens aujourd’hui à vous saluer chaleureusement, collègues de l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario, pour votre appui envers les francophones de notre province. Encore une fois, cette belle unanimité rend hommage à la réalité linguistique et culturelle française de l’Ontario, une réalité qui loge de plus en plus à l’enseigne de la diversité. Ceci démontre aussi que l’Ontario est une société inclusive dont tous les membres peuvent pleinement s’épanouir sur tous les plans.

Oui, la francophonie ontarienne a été interpellée par ce geste historique, lequel confirme sans aucun doute la place des francophones dans la société ontarienne.

In 2016, Ontario will celebrate the 30th anniversary of the first French Language Services Act, a bill that was an unprecedented turning point in favour of the expansion of French-language services throughout the province. Thanks to its quasi-constitutional status, this act is a fundamental lever that promotes the overall development of the Francophonie in Ontario.

Je salue donc le père de cette loi, l’ancien député de mon comté d’Ottawa–Vanier et mon bon ami, Bernard Grandmaître.

Je suis fière de souligner que 26 régions de la province sont maintenant désignées en vertu de la loi et que plus de 200 agences et organismes en Ontario sont aussi

désignés pour offrir des services en français, dont six établissements d’enseignement postsecondaire.

D’ailleurs, le Collège universitaire Glendon de l’Université York vient tout juste d’obtenir cette désignation, et j’aurai le plaisir de m’y rendre ce mercredi pour souligner cette étape importante et féliciter au nom du gouvernement, et en votre nom, tous ceux et celles qui ont contribué à cette avancée significative.

In 2015, the commemoration of 400 years of French presence in Ontario was a tremendous success, thanks to the combined efforts of the government and the support of francophones and francophiles across the province and Canada and from elsewhere around the world. Hundreds of events were held during this commemorative year, and we saw promising projects for the future take shape, such as the Rotary Champlain Wendat Park in Penetanguishene.

The commemoration promoted Ontario within Canada, in Quebec and in France. This exceptional exposure will have a long-lasting, positive impact on our relationships with partners from the national and international Francophonie. This commemoration was also instrumental in conveying new knowledge to our youth, and the not so young, enabling them to acquire a better understanding of their francophone history and heritage.

La commémoration a certes donné une nouvelle dose d’énergie à tous les Franco-Ontariens et Franco-Ontariennes. On a beaucoup entendu parler de la francophonie ontarienne en 2015 et, oui, monsieur le Président, ceci a eu un effet mobilisateur. C’est un constat qu’en tant que ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones je fais à tous les jours. La commémoration a eu un effet de levier et je suis très heureuse de constater l’effervescence actuelle qui donnera une toute nouvelle poussée à la francophonie de l’Ontario.

Et je ne peux passer sous silence le renforcement de notre amitié avec la province voisine, le Québec, notre partenaire privilégié, à qui je dis un grand merci pour sa participation au 400^e et sa collaboration exceptionnelle.

Monsieur le Président, dans son message à l’occasion de la Journée internationale de la Francophonie dimanche, la secrétaire générale de l’Organisation internationale de la Francophonie, l’honorable Michaëlle Jean, qui était ma commettante d’ailleurs, disait ceci en parlant de la violence et du terrorisme qui affectent plusieurs États de la Francophonie internationale :

« La menace plane encore et toujours, mais à la stratégie de la terreur, les populations ont voulu, partout, répondre par le courage, par la volonté de se dresser fièrement et de célébrer la vie. »

N’est-ce pas la voie choisie par l’Ontario et le Canada?

We have chosen to be a safe haven for thousands of people who choose to live in Ontario each year. Here, we have adopted laws, policies and regulations that favour linguistic diversity and that respect cultures instead of creating barriers. Here, we have understood the power of words and have chosen to adopt an inclusive, welcoming discourse respectful of our differences.

Here in Ontario, the French language is a jewel that enriches our vision for society and the spirit that nourishes our social and economic well-being. Yes, here we celebrate life in French and Ontario's diversity, which, when combined, serve as a model to the 280 million francophones living everywhere in the world and for all the world's citizens.

J'invite donc tous mes collègues à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario à rendre hommage à la francophonie, à continuer à l'accueillir et à la faire briller comme elles et ils l'ont fait encore si généreusement cette année.

Merci et bonne Semaine de la Francophonie à tous et à toutes.

Le Président (L'hon. Dave Levac): Merci beaucoup.

It is now time for responses. The member from Thornhill.

M^{me} Gila Martow: Merci, monsieur le Président.

Dimanche passé, le 20 mars, nous avons célébré la Journée internationale de la Francophonie ici en Ontario et partout à travers le monde.

1530

Comme porte-parole des affaires francophones du Parti PC et au nom de notre caucus, j'aimerais prendre ce moment pour souhaiter à tous les francophones et à tous les francophiles en Ontario et au Canada une excellente Semaine nationale de la francophonie.

Vendredi dernier, j'ai eu le plaisir d'assister à la sixième célébration de la Journée internationale de la Francophonie organisée par le comité consultatif communautaire francophone du Service de police de Toronto. Le thème de l'événement de cette année est « La francophonie en 3D : diversité, dualité, dynamisme! ». Ce thème décrit et est inclusif de tous les 611 000 francophones dans la province de l'Ontario aujourd'hui. Cette cérémonie fut un événement spécial car nous avons célébré avec l'invitée d'honneur et conférencière, Son Excellence M^{me} Nouzha Chekrouni, ambassadeur du Royaume du Maroc au Canada. Le Consul général de France à Toronto, M. Marc Trouyet, est venu aussi, avec le chef de la police, M. Mark Saunders; le fondateur de Cinéfranco, Marcelle Lean; et mes amis de la Communauté Juive Marocaine de Toronto.

Aussi, j'ai eu la chance de célébrer cette journée spéciale avec M. Donald Ipperciel, le principal du collègue universitaire francophone Glendon, qui fait partie de l'Université de York. Je félicite le collègue Glendon d'avoir récemment obtenu sa désignation bilingue en vertu de la Loi sur les services en français.

L'une des personnes qui ont contribué à la culture francophone en Ontario est le président de l'organisme francophone rassembleur de la région de York, AFRY, M. Alain Beaudoin. Cette année, M. Beaudoin est un récipiendaire de l'Ordre de la Pléiade, qui est l'Ordre de la Francophonie et du dialogue des cultures de l'Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie. Cette reconnaissance prestigieuse reconnaît le mérite des

personnalités qui se sont distinguées en servant les idées de l'Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie.

Le mois dernier, j'ai visité le Maroc pour le Réseau des femmes parlementaires, qui est une branche de l'organisation de la Francophonie mondiale. J'ai eu l'occasion de rencontrer beaucoup de politiciens qui ont des défis incroyables dans de nombreuses juridictions francophones, en particulier en Afrique.

Il est donc important de continuer à promouvoir la langue française, à la parler et à la partager. En cette occasion, nous allons rassembler et échanger nos histoires pour faire en sorte que les générations futures continuent de bâtir des communautés francophones fortes.

Au mois de juillet 2015, j'ai eu l'occasion de rencontrer la secrétaire générale de la Francophonie, l'honorable Michaëlle Jean, lors du Sommet de la Francophonie en Suisse. Elle est très passionnée par les communautés francophones, et elle est une source d'inspiration pour nous tous. Comme elle l'a bien dit : « Fêtons partout avec allégresse et une conviction renouvelée le pouvoir de notre langue commune, la langue française, et le pouvoir des mots. »

En conclusion, je tiens à réitérer l'importance de créer une université de langue française en Ontario. Partout en Ontario, les francophones souhaitent gérer eux-mêmes leurs programmes universitaires, comme ils le font déjà pour leurs écoles, leurs conseils scolaires et leurs collèges francophones.

Notre parti va continuer à pousser le gouvernement à créer une nouvelle université de langue française.

Soyons fiers de nos racines francophones.

M. Michael Mantha: Bienvenue à tous les gens à la Semaine de la Francophonie. Encore de la part des gens à travers Algoma-Manitoulin, et puis tous les francophones et francophiles à travers la province, ça me fait plaisir d'adresser les participants ici aujourd'hui et au réseau.

Nous voici encore une fois arrivés à la Semaine de la Francophonie. Cette célébration fêtée en Ontario donne l'occasion aux gens francophones de célébrer leur héritage dans leur langue maternelle. Cette semaine dédiée à la langue française permet à plusieurs francophones et francophiles de s'exprimer, de vivre en français et de partager leur culture avec fierté.

Plusieurs organisations en Ontario planifient des événements reliés à la francophonie. Les écoles francophones, surtout, dans les circonscriptions et à travers tout l'Ontario, organisent des cérémonies et des activités spéciales afin de démontrer et enseigner à toutes les générations l'importance de leur patrimoine français. Ceci est une chance de fêter la présence française et ses échos culturels en exposant ses lauréats et contributions au développement de l'Ontario. Au fil des années, la Semaine de la Francophonie s'est fait connaître dans les réseaux et les divers milieux éducatifs et culturels.

Monsieur le Président, nos élèves doivent pouvoir se sentir bien à l'aise de vivre librement dans leur langue maternelle. Il est important d'appuyer tous les efforts qui visent à encourager la communication, le partage et le regroupement entre les communautés et les associations

françaises. En trouvant des moyens d'encourager les échanges et assurer que nos éducateurs ont les ressources nécessaires en éducation francophone, nous espérons que notre future génération insistera à maintenir leurs droits et services préservés par la ténacité et le travail de leurs ancêtres. Toutes celles et tous ceux qui le désirent devraient avoir la chance de vivre pleinement leur distinction francophone avec liberté et bien-être.

À titre de francophone moi-même, j'appuie fortement les efforts de ma collègue France Gélinas, députée de Nickel Belt, et son projet de loi déposé à l'Assemblée, demandant la création d'une université de langue française.

La Semaine de la Francophonie en Ontario est l'occasion ultime d'inviter tous les Ontariens et Ontariennes à se joindre à la célébration. N'oubliez pas de porter votre blanc et vert, qui représentent les couleurs de notre drapeau franco-ontarien. Venez partager vos valeurs francophones et démontrer votre amour de la langue et la culture françaises. Débutons la semaine en exigeant la création d'une université francophone et son conseil d'administration. Donnons un choix viable à nos enfants.

Je vous souhaite une belle Semaine de la Francophonie. Soyons fiers et célébrons en grand nombre. Nous sommes une province—ça fait 400 années qu'on célèbre la francophonie. Ça fait 400 années que nous sommes ici dans notre territoire qu'on appelle maintenant l'Ontario. Aujourd'hui, on est plus de 600 000 personnes. On a beaucoup, beaucoup de fierté; on a beaucoup, beaucoup d'histoire dans la province; et on a beaucoup, beaucoup à célébrer dans ce temps de cette Semaine de la Francophonie.

Monsieur le Président, je te salue.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their comments.

It's now time for petitions.

Interjection: I'm the only girl.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): No, you can't give me excuses. I already made a commitment to the member from Leeds–Grenville.

PETITIONS

SPECIAL-NEEDS STUDENTS

Mr. Steve Clark: And because of that, because there are so many members, I'm not going to read the "whereases." I'm just going to read the bottom line:

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

"To immediately reinstate funding streams for demonstration schools and other specialized education services for the duration of the review and to commit to ensuring every student in need is allowed the chance to receive an education and achieve their potential."

I'm pleased to put my signature. I'll send to it the table with page Diluk.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That'll get you chosen to do petitions all the time.

SPECIAL-NEEDS STUDENTS

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to "Stop the Closure of Provincial and Demonstration Schools:

"Whereas provincial and demonstration schools in Ontario provide education programs and services for students with special education needs;

"Whereas there are four provincial and three demonstration schools for anglophone deaf, blind, deaf-blind and/or severely learning-disabled students, as well as one school for the francophone students who are deaf, deaf-blind and/or have severe learning disabilities;

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"Whereas even with early identification and early intervention, local school boards are not equipped to handle the needs of these students, who are our most vulnerable children;

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

"(a) oppose the closure of provincial and demonstration schools and recognize that these specialized schools are the last hope for many children;

"(b) stop the enrolment freeze at these schools in order for students and their families, who have exhausted all other available resources, to have access to equal education for themselves without added costs, to which they, like all students, are entitled to."

I sign this petition and I give it to page Sabrina to deliver.

WATER FLUORIDATION

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have a petition addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly. It's entitled "Fluoridate All Ontario Drinking Water." It was sent by Mississauga dentist Lisa Bentley. It reads as follows:

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

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

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

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

"Whereas the decision to add fluoride to municipal drinking water is a patchwork of individual choices across Ontario, with municipal councils often vulnerable

to the influence of misinformation, and studies of questionable or no scientific merit;

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

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

I am pleased to sign and support this petition and send it down with page Vanessa.

SPECIAL-NEEDS STUDENTS

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: To the Legislative Assembly:

“Whereas demonstration schools in Ontario provide incredible necessary support for children with special ... needs;

“Whereas the current review by the government of Ontario of demonstration schools and other special education programs has placed a freeze on student intake and the hiring of teaching staff;

“Whereas children in need of specialized education and their parents require access to demonstration schools and other essential support services;

“Whereas freezing student intake is unacceptable as it leaves the most vulnerable students” in this province “behind; and....

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

“To immediately reinstate funding streams for demonstration schools and other specialized education services for the duration of the review and to commit to ensuring every student in need is allowed the chance to receive an education and achieve their potential.”

I agree with this petition and I present it to page Ariel.

