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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

Thursday 17 July 2014

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Jeudi 17 juillet 2014

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Greffière
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 17 July 2014

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 17 juillet 2014

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BUILDING OPPORTUNITY
AND SECURING OUR FUTURE ACT
(BUDGET MEASURES), 2014

LOI DE 2014

OUVRANT DES PERSPECTIVES
ET ASSURANT NOTRE AVENIR
(MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

Resuming the debate adjourned on July 16, 2014, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 14, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various Acts / Projet de loi 14, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter et à modifier diverses lois.

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

Mr. Arthur Potts: It gives me great honour to continue my remarks on the budget bill, and I look forward now to—I had an opportunity to speak yesterday, when we talked at length about what a progressive budget this was. As I went door to door in my community, I heard repeatedly how much people wanted us to enact this budget. This was the platform we ran on.

What I have a sense of is that the budget debate—we've already had it. We had it during the course of an entire campaign, where I think the party's direction, the plan, which was contained in the budget, was one that was overwhelmingly supported across the province, resulting in the results of the election that we have. What I, of course, like most about this budget is how progressive it is.

If you'll permit, my father taught me to be a Liberal. My father was a great inspiration to me—my father, Justice Joseph Potts. He was born in Saskatchewan, and he came to Toronto as a lawyer, developed a career practice where he was very active in the Canadian Bar Association, was the president of the Ontario Bar Association. He taught me about being a Liberal.

What is so important in this budget is how progressive it is. He once showed me a speech that was given by a French philosopher named Étienne Gilson. Étienne Gilson spoke to a Liberal gathering in 1958 in which he

defined what it meant to be a Liberal. I think that his definition of "Liberal" is contained in this budget because of the support it gives in social justice, the recommendations it has from the Lankin-Sheikh report, and that we were going to implement it. We've gone a long way to bringing child poverty more money for children in low-income situations. But Mr. Gilson defined being a Liberal as one who seeks direction from the majority but with due regard for the rights of minorities. I think that's such an important concept, which is contained in my fundamental belief for liberalism, and I think you'll see that those kinds of measures are contained in this budget bill.

I heard, in some of the other members' comments about the bill, concern about energy rates, particularly in low-income housing. As you know, in this budget bill we have a plan to remove the debt retirement charge off energy bills which will relieve homeowners of about, I think it's 7% or 8% of the costs of those energy bills—by taking the debt retirement charge off their energy bills. That's a very, very important initiative that will help lower electrical charges for everyone across the province.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, you probably would be aware that there is a provision for a 10% reduction for energy bills for low-income families. This is another example of how we are trying to make and going to make energy rates more affordable for families in Ontario.

Now, part of the concern with high energy rates is that people want to blame our green energy policies for having jacked up the price of energy. Let's be very clear. We've seen the report from the Environmental Commissioner which said that the cost impact of the green energy proposals is a minimal part of the increase that people have experienced. Most of the increase that people are experiencing in their bills has to do with having to rebuild the energy infrastructure of this province, particularly for peak-demand energy needs.

It was a commitment of our government to phase out coal-powered generation plants. That was an absolutely critical thing that had to be done. There are thousands of people every year whose lives are made better because they're not breathing the smog and particulates associated with those plants. It has reduced the number of premature deaths as a result of asthma and other breathing complications, by removing those gas plants. But having removed those gas plants, you have to replace them.

We have done a good job of replacing those gas plants in communities that needed it, such as the Portlands Energy Centre which is an absolutely critical piece of infrastructure for downtown Toronto. I would tell the constituents, as I was at the door in Beaches-East York,

that if we did not have the Portlands Energy Centre, we would be suffering from blackouts and brownouts far more regularly, as other people in this province have experienced. We have a much better energy system in downtown Toronto because this government insisted on putting in a plant in the face of tremendous opposition from the local community. But that plant is there, and I tell you that the people of Beaches–East York and Toronto–Danforth, which I have the pleasure of it being my home riding, absolutely were delighted that those plants were there.

This infrastructure money that we have in this bill, \$130 billion, will also help us to create more distributed energy plants and gas-fired plants to deal with peak-demand periods. Every environmentalist will tell you that the most important way of developing an infrastructure system in electricity is to have generation close to consumption. You don't want the spillage associated with long transmission.

So in the infrastructure commitments that this government has, you will see an opportunity to relocate some of the other gas plants that did not get built as they should have been built. We'll relocate, use some of the assets that are stranded in those contracts and build gas plants in communities that will need it. That's an important point moving forward in energy.

I want to speak a little bit now on government assets. During the course of the election, we heard repeatedly in my riding that the number one reason that the third party did not support the budget that was brought in on May 1 had to do with the sale of assets. The NDP candidate in my riding repeatedly referred to, what I think is meant by the Trojan Horse budget comments of the leader of the third party, that this was all buried deep down in the appendix of the budget documents. Particularly, he was referring to the sale of the LCBO.

Now, let's be very clear: There is absolutely no plan in place right now to sell the LCBO. That's just fear-mongering on the part of others. We are going to review all government assets, including the LCBO, with a view to making sure that we are maximizing the value of those assets. The LCBO holds dozens and dozens of properties that may not be getting the best value. It may be, as part of that review, that we look at the real estate assets of the LCBO and we sell them off, because there's no point in us holding land that's not being used effectively. If we can take the sales associated with that and put it into the Trillium fund and use the Trillium fund to build up productive assets elsewhere in the province, I think that would be a fantastic step forward. That is part of the review that is being done with Mr. Clark. We look forward to his report and ensuring that we're maximizing the value of government assets.

Another government asset we hold, that I just for the life of me can't understand why members on both sides of the House aren't unanimously in agreement that we should be selling off, are the shares that we hold in General Motors. This government, as part of its investment strategy and its strategy to retain jobs in Ontario during

the auto industry crisis, went out of its way to work with the major manufacturers of automobiles in Ontario to ensure that we continue to keep these good jobs in Canada, in Ontario, to keep Ontarians at work. As part of that deal we acquired a lot of shares in General Motors.

0910

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: A billion dollars' worth.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Is it a billion dollars? Thank you, Mr. Rinaldi. Lou tells me it was \$1 billion.

Why we wouldn't want to sell off a government asset of shares that we hold in General Motors is beyond me. This is the right thing to do. Their share values are up. We want to capitalize on the investment we made in creating those jobs and keeping that manufacturing in Ontario, and we should sell off those shares. That's just one example of how we do hold assets that are being unproductive, and we can take those dollars and put them in the Trillium fund and use them as part of our plan to build Ontario up.

I'd like to also talk a bit about the Ontario pension plan. I repeatedly heard at the door how important it was, for the retirement security of residents in Beaches–East York, that we do something in this area. You all know it's not our preferred option. We believe the federal government should be stepping up to the table, and I think what we're showing is tremendous leadership in Ontario, that the Premier is making it clear that this is going to happen in Ontario, that we're going to boost the value of retirement pensions for hard-working Ontarians and we want the federal government to come along with us. What we've done by putting this plan in place is we are now able to talk to other provincial jurisdictions and have them think along the same lines. This will be an opportunity for other jurisdictions to come in provincially and at some point, you can rest assured, the government of Canada is going to see the value of bringing in a national program, rather than having 11 disparate provincial programs as add-ons to their own program. That would be the efficient thing to do; that would be the federal government stepping up and taking responsibility for income retirement security. We want to be able to retire with dignity at an income level that's appropriate, and currently there's a significant gap between what the CPP will provide and what we would need to have as part of a living wage.

These are the kinds of measures that we see in this extremely, extremely progressive budget bill. I urge all members of the House, during committees this week, to reflect on those conversations you had at the door with people who recognize that we need to do more in transportation, we need to do more in transit, particularly in the GTHA, so that we can move people faster, so we can electrify the GO rail system. These are the important things that I want you to remember as we go to hearings, and I appreciate very much, Mr. Speaker, this opportunity to speak to the budget bill.

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

Mr. Michael Harris: I'd like to first off welcome the member for Beaches–East York and congratulate him on

his election campaign, of course. Welcome to a fine building. I'm amazed and impressed each and every day that I walk into this building. I'm so thankful that I have the opportunity to stand up and speak on behalf of my constituents, and I know he'll feel the same.

I think it's important, given the opportunity—I'm speaking after the member for Beaches–East York. I want to thank the former member for Beaches–East York, Michael Prue, who I had an opportunity to serve with over the last two and a half years. I was a rookie member on an estimates committee that he chaired, and we went into some lengthy committee meetings on gas plants. You know what? It was difficult at times, but I was always impressed with Michael—his work ethic, his commitment, and his thankfulness for getting up early and making us a nice dessert that we could enjoy during committee. I want to thank him not only for that but for his service as an MPP for his riding and his community for the number of years that he did. I did have a chance to chat with Michael after the election. I wished him well in everything that he will now do forthcoming. I know he still has a lot to offer to his community. I know he is an avid traveller, touring all over the world, and I know he'll probably get some time in with his loved ones and see some new things.

I'll leave it at that, Speaker. Again, I welcome the member for Beaches–East York and I hope I have a further opportunity to speak again to the fiscal reality that our province has faced, that I know he heard at the doorsteps as well.

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

Mr. Michael Mantha: I'm just happy and delighted to have been here yesterday for the comments from the member from Beaches–East York, where he talked about the budget in regard to building Ontario up and also this budget being a progressive budget.

I just wanted to remind him of the difficulties that certain communities are actually really facing, and trying to explain to them how progressive this budget is. Let me just share some numbers with you, as I did with you yesterday, in regard to one community particularly, the community of Wawa, but there are 110 other communities that are going to be affected by this so-called progressive budget of yours.

The community of Wawa, in 2015, are going to be subject to a cut in their municipal budget of \$74,000. In 2016, they're going to be cut by \$248,923. In 2017, they're going to lose another \$558,415. That is due to the cut that this government is doing to the Power Dam Special Payment Program.

Now, what I would like you to do is, if this was the case and you were knocking on your doors in Beaches–East York, here's the per capita; here's the reality. This is what you would have been knocking on the doors with in your area. If you do the multiple factor, the population of Wawa is 2,975, and here in Toronto it is 2,600,000. The loss to Wawa is \$882,000. Would you have gone knocking on any doors in your area to tell them that your

Liberal government is going to be taking \$770 million out of their budget? I don't think so. That's the reality of your progressive budget.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Scarborough–Agincourt.

Ms. Soo Wong: I'm pleased to rise today to join in the debate on the 2014 budget, building opportunity and securing Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, let me also begin my remarks this morning to congratulate my new colleague from Beaches–East York and also to acknowledge the former member for Beaches–East York, because I knew Michael Prue for a number of years as a former mayor of East York. I also worked with him on the former Metro Toronto District Health Council. I know Michael has served his province and the city very well.

As the member from Beaches–East York clearly stated earlier, our government is making an investment in transportation and infrastructure as one of the priorities. It is of great interest in my riding of Scarborough–Agincourt. In my very short time this morning, I'd like to re-emphasize our government's commitment of \$29 billion over the next 10 years to address public transit, transportation, infrastructure and other priority infrastructure projects across Ontario.

It says very clearly in the budget book on page 44, "Two new dedicated funds would be created to support infrastructure projects that are essential to Ontario's immediate and long-term economic growth and job creation." I'm very pleased, Mr. Speaker, that one of these funds would target specifically the greater Toronto and Hamilton area. These particular allocations for these two funds were based on census data from Statistics Canada. So based on data, based on facts, allocation of the proceeds of these funds will be allocated based on fairness, accountability and transparency.

We all know congestion is not good for your health, and I know my colleague from Beaches–East York talked about that earlier. We also know we want to spend more time with people we love than being stuck in traffic.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for this opportunity.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Leeds–Grenville.

Mr. Steve Clark: Thank you very much, Speaker. Good morning.

Through you to the member for Beaches–East York: I want to congratulate you on your election. I also want to congratulate you on your appointment as parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

I want to tell you—through you, Speaker, to the member—we had a great meeting last night in my riding. I was in my riding last night in Kemptville at an event for Kemptville College. It was the Kemptville College Renewal Task Force. Your provincial facilitator, the Honourable Lyle Vanclief, was there. He wasn't there to speak to the media necessarily, but there to listen to the agricultural community.

So, through you, Speaker, to the member: I just want to take this opportunity to invite you, as I did to the

minister, and also to Minister Moridi, the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities and Innovation and all those other things that he is—I also want to invite you to tour Kemptville College. I would be more than happy to introduce you to the Kemptville College Renewal Task Force and have you tour that fine campus that's got a 97-year tradition. I know I speak on behalf of the people of Leeds–Grenville, if I might, directly to the member, that this is a wonderful institution. I hope that you, in your capacity as parliamentary assistant, will take the opportunity to see what potential we have at that campus to ensure that it's around for its centennial in 2017. Congratulations, and welcome to Queen's Park.

0920

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Beaches–East York, you have two minutes for a reply.

Mr. Arthur Potts: I certainly want to thank the member from Kitchener–Conestoga. We met and had a chat last night. I'm not a great baker. I don't see myself bringing cookies in here on a regular basis. I apologize for that. I'll do my best to be as good a representative here as Mr. Prue was, but it may not include cookies.

And my apologies to the pages: Mr. Prue, I've come to understand, used to keep sweets in his desk, and the pages would come up and get chocolate quite often. I'm thinking, in my interest in preserving the health of our youth, that I might have carrot sticks and broccoli, and maybe I'll try a new tradition which is a healthier choice.