SPECIAL-NEEDS STUDENTS

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I have a “Stop the Closure of Provincial and Demonstration Schools” petition.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas provincial and demonstration schools in Ontario provide education programs and services for students with special education needs;

“Whereas there are four provincial and three demonstration schools for anglophone deaf, blind, deaf-blind and/or severely learning-disabled students, as well as one school for the francophone students who are deaf, deaf-blind and/or have severe learning disabilities;

“Whereas even with early identification and early intervention, local school boards are not equipped to handle the needs of these students, who are our most vulnerable children;

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

“(a) oppose the closure of provincial and demonstration schools and recognize that these specialized schools are the last hope for many children;

“(b) stop the enrolment freeze at these schools in order for students and their families, who have exhausted all other available resources, to have access to equal education for themselves without added costs, to which they, like all students, are entitled to.”

I fully support this petition, will sign my name and give it to page Terry to bring to the Clerks’ table.

FRENCH-LANGUAGE EDUCATION

Mr. Arthur Potts: I have a petition here in honour of francophone week for an east Toronto French secondary school.

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

“Whereas there are more than 1,000 children attending French elementary schools in east Toronto ... and those numbers continue to grow; and

“Whereas there is no French secondary school yet in east Toronto, requiring students wishing to continue their studies in French” schools “to travel two hours every day to attend the closest French secondary school; and

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

“Whereas it is well documented that children leave the French-language system for the English-language system between grades 8 and 9 due to the inaccessibility of French-language secondary schools, and that it is also well established that being educated in French at the elementary level is not sufficient to solidify French-language skills for life; and

“Whereas the Ontario government acknowledged in February 2007 that there is an important shortage of French-language schools in all of Toronto and even provided funds to open some secondary schools; ...

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

“That the Minister of Education assist French school boards ... in locating an underutilized school building in east Toronto that may be sold or shared for the purpose of opening a French secondary school ... in the community ... so that French students have a secondary school close to where they live.”

I certainly agree with this petition, and I’ll leave it with page Terry.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

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

“Whereas the rightful purpose of Ontario’s Environmental Protection Act ... is to ‘provide for the protection

and conservation of the natural environment.' RSO 1990 ... ; and

"Whereas 'all landfills will eventually release leachate to the surrounding environment and therefore all landfills will have some impact on the water quality of the local ecosystem.'—Threats to Sources of Drinking Water and Aquatic Health in Canada;

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

"That section 27 of the EPA should be reviewed and amended immediately to prohibit the establishment of new or expanded landfills at fractured bedrock sites and other hydrogeologically unsuitable locations within the province of Ontario."

I affix my signature, as I agree with this petition, Mr. Speaker, and thank you very much for the opportunity to present it.

ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I have a petition, signed by people from Windsor-Essex and Leamington, to stop the plan to increase seniors' drug costs.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the government of Ontario will require most seniors to pay significantly more for prescription drugs, starting on August 1, 2016, under changes to the Ontario Drug Benefit;

"Whereas most seniors will be required to pay a higher annual deductible of \$170 and higher copayments each and every time they fill a prescription at their pharmacy;

"Whereas the average Ontario senior requires at least eight different types of drugs each year to stay healthy and maintain their independence; and

"Whereas many seniors on fixed incomes simply cannot afford to pay more for prescription drugs and should not be forced to skip medications that they can no longer afford and to put their health in jeopardy;

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

"Stop the government's plan to make most Ontario seniors pay more for necessary prescription drugs and instead work to expand prescription drug coverage for all Ontarians."

Speaker, I agree with this, I will sign my name and give it to Vanessa to bring up to the front.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further petitions? The member from—I know this, I know this—Kitchener Centre.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: You'll have to visit sometime, Mr. Speaker. Then you will know for good.

This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas one in three women will experience some form of sexual assault in her lifetime. When public education about sexual violence and harassment is not prioritized, myths and attitudes informed by misogyny become prevalent. This promotes rape culture. ... Sexual violence and harassment survivors too often feel revictimized by the systems set in place to support them. The voices of survivors, in all their diversity, need to be amplified. Survivors too often face wait times for counselling services as our population grows and operating costs rise for sexual assault support services.

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

"Support the findings and recommendations of the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment's final report, highlighting the need for inclusive and open dialogue to address misogyny and rape culture; educate about sexual violence and harassment to promote social change; fund sexual assault support" centres "adequately to meet the demand for their counselling and public education programs; address systemic assumptions within the current ... aid structure to ensure survivors are supported and not revictimized; and address attrition rates within our justice system, including examining 'unfounded' cases, developing enhanced prosecution models and providing free legal advice for survivors."

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I agree with this petition. I will sign my name to it and give it to Sohan.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Jim Wilson: Mr. Speaker, the abbreviated version:

"Whereas Stevenson Memorial Hospital deserves equitable servicing comparable to other Ontario hospitals;

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

"That the ... Wynne Liberal government immediately provide the necessary funding to Stevenson Memorial Hospital for the redevelopment of their emergency department, operating rooms, diagnostic imaging and laboratory to ensure that they can continue to provide stable and ongoing service to residents in our area."

I agree with the petition and I will sign it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I thank the member and remind all members that brevity is a sign of wisdom, so if you have a long petition, you can shorten it.

I recognize further petitions.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Cindy Forster: My petition to the Legislative Assembly is "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 support this petition and will send it with page Ariel.

LUNG HEALTH

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario from residents in Woodbridge.

“Whereas lung disease affects more than 2.4 million people in the province of Ontario, more than 570,000 of whom are children;

“Of the four chronic diseases responsible for 79% of deaths (cancers, cardiovascular diseases, lung disease and diabetes) lung disease is the only one without a dedicated province-wide strategy;

“In the Ontario Lung Association report, *Your Lungs, Your Life*, it is estimated that lung disease currently costs the Ontario taxpayers more than \$4 billion a year in direct and indirect health care costs, and that this figure is estimated to rise to more than \$80 billion seven short years from now;

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

“To allow for deputations on ... private member’s bill, Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, which establishes a Lung Health Advisory Council to make recommendations to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on” lung disease issues “with respect to research, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of lung disease; and

“Once debated at committee, to expedite Bill 41” through to third and final reading; and finally, seeking “royal assent immediately upon its passage.”

I agree with the petition. I affix my name and give it to Joshua.

ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES

Mr. Michael Harris: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Bill 45 prevents full display of electronic vaping hardware, and accessories, within registered, licensed, age-of-majority-only dedicated vapour stores; and

“Whereas Bill 45 prohibits e-liquid sampling (vaping) indoors of a registered, licensed, age-of-majority-only commercially dedicated vapour store; and

“Whereas these prohibitions in effect restrict the ability of fully trained sales staff to assist customers with

questions, and provide recommendations to facilitate the sales and end use of the products offered for sale; and

“Whereas an expert, independent evidence review published by Public Health England (PHE) concludes that e-cigarettes are significantly less harmful to health than tobacco and have the potential to help smokers quit smoking; and

“Whereas the review’s findings include:

“The current best estimate is that e-cigarettes are around 95% less harmful than smoking;

“There is no evidence so far that e-cigarettes are acting as a route into smoking for children or non-smokers;

“Emerging evidence suggests some of the highest successful quit rates are now seen among smokers who use an e-cigarette and also receive additional support from their local stop-smoking services;

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

“Allow amendments and/or exemptions to Bill 45 that would permit,

“(1) unregulated, unfettered full display of all electronic vaping hardware, accessories, devices and e-liquid within a registered, licensed, age-of-majority-only dedicated vapour store;

“(2) the ability of fully trained sales staff to fully assist customers with the inquiry, questions and recommendations to facilitate the sales and end use of the products offered for sale;

“(3) allowance of e-liquid sampling (vaping) indoors of a registered, licensed, age-of-majority-only commercially dedicated vapour store.”

I will sign this petition and send it down with Deanna.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I’d like to thank the member for exercising brevity with that petition.

The time for petitions has now expired.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SMOKE-FREE ONTARIO AMENDMENT ACT, 2016

LOI DE 2016 MODIFIANT LA LOI FAVORISANT UN ONTARIO SANS FUMÉE

Ms. Damerla moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 178, An Act to amend the Smoke-Free Ontario Act / Projet de loi 178, Loi modifiant la Loi favorisant un Ontario sans fumée.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I recognize the minister.

Hon. Dipika Damerla: It is an honour and a privilege to rise today to speak to the second reading of the Smoke-Free Ontario Amendment Act, 2016. I want to say that I will be sharing my time with the member from Halton.

I've said this before and it bears repeating: As the associate minister responsible for wellness, I believe that an ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure. It is with that belief in mind that we have introduced this bill.

This is a simple bill, but with far-reaching consequences. Essentially, the bill seeks to amend the existing Smoke-Free Ontario Act to enable us to better protect Ontarians from second-hand smoke, whether it comes from a tobacco product or another substance. As it stands, the Smoke-Free Ontario Act is limited to tobacco. The time has now come to expand the reach of the Smoke-Free Ontario Act beyond tobacco.

The Smoke-Free Ontario Act, when it came into force in May 2006, was a landmark piece of legislation and continues to be so—legislation that has touched each of our lives, legislation that means an entire generation of Ontarians has grown up without ever inhaling second-hand smoke on a subway or a streetcar, an entire generation that has never seen anyone smoke inside a theatre or an office, that has never been forced to inhale second-hand smoke inside a restaurant or a bar.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take a moment to recognize the passion that so many members of this Legislature have brought to this issue. I believe that all 107 members have been touched by this legislation in some form or fashion, because all of us have friends or family or know somebody who smokes or is trying to smoke. I thank them all for their passion, but I want to also recognize my two critics, the member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound and the member for Nickel Belt.

I recall the member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound sharing in this Legislature a truly moving story of the impact of smoking on his family—stories of personal loss and heartbreak due to smoking, including the loss of his sister Marj to cancer. It is these very personal stories that are so much a part of why each of us in this Legislature tries each and every day to do our best to make Ontario a better place.

The member for Nickel Belt has, of course, brought exemplary leadership to helping to make legislative changes as we relentlessly push the needle on driving down smoking rates. In particular, I want to thank her for her advocacy on the issue of banning flavoured tobacco.

It would be remiss of me if I did not recognize and thank the many advocates and stakeholders in Ontario who have worked with this government to reduce smoking: the Ontario Lung Association; the Canadian Cancer Society; the Ontario Campaign for Action on Tobacco. And I really want to thank and recognize Chris Yaccato, who is no stranger to this Legislature, and who always shows up in this Legislature every time we are making any changes or announcements around smoking. Thank you, Chris, and thank you to the Ontario Lung Association.

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I also wanted to give a special shout-out, at this point, to the youth volunteers of Big Tobacco Lies. Many of us took part in many of their advocacy programs. It's been such a pleasure to work with the youth and see high

school and university kids come to Queen's Park and advocate on behalf of a smoke-free Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, because of all of these efforts, we know that smoking rates have decreased over time in Ontario, from 24.5% in 2000 to 17.4% in 2014. The number of smokers has decreased over time, as well, from 2.4 million in 2000 to 2 million in 2014. This decrease in the number of smokers is particularly notable because Ontario achieved this decrease while its population actually increased during the same period.

We have driven down rates, in part, because of so many of the changes that we brought in through smoke-free Ontario legislation. Mr. Speaker, with your indulgence, I just want to give a brief, short history of how Ontario became progressively smoke-free.

It was on June 13, 2005, that the landmark legislation, the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, received royal assent, and it came into force on May 31, 2006. The act made it illegal in Ontario to smoke in enclosed work spaces and public places. It also made it illegal to smoke tobacco in schools, day nurseries, common areas of condominiums and apartments, reserved seating areas of sports and entertainment venues, among other places.

In January 2009, we brought in further restrictions and made it illegal to smoke tobacco in motor vehicles with passengers under the age of 16. In July 2010, we introduced prohibitions on the sale of flavoured cigarillos and established rules for cigarillo packaging. In 2011, we introduced stronger controls over all types of raw leaf tobacco grown in or imported into Ontario.

Last year, we took another significant step toward our Smoke-Free Ontario Strategy. We banned the smoking of tobacco on and around children's playgrounds and publicly owned sports fields and surfaces, and on bar and restaurant patios. We also banned the sale of tobacco on university and college campuses, and we banned the sale of all flavoured tobacco, including menthol.

Through the 2016 Ontario budget, we're proposing to increase the tobacco tax rate by \$3 per carton of 200 cigarettes and use the estimated \$5 million in increased revenues from the tax in 2016-17 to enhance priority populations' access to smoking cessation services.

We have taken steps, Mr. Speaker, to reduce the access to, and discourage young adults from taking up, smoking, such as banning the sale of tobacco products on post-secondary campuses. Research has shown that the earlier an individual begins smoking, the more cigarettes they're likely to smoke and the less likely they are to quit. Delaying smoking initiation by even a few years might have both individual and public health benefits.

But despite the significant progress we have made in curbing the use of tobacco products, the fact is that 13,000 Ontarians still die each year as a result of tobacco-related diseases. We know that tobacco-related diseases cost Ontario's health system an estimated \$2.2 billion in health care costs and account for 10% of the acute care hospital stays; and that tobacco-related diseases cost Ontario an additional \$5.3 billion in indirect costs due to value of production that is lost as a result of

premature mortality, long- or short-term disability, and reduced productivity while at work.