I'd also like to respond to the member from Algoma–Manitoulin. I appreciate your comments very much. Of course, the concerns of the citizens of Wawa are very important to this government, and we're listening very carefully. If these downloads and reductions are hurting, they need to be looked at very carefully. But I also remind you that you must look at this in terms of a net financing position. The town of Wawa, in your riding, has been benefiting from the uploading we've done, taking on the costs that were downloaded to under the previous Harris government. I think you need to look at the net benefit of whether, in fact, your bottom line is lower.

I'd also like to thank the member from Leeds–Grenville. I know that the Kemptville College is under some duress and pressures right now. The minister and I have talked about it, that we are going to seek some kind of solution. That may not involve the ministry directly, but it needs to be maintained. It seems like a great institution. As I mentioned in my remarks, my grandfather had a doctorate in animal husbandry, and so the education of agricultural students is very, very important. We know the great tradition that Kemptville College has had.

My friend from Scarborough–Agincourt: Thank you so much for your kind remarks. I'm looking forward to working with you as we go forward and bringing this budget to fruition.

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

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I look forward to having the opportunity to speak to this budget for the next—are you

sitting down?—45 minutes. I promise it will be scintillating for you. I'll do everything I can.

Good morning, everybody. I wanted to have a chance to chat about the budget. I'm going to start off rather critical, as you can imagine, because the budget is the same one that the Liberal government introduced on May 1. We've carefully looked at it. There's not a comma changed. It is the exact same budget that Maclean's magazine called, "A unicorn budget built on delusion...." That's what our leading national magazine called it. Of course, it immediately sparked a credit watch from Moody's rating services, who also recently downgraded their credit outlook from stable to negative. That's not a very proud thing for what was once the engine of Confederation, this province of Ontario, now reduced to a have-not province after 11 years of Liberal reign.

This budget recklessly puts Ontario's finances in a very precarious and teetering position. We see a deteriorating fiscal balance sheet, and that's what BlackRock, when they came out with their credit notice as well on the 13th of June, had said, "...a deteriorating financial balance sheet." That's how Ontario is characterized in the marketplace.

What does that mean to the people at home today? Let me tell you exactly why a \$12.5-billion deficit is hurting you at home. We started many years ago with deficits, and we saw the \$139-billion debt of Ontario double under the last 11 years of Liberal reign to over \$290 billion. That debt has doubled. Two years ago, our deficit was \$9.2 billion. Last year it grew to \$11.3 billion, and this year it is forecast to be \$12.5 billion. Because we have such a huge deficit, this government has immediately made very serious cuts to front-line services. I can tell you specifically that they have cut physiotherapy for seniors; they have cut cataract surgeries for seniors, again; they've cut diabetes testing strips—this is a very, very concerning issue, when people who can't afford these testing strips are now not testing. We know that's only going to increase our health costs in the end. To use the expression, they've cut off their nose to spite their face. Or the other expression: They can't see the forest for the trees—that's a more northern expression. They're looking for nickels and dimes in the couch, and this is what they've done: They've cut off diabetes testing strips.

Of course, we've already seen them fire nurses, over 300 throughout Ontario. In my hometown of North Bay last year we lost 40 front-line health care workers; this year so far, an additional 34 front-line health care workers. We lost eight teachers two weeks ago. We lost 67 telecom workers at Ontera. This is exactly what happens when you can't balance the budget.

We have deficits here in Ontario. We have deficits forecast next year, the year after, and of course all of the rating agencies presume that this government has no path to balance the budget in 2017-18, as they continue to say. In fact, their own Ministry of Finance documents—when Premier Wynne was appointed as Premier back in 2013, she received a briefing from the Ministry of Finance

which we were able to receive a copy of through our estimates committee—after about a half a year of prodding for it, I might add. In that it very, very clearly stated that there is no plan to balance the budget by 2017-18, period. It was very succinct.

This means that there will be continued cuts to front-line services. So let me tell you—if you look at, I think it was page 244 of the budget, it talks about the budget going forward with health at a 2.2% increase, education at 2.3%, training at 1%, social services at 3.5%, justice at 0.8%. Those are the increases. The rest of the ministries all have a 6% decrease—a 6% decrease, when more than 50% of each and every ministry's expenses are comprised of people—human capital.

When you look at the health budget, increasing it by 2.2% is actually a massive, multi-billion dollar reduction, and here's why: Each year, health is increased 6%. To only increase 2.2% is an almost 4% reduction in the budget that was originally planned. Every 1% of health budget is about \$500 million. So they're cutting more than \$1.5 billion out of health care this very year alone. Now in health care, 80% of their budget is people. So when you start cutting \$1.5 billion out of health care, you're starting to talk about a serious number of front-line people, like the 300 nurses they've already fired and, as I said, the ones in North Bay: 40 last year, 34 so far this year.

When you can't afford the bare necessities, you start looking for the nickels and dimes, the change in the couch. They announced they're closing 60 beds in our hospital. Our hospital is a \$1-billion hospital. It was only opened a few years ago. It was opened while I was the mayor of the city of North Bay, and I left in 2010. So the hospital is about five years old, a brand spanking new hospital. And we're cutting 60 beds because they have no money, because we have a \$12.5-billion deficit. That's why we talk about deficits so much. This is money; a deficit is money that you spend that you don't have coming in. We're spending more than we take in.

So did this budget do anything to address the deficit, to protect the very front-line services that we have come to require in Ontario? No, it did not. It did not do anything to protect front-line services. It did nothing to address the teetering financial situation that this government has got us into.

0930

In fact, what it did was go the opposite way. It said they are going to tax and then spend. They're going to tax you more and spend your money. They're going to spend \$5.7 billion more than last year. That's not the prudent way. If you were in your household and you or your spouse, one of you, lost a job, you would not go on a spending spree; you would start to tighten your budget until more money was coming in.

The Bank of Canada has told us last year, this year, last month, and this morning on the front page of the National Post that the problem is we're not going to make our revenue targets this year. Our growth is not happening. This is a government that had planned on

“growing their way out of the problem”—except for the fact that growth is not going to happen. It's very clear—very, very clear. The Bank of Canada and every other institution is telling us we are not going to hit our revenue targets for this year. Yet we're talking about how we're going to grow our way out of the problem and spend our way. Well, if the growth doesn't happen, we're still spending. So deficits are going to continue under this particular government.

In fact, what actually happened—if you could imagine the awkwardness of this, they're actually going to increase taxes and yet increase the deficit at the same time. How bizarre a scenario is that? How could that even possibly happen, that you're going to raise taxes from people and still have a higher deficit, over \$1 billion higher than last year?