But Mr. Speaker, the real cost is not in health care; the real cost is not in the loss to the economy; the real cost is in the health and quality of life of Ontarians. That is why our government continues to build on the progress we have made through the Smoke-Free Ontario Strategy, alongside all of our partners, to achieve among the lowest smoking rates in Canada.

While we are proud of the accomplishments we have made to date, we know there is still more work to be done, which brings us to the act we are debating today. We believe that it is time to expand the scope of the Smoke-Free Ontario Act to include substances other than tobacco—specifically, medical marijuana. As it stands today, the Smoke-Free Ontario Act only applies to tobacco. There are few laws that regulate smoking other products or substances like medical marijuana, and we recognize that we need to address this. We are now moving to regulate the smoking and vaping of medical marijuana in Ontario.

We have to consider that the number of people in Canada who are legally able to possess marijuana for medical purposes under the federal framework is steadily rising. Health Canada reports that as of September 2015, there were around 30,000 medical marijuana users in Canada who were registered with licensed producers of marijuana under federal regulations. That is up from 23,000 registered users in June 2015.

Since the most common method of consuming medicinal marijuana is smoking, some businesses and employers have grappled with how to provide safeguards for their patrons and employees from exposure to second-hand medical marijuana smoke. Our government held preliminary consultations with health care providers, medical marijuana users, producers, restaurant and other business owners, and public health organizations to inform the proposal we have put forward. We also learned a great deal through the public hearings process for the Making Healthier Choices Act, 2015, that took place in the spring of 2015. That is why our government has introduced legislative amendments that, if passed, would expand the Smoke-Free Ontario Act to regulate the smoking of other products and substances specified in regulation.

If the proposed amendments to the Smoke-Free Ontario Act are passed, we would also consider regulatory amendments to prescribe medical marijuana by regulation as a substance that is subject to no-smoking rules. Put simply, by including medical marijuana under smoke-free Ontario legislation, it would mean that if you cannot smoke tobacco somewhere, you will not be able to smoke medical marijuana either.

To ensure we have a level playing field between the smoking and vaping of medical marijuana, we're also proposing separate amendments to the regulation of the Electronic Cigarettes Act to prohibit the use of e-cigarettes to consume medical marijuana in all enclosed public places, enclosed workplaces and other specified outdoor areas.

We recognize that this is a complex issue requiring extensive consultation and evaluation. That is why we're continuing to consult on a discussion paper through the regulatory registry to understand the potential implications that the proposed regulatory measures would have for Ontarians. Ontarians have until April 24 to submit their comments on the discussion paper on proposed changes to the regulations. The regulatory registry posting of the discussion paper is a key step in consulting with businesses and the public. Through this posting, we expect to receive valuable input from stakeholders to inform our approach.

Our goal has always been to reach decisions that reflect the best approach for Ontario. Our proposed approach is intended to protect Ontarians, especially children and youth, from exposure to second-hand tobacco and medical marijuana smoke. The ministry believes that this approach establishes reasonable and precautionary safeguards against second-hand exposure to medical marijuana smoke and vapour by members of the public.

If passed, this legislation would:

- add “prescribed products and substances” to the application of the Smoke-Free Ontario Act;

- specify that smoking or holding a lighted prescribed product or substance is prohibited in enclosed public places, enclosed workplaces or any other place where the smoking of tobacco is prohibited;

- specify that smoking or holding a lighted prescribed product or substance is prohibited in motor vehicles while another person who is less than 16 years old is present;

- specify that sections of the Smoke-Free Ontario Act that set out employer and proprietor obligations, protection from employer reprisal and protection of home health care workers apply to a prescribed product or substance;

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- exempt scientific research and testing facilities from the prohibition on smoking a prescribed product or substance;

- add provisions that would authorize the Lieutenant Governor in Council to make regulations under the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, specifying other places where the smoking or holding of a prescribed product or substance is prohibited, and providing for exemptions; and

- apply existing inspection, enforcement and offence provisions to a prescribed substance or product.

If this proposal to amend the Smoke-Free Ontario Act is passed, we would be taking the first necessary step to further protect Ontarians from exposure to second-hand medical marijuana. By prescribing, in regulation, medical marijuana as a substance that is subject to the smoke-free Ontario provisions that prohibit smoking in enclosed workplaces, enclosed public places and other outdoor areas, we would be establishing reasonable and precautionary safeguards against public exposure to second-hand medical marijuana smoke in smoke-free areas.

It will also provide the framework for the Smoke-Free Ontario Act to regulate substances other than tobacco or

medical marijuana in the event that, in the future, Ontario needs to consider adapting the legislation to cover other substances as well.

This, Mr. Speaker, is a forward-thinking piece of legislation that considers not only the needs of today but how we can build on this legislation in years to come to accommodate the need for change. Since taking on my role as associate minister, I have spoken a great deal about the importance of protecting our youth from the dangers of tobacco—as I like to say, to try to stop that next generation of smokers from ever starting.

We know that children are more vulnerable to the harmful effects of second-hand smoke exposure. Studies show that young people are less likely to become regular smokers when living in areas with strong tobacco control regulations, as compared to areas where regulations are weaker. If we prevent youth from taking up smoking in the first place, that will mean fewer smokers and healthier Ontarians. We need to do everything we can to protect all Ontarians from the harmful effects of second-hand smoke, be it from tobacco or medical marijuana.

Hon. Mario Sergio: Absolutely.

Hon. Dipika Damerla: I thank the minister for seniors for his support.

I'm confident there is significant support for this proposal from public health and tobacco control stakeholders, as well as most businesses and employers in Ontario. We have been listening to all of the affected stakeholders and we understand that there is a desire for one straightforward set of rules and regulations with respect to the application of the law around medical marijuana, and where it can and cannot be smoked.

We are eager to continue to consult with the public about the implications of this proposal through the posting of the discussion paper on the regulatory registry.

Finally, it's worth noting that the smoke-free Ontario legislation will be marking its 10th anniversary in May of this year. To commemorate this significant milestone in our province's history, I am honoured and excited to share with the Legislature that the province is announcing the Heather Crowe Smoke-Free Ontario Award.

Heather Crowe, as we know, died of lung cancer even though she said she had never smoked a single cigarette in her life. Heather, who worked as a waitress for over 40 years, used her personal tragedy to raise awareness of the dangers of second-hand smoke. She travelled across Canada to advocate for improved second-hand smoke laws. Tragically, she died days before the Smoke-Free Ontario Act came into force on May 31, 2006. I believe it is only fitting that on the 10th anniversary of this act, we honour her legacy.

Ontario is now accepting applications for its Heather Crowe Smoke-Free Ontario Award, which will recognize anti-smoking advocates who have made a significant contribution towards achieving a smoke-free Ontario. Nominations for this award may be submitted to sfoaward2016@ontario.ca.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to repeat that email for any viewers who are watching or any MPPs who are paying attention. If you want to submit nominations to the Heather Crowe Smoke-Free Ontario Award, please forward them before the end of April to sfoaward2016@ontario.ca. Each of the 107 MPPs should be receiving in the mail details of the award and how they can help nominate constituents that they think may be deserving of this award.

To mark the upcoming 10th anniversary of smoke-free Ontario, up to 10 awards will be presented to recognize individuals, groups and organizations that have championed tobacco control in Ontario over the past 10 years. I would implore all 107 MPPs in this Legislature to get the word out, because we want to make sure that deserving Ontarians do get the nomination for this award. Nomination submissions can be made by anyone and nominations are open until April 29, 2016. The award winners will be recognized on May 31, 2016, on World No Tobacco Day.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, we're committed to finding the right solution for Ontario and will continue to work towards that goal. I look forward to what I am sure will be a hearty debate of this proposed legislation and all constructive feedback that comes from it. I'm confident that all members can stand behind our proposed legislation that will help make Ontario the healthiest place in North America to grow up and grow old.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you. Sharing the debate time with the Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, I recognize the member from Halton.

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today in support of the Smoke-Free Ontario Amendment Act, 2016. I would like to thank the associate minister for the opportunity to speak to this important piece of legislation, which, if passed, would strengthen smoking laws in Ontario and build on the progress made by the Smoke-Free Ontario Strategy.

Mr. Speaker, this is a plan for the future. More importantly, this is a plan for our children. It benefits Ontario residents and has a direct impact on the health and well-being of people of all ages and on our health care system.

Why are we doing this? Well, here is the harsh reality: Tobacco is the leading cause of preventable death and illness in Ontario. There are approximately 13,000 tobacco-related deaths each year in Ontario. That's 36 deaths a day. Just think about it. Tobacco-related deaths also cost the Ontario economy at least \$1.6 billion in health care annually. Finally, tobacco use and exposure to second-hand smoke can cause major damage in children, like asthma attacks, alterations in lung development and chronic middle ear disease.

It is our duty as elected members to protect people from the harmful effects of smoking, and that doesn't just mean tobacco anymore. It includes vaporizers and medical marijuana. As society and habits change, it is our responsibility to make sure our rules and regulations

evolve and change with us, and that's what we're doing with these proposed amendments. These amendments are the natural progression and reflection of our society.

As the associate minister has outlined, the passage of the legislation under debate today would amend the Smoke-Free Ontario Act to allow for the inclusion of other prescribed products and substances besides tobacco. This will allow our government to move forward with proposed amendments that would prescribe medical marijuana by regulation as a substance that is subject to the Smoke-Free Ontario Act's no-smoking rule. As a parent, I can't tell you how important this is to me.

It would also work with our proposed regulatory amendments under the Electronic Cigarettes Act, 2015, to prohibit the use of e-cigarettes, including the use of vaporizers, to consume medical marijuana. It is important to be clear that these changes are specific to enclosed public spaces, enclosed workspaces and other specified areas—areas where the flow of fresh air may be restricted and put non-smokers at risk.

In making these changes, our government will be protecting Ontarians, especially children and youth, from exposure to second-hand tobacco and second-hand medical marijuana smoke and the potential harms of e-cigarette use.

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Our government believes this is a reasonable approach that establishes important precautionary safeguards against second-hand exposure to medical marijuana smoke and vapour for members of the general public. We are helping to lower the health risks to non-smokers in Ontario. We are keeping Ontarians healthy by giving them a smoke-free, healthy environment to live in. It's the right thing to do.

In my riding of Halton, for example, the population is rapidly growing, which means more and more families and young kids. It also means that neighbourhoods are becoming increasingly dense and people are living closer to each other. As a community and as neighbours, we need to remember that our actions can affect those around us, and with that proximity and closeness comes responsibility.

As the representative for Halton, it is part of my responsibility to do everything I can to make sure that Halton families can enjoy the healthiest environment possible. That means putting my full support behind a smoke-free Ontario. The health impacts related to smoking are serious issues that affect our children, our seniors—as the minister responsible for seniors beside me will agree—and our health care system.

That is why we have put in place legislation that protects youth from tobacco products and e-cigarettes, and limits their exposure to second-hand smoke in public areas. By shielding young people from outside sources of second-hand smoke and by preventing them from ever taking it up themselves, we are not only protecting our kids, but we are also ensuring that there will be less impact on the health care system in the future.

Mr. Speaker, just yesterday I was at the Juravinski Cancer Centre in Hamilton. I saw first-hand what cancer can do to individuals and families. Believe me, I walked away from that centre feeling that we must do everything we can to protect people and protect Ontario residents.

Less than a year ago, I had a conversation with my own teenage daughter that directly relates to what we're talking about today. She was 16 at the time, and she came to me to express her concern about the rising popularity of vaping. She said, "Mom, these kids think it's cool to vape in public." Long ago, of course, we had talked about the dangers concerning tobacco, but vaping was a new discussion that we needed to have. She told me she was worried about her friends and that they may take it up, and about the lasting effects it may have on them. She was also concerned that vaping could lead to smoking tobacco, and she was concerned for her own health, from being exposed to people who are vaping. We had a good talk, but I know we will both be reassured, if the proposed amendments here are passed, to know that there are strict rules and regulations that will protect my daughter and all Ontarians from the effects of second-hand smoke. By preventing kids from ever starting, it helps us to achieve our goal of having the lowest smoking rate in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, through legislation like the proposed amendments we're talking about today, our government is investing in everyone's future. The associate minister has walked us through the Smoke-Free Ontario Strategy and explained the role these proposed amendments would play in that strategy. Today I will speak to the specifics of what these amendments would address, if passed, and what they would mean for those affected.

The first piece of the proposed legislation would amend a provision in the Smoke-Free Ontario Act that would allow the Ontario government to prescribe by regulation products or substances subject to the act's no-smoking rules. Just as tobacco is currently regulated under the act, this would allow the government to specify no-smoking rules for other substances, such as medical marijuana.

Expanding the scope of the act would also allow for the appropriate enforcement of rules in the event that someone should break the law. This is important. We need to be able to do something if someone breaks the law.

Under the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, owners or occupiers of any place in which smoking of tobacco is not permitted are responsible for posting no-smoking signage. This is crucial and acts as a further deterrent to smoking.

Should these proposed amendments pass, that signage will also apply to prescribed products and substances, including medical marijuana. This is a simple and straightforward rule that will be clear to the general public: If you see a no-smoking sign, it applies to the smoking of medical marijuana as well. It's in keeping with what our government is hearing from stakeholders about the need for clear and consistent provincial direc-

tion on the smoking of medical marijuana in public places.