So let's talk about some of these taxes that they're going to raise. One is the aviation fuel tax. I must say I'm quite surprised at this aviation fuel tax, because what this does is take somewhere between \$40 million and \$65 million away from the airlines by increasing the fuel tax from 2.7 cents a litre to 6.7 cents a litre. This is adding 4 cents a litre. This is outrageous not just for passenger service—we're not talking about how this is going to hurt families flying to Hawaii for the year; this is about families that are on a medical emergency, where they need to take a flight. These flights are now going to cost more. Cargo, aircraft that bring in clothing, shoes, products that we trade worldwide, products we ship in exports, our sales—all of these products are going to cost more money. They're going to cost more money to sell and they're going to cost more money to buy because we've more than doubled the aviation fuel tax.

If you look at other areas of the country—look at Vancouver, for instance. They just got 22 new international flights in and out of Vancouver International Airport because they have removed the aviation fuel tax for those international flights. So British Columbia got it right. They're taking the tax and wiping it off. There is no aviation tax for those international flights and now they've got 22 new flights. All the business, the landing fees, the repair and overhaul and maintenance, the fuel that they sell—all of this is business. That's how you do business. I have never seen how increased taxes increase business. I've been an entrepreneur all my life, I've been in business and owned my own company for many years, and I've never seen how new taxes increase business. It is the other way, period.

So British Columbia got it right. They cut the aviation tax right down to zero for those international flights; they got more business. Here in Ontario we do the opposite. We're looking for these nickel and dimes in the couch: “So let's go after these guys next. We haven't picked their pockets lately. Boom. Let's go after the airlines,” which means their customers, their cargo, medical flights—all of these things. That's what they're going to do. That's exactly the kind of taxes that this government is adding.

They talked, interestingly enough, about the Trillium Trust. This is an interesting thought, not unlike the

thought we had, as well, in part of our plan: an infrastructure trust. But I've read the bill carefully, I've been briefed carefully, and we have found what I term a very massive loophole in this Trillium Trust.

Let me tell you, basically, the way it's supposed to work. They're supposed to look at the assets that they own throughout Ontario—admirable. They're supposed to look at selling these non-productive assets, taking that money, putting it in the Trillium Trust and using that for infrastructure. That's the plan, except if you look very, very carefully at the Trillium Trust Act—now, here's the rub, Speaker; here's where it starts to go off the rails for me. They're supposed to take the money, put it in the Trillium Trust and spend it on infrastructure. The act states that “When a qualifying asset”—the one magic word is “qualifying”—“is disposed of, the regulations may”—that's the second funny word: “may”—“require that a portion”—that's the third funny word—“of the net proceeds ... be credited to the Trillium Trust.” Basically what they're saying is, “We're going to sell an asset. We're going to take that money, put it in the Trillium Trust and build infrastructure.” But let's look at those wiggle words again.

“Qualifying assets”: When they sell an asset, the bill says that they then get the opportunity to decide what is a qualifying asset. In their own guidelines that they make up themselves, if it doesn't qualify, then they get to use that money for anything. They'll put it in general revenue and help pay down their deficit. That's what it's really all about. It's not about investing in infrastructure. They get to choose the guidelines to say, “Yes, that's a qualifying asset,” or “No.” If it's “Yes,” then it goes into the Trillium Trust; if they say, “No, that doesn't qualify,” then they can use that money for anything. That's number 1.

Number 2: “The regulations may”—it doesn't say the regulations must put that money; they may put the money in the trust. Well, what's to stop these guys from raiding the piggy bank, like they did with other piggy banks they raided, and using that money—right into general revenue—to bring their deficit down? That word “may” is the other wiggle word.

The third one: a “portion” of the proceeds. So they don't have to put it all in. Once they have a qualifying one, they may decide, and if they do decide, now we're into the third wiggle word: “portion.” They don't have to put all the money into the Trillium Trust. They can put a portion of it—a fraction of it, for all we know; we're never going to know—and that money then, again, goes into general operating revenue and helps bring their deficit down.

Basically, what they're doing is selling the furniture to pay the bills. That's what they're doing here, and hoping, with a Hail Mary pass, that, about three years from now, the economy will somehow magically turn around—although the Bank of Canada says no, the bond rating firms say no, and all of the financial people who know say no. It's not going to happen. You can't just wish that your economy is going to turn around. You actually have to do things to make your economy turn around. I'll talk

about that in a moment. But the thing is, they're selling the furniture off to pay the bills.

Yes, I'm quite certain they'll put some of that money in the Trillium Trust. We'll hear about that. Things like the GM shares—I have no doubt that that will entirely end up in the Trillium Trust. It would just be too hard to fudge that one. That's too much under the microscope. But all the other asset sales—that's the money that they can “not have to qualify”, and then only “may”, and then put a “portion”. That's what's so darned scary about doing that. We're talking billions of dollars here, people. We're not talking about pennies; we're talking about billions.

Instead of getting into the fundamental core of what's wrong in Ontario, this budget does nothing to address those very issues.

One of those issues was skyrocketing electricity rates. Speaker, this entire budget does absolutely nothing to address skyrocketing electricity rates. We just came off a lengthy campaign, since the 2nd of May. We all knocked on doors. You can't tell me that you did not hear people talking about their hydro bills at the door—people, seniors, families, businesses; businesses that have left Ontario, businesses that are planning to leave Ontario because they can't afford the hydro bill. I've stood in this Legislature and used the example of Xstrata Copper in Timmins at least 25 times. We're talking about 672 people in a town of 45,000—Timmins, Ontario—who lost their jobs because the company moved across the border into Quebec for cheaper hydro.

0940

This bill does absolutely nothing for hydro. It doesn't address it whatsoever. It does mention where they're going to merge the IESO and the Ontario Power Authority, the OPA, into one, for a savings of a few million dollars. This is nothing that we're talking about, Speaker. We're talking about a core problem in Ontario. Until we fix this problem, until we make hydro affordable in Ontario like it was before this government took over and began tinkering with it—before that happens, we will not see the turnaround that we need in Ontario.

You can't just wish that it's going to happen. You can't just spend your way out of the problem when your income is coming down. Revenue is going down. We will not hit our revenue targets. We've been told that over and over, but you're going to spend as if we are. That is why we have a \$12.5-billion deficit.

Speaker, I wanted to talk about not only the electricity rates as one of the solutions, but our mutual friend Don Drummond had some very interesting things to say. I'm going to speak from my book, *Fedeli Focus on Finance*—a shameless plug. I am going to read a couple of paragraphs because I'm quoting Don Drummond.

Page 36: First of all, he outlines some big-ticket reforms that he said would be “an important turning point in the province's history.” He called for a “sharp degree of fiscal restraint.” Stop me if you've heard this before, or if any of this sounds like anything you're actually doing. “Sharp degree of fiscal restraint”: I don't think a

\$5.7-billion spending spree is that fiscal restraint that your own Don Drummond talked about.