In the spirit of the proposed amendment, we will also recommend amending the act to spell out exactly where it will be illegal for a person to smoke or hold a lit prescribed product or substance. For instance, this includes: enclosed public spaces; enclosed workplaces; schools as defined in the Education Act; the building or grounds of a private school; the common areas in a condominium, apartment building or university or college residence, including elevators, hallways and parking garages; child care centres, places where home child care is provided or places where an early-years program or services are provided; the reserved seating area of a sports arena or entertainment venue; or in any other area prescribed by regulation. Again, this reflects all the places where, under current legislation, it is prohibited to smoke tobacco, ensuring that the new measures would be consistent with the existing rules.

Mr. Speaker, we are doing everything we can to protect Ontarians, keep them healthy and protect them from second-hand smoke.

It also ensures consistent protection from exposure, as I said, to second-hand smoke, whether it is from tobacco or medical marijuana.

The proposed amendments also speak to the responsibilities—not just government's responsibilities, but the responsibilities of employers and proprietors in charge of enclosed workplaces, enclosed public places, or any other public location I just referenced.

As I mentioned earlier, with changes in society comes responsibility, and that responsibility is shared. It is not just the place of governments to ensure that we are doing the right thing. Everybody carries some of the share of this responsibility.

It lays out what their responsibilities would be under the legislation, should these proposed amendments be passed. This is important. These obligations are consistent with the obligations of employers and proprietors with respect to tobacco smoking. Their responsibilities would include making sure that anyone in these spaces complies with the Smoke-Free Ontario Act and that they give each person in the prohibited space proper notice that they are in a no-smoking area.

The employer or proprietor would be responsible for posting the proper signage as prescribed under the act, and for ensuring that anyone who refuses to respect Ontario's smoking laws is removed from the no-smoking area. These proposed amendments are simply an extension of the law as it exists now for smoking tobacco, and it only makes sense that this should be applied to medical marijuana as well, in order to limit Ontarians' exposure to second-hand smoke.

When it comes to the Smoke-Free Ontario Strategy, one of our key goals has always been to protect children and youth from exposure to second-hand smoke from tobacco. With these proposed amendments, we would be able to expand that protection to medical marijuana or other prescribed substances.

That is why the amendments would also make it illegal to smoke prescribed products and substances, such as medical marijuana, in a motor vehicle where someone who is less than 16 years old is present. I think this is great news. It's an important step to protect the rights of children and to protect their health. Again, this would be an extension of the current rules around smoking tobacco in a motor vehicle and would protect our children and youth from exposure.

It also reflects the consistent approach we are proposing to take with prescribed products and substances.

However, the government understands that it may be necessary to make allowances in very specific circumstances. Included among the proposed amendments is an exemption for scientific research and testing facilities. Under the exemption, employers and proprietors of scientific research and testing facilities cannot be found to have violated the proposed legislation by smoking or holding lighted prescribed products or substances, provided they are being used for the purpose of scientific research or testing. Why are we doing this? Because we need to be able to conduct research. The same is also true of the person smoking or holding a lighted prescribed product or substance.

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Again, this proposed amendment is fairly straightforward. Our government does not want to do anything to deter scientific research and testing that is being conducted, and is necessary, with respect to medical marijuana. This is important work, and we understand the importance of this research and the impact it will have on the industry. We offer these same protections already to facilities doing research and testing on tobacco.

Mr. Speaker, it is imperative that we learn more about the effects of tobacco, medical marijuana and other substances, so that we can better understand the health impacts on Ontarians. The more we learn, the greater the strides we can make in educating the public in developing cessation methods and finding potential cures for diseases, and the more we can do to protect Ontarians and their health.

Finally, with respect to the remainder of the proposed amendments, they are designed to ensure that, if passed, the legislation would allow for the proper application and enforcement of the law. This means that prescribed products and substances such as medical marijuana would be subject to the same rules that relate to inspectors and inspections—this is key—and the penalties for failing to abide by the law will result in the same penalties for those who break the laws with respect to tobacco smoking.

Mr. Speaker, based on what I have outlined here today, I believe that what we have before us is a proposal that would strengthen the existing Smoke-Free Ontario Act. These proposed amendments would build on existing legislation that is already working for the people of Ontario. These amendments would also lay the groundwork for other products or substances to be added at some point in the future, should it be necessary. This

proposed legislation deals not just with the issue of the moment, but also gives Ontario the means to effectively address other similar situations in a much more expedient fashion, should they arise in the future. It's forward-looking, and that's important.

It would also ensure consistency with other proposed legislation and regulations currently under consideration. As outlined by the associate minister, our government is already proposing amendments to the regulations under the Electronic Cigarettes Act, 2015, that would prohibit the use of e-cigarettes—and vaporizers to consume any substance—in all enclosed public spaces, enclosed workplaces and other specified areas. This proposal has already been posted on the Regulatory Registry for comment until April 24 this year.

It is just one of several regulatory amendments we are considering with respect to e-cigarettes. Others include the establishment of rules for the display and promotion of e-cigarettes at the places where they are sold, and to expand the list of places where e-cigarettes are prohibited from sale, just to name a few.

The government is considering these regulatory amendments because we are committed to protecting Ontarians from the potential harm of e-cigarettes. What we don't want is a situation where it is illegal to vape medical marijuana but legal to smoke it in an enclosed public space or workplace. We want to ensure that the same rules apply to those who consume medical marijuana by smoking it, and we want to put in place legislation that protects everyone from exposure to second-hand smoke or vape.

It is also about consistency. Whether you smoke or vape your medical marijuana, you are consuming the same prescribed substance, and our government—and, I think, most Ontarians—would like to see laws that are applied consistently.

Speaker, I want to appeal to all members to support the proposed legislation and amendments before us. They are a vital part of maintaining and improving public health, and it's an investment in the long-term sustainability of Ontario's health care system. They protect Ontarians—especially children and youth—from exposure to second-hand tobacco and medical marijuana smoke and the potential harms of e-cigarette use.

Mr. Speaker, just on a personal note, I want to say to you that I recently found out that a very good friend of mine actually has lung cancer, and was diagnosed just within the last week. I can't tell you how important legislation like this is to Ontarians, to our children and to protecting people from having to deal with cancer.

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: I'm pleased to comment specifically on the minister's address today.

It's difficult to be critical sometimes, but sometimes it has to be said. We're here debating Bill 178 because the minister messed up.

Mr. Todd Smith: Totally.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Totally messed up. I saw her on television talking about how you were going to be able to smoke that medical marijuana in the park, going to be able to smoke it on the bus and wherever. Then I guess she got taken out to the woodshed by the Premier about an hour and a half later and got read the riot act and said, "Hey, no. That's not going to happen."

If the government had done their due diligence and brought in the proper legislation in the first place, we wouldn't be debating this bill in the House. It's not much of a bill; it's a few pages. But it should be—

Mr. Todd Smith: It's the "Oops, we screwed up" bill.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Yes. It should be the "Help me out; I messed up" bill. That's what it should be called on behalf of the minister.

Now, at the end of the day, because they did mess it up so badly—can I say screwed up? I don't know if I can or not.

Interjections.

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's not allowed, apparently.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I would ask the member to withdraw.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Withdraw.

So because they messed up so badly, we're forced to debate this. I like some of the stuff in the bill because it does clarify it, but it's unnecessary. If they would have clarified it in the first place, we wouldn't be having this debate.

At the end of the day, I support some of the changes when it comes to medical marijuana. We still have to discuss this more amongst ourselves, but I'd like to think that we're on the right track.

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

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I've said before in this House that there's no harm in admitting to a mistake. I think, to some extent, that's what is happening here today with this bill. A mistake was made when they first introduced medical marijuana—the concept that you could smoke it in places where you wouldn't expect it to be smoked, and now we're changing that. So no problem; we're going to correct it. That's the way it is.

When it comes to smoking, there have been a lot of mistakes made, Speaker. I know you're young enough to remember getting on an airplane when people used to smoke on airplanes in this country. Believe it or not, I think the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke's father used to have an ashtray on his desk here in the House and they used to smoke here in this hallowed chamber. It probably smelled like an ashtray, but it was this chamber that we're in today.

In the past, we have made mistakes when it comes to smoking. I know when I worked at the CBC, I was one of the champions to get smoking out of my workplace. I didn't want to be bothered by it. I haven't smoked in more than 40 years. I didn't want some guy walking through with a cigar, infecting my workspace. So I led the fight at CBC Windsor to get smoking out of the workplace, and I'm glad I did.

I've lost very close relatives through lung cancer. I know what they went through. I wouldn't want anybody else to go through it. I think the medical evidence is there and strong enough that there's a direct correlation between tobacco, tobacco use, second-hand smoke, if you will, and lung cancer.

Whatever we can do to improve the health of the people in this province I think is worth supporting. This bill is certainly worthy of support as well.

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

Mr. Grant Crack: It's a pleasure for me to get up and speak and support Minister Damerla on this particular bill.

We can talk about why this bill is before us and perhaps say that we didn't do a good enough job on the first go-round, as the opposition has mentioned, but nobody's perfect. I think bringing this back actually gives us a better opportunity to continue to talk about our Smoke-Free Ontario Act.

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Speaker, I'd like to provide you with a confession today. I never smoked a cigarette before I was 45 years old. When I turned 45, shortly thereafter I started smoking menthols. I smoked for seven years. I was able to see my father, who smoked a pipe for his entire adult life, from what I can remember—and my father did end up with cancer in the nose and tumours, and went through radiation and had his complete face affected and burned. I watched him go through that. It took me a while to really absorb the effect that it had on his life. When you're smoking, you think it's the greatest thing in the world. You're addicted to it. But I said to myself, on his birthday in 2015—December 12—that I was done after seven years of smoking. I had tried a couple of times. I haven't smoked a cigarette since December 12, 2015, and I don't intend to smoke again.

I wanted to share that with members of the House because it's not easy. I did it cold turkey. I just pretended that I was sick for a week, without the sniffles. It's a tough thing to do—you're not the same person that you normally are—but you get over it and you get through it and you just keep working at it.

I want to encourage all Ontarians out there who actually do smoke. You can do it. You can stop. Do whatever you need to, but stop. Not only is it good for yourself, but it's also good for the health care of all Ontarians.

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

Mr. Todd Smith: It's a pleasure to bring some comments on the presentations by the two members of the government on Bill 178, trying to fix the mistakes that they made back in late 2015, when the bill first passed. It was kind of a ridiculous couple of hours; I've got to be honest. I was watching on the news as the minister said that you were going to be able to smoke these medicinal marijuana vapours basically anywhere you wanted.

I think the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke referred to the Premier taking the minister out to the woodshed. I don't believe there are any woodsheds here in downtown Toronto, but I'm sure that she was read the riot act because her ministry obviously didn't do their job. There are a heck of a lot of people in that ministry, and I can't believe that they didn't get it right the first time.

The parliamentary assistant said that these amendments “only make sense.” Well, how many people took a look at this legislation before it was passed and didn't see that what they were actually passing didn't make any sense at all? There was a lack of common sense involved in the bill in its origin anyway. Good for them for realizing that they made a mistake, but I think a lot of it had to do with public opinion polls and the realization that they had made a big mistake when it came to this.

I'll be talking for 20 minutes a little bit later this afternoon about a local issue in Belleville and what happened because of the mistakes of this ministry and a confrontation that occurred in Belleville when I get the chance—in just a few minutes, actually. They are getting it right, now, on the second opportunity. If only they would fix some of the other pieces of legislation that they've messed up on, like the Green Energy Act and their cap-and-trade program. Hopefully, this is the start of something good from this Liberal government, and they're going to fix all of the mistakes that they've made over the last 12 years.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Now back to the member from Halton for final comments.

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I want to thank the members from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, Windsor–Tecumseh and Glengarry–Prescott–Russell for their comments over the last little while.

Once again, it's pretty clear to me that the opposition and the members opposite really do support this Smoke-Free Ontario Act. I think that Bill 178 is an extremely important bill. I think it's necessary; I think it's forward-looking; and, as I said earlier, I really feel that it does what it needs to do when it comes to protecting our young people and our children.

It aims to protect the health of the people of Ontario by regulating the sale, supply, distribution, promotion and smoking of tobacco products and also other substances, like medical marijuana. Why is this important? Because we know that you wind up sometimes in enclosed spaces, and we need to ensure that we make amendments to reflect the new reality that we are living in in this year of 2016.

With the help of this legislation, the government will now be able to prescribe, through regulation, that medical marijuana is one of the products or substances that is subject to the Smoke-Free Ontario Act's no-smoking rules. This could mean really important stuff when it comes to public spaces—when it comes to signage, for example. It's also ensuring that there will be rules in place that will ensure there will be enforcement. It also ensures that we are doing everything we can to put in

place further protections for Ontarians from being exposed to second-hand smoke.

I'm especially pleased about the proposal to have it not be allowed that children 16 years of age or under be riding in vehicles where there may be the possibility of second-hand smoke from medical marijuana. This is so key to a child's human rights and their health.

Mr. Todd Smith: A point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): On a point of order, I recognize the member from Prince Edward-Hastings.

Mr. Todd Smith: Mr. Speaker, I believe you'll find that we have unanimous consent to stand down our leads on Bill 178.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Is there unanimous consent? Agreed? Agreed.

Further debate?

Mr. Todd Smith: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure to join the debate again on Bill 178. As was mentioned earlier by my colleague from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, this should have been called the "we-messed-up bill, but we are going to get it right eventually." That's what the actual title of this bill should be. The Smoke-Free Ontario Amendment Act is the actual title of the bill put forward by this Liberal government. They made a big mistake, and they had some egg on their face back before Christmas, but they've done the right thing. Now they're moving on, and they are going to get it right for everyone in Ontario.