He said, “The government must take daring fiscal action early.” Well, I don’t see anything daring in this budget. You’re taxing and you’re spending. There’s nothing daring, and this is two years old. There’s nothing early that you’ve done.

He also said we must act “swiftly and boldly.” Well, not too swift, because that’s two years old now, and “boldly” raising the aviation fuel tax, causing businesses and families to suffer? I’m not sure that that’s bold. I think that’s just the easy way out.

To balance the budget will require “tough decisions.” Treatment will be “difficult,” and “most of the burden ... must fall on spending.” Well, no burden fell here, Speaker. Spending is up—\$5.7 billion in new spending, a \$12.5-billion deficit. That spending isn’t one-time spending; that’s now baked into the budget. That is why we have a structural deficit in the budget, and that means it takes something a lot more to fix it. These aren’t just one-time gifts that are thrown out; this is built into the budget now so that next year, the budget starts at an already higher number. They’re baked in.

Don Drummond called for—and this is the last one I’ll read—“a wrenching reduction from the path that spending is now on.” He’s calling for this wrenching reduction, and what did they do? A spending spree, exactly and entirely the complete opposite of what is called for.

So here we are, more than two years later, and the Liberals are planning an expenditure review. That’s what they’re going to do. They’re going to do another study to take care of these urgent, two-years-ago recommendations by their own Don Drummond.

Another item in this budget is the Ring of Fire. Look, these guys have blown it so far. We can’t afford another four or five years of having you blow it again. We really need you to step up to the plate on the Ring of Fire. We absolutely need this to happen.

First of all, let me tell you a little bit about the Ring of Fire. This is a mining find in the Far North, in northern Ontario. It is, according to both sides’ experts, about a \$60-billion mining find. It’s very complicated to get there. I have been there four times now, in 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014. The first time I was there, let me tell you, it was so exciting. It must have been like a mining camp would have been 100 years ago, when they discovered nickel in Sudbury or silver in Cobalt. You’re in the middle of nowhere, there’s nothing there, you have tents set up—as I was flying on the last flight of many to get there in a helicopter, I saw these blue-and-white tents. A big smile came across my face, because I recognized those tents. When I was in my marketing business in the 1970s, Canadian Can-Tex was one of my clients. They’re in Rutherglen, Ontario, which is in my riding. That trademark blue-and-white tent was made in my riding. As I’m flying in the helicopter and I see those tents, a big smile because they’re made in my riding.

As we got a little closer to landing, these massive, massive mounds of drill rods—again, a bigger smile, be-

cause North Bay and Powassan, also in my riding, have 12 manufacturers of drill rods and drill bits. North Bay-Nipissing is one of the world’s pre-eminent exploration centres. We’re one of the largest centres in the world for exploration products. We make them in North Bay. They use them all over the world. They use them in Sudbury; they use them in Timmins; they use them in the Far North; they use them in all countries, on all continents. It’s amazing, the shipping that comes out of North Bay. So I’m looking at these mounds of drill rods and the city built of tents. There are 250 men and women working at Noront and Cliffs resources, about 125 on each side of the fence, and it was so exciting, because they were drilling. They’ve got drill rigs which are also made in North Bay. They’ve got drill rigs drilling for chromite, the exciting mineral—the first find in North America, other than South Africa, Kazakhstan, Finland; there are a few places in the world. Chromite is used to make stainless steel. Now we have a chromite find, \$60 billion worth of chromite. These people are working. It was so exciting. You could just feel the energy.

I wasn’t yet an MPP. I was thinking about running at that time. It’s one of those things that inspired me. It was so exciting, it was just so thrilling to see this happening. But sadly, virtually nothing has happened in all of these subsequent years—very, very tragic. The government here has dithered on this and let opportunity slide right through their fingers. The last time I was up was before this election, and there weren’t 250 men and women any more; there were fewer than a dozen. I said to one of the companies, “What on earth is going on?” One company, only two summers ago, spent \$200 million exploring—drill rods, drill bits, mostly from my hometown. Some \$200 million was spent by just one company; there are 33 companies drilling. One company alone spent \$200 million. Now they have four people there. They’re spending zero. I said to them, “How can you go from \$200 million to zero?” They said, “Our shareholders are who we are answering to. Why would I continue to spend my shareholders’ money drilling to delineate the ore body”—to define it so they know how to mine it after—“when there’s no way to get the ore out of the ground into the marketplace?” There’s no highway, there’s no road, there’s no rail, and there’s no plan. If there was even hope for them, they would be continuing there.

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So now Cliffs is gone. They’ve sold their camp. Noront has four, five, six people, perhaps, at the most, just taking care of the infrastructure and their investment there—babysitting it, if you will, waiting for this government.

So we did see a glimmer of hope in the budget, but then that glimmer was certainly changed very quickly. Back in May, during the campaign, our Premier, Kathleen Wynne, was in Thunder Bay saying, “We will commit a billion dollars, with or without the federal government involvement, towards the transportation infrastructure that will help make the Ring of Fire a reality.” I applaud that. I do. I applaud that: “We will commit a billion

dollars.” Sadly, this is about the fifth time I’ve heard that. Five years have gone by. So this time we’re going to take her at her word.

Now, that was May. Here’s the July 14 budget document, page 89: We will commit \$1 billion towards infrastructure development in the Ring of Fire, “contingent on matching investment by the federal government.” So they’ve already waffled.

I have spoken with the minister involved, and he continues to tell me that they’ve never made an application for infrastructure money. They have never done that for the Ring of Fire, period. They’ve never made an application. All of the other applications that they partner with, they have made and received that money. They have not even made an application. But here we are, one day during the campaign, when we’re promising, “We will do it with or without the federal government involvement.” We cheered that, and now it’s “contingent on matching investment from the federal government,” which I know will come, but now they’ve waffled already. This just deflates—

Mr. Bob Delaney: When? Tell us when.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Well, on the 14th of July, when you changed your mind from the 25th of May; that’s a pretty big waffle. I’ll tell you, it’s the marketplace that answers that when you’ve got everybody just yawning again: “Oh, here they go again.”

Now they’re going to form a development corporation within 60 days, and now the minister is waffling, “Well, is it 60 days from this day? Is it 60 days from that day?” Come on. For heaven’s sake. Again, that’s the fifth time they’ve announced the development corporation. Sadly, the companies aren’t being fooled. We want the Ring of Fire to be developed.

By outlining the shortcomings of this government, I’m hoping you’ll acknowledge you haven’t done it right. There’s still no ore coming out of the ground. You can’t fool us for much longer. Come on. There’s \$60 billion at stake here. This isn’t just about the Far North. It’s not just about northern Ontario. It’s about all of Ontario. This is the economic engine to get Ontario going again. You’ve got to stop the dithering and the waffling on this, the blame game and the finger pointing. We did that when we were in kindergarten; not today, guys. Not today.

Speaker, I’m going to close in a couple of moments, but I just want to say that I think the most disappointing aspect of this budget was the 34,000 men and women in Ontario who lost their jobs in the month of June alone—that this budget does absolutely nothing for those men and women. It doesn’t provide them any hope. It doesn’t lower their energy bills. It raises the cost of goods they’re going to buy through your aviation fuel tax.

It is the 90th consecutive month that Ontario has had higher than the national average unemployment. Our unemployment is 7.5%, up from 7.3% in May, while the national unemployment is 7.1%. We’re not doing it right, yet you are doing the same thing over and over and over. You’re not addressing the unemployment. It’s rising. You can’t tell us how good it is when we’re the worst for

90 consecutive months. That’s not a made-up number; that’s just a fact. It’s seven and a half years of having unemployment higher than the national average. Come on, people, let’s do something to address this.

Electricity rates: the highest in North America. You know, when you guys took office, they were 4.3 cents a kilowatt hour. Before May, they were 12.9 cents a kilowatt hour. Now they’re over 13 cents. You’ve tripled hydro rates, and you’ve caused companies to leave—leave, leave and leave. We lost 300,000 manufacturing jobs under your watch.

People, we can’t just keep doing the same thing and thinking that’s going to help us get out of this. We cannot think that we’re going to continue to raise taxes and somehow high taxes are going to bring business—it’s not going to happen—and somehow this spending spree that you’re going to go on is just going to work itself out.

I know I heard Justin Trudeau say the budget will work itself out, that these things just work themselves out. This is what I’m seeing from this side, as well. I’m looking at you, and you’re thinking, “Well, you know what? Don’t worry. We’re going to spend our way out of this problem, but don’t worry. It’ll work itself out.”

The Hail Mary pass is not coming, folks, not when you didn’t address core problems like high electricity, not when you don’t address the core problems like 34,000 jobs lost last month and not when your solution is just to raise taxes.

Speaker, I see the time is coming close to an end. I’m getting the high sign from our House leaders here.

Interjection.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I was on a roll. I was having fun.

Speaker, I encourage this government to listen to the people, and to take some of the thoughts of the opposition parties, who have throughout the last two and a half years presented some thoughtful solutions.

Look, I know I love to rail on the Ring of Fire, only because of the passion that I have for it and the potential for Ontario that I know it has. We do want to work together with you on the Ring of Fire, but you’ve got to stop the blame game. You’ve got to just start looking at what we can truly be doing.

Are we going to be investing in roads? Are we going to be investing in rail? You’ve got to bring Ontario Northland and my hometown of North Bay to the table. These are your transportation experts. They’ve been hauling ore for over 100 years in Ontario, from the north to the south. They’ve been doing that, and you haven’t asked them to the table yet.

You’re selling off Ontera. Again, you’re looking for nickels and dimes in the couch to pay your bills. The Auditor General told us that you’re not going to save any money selling Ontera; it’s going to cost you between \$50 million and \$70 million, so why would you do it? If the whole reason was to save money, and you’ve been told by the auditor that you’re not, why are you going through with this fire sale, and why aren’t you bringing Ontario Northland—the experts—to the table, so that they can talk to you about really positive solutions on the Ring of Fire?

Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity to speak in this Legislature again today.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments. The member for Sudbury.

Mr. Joe Cimino: Thank you, Speaker. Through you to the member from Nipissing: It's hard to follow such a passionate 45 minutes or so of commentary on the budget.

I must say that the Ring of Fire is extremely important. I also went through some ups and downs as a city councillor, attending functions with the management of Cliffs—ribbon cuttings and huge announcements. It was almost like it was going to happen—obviously not overnight, but in the near future.

That was several years ago. The potential for all of northern Ontario—remembering that any revenues that come out of natural resources, which is northern Ontario, for the most part, for over 100 years, have provided funds for the coffers of the province, which benefits all of the province and all the citizens across this province. We do need to move on.

We need to forget the fact that there have been failings, that plans weren't done. We're talking about thousands of construction jobs in Greater Sudbury. We're talking about smelting north of Capreol in the riding of Nickel Belt, which benefits all of Sudbury, but also benefits all the supply and service companies which go beyond the border of Sudbury. Cliffs is important; it must be our priority.

We talk about hydro rates, as well. It's affecting seniors at home. It's affecting curling clubs. It's affecting businesses. The 300% hydro rate increase since this government took power is too high, and 42% more in the next five years is unimaginable. People cannot pay these rates.

In northern Ontario, a lot of homes and a lot of apartments are still heated by hydro. At the door, you're hearing that sometimes the hydro rates are hundreds of dollars a month—\$700 or \$800 over two months. That is outrageous, so I am urging the government to include in their discussions of the budget more commitment to the Ring of Fire, getting her done, and more commitment to getting hydro rates down, and other expenses that people can't afford—auto insurance, gas for their cars, home heating. There has to be more concern for those who have to pay the bills.

1000

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The Minister without Portfolio.

Hon. James J. Bradley: It was a very interesting speech, but it was riddled with inaccuracies, where we would dispute the facts that members put forward, honestly dispute those facts. The one thing I keep hearing from members of the Conservative Party is an apology for the federal Harper government. What we're looking for, I think unanimously in this House, is for people to stand up for Ontario and to defend Ontario's position within Confederation, particularly when we're being treated unfairly by the federal government. I look forward in future speeches from the member, and from other

members of the Conservative caucus, to hearing that defence of Ontario instead of the apologies for the Harper government.

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

Mr. Ted Arnott: I want to compliment the member for Nipissing. That was a good speech. Thank you very much.

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

Ms. Peggy Sattler: It's a real honour for me to stand today in this place on behalf of the people I represent in London West. I want to thank the member for Nipissing for his comments. Sometimes it's interesting, when you think about the different perspectives that each of us brings to the information that we have before us.

The member for Nipissing described this budget as a spending spree and talked about all of the buckets of money that the Liberals were planning to spend. Our concern, on this side of the House, is not about the spending that's included in the budget, but in terms of what that is actually going to mean for people in this province. The Liberals have committed to a 2.5% increase in spending, but when you look at inflation running at about 1.5%, and population growth expected to be about 1%, what we're actually seeing is a flatlining of spending.

Yesterday, we heard my colleague the member for Kitchener–Waterloo, our party's budget critic, talk about page 244 of the budget. It actually confirms a 6% cut to program spending. We know that that's really going to hurt the people we represent. In the election that we all just went through, I heard about electricity rates, absolutely, but I also heard about health care; I heard about people not being able to get the health care services that they relied on; I heard about wait-lists in emergency rooms; I heard about a lack of access to home care. What this budget includes is years of zero for hospital spending. That's going to hurt people in this province. This is an austerity budget, and New Democrats can't support it.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member from Nipissing, you have two minutes to reply.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Thank you, Speaker. I do want to thank the members from Sudbury and London West, the Minister without Portfolio and the member from Wellington–Halton Hills for their words as well.