This is really a perfect example of the government shooting from the hip on an initial set of regulations, only to face blowback because the talking points for the original bill didn't actually match the legal reality that we're facing here in Ontario, or common sense. It was lacking in those areas.

When Bill 45 was originally introduced into the Legislature, it was met with resistance by people who had wanted to be able to use electronic cigarettes as stop-smoking aids. I had the opportunity to go to a shop in Trenton in Quinte West called the Stinky Canuck where they actually sell these smoking aids. I met with a lot of folks who had smoked for 20, 30 or 40 years. They were given the opportunity to use these vaporizers or e-cigarettes to kick the habit. It works, and it's something that we shouldn't put a ban on. It's something that we need to study because when you consider the fact that these people who had smoked for 20, 30 or 40 years were getting off cigarettes, moving to the vaporizers and then eventually getting away from the vaporizers and quitting any kind of smoking, including vaping—these are a cessation aid. They were treated as something sinister by this government originally, but that's another story.

There was a chance to have a reasonable and rational debate in this House about what could be done to accommodate this new technology and how it could be regulated and controlled in the marketplace. That's not a new idea, Mr. Speaker. It's something we've done a lot. We've done it regularly in this House as we discussed the sharing economy. That's a bill put forward by my

colleague in Niagara West—Glanbrook which deals with the sharing economy: Airbnb, Uber and other businesses in what they call the sharing economy. Instead, though, the government decided to immediately move to declare that it would ban these vaporizers or e-cigarettes, which were successful for an awful lot of people. Sadly, it was a predictable response from this government.

Smoking rates can always be lower. There's no question about that. I've actually brought forward my own private member's legislation to try and accomplish that. It did receive unanimous support here in the Legislature a few months ago. Nobody wants anyone under the age of 19 to have access to products that could harm their health—and justifiably. Until we know more about products, we have a responsibility to regulate them effectively in an attempt to minimize harm. That's what should have happened, and this is beyond dispute. But this is what happens when you politicize substance control rather than just regulate it.

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Ontario has taken multiple steps to crack down on tobacco usage, and we commend them for that. The Smoke-Free Ontario Act was a major step in this. But there have been others throughout the years, and we've talked about them a bit this afternoon already. All of this is predicated on the idea that tobacco usage, while legal, is bad and should be contained and heavily regulated. It's a policy position that, based on my work to fight illegal tobacco, I am inclined to agree with. Fine, you need fines.

But then the government made an exception for marijuana, and it left a lot of people scratching their heads back before Christmas. It's easy to understand what they thought the argument was: At the present time, the only legal users of cannabis in Ontario must have a prescription, so they drafted a medical exception at that time. On the surface, that does make sense. After all, we wouldn't stop somebody from taking heart medication or insulin in public if they actually needed it. The difference is third-party protection, in this case. If somebody injects insulin or takes heart medication on a public bus, for example, they are the only person affected by the injection or ingestion of that medication, not anybody sitting near them or standing next to them.

Second-hand smoke, however, is still a thing. If you're on a bus, in line at city hall or at a Maple Leafs game—they're red-hot lately—and somebody lights up, their action affects you too. This happens in spite of the fact that you've chosen not to partake in their activity. The law, therefore, incurs a responsibility to protect parties who don't consent. This was always going to be the case, and it's a good argument for why there never should have been an exemption granted to medical marijuana users in the first place. That's the argument for treating any marijuana like tobacco, instead of like a pharmaceutical for the purposes of public consumption and usage.

The government knew this. The Premier spent months on the campaign trail standing next to someone who was promising at almost every stop that he was going to

legalize marijuana. By the way, that same individual just brought in a federal budget that's going to have an almost-\$30-billion deficit, Mr. Speaker, so perhaps they've been standing too close to each other over the last several months, because she's starting to rub off on our new Prime Minister.

An exemption from Smoke-Free Ontario regulations for medical marijuana, in the face of the full legalization of marijuana, would have made enforcing any regulations against marijuana a legal and logistical nightmare—absolutely unmanageable. Once again, none of this was unforeseeable when the original exemption was granted. The government knew that the new federal government wanted to legalize marijuana. It knew that the province had enacted legislation in the past to protect people from second-hand smoke. The reason that it knew that is that the legislation that was drafted to protect people from the dangers of second-hand smoke is the same piece of legislation that had to be amended in order to give medicinal marijuana users this exemption in the first place.

The Ministry of Health is the largest department in the provincial government. The minister's office alone has 19 staffers, the associate minister's office has seven, and the deputy minister's office has 10.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Is that all?

Mr. Todd Smith: I know. You would think there were more. We're not talking about the bureaucrats, though; there are a lot more bureaucrats there. These are just the ministerial staff.

That we have to debate this bill to correct a bill that was hastily rushed through the Legislature, because that many adults couldn't understand that we would have to apply second-hand smoking legislation to cannabis, is pretty ridiculous, Mr. Speaker, and everybody over there knows it. As I mentioned earlier, there's a lot of egg on the faces of members of the Liberal government in response to this bill.

The story in my own riding highlights the problem with the exemption in the first place. A man got on the bus in the city of Belleville last month and proceeded to use his medical marijuana vaporizer on the bus. Because of the government's announcement, he was absolutely within the law to do that. Bill 45, passed before Christmas, allowed him to legally use that vaporizer for medicinal marijuana on the city bus in Belleville. Doesn't it seem ridiculous? It seemed ridiculous to the bus driver. He had a prescription, and he was taking public transportation because he didn't want to drive under the influence. The bus driver, who was applying more common sense to government regulation than the government apparently did in drafting it, told the man that he was violating the law and that medical marijuana was governed like cigarettes. You would think that would be the case, right? But technically, the bus driver was in the wrong for doing what only made sense.

Because the government got it wrong in the first place, this guy is legally using his vaporizer on the bus. The bus was stopped. The driver called the police. A second bus

was brought in, and the man who had used medical marijuana on the bus was told that he would not be allowed to board. He then had to walk home. He had done nothing wrong according to the law that these guys passed.

The bus driver pointed out that the city had, in total compliance with the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, as they saw it, posted signs that specifically stated, "No person shall smoke in or on city of Belleville transit property or carry a lighted cigar, cigarette, e-cigarette, pipe, other tobacco product or any other lighted smoking equipment or material while in or on transit property." That's what the sign said, not knowing that this government would, for reasons passing understanding, carve out an exemption to long-held second-hand smoking laws in the province to the benefit of a few thousand with a medical rationale for using a substance that millions of Ontarians would soon be able to use legally.

Now, there are arguments that have been made that the number of users is fairly low, and a legally inconsistent exemption doesn't actually hurt anybody. But it's a terrible law, and once marijuana usage becomes legalized, the exemption would have proven to be an unenforceable legal disaster. You would have taken that one bus in Belleville and turned it into buses and lines at Service-Ontario and public spaces right across the province.

There's a fair argument to be made that legitimate medicinal marijuana users, as opposed to potential recreational users, would want to keep any health care decision treatment where possible. That's an attitude more prevalent now that marijuana, for the time, remains illegal. I didn't get a chance to see the budget from the feds today up on Parliament Hill, so I don't know if the word "marijuana" was even mentioned in the budget today. But I will be watching the evening news to find out the highlights of the federal budget.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Good news.

Mr. Todd Smith: I'm sure, as the minister of Blue Jays games says, it was all good news today.

The puffer doesn't impact anyone else, right? Let's backtrack. Once you legalize it, you remove the stigma—we're talking about marijuana now—from it for thousands of people. Most people would think nothing of a kid with a puffer using it in public. They'd assume that the kid was having trouble breathing. But the puffer doesn't impact anyone else. We didn't enact decades of legal protections against second-hand albuterol, but we did against second-hand smoke, right?

Weighing the rights of different individuals is difficult when drafting legislation. There's always a bit of a sword-and-shield dynamic at work when you're doing this. In this case, do the rights of multiple individuals to not be subject to second-hand smoke outweigh the rights of a single individual to immediate medicinal usage? That's the complexity that we're dealing with. Admittedly, it's not really an easy question to answer, and that's why we have these debates in the Legislature.

However, the restrictions are reasonable. There are plenty of places where medical marijuana use is allowed,

and using it can be reasonably confined to those places. In the case I mentioned where the gentleman was on the bus, the guy can go to the front of the bus. He can ask for a transfer, he can get off at the next stop, he can use his medication and he get on the next bus, if he wants to.

As has been stated, though, what happens when recreational cannabis usage is legalized? What happens if, as happened here, the regulation is so poorly communicated that recreational users believe that all marijuana is exempt from regulations under the Smoke-Free Ontario Act? What happens when you've got two recreational users and a medicinal marijuana user in line at Service-Ontario or on a TTC red rocket subway train here? Who's going to ask to see a prescription at that point?

It's a pretty good question.

1700

The law is at its most effective when it's simple, when it's consistent and when it makes the broadest possible consideration for human rights, and this does so. Years of precedent in this province are consistent with the approach taken by the new piece of legislation and not the ridiculous approach that made Bill 178 necessary in the first place. I'm talking about Bill 45, which passed before Christmas.

Consequences deemed unforeseen are too often a consequence of government legislation lately. One that we spend a lot of time talking about here on this side of the House is the Green Energy Act, but we'll get into that later. You have laws that apply to some cigarettes and not others, which results in police enforcing regulations different from the ones the government drafts, because the regulations that the government has drafted contradict other legislation that the government has drafted. You have environmental laws that apply to some energy projects but not all of them, which means that a wind turbine company gets to rip down trees and tear up ground after being rejected by the government's own Environmental Review Tribunal, but if a pipeline company were to do that, they'd be before a judge before morning and the province would be seeking millions of dollars in damages.

There's a lot of legislation that this government has brought forward, and I think the intentions were good, but I think the unintended consequences haven't been dealt with properly. One of them is the Green Energy Act. At least the government in this case, with Bill 45, has realized that they stepped in a big hole. I was going to say something else, but they stepped in a big hole. They climbed out of the hole, they went back to the drawing board and they fixed it. That's why I'm going to be supporting Bill 178: because they realized that they made a mistake. They realized that they missed something during the original drafting. All of those experts over there in the ministry office didn't pick up on the mistake until the next morning, when it appeared on every newscast in town, but they realized that they made a mistake, and that's a good thing.

Why have they only done it on Bill 45? Why haven't they done it on other pieces of legislation? I have all

kinds of theories as to why they haven't done it. I think those who are paying attention probably know why they haven't done it.

When you look at what the Green Energy Act has done to the province of Ontario and when you look at the unintended consequences of the Green Energy Act, the fact that this government hasn't taken a sober second look at the Green Energy Act and made changes to it—fixed the problems that have caused electricity chaos in Ontario and that have driven manufacturers outside of the borders of Ontario to other jurisdictions—why haven't they had their Saul on the road to Damascus moment on that bill? Why have they only had that moment on this bill? Because they've messed up a lot. They've messed up a lot over the last 12 or 13 years in government. They've brought in some legislation that has done some serious damage, but they haven't gone back and fixed it.

The law is at its best when it's consistent, when it's simple and when it makes the broadest possible consideration for human rights, and this does so. It's also at its best when it applies to everybody. It's at its best when, as Aristotle said, it is reason devoid of passion. This government has to be way more careful with how it drafts laws and regulations than it has been. It has to be way more consistent with how it enforces government regulations than it has been. The most basic cause of cronyism, of which this government has been accused and guilty many times, is when the law is held to mean different things to different people.

As I've said, I will be supporting the bill. I offer no kudos to the government for needing two kicks at the can to get this one right. They knew the answer all along and tried to play fast and loose with the precedent. They knew the answer all along and chose to ignore the most obvious solution. They knew the right answer all along and decided to push through a hasty bill and draft a hasty regulation rather than actually listen to concerned opposition from members of the Legislature, from members of the public and from informed outside groups when it came to this issue.

They did this for one simple reason: arrogance. It's the arrogance of this government that is driving people across Ontario crazy. You see, Mr. Speaker, the belief that the law means different things to different people is actually the second symptom of cronyism. The first is believing that it no longer applies to you, and this government has believed that for far too long.

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

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: It's a pleasure to rise and join the debate on smoke-free Ontario. As a former smoker many, many, many moons ago, I appreciate the fact that I chose to quit smoking, and I certainly don't want to be exposed to second-hand smoke, nor do I want my children exposed to it. I recognize that, as an adult, it's your decision whether or not you want to smoke, but I certainly think that those who choose not to smoke should not have to be exposed to second-hand smoke against their will.

Aside from smoking tobacco, I'd like to concentrate more on marijuana. I've had some constituents—some

are owners of medical marijuana vaping lounges; some are medical marijuana users—who have had questions around this bill and potential changes to the regulation. The questions are not so much around whether or not they can smoke their medical marijuana, something that they have been licensed and prescribed to use; they are not so much around using that in a public place, but more so whether or not they are allowed to ingest their medication when they need it—so if they're allowed to bake it into something and carry it with them so that when they need to take it, they are able to take that sitting in a restaurant, in a hockey arena or wherever that may be. There are questions around whether or not changes to regulation are going to affect that.

Apparently there is a difference between smoking marijuana and ingesting it, so those who find that smoking marijuana—medical marijuana specifically—is the best way for them to take their medicine have concerns because there's some information out there that they are not going to be able to do it in their own private residences if they are in a multi-residential type of building. So if they live in an apartment building or a townhome or a condo or a dorm, is this going to limit their ability to take their medication the way that they need to, which is by smoking?

These are questions that I'm hoping the government will be able to clarify.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments? The member from Northumberland—Quinte West.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I did say I was going to be nice to my neighbour to the east, but you know what?

Mr. Arthur Potts: There's always a "but."

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I was going to change my mind, but I'll still be nice to him, Speaker. I've known the member for a long, long time.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Aren't you supposed to be arrogant, though?

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Well, I don't want to be arrogant. Let them be.

Mr. Todd Smith: I didn't say you were arrogant.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Thank you.

Speaker, as the member talked about his experiences with the vape shops in our area, I did too meet with the folks from Crazy Canuck. I thought it was kind of a weird name for—

Interjection.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Whatever. I met with some other folks in the west end of the riding—that one we talked about was in Trenton—and I met some folks in Cobourg. In some of the cases, they made sense in what they were saying. But it is a new product, and the question I've always asked, and this is to do with vaping, is, how do we know what's in those little vials? You can buy them through the Internet. We had a couple of incidents, for example, where—I'm going by the media, and of course, they're always right. It's the fact that they had a couple of accidents, where they actually blew up, and people suffered.

1710

I think that's the type of thing that we as a government and all parties need to make sure we recognize: Whatever we put the stamp of approval on through regulations or legislation here, it protects the public. That's number one.

I am delighted to hear that not just the member from Prince Edward—Hastings, but other members from both sides are prepared to support this. I think we're on the right track, so let's get it done and get it over with. Let's pass this before we actually cause some serious accidents.

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

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I'm pleased to add comments in reflection upon what the member from Prince Edward—Hastings shared with us today.

It was interesting, I found, that he referenced the Green Energy Act. He specifically pointed out the unintended consequences, but since he brought it up, I need to reflect on it a little bit. I might suggest that we can never forget that in 2009, this government across the floor totally stripped municipal autonomy away. I would suggest that some of the steps that went into the Liberal Green Energy Act were absolutely intended, and we have to hold this government to account.

That is where we look to what they have done on this particular bill. In terms of Bill 178, we held this government to account. From the moment it was introduced, we knew they were off base. For goodness' sake, even the next day, the Premier was on record saying, "What?" She doesn't want to sit in a restaurant or in a movie theatre beside somebody who is smoking. It just goes to reinforce how in the backroom, things are happening that not everybody agrees with.

So I'm glad that this government actually admitted to one of their mistakes and has come forward with a bill to clean up the mess that they've made—and I would suggest that they don't stop with Bill 178. I would suggest they need to take a look at Bill 100, and I'm very glad to hear that our critic for tourism, culture and sport is working with the minister to clarify some sections within Bill 100 to make up for a lack of consultation. Again, so many mistakes come from this lack of consultation. This government just doesn't care about it, and it would be an area that has room for improvement.

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

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'm pleased to add to the debate from my colleague the member from Prince Edward—Hastings. I appreciated the information. He was quite concise and thorough. Kudos to you, sir.

I think he hit on the nucleus of the debate here, which is that the government made a mistake in the original version of the bill. Hindsight being 20/20, they carved out some more legislative time to fix some of their mistakes, which is a failure in and of itself. Can they not get it right the first time?

I want to relate a story that my colleague from Windsor West was talking about. There are proprietors of

vaping lounges in Essex county—there's one in Windsor now—who have made substantial investments into a facility, a private business, to be able to accommodate those who are medicinal marijuana holders and who want a venue to be able to not only talk and socialize, but also to at whatever given point ingest their medicine.

That's what we have to regard it as now, Speaker. My dad has been a diabetic for 50 years, and I've watched him many times, in the middle of a public space, having to give himself a shot of insulin. That has potentially offended some people; when you pull a needle out and shove it into your leg in the middle of nowhere, it's a little bit of a weird thing if you're not used to it.

This is a new concept as well: folks who are ingesting medicinal marijuana for whatever their ailment requires. I don't know how the government is regarding other aspects of the ingestion of marijuana, whether it's edible or otherwise; these are questions that still loom. But all said, their failure has now cost one of the business proprietors in Windsor a substantial amount of money because they didn't get it right the first time. Who knows what the future of his business is going to be going forward?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the member from Prince Edward–Hastings for final comments.

Mr. Todd Smith: Thank you again, Mr. Speaker, and thanks to the other members of the Legislature who are bringing comments on Bill 178 this afternoon.

The members from Essex and Windsor West raised some very important concerns when it comes to proprietors of businesses, business owners, that have started up.

The member from Northumberland–Quinte West spoke about the Stinky Canuck—I think he called it the Crazy Canuck; it's actually called the Stinky Canuck—in Quinte West, in his riding, in Trenton, that I have visited, as he did, which has invested a lot of money into their business, and they're doing things properly. They're not allowing young people in to purchase these e-cigarettes or vaporizers.

He posed the question—and it's a good question. He said, "What about the dangers of these vials of juices or these types of things that are used in the vaporizers and the e-cigarettes?" But the point I want to make on that issue is that we don't have to ban everything. That's why we have regulations. That's why we have inspection agencies that can say, "Okay, this stuff that's coming from China or Mexico or wherever it's coming from that doesn't pass the test? You can't sell that in Ontario." It has to meet certain regulations or requirements and you can sell it in Ontario, because it's not going to cause any problems because it's been inspected by a certified agency.

Those are the types of things that we should be doing; not outright banning things, especially when there are so many success stories when it comes to the cessation that people have experienced, in getting off the habit of smoking very harmful cigarettes, whether they're legal or contraband cigarettes. These tools are working.

I want to commend my colleague the member from Huron–Bruce as well for bringing up the fact that there's just not enough consultation. The government is ramming things down our throats without thorough consultation. That's why we're running into the problem that we're experiencing today with Bill 178.

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

Ms. Cindy Forster: It's always great to get up in the Legislature and talk about our constituency issues. These kinds of bills give us the opportunity to talk about our constituents and talk about our municipalities and agencies in our riding.

This particular bill, Bill 178, is really an amendment to Bill 45, and it does something very simple: It extends the Smoke-Free Ontario Act to include prescribed products and substances. Under this legislation, anywhere you can't smoke a cigarette, you won't be able to vape and you won't be able to smoke medical marijuana. This includes public spaces, schools, common areas in apartments, restaurants, child care centres, arenas—you name a public space or an enclosed workplace; you won't be able to smoke. More recently, some municipalities have even extended the no-smoking bylaw to include public parks.

That brings to my mind the question—and the member from St. Catharines will know about this. We have the marijuana day in Niagara Falls every year that brings hundreds of people to Niagara Falls. So the question will become, I guess, whether they will be able to continue with that festival.

Workers in certain industries are more at risk than others, and so this legislation extends the obligation to make sure that employers are complying with the legislation, which is kind of a problem with this government because we don't have enough enforcement around a lot of other issues—the ESA and under workers' compensation and under the Labour Relations Act. We often hear from constituents about the lack of enforcement. So this is another place where we're going to make sure that we have the people in place to actually do the enforcement.

The bill will extend the authority of inspectors employed by public health units to enter, without warrant and at a reasonable time, any place where it is prohibited to smoke or light a prescribed product or substance.

As vaping and medical marijuana use increases, this legislation will seek to limit exposure to second-hand smoke.

1720

In broad strokes, New Democrats support this bill and we'll certainly be waiting to hear from the stakeholders as to any amendments that may improve the bill, like some of the issues that our members raised here today in debate.

According to the World Health Organization, tobacco has an annual death toll of six million people. That could exceed eight million by 2030. As well as causing lung cancer and chronic respiratory diseases, it's also a major

contributor to heart disease in many people—the world's number one killer.

Many individuals are using vaping—e-cigarettes—as a smoking cessation tool. Vaping is thought to give individuals wanting to give up smoking the ability to do so without eliminating the stimulant nicotine or the behavioural habits of smoking. In fact, people can wean themselves off nicotine as well during that process, because many of these vaper juices that people talk about have varying levels of nicotine in them. You could start out with a percentage—I think 18 milligrams is the maximum—and wean yourself down to zero nicotine.

I can tell you that my husband recently, in January, quit smoking. He went off to the vaper store and got himself a vaper. This was a guy who was smoking a pack a day. So in two months, he has not smoked about 60 packs of cigarettes and is only using this vaper thing two or three times a day. That is it. He's still on his first bottle of juice. So I'm very proud of him.

Interjection.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Oh, I need to—excuse me, Speaker. I forgot to seek unanimous consent to stand down the NDP lead.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Unanimous consent to stand down the NDP lead? Agreed? Carried.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Thank you so much.

I'm very proud of him because he's actually almost been able to kick this habit.

Those who use e-cigarettes find that they're a cheaper, cleaner alternative, and they're certainly far better than cigarettes that are loaded with tar and toxins. Unfortunately, there's a lack of evidence because vapers haven't been around that long to actually determine whether or not there are any harmful effects from using those vapers, but the impact surely has to be less than smoking a pack of cigarettes a day.

While I was mayor, I was involved with all of this smoke-free stuff. I sat on regional council, and I can remember that the world was going to fall in because we were passing these smoking bylaws. I personally think that, at the time, as opposed to transitioning it in municipality by municipality, it probably should have been something that the provincial government took on. It should have been done in one fell swoop because it caused a lot of problems between local Legions, bars and casinos versus restaurants. I can tell you that as I sat on regional council, I think over a two-week period we probably heard from a hundred or more proponents about how they were going to lose their businesses if we implemented this. Eventually the bylaw was passed, first to stop smoking in some public places, and then eventually that got extended out to the casinos and Legions and all of those other places so that everybody was on a level playing field.

The problem was that a lot of restaurants at the time were given the option that if they could have a separate smoking place in their restaurant, they would comply with the legislation.

I just want to do a shout-out to my friends John and Barry at Cheers restaurant in Welland because they were one of those proponents who probably spent \$50,000 to \$100,000 renovating their restaurant so that they had a smoking area and a non-smoking area. They have the best fish and chips in town, I can tell you, the best halibut, the best haddock.

Interjections.

Ms. Cindy Forster: They have chicken wings as well.

Anyway, they spent a lot of money because of this transition for the smoking bylaw. After a couple of years, the law changed and they couldn't have smoking at all, even in their bar section, so they were out a lot of money and a lot of investment when it all could have been accomplished in the first legislation.

Every day, my constituency staff get emails and phone calls about medical marijuana in the riding. Issues around access are problematic, and around the cost of medical marijuana. Specifically, many in our lower-income communities, those on OW and ODSP, who rely on medical marijuana for pain management or seizures, can't access it because it comes with a crushing financial burden. Unfortunately, it isn't on the pharmaceutical list of the province, so many people either don't have access to it or they have to trade that off for food or heat in their house.

I've heard from a number of constituents about how much their quality of life has actually improved since they've been on medical marijuana. There was one gentleman I spoke to not that long ago who was on four different pain medications, from fentanyl patches and OxyContin to oxycodone to hydromorphone. He is now off of all of those medications and is just vaping medical marijuana as he needs it, and he says that his quality of life has improved dramatically.

We now have the first cannabis clinic in St. Catharines, in Niagara, focusing on patients who don't get relief from traditional methods of medicine for their pain control. Ronan Levy is the director, and he says that the general feedback he has received is that that clinic has been a life-changer for many who are thankful to the clinic for the help they have provided to many in the riding.

I think there are, to date, about 600 patients whom they've seen in the first six months. Those 600 patients were referred by as many as 130 physicians across the Niagara region. Chronic pain is the most common problem that medical marijuana is ordered for, but we all know that with chronic pain come anxiety, depression and insomnia because of the chronic pain. I think this clinic is doing a great job in Niagara; I know that there are some in other municipalities across the province as well.

Niagara public health—I sat on their social services and public health committee over the years—have a number of programs. One is STOP on the Road, a smoking cessation program delivered by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health here in Toronto and the Niagara public health department, and it's a program that

helps people deal with cessation treatment in our communities. It is part of a nicotine replacement program, with a five-week workshop, so it isn't just, "Here's your patch. Stick it on, get on with life and stop smoking. You're strong; you can do it." We all know that smoking is an addiction, not unlike alcoholism, overeating and substance abuse. All of those things are addictions, and so is smoking.

I can remember not that long ago, just 30 years ago, when I worked in the hospital: Nurses and doctors were smoking at the desk. Doctors were going on patient rounds and seeing their patients while dangling a cigarette between their fingers. Imagine the sickest patient you were caring for in the intensive care unit, and your nurse, coming back, has just finished smoking a cigarette or two. That smell, when you are so sick, critically ill, nauseated and having to be looked after by people who were smoking—of which I was one—when you think today of how far we've moved, it is so good for the patients and for the people who have had to quit smoking.

My smoking cessation was the smoke shacks that all of the hospitals built outside of their hospital. You didn't even want to go in them because the nicotine and the tar was hanging on the walls of these shacks. You could have as many as 50 people in there at once having a cigarette. I went once and I quit smoking immediately after that first visit.

I wanted to spend a couple of minutes talking about smoking and its relationship to dental health, because I have a very strong advocacy group in my riding of Welland through the Bridges Community Health Centre. We all know that oral health can lead to all kinds of medical problems. Smoking, whether it's marijuana or whether it's cigarettes, can lead to poor oral health as well.

1730

The Bridges Community Health Centre in my community supports clients in Fort Erie, Port Colborne and Wainfleet. They focus on the needs of low-income children and families. They recently spearheaded a regional dental health coalition relationship in partnership with Quest Niagara Falls and the Centre de santé. It is made up of a diverse group of stakeholders whose main focus is to expand publicly funded dental programs for adults and seniors with low incomes.