I know that it's tough to hear the facts. I know that it's tough to listen to the reports from Moody's and others. I know that it's awkward when the Auditor General comes out with a finding that is drastically different from what the government promised. I understand how hard it is to listen to the facts when they're presented. It's an opportunity for us to be able to speak about the Ontario that we want as well.

I do want to finish up by talking yet again about the Ring of Fire. It is just so very important to all of us. The member from Sudbury I know has been to the site. I too was at the site in Capreol, where Cliffs at one time was going to put the smelting facility. This is a wonderful

opportunity not only for Sudbury but for all of the north and for all of Ontario. The amount of business, the employment, the rail that would be built there—I've seen the site, where it's flat, where about nine tracks wide can be built to shuttle in and to shunt the chromite. I've seen the 4,000-acre parcel that they were looking at. It's perfect. It's a perfect opportunity to get this ore processed.

The bigger dream, Speaker, is that we don't just extract the ore, smelt it and ship it away, that we maybe dream a little bit bigger and talk about the possibility of making stainless steel here in Ontario. It needs three things: It needs ore, it needs nickel and it needs chromite. We mine all three in Ontario now, Speaker. So that's the bigger debate that I hope we have one day.

Thank you, again, for the opportunity to speak in this Legislature.

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

There being none, Mr. Naqvi has moved second reading of Bill 14, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various Acts. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

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

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

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

Second reading vote deferred.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Orders of the day?

Hon. James J. Bradley: No further business, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Seeing that there is no further business, this House stands recessed until 10:30 a.m.

The House recessed from 1006 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Todd Smith: I'd like to welcome some friends of mine from Belleville, who are visiting today: 11-year-old Logan James is in the members' gallery along with his mother, Danielle Barsotti, and his father, an old radio colleague of mine, Tommy James. And no, the Shondells are not visiting today.

Hon. Michael Coteau: Joining us today in the members' gallery are page captain Ayesha Mir's parents: Ms. Ajmal and Mr. Mir. Please stand up. There you are; nice to see you. Welcome to the Legislature.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It's my pleasure to welcome Matthew Boulden here to the Legislature. Matthew is an amazing campaign worker, and I thank him for all he has done.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: It's my pleasure to recognize my good friend Elliott Silverstein from CAA South Central Ontario, here with us in the members' gallery.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Today I'd like to introduce to the Legislature, in the members' gallery, Craig Stevens. Craig hails from Chatham. He's a passionate community

activist, and he helped knock on a lot of doors during the last election. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: It's my pleasure to introduce in the gallery today the Abraham family: Bibu Abraham, Mini Abraham and Athira Abraham. They are the father, mother and sister of Tania Abraham, who is serving as page captain today.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I'm pleased to introduce two people from Children's Mental Health Ontario: Kim Moran and Gordon Dunning. Kim is the CEO and Gordon is the board chair of Children's Mental Health Ontario. Welcome to the Ontario Legislature.

Mr. Bob Delaney: I'd like to introduce Victoria and Christopher Ng, who are visiting us from Hong Kong today. They are seated in the east members' gallery. Welcome.

Hon. Reza Moridi: It's my pleasure and honour to introduce my friends and also my constituents: Karin Lynett and Carole Lundy, sitting in the members' gallery.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: It's my pleasure to introduce my friends from the Canadian Jewish Political Affairs Committee, CJPAC. We have Rachel Chertkoff, the director of operations, here today; Laura Sohinki, director of outreach and programming; and interns Jordan Devon, Zane Colt and Greta Hoaken. Welcome.

Mr. Joe Cimino: I'd like to welcome, from Oshawa, Katherine Bowes, in the public gallery. She is the mother of page Ashley. Welcome.

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: It's my pleasure to welcome Linda Sadvari, in the gallery, who is a family friend of our page from Etobicoke-Lakeshore, Gabriel Chemla. Welcome to the gallery. Gabriel is my neighbour from the Sunnylea neighbourhood.

Mr. Yvan Baker: I'd like to welcome, in the gallery today, a couple of great friends and great Liberals: Mary Ng and Gabriela Gonzalez. Please welcome them both.

M. Shafiq Qaadri: J'ai le plaisir de vous présenter quelques-uns de nos invités: Bob Wood and Connie Choy, who are interested in our radon bill today.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Please welcome to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario Ms. Barbara Heath, the mother of an outstanding press secretary at the Ministry of Finance, Susie Heath, joined together with Dr. Bill Tucker, a famed surgeon here in Ontario. Thank you both for attending.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: It's my pleasure to welcome to the House Julie Cayley, from Ducks Unlimited.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: I'd like to welcome Andrew Sheppard, father of page Brendan Sheppard from Barrie.

ORAL QUESTIONS

PAN AM GAMES

Mr. Todd Smith: Good morning, Mr. Speaker. My question this morning is for the minister responsible for the Pan Am Games. Minister, in my hand I have the financial section of the TO2015 bid book. Nowhere in this

is there an actual line-by-line cost of the projects associated with the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games.

Your ministry and TO2015 officials keep promising that the projects are on budget and that they're on time, which is pretty easy to say when you don't provide a budget outlining the line by line for these costs. Your government really has no intention of being transparent.

Minister, where is the publicly available TO2015 budget so that taxpayers can actually see how much these games are going to cost them?

Hon. Michael Coteau: I want to thank the member opposite for this opportunity to really talk about the great things that are happening in Ontario, and especially the Pan Am Games that are taking place next year—

Interjections.

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

Finish, please.

Hon. Michael Coteau: As the member knows, these games are the most transparent games in the history of any sporting event in this country. In fact, these games are put under the freedom of information act. You can access that information through an FOI. We've had two technical briefings. In fact, both critics in the past have attended, I think, one of them. But we have had two technical briefings. We will go forward with another technical briefing very soon, before the fall hits. We're very proud of these games and—

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

Mr. Todd Smith: It's quite a statement. I'm sure the media would love to see the budget. I know taxpayers would love to see the line-by-line budget.

Minister, quite honestly, your excuses for the venues so far—we're talking about the Tim Hortons stadium, which is the new home of the Hamilton Tiger-Cats, eventually. It was late. It's not on time. It's not on budget. Your excuse for why it was late was because of winter. Here's a newsflash for you: We're building projects in Canada and winter does happen here.

Minister, in order to host these games you had to sign over 25 different memorandums of understanding with new or retrofitted venues. In this bid book it says that the venues are going to cost \$75 million. We know that the Hamilton stadium has cost over \$100 million. That's just one, by the way.

Will you commit to tabling all of the signed MOUs in the Legislature so that taxpayers—

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

Minister?