To talk about seniors' stories from the riding—I'm happy to have the opportunity to speak a little bit to that today. Rhonda Barron is actually the person who leads this up. She provides me with the reports and invites me regularly to her meetings. She says that one in every five Canadians avoids visiting a dentist because they can't afford it: 2.3 million Canadians cannot afford a visit to a dental office. I mean, imagine, if you go for one cleaning in a year, it's \$200. People on Ontario Works and ODSP can't afford that. But the important piece of this is that 61,000 visits to hospital emergency rooms in 2014 were because of oral health problems.

Rhonda actually just sent me an email before I came down here today. She said that in Niagara alone, 1,900

people visited an emergency room with dental pain and infection, leading to costly health care of approximately \$1 million, because they didn't have their dental needs looked after. I relate this back to smoking being one of the causes of some oral diseases. Imagine if that \$1 million in Niagara—and I don't know how many millions of dollars it would be across the province—was actually sent directly to make sure that adults also have appropriate dental care in this province. It would free up the staff in the emergency departments. It would free up the doctors in the emergency departments. People would actually get their dental care looked at. It would be preventive and it would be so much better than the system that we currently have.

The evidence says that there is one ER visitor every nine minutes in Canada because of oral health issues. In 2012, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care set up health links, with one goal being to reduce avoidable ER visits. Well, here's one way that they could reduce it: by just putting in a program that gave low-income adults, in addition to all children, free dental care. Then they wouldn't be visiting the emergency department.

I've just got three minutes left, so I wanted just to go back to the people who called my office about not having access to medical marijuana. Some of them have to go to the streets to buy a product because it is cheaper to do that, in many cases, than it is to pay for it through the medical marijuana program.

I want to relate that back to a short story, a personal story of my own. I had purchased a farm in Wainfleet, in the rural part of my riding, at one point. We were thinking about building a house on that property. It had about 40 acres. It had an apple orchard and some crops that Young Sod Farms would put in. I had tenants for about five years; they had come from New Brunswick. I really never saw those tenants other than when they signed their lease. They would come in every month and they would pay their rent. I think he was a truck driver and she was a school bus driver. They had a teenaged daughter. For four or five years, they lived there. They'd come every month and they'd bring the rent in. There were never any issues or any problems.

Then one day, they moved out without telling me. They just kind of said, "We're leaving. You've got my last month's rent." I went out and kind of cleaned the place up and I rented out to the next set of tenants. Those tenants were a lovely couple of a religious background. They belonged to the Faith Tabernacle Church in my riding.

About two days into their living out there at the farm, they called me and they said, "You'll never guess what we found here on the farm property." I said, "Oh, what was that?" They said, "We found marijuana plants." And I said, "How many?" And they said, "Oh, about three dozen." I said, "Where did you find them?" "We found them in the apple orchard." I said, "What did you do with them?" They said that they burnt them. They had a fire and burned them. My response was, "I hope you didn't stand too close to the fire."

These illegal kinds of things happen, and they happen a lot—you would know that—in rural communities, where people have grow-ops in their houses or they have grow-ops on farms—

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Cornfields.

Ms. Cindy Forster:—and in their cornfields. This one just happened to be in the apple orchard.

People who are on low incomes have to sometimes resort to buying their drugs illegally, and that shouldn't be the case. If your doctor prescribes medical marijuana for you, there should be some way in the system that you can get that drug because the cost probably is less expensive than being on four or five different medications for the rest of your life to try and address the issue of pain control.

I'm happy to have had the opportunity to speak to this. I wish that this amendment didn't have to happen and that this had been dealt with and that people had been consulted to start with so that we didn't have to be dealing with this here again today. But it's always great to be able to get up and talk about the folks in your riding and how various pieces of legislation affect the quality or non-quality of their lives.

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

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: It's always a pleasure to rise on behalf of my constituents in Cambridge to add a few comments to the debate.

I wanted to relate to the member from Welland's experience with being in a hospital with physicians and nurses smoking in the hallways and smoking in their offices. When I started at the Hospital for Sick Children way back in the early 1980s, we actually had a smoking room on every ward. These are including some of our very vulnerable small children with severe asthma. So it was rather horrifying for me.

I raised a child with severe respiratory complications and disease who narrowly avoided a lung transplant in the early 1990s, when he was about age 13. I can tell you, Speaker, that he was subject to issues with any smoke, whether it be from tobacco, wood fires—any kind of smoke would bother his lungs. That's why I really feel that this bill would protect those who react to any kind of environmental issues with smoke involved.

I am very supportive of adding other substances, including medical marijuana, to the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, Mr. Speaker. It would prevent those who are using medical marijuana from doing so in an enclosed space with others present, in a car with children and in an enclosed space where somebody may react to it. So I am supportive of that.

Although, certainly, those needing medical marijuana for pain control and other issues should be able to consume these products, I feel very strongly that they should be outside and not exposing any other folks to the second-hand smoke.

Again, I'm very supportive that we do make those changes in the legislation, that we pass this legislation and protect all of our public from the issues of second-hand smoke.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments? The member from Northumberland—Quinte West

Mr. Todd Smith: No, you're wrong. That's my little friend over there.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Forgive me. I should have known that it's Prince Edward—Hastings.

Mr. Todd Smith: My twin brother from Northumberland—Quinte West.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to bring some comments on the remarks by the member from Welland, who brings a couple of different perspectives, being a former mayor of Welland, of course, and a nurse. So there was the business perspective and there was the health perspective. She made a lot of very fine remarks during her presentation here this afternoon.

1740

I think we all agree, Mr. Speaker, that smoking is bad. If we can end smoking, then let's end smoking, right? Let's do what we can. Members from all three parties have brought forward legislation to try to get people to kick the habit, whether it's cracking down on contraband cigarettes or the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, which the government has brought forward; and I know there have been a number of pieces of private members' legislation that have come from the members of the third party as well. We all agree that smoking is bad and we should do what we can to wipe out smoking.

There has been a lot of talk about vaporizers and e-cigarettes and the effects that those devices have had in helping people kick the habit that, in many cases, they have had for decades. They have spent tens of thousands of dollars on cigarettes over their lives. Then they get this magical device called a vaporizer or an e-cigarette, and the next thing you know, they have kicked this lifelong habit.

I remember talking to one person at the Stinky Canuck in Northumberland—Quinte West. He had been smoking for 40 years, and he told me that after using this device for a month or so, he could taste his food again. He actually hadn't tasted his food for decades, and he forgot what it tasted like to have a hamburger.

I wouldn't condone having a hamburger every day, because that's not good for your health, either.

Mr. John Yakabuski: We assume you've had a few of them.

Mr. Todd Smith: I have had a few hamburgers over the years, though; you're right.

But anyway, the government is finally on the right track. They are correcting their mistakes, and this amendment is a good thing.

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

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Once upon a time, in a land far, far away—actually, it wasn't that long ago, but it was out in British Columbia, which isn't all that far away, either—you would be taking a walk in the woods and you would see somebody planting or, depending on the

season, harvesting a crop. At the time, it was BC bud. Then when I moved to Leamington, a town you're familiar with, where Point Pelee National Park is, I remember marijuana growing wild in those days in the park. You're not allowed to pull a plant or pick up a stone in the national park, but every now and then, you would see a Volkswagen van or something going out with all these twigs sticking out the window, and you knew what was going on.

So when the member for Welland talked about renting a piece of farm property out in an apple orchard and somebody finding three dozen or more marijuana plants, it happens.

I know in parts of Essex county, wild marijuana still grows along some creeks and streams. I mean, it happens. I know in your community in Chatham-Kent, I remember as a reporter covering stories with the OPP up in the plane, with their radar, their infrared—whatever it was—zooming down into the cornfields. They could see on the radar, on the TV screen, the flares that they would get in the cornfields where somebody—unless it was Jack and the beanstalk—was growing marijuana.

It still happens today, and it's going to happen for a long time. If that's where some people have to go to get their medical marijuana, they will do that if the cost is too high elsewhere. I think the member from Welland made that point. Especially with her nursing background, she knows what's going on in her community and some of the effects of this bill.

Thank you for your time, and they all lived happily ever after.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you very much for that once-upon-a-time story.

Further questions and comments?

Mr. Granville Anderson: I am honoured to speak to this bill this afternoon.

The irony of it is last week, I went to visit—I don't know if it's called a farm—a marijuana facility in my riding in Bowmanville. It's called Mettrum. I visited it, and it was heavily secured. They had various farms and various types of marijuana plants. I didn't know much about it, but there were different types. They were for medicinal purposes.

Interjections.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Why is he laughing so much over there?

Mr. Granville Anderson: I guess maybe it's the fumes from the plant. No, I'm just kidding.

It was funny how they went through the process. They had different grades, and it was all labelled. They had a special amount for kids and for adults, different strengths and all of that stuff. That was really my first real interaction with marijuana, believe it or not.

Mr. John Yakabuski: When was your most recent?

Mr. Granville Anderson: Yes, my most recent, if you want to call it that.

Anyhow, finally, in addition to providing a framework for the Smoke-Free Ontario Act to regulate substances other than tobacco, this legislation ensures that the rules

with regard to enforcement and employer and proprietor responsibilities are making sure the powers are more in place to further protect Ontarians from exposure to second-hand smoke, which, as we know, is a killer. Also, I've seen that interaction during workers' compensation claims, where there is a determination whether it was exposure to other substances or second-hand smoke, so I know the dangers of second-hand smoke from my other life experience.

This bill, in addition to regulatory amendments that would follow, if passed, are intended to provide reasonable and precautionary safeguards for Ontarians from exposure to second-hand medical marijuana smoke, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I want to thank the member from Durham for taking this discussion on marijuana to a higher level.

Back to the member from Welland for final comments.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Thanks to the members from Cambridge, Prince Edward-Hastings, Windsor-Tecumseh and Durham for their comments.

I want to get back into that little story that I told you about my tenants. After we heard from the new tenants about the marijuana plants that they burned, we went out there and had a look and found about 30 bales of fertilized potting soil and we found grow-op lights. So I think that they were planning on expanding their business, except that they must have thought the police were on to them. They bailed in the middle of the night and moved back to New Brunswick.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Save the bales.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Save the bales, yes. So I had some good potting soil that year to plant flowers and whatever, yes.

I think that whole message of the illegal piece is that the more we do to make sure that people who need to use medical marijuana—and I understand that there are about 30,000 people across the country who are using medical marijuana—have access and they have the financial means to actually access it. For people who are low-income that really need to use that, there should be some funding model available for them. The more we do that, I think the more we push out the illegal growing and the illegal selling. That, in itself, will reduce crime across this province and across the country.

Anything we can do to reduce second-hand smoke—because we all have a friend or a family member who never smoked in their life who is either suffering from COPD or has died from lung cancer because they worked in a restaurant or they worked in a bar or they worked in a casino. So I think that this bill, along with the original Bill 45, will go a long way to protect the health of many people who live in this province.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate? I recognize the member from Kitchener Centre.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad to see that you are remembering my home riding.

I'm very pleased to add my voice this afternoon to our discussion on the Smoke-Free Ontario Amendment Act. I

do so on behalf of the residents of Kitchener Centre. I'm going to be sharing my time with the member for Newmarket–Aurora and with the Chair of Cabinet.

With so many things, it's really important for our laws and our regulations to adapt quickly to modern life. This bill shows that we're doing exactly that. The Smoke-Free Ontario Act is going to serve every day to protect our health for people throughout the province.

We see the changes surrounding smoking, the need to expand the act's no-smoking provisions to just beyond tobacco. This legislation is going to help us to add medical marijuana to the no-smoking rules.

What exactly does that mean? You've heard members on this side of the House talk about some of the rules surrounding this. Smoking and vaping medical marijuana is going to be prohibited in places like enclosed public spaces and workplaces, in schools, in child care centres and where private home daycare is provided, and in vehicles where children under 16 are present. All of this makes perfect sense, doesn't it?

The intent here is to safeguard our communities and our children and to limit the public health risk that second-hand smoke can cause. We need to ensure that our regulations do continue to protect public health as medical marijuana becomes more common.

1750

Mr. Speaker, it's really remarkable when you start to track the trajectory that we have been on for the past 25 years, when you look at how we're handling smoking in workplaces and in public places. I want to share a story with you. In the late 1980s, I was involved in an effort in my workplace to try and get smoking banned. I look back on this and remember how people used to smoke at their desks. It's astonishing. I will tell you that it was no easy feat. I joined with a couple of other co-workers who felt that this was very unhealthy for our workplace. We were armed with all kinds of information. The experts at that time, even in the 1980s, were telling us how unhealthy smoking and second-hand smoke were. But this was a time before we had laws protecting us in the workplace.

I want to tell you what motivated me to actually join this gang of rabble-rousers as we approached our management. I was expecting my first child, and I think I was at about the six- or seven-month mark in my pregnancy. I was sitting just a few feet away from a chain smoker. It was very unpleasant. Smoking bothered me before, but while I was pregnant, it was especially challenging to try to get through the day with a smoker sitting so close to me. This was an open-concept room in a television newsroom, so you couldn't escape it.

As the 6 p.m. deadline came closer every afternoon, the smokers seemed to light up with greater urgency, feeling the pressure of the deadline approaching. By the end of the afternoon, there was this grey haze along the ceiling in the newsroom. It was quite unpleasant.

But it became a very contentious fight. We made our case—our little group—to management and to the health and safety committee, and we did so on a foundation of sound medical research. Finally, we managed to convince

management to ban smoking in our workplace. Then a few years later, you saw it happening across the province. But I'll tell you, it would have been a lot easier had we had legislation at the time.

So, Mr. Speaker, we now see different substances in different uses being smoked and vaped, and we need to stay ahead of the curve and ensure that our regulations do protect all Ontarians. Many people might be asking themselves, "Why do we even need this amendment?" Well, under the current legislation, it was working; however, the number of people who are now using medical marijuana—we see this is on the increase.

In December of last year—you've heard reference to this—the exceptions proposed for medical marijuana users sparked a public debate. We wanted businesses to have the option of choosing whether or not they wanted to deal with medical marijuana in the workplace. But since then, many people and many businesses have told us that they're looking for clarity on the use of medical marijuana and that there is a desire for consistency. So we listened and we are adapting to those suggestions. With the federal government's commitment to legalizing marijuana, it's critical that we do ensure controls are in place to protect public health.

This bill is going to help protect Ontarians from a public health risk. This bill is going to ensure that our children are safeguarded against second-hand smoke. This bill looks toward the future, and I urge my colleagues to support the amendment.

I wish that we had had things like this back in the 1980s, when I was making the fight and trying to grow a healthy baby. I will say, though, that the baby is now 28 years old, and he's in very good health.

This is a very excellent bill, and I encourage all of my colleagues to vote in favour of it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I recognize the member from Newmarket–Aurora.

Mr. Chris Ballard: I'm honoured to be able to speak to the Smoke-Free Ontario Amendment Act this afternoon. I think it's an exceptionally important piece of legislation.

If I may just reminisce for a minute, I've heard stories from a number of members in the House today about the effects of second-hand smoke and smoking in their lives. For me, I go back to my grandfather, who started smoking when he was 13 years old and working in a shop, on the shop floor, as an apprentice, and who continued to smoke unfiltered, hand-rolled cigarettes his entire life until he died in his early eighties.

So one might ask: What threat could cigarettes possibly pose if you've smoked from the time you're 13 until your death in your early eighties? It's a good question. But, Mr. Speaker, if you had met my grandfather when he was in his early fifties and seen the ravages of emphysema, you would understand what an exceptionally unpleasant life that gentleman had for the last 30 years, where every breath he took was a fight as he battled emphysema. He eventually died of a number of different cancers, most of them related to smoking. So

in the end, those cigarettes got him, but it took 30 years of awful living to get there.

As a 12-year-old boy watching his grandfather die of emphysema, and later, cancer, it made an indelible impression that smoking really wasn't a very smart thing to do. In fact, I don't think my parents ever told me not to smoke. I just had to think about what Grandfather Ballard went through. Frankly, no sane person would touch a cigarette after watching what he went through. I use that to set up where I'm coming from with the Smoke-Free Ontario Amendment Act.

Just to recap, the proposed legislation would expand the scope of the Smoke-Free Ontario Act so that the no-smoking rule will apply to products or substances other than tobacco—because unlike my grandfather's era, there is a lot more than tobacco that people can ingest by smoking now. The act was created to support efforts to reduce the prevalence of tobacco use in Ontario, and I think it's a fantastic piece of legislation. It aims to protect the health of the people of Ontario by regulating the sale, supply, distribution, promotion and smoking of tobacco products in Ontario, but because the Smoke-Free Ontario Act only applies to tobacco, as we've heard every other speaker say, there are few rules around smoking other products or substances, like medical marijuana.

Our government believes the time has come to expand the Smoke-Free Ontario Act so that it enables the government to include products and substances other than tobacco to be subject to its no-smoking provisions.

With the help of this legislation, the government can prescribe through regulation medical marijuana as one of the products or substances that are subject to the Smoke-Free Ontario Act's no-smoking rule. This would mean that smoking medical marijuana or holding a lighted medical marijuana product or substance would be prohibited in enclosed places—in a motor vehicle where a person under the age of 16 years old is present.

I think I will leave it there. I will turn the floor over to the chairman of the board.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you. I recognize the deputy House leader.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I was listening to some of the interventions that have been taking place from across the House about changing people's minds on things. I just wanted to remind you, in case you had not had the opportunity to read this, that there was a column by R. Michael Warren in the Toronto Star on March 21 entitled, "Will the Real Patrick Brown Please Stand Up?"

The reason I mention that is I know my friend from Belleville, for instance, said in the House that this was a change of heart or a change of position on the part of the government. If there are any changes taking place, my gosh, the changes are certainly outlined in this particular column in the Toronto Star. I commend it to you and to all the people of this province. It appeared on March 21, 2016.

I won't go into the details of it because it uses some language that would not be permitted in this House, and

you know I would not want to do that in reference to the leader of the Conservative Party—other than to say this: This legislation is very good. The member for Pembroke—Barry's Bay, sorry—said this bill is quite simple. It's a small bill. It should be able to proceed quickly in this House. Therefore, I won't be compelled, as deputy government House leader, to impose what's called a time allocation motion because the opposition has said this is a very simple bill that can pass quickly.

With that, I know you're going to cut me down, even though I still have about nine minutes left. I know you're probably looking at the clock and saying it's close to 6 of the clock. So I'll let you say that, and I'll be prepared to come back and complete my remarks.

1800

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you very much, deputy House leader. I appreciate the fact that you eventually brought your discussion back to the bill that was being debated.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Pursuant to standing order 38, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

WIND TURBINES

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry has given notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given by the Minister of Energy. The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter—

Interjections.

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

The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter, and the minister—in this case, the parliamentary assistant—may reply for up to five minutes.

I now turn the period over to the member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry.

Mr. Jim McDonell: Our community has had its fair share of wind and solar projects. During my time as mayor of South Glengarry, we saw three large, approximately 100-acre solar farms and numerous smaller FIT solar projects undertaken in our township, with no municipal planning control or say in where or how these were located. They were sometimes just a mess.

Some of these installations are stuck in places where they shouldn't be. With no municipal input, there is no control. In South Glengarry, they overhang property lines, block sight lines, and are put up in front of houses and at the road, where they're a real eyesore. It's unfortunate, for if the location had been subject to some type of local input, they could have been moved just a short distance to at least make them a little more pleasing and a lot more practical.

To highlight the extreme lack of co-operation the local municipalities received from these large, mainly foreign companies, I'll recount my experience in the township. On reading about an open house being held in the city of Cornwall concerning a large solar farm being built in our township, the first we had seen or even heard of it, I asked our planner to contact the company, identify us as the host township and suggest that they might hold at least one meeting in our township.

We were basically told to buzz off, until, I assume, they later verified that although the property had a Cornwall mailing address, it was actually in South Glengarry, and by the terms of the contract or the application, they would have to hold a meeting in our township. That shows the lack of consultation we used to receive, and today we see the same in North Stormont. It has changed very little.

I attended one of the information sessions in Crysler this past summer, and witnessed the overwhelming wishes of the local residents of North Stormont, later confirmed by the township council when they voted to be an unwilling host. This was not a simple decision made without consequences, for the company had offered the township some serious money if they would pass a resolution identifying themselves as a willing host.

The council took the Liberal government at its word that the local municipalities would be heard, and they turned down \$450,000 for 20 years, a total of \$9 million, plus approximately \$4 million in property taxes over the term of the contract. The evidence is clear: The residents and the council of North Stormont were not willing hosts.

Now they find that they are the latest victim of just another broken Liberal promise. They are getting the wind turbines, but without the \$9 million. It might be different if we actually needed the power, but as we can see from the Auditor General's report, we are producing enough excess power each year to power Nova Scotia for five years.

The 2015 Auditor General's report highlighted that as a result of Liberal mismanagement between 2006 and 2014, the people of Ontario have been overcharged \$37 billion for electricity. What's more, ratepayers will continue to be overcharged another \$133 billion over the next 18 years, resulting in a total of \$170 billion in unnecessary costs to the ratepayers—just unbelievable.

We are paying way too much for this renewable energy. In fact, the auditor reported that in 2014, we were paying double the price for wind and three and a half times more for solar than our American neighbours. Winning a power contract from this government is like winning the lottery, and when the people of Ontario are paying the bill, it's just another way this Liberal government is making life unaffordable and our businesses uncompetitive.

Speaker, can we ask the minister to intervene and follow through on the government's commitment to listen to the people of North Stormont, who clearly designated themselves as unwilling hosts, and cancel the wind turbine project in North Stormont?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Energy has up to five minutes to respond.

Mr. Bob Delaney: The announcement made by the Independent Electricity System Operator, or IESO, earlier this month, on March 10, regarding competitive renewable energy procurement is a significant step forward for Ontario's energy system. This is the result of hard work to develop a process to enable renewable energy generation at competitive prices across Ontario.

There were 16 contracts announced for solar, wind and hydroelectric power, representing more than 454 megawatts of clean, renewable energy capacity. Ontario's 2013 long-term energy plan established a clear goal of 10,700 megawatts of wind, solar and bioenergy online by 2021 and 9,300 megawatts of hydroelectricity online by 2025. This procurement will contribute to the achievement of the province's renewable energy targets and to securing a future in clean, reliable and affordable electricity in Ontario.

In addition to achieving the lowest contracted prices for renewable energy, there are great achievements in support for these projects. More than 80% of the projects include participation from one or more aboriginal communities, including five projects offering aboriginal communities more than 50% equity participation. More than 75% of the successful proposals received support from local municipalities, and more than 60% had support from neighbouring residents.

The member for Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry talked about some of his concerns. I'd like to address some of those concerns and explain the process.

The Ministry of Energy changed the procurement of large renewable projects based on the concerns of municipalities and the lessons learned from the large feed-in tariff or FIT projects that were previously procured.

The Independent Electricity System Operator, or IESO, has developed a new, competitive process to provide municipalities, First Nations and Métis communities and the general public with a greater opportunity to participate in the development of renewable energy projects. Between July 2013 and February 2014, the IESO undertook an engagement process with the public, municipalities, First Nation and Métis communities and other groups on the design of the Large Renewable Procurement Program.

This Large Renewable Procurement, led by the IESO, included mandatory new requirements that focused on engaging with the local community and receiving feedback. In designing and launching Large Renewable Procurement, the IESO was guided by the principles from the province's 2013 long-term energy plan. Just to remind the member, they are as follows:

- to follow a provincial and/or regional electricity system need;
- to consider municipal electricity generation preferences;
- to engage early and regularly with local and First Nation and Métis communities;

—to occur in multiple successive rounds, providing opportunity for a diverse set of participants; and

—to identify clear procurement needs, goals and expectations.

The requirements were designed to strike a balance between early community engagement and achieving value for ratepayers.

Large Renewable Procurement projects proposed through this process must have demonstrated site and resource due diligence, as well as engagement with the communities in which they propose to locate. That means that in the member's region, proponents held public meetings, met with the municipality, and worked individually with local residents and property owners to ensure all of the information about the project was known up front. Evidence of any or all of the above would raise the probability of a project ahead of other projects that did not show such participation or support, depending on the prices bid for each project.

Regardless of whether municipalities pass resolutions to indicate their willingness or unwillingness to host projects, Large Renewable Procurement project proponents were and are required to engage with municipalities and to take into account local needs and considerations before proposals are submitted. Every project offered a contract by the IESO met all mandatory requirements of the requests for proposals. The IESO and the ministry listened to municipal concerns about the way large feed-in tariff projects were being procured, and the ministry made a commitment to address those concerns in the new process. The goal was to provide municipalities with a stronger role going forward, but not to provide a veto.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I would like to thank the member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry and the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Energy for your comments and replies.

It is now 6:10. This Legislature stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock.

The House adjourned at 1810.

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Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research 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	
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
Oraziotti, 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	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors Affairs Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Leader, Recognized Party / Chef adjoint du gouvernement
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thibeault, Glenn (LIB)	Sudbury	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire 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
Vacant	Scarborough–Rouge River	

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Monique Taylor
Chris Ballard, Grant Crack
Cheri DiNovo, Han Dong
Michael Harris, Sophie Kiwala
Todd Smith, Monique Taylor
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

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Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

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Laura Albanese, Yvan Baker
Toby Barrett, Victor Fedeli
Catherine Fife, Ann Hoggarth
Peter Z. Milczyn, Daiene Vernile
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Eric Rennie

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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
Jim McDonell, Eleanor McMahon
Lisa M. Thompson
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

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permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

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Robert Bailey, Vic Dhillon
John Fraser, Wayne Gates
Marie-France Lalonde, Harinder Malhi
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Lou Rinaldi
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Lorenzo Berardinetti, Bob Delaney
Randy Hillier, Michael Mantha
Cristina Martins, Indira Naidoo-Harris
Arthur Potts, Shafiq Qadri
Laurie Scott
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jack MacLaren
Granville Anderson, Chris Ballard
Steve Clark, Jack MacLaren
Michael Mantha, Eleanor McMahon
Monte McNaughton, 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 / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**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
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Jennifer K. French
Monte Kwinter, Amrit Mangat
Kathryn McGarry, Indira Naidoo-Harris
Daiene Vernile, Bill Walker
Jeff Yurek
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

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

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jagmeet Singh
Granville Anderson, Lorne Coe
Vic Dhillon, Amrit Mangat
Gila Martow, Kathryn McGarry
Jagmeet Singh, Peter Tabuns
Glenn Thibeault
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