Hon. Michael Coteau: What the member opposite won't tell you is that we are \$50 million under budget when it comes to our venues here in the province of Ontario. Thank you to Infrastructure Ontario for bringing us under budget. It's 10% under budget than what we originally—and, you know what? If you want to get into details about venues, let me go through a few of these venues.

Today, I'm so proud to announce that the aquatics centre at the Scarborough University of Toronto campus

is complete. It has officially been handed over and it is complete. In fact, that was slated for \$248.9 million. You know what the cost is? It's \$205 million.

I want you to stand up and join the rest of us on this side of the House, and Ontarians, and celebrate what we're doing when it comes to the Pan Am Games, because it is the largest multi-sport games in the history of not only this city or this province but this entire country and you should be proud.

Interjections.

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

Final supplementary.

Mr. Todd Smith: Mr. Speaker, the tryouts for the Toronto cheerleading teams were last week—last week. There's no reason to cheer about these games and everybody out there knows it.

Minister, let me remind you your government low-balled the Ornge cost—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

Finish, please.

Mr. Todd Smith: Minister, your government low-balled the cost of Ornge. It took the Auditor General to get to the truth. You originally said the cost of the gas plant scandal was 5% of what the Auditor General showed the final cost as being.

Is it going to take calling in the Auditor General to find out how much these games are actually going to cost? You're not being open and you're not being transparent in sharing the actual cost of the games. Are you going to stall? Are you going to slap a final price tag on the games and then tell the people of Ontario that these games were on budget after it's too late to do anything about it?

Hon. Michael Coteau: Again, I have to say, we've had the most transparent games in the history of any sporting event in this entire country. We have had technical briefings on two occasions, and I think the opposition member who was responsible for the file before only attended one of the two. We will have another one, and I invite you to join me.

But let's go through this list of other events and see where they are. We have the athletic stadium at York University. It was originally budgeted for \$52.9 million. I can report that the cost is \$45.9 million. That's under budget.

Mr. Speaker, the opposition members will tell you when things are going bad, but they won't say when things are going good. These games are going well. We're under budget when it comes to our infrastructure. I think you should stand up and compliment this government for it.

SPECIAL-NEEDS STUDENTS

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My question is for the Minister of Education. Minister, a chart prepared by your own min-

istry shows huge discrepancies between the funds given to the 72 school boards across Ontario to assist students with special needs. In my own riding, the Upper Grand District School Board and the Peel board of ed both receive some of the lowest funding per student at \$365 and \$339, compared to some boards receiving well over \$1,000.

Minister, we all understand that a student with a learning disability will need similar resources to succeed, regardless of where they live in Ontario. Can you please explain why there is such a massive variance in the resources allocated to students with special needs in different parts of the province?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek and the member from Eglinton–Lawrence will take their conversation somewhere other than this House.

Minister.

Hon. Liz Sandals: I'm very pleased to respond to the question. We are now spending \$2.5 billion on special education in this province. Special education is relatively unique in our funding model in that boards must spend all the money allocated for special-needs students on special education.

In fact, the vast majority of that money, the biggest chunk of that money, is allocated on a per pupil basis. You count the number of pupils in Upper Grand and allocate a per pupil amount. It's known as SEPPA, the special ed per pupil amount. The bulk of that \$2.5 billion is on a per pupil basis.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Minister, arguments like that don't hold water because Peel is getting \$300 and, there are boards that are getting \$1,600. It's not fair; it's not equitable. Regardless of where you live in Ontario, you should expect that your government will assist your child with a special need.

The Libs have been in power for more than a decade, and it's time that you take responsibility for the students languishing on these wait-lists. No amount of justification or talking or explanation can justify the current funding model, where a school board is given \$1,600 per student, while others, like students in the Dufferin and Peel region, receive less than 20% of that amount. Your budget doesn't address this inequity, and families are tired of being told that there are no resources to help their son or daughter with a special need.

When is this government going to admit there is a problem, and what steps are you taking to address the funding inequity?

Hon. Liz Sandals: Actually, the member has it wrong. The budget and the Grants for Student Needs do address this problem, which is that the high-needs amount has, in fact, been a subject of concern. We struck a working group. The working group, composed of special-needs and school administrator folks from all over the province, suggested a new funding model for the high-needs amount, and the budget this year—the Grants

for Student Needs, in fact, are implementing a gradual transition to a high-needs funding amount, which, I would point out, the chair of the Peel District School Board said is a great improvement, and thanked us for implementing a new funding model for a high-needs amount for special education.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I don't think parents and children with special needs are interested in a lecture; I think they're interested in some action. It's not in the budget. I've looked at it. You've talked about full-day learning. You have not talked about actually solving that inequity, where certain boards get over five times what other boards get.

Another waiting list that's plaguing children with special needs is access to assessment. As you know, a formal assessment is the key to receiving services that students need to thrive. It gives them a legal right to services, or a right to wait on another waiting list.

People for Education's 2014 report on special education includes quotes from principals who mention a three-year wait for an assessment. I have parents calling my office. They have to make a choice between waiting three years for board assessments or paying for private assessments at a cost of \$3,000. It's simply out of reach for most Ontario families.

Will you address the wait time for assessments, the wait time for services and funding inequities between boards?

Interjections.

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

Minister?

Hon. Liz Sandals: I find it very surprising that the member opposite, having identified an issue, which was a difficult allocation of the high-needs amount, is saying, "Why don't you fix it?" when we point out that we are in the process of fixing it and, in fact, are in the process of implementing a new model for high needs; then turns around and says, "Well, that doesn't matter. I don't care." We're doing exactly what the member asked us to do, and the Peel District School Board has, in fact, said that we are addressing the problem that we identified. I don't know how on earth we make the member opposite happy when she identifies a problem and we're, in fact, fixing it.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC SERVICES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier: Does the Premier think the LCBO headquarters and GM shares combined are worth \$3.15 billion?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: No, Mr. Speaker, it's not.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, the Premier's plan counts on at least \$3.15 billion from assets. The LCBO headquarters and the GM shares are worth significant sums, but certainly not \$3.15 billion, as the finance minister has just acknowledged.

The question is an obvious one: Where is the money coming from?

Hon. Charles Sousa: That's why we have Mr. Clark and the council doing their work, reviewing effectively and appropriately the values of our crown corporations, our assets and how we can—basically, we're talking about looking at those products that the member just spoke about, real estate and shares in companies where we're not getting the most productivity and the best value for our taxpayer, to do an asset swap, to find better ways to invest.

Would you rather have shares of GM that are there as a passive investor or would you rather we build a subway? Do you want us to have real estate holdings in downtown Toronto, or do you want us to build an LRT? Do you want us to have roads and bridges up in the north or do you want us to hold on to real estate in Hamilton, in your own riding? We are trying to make it more productive and more effective for the people of this province for the long term and for our prosperity.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Liberals are holding a blind auction where the public are the only ones who are being left in the dark. On the one hand, they already have an asking price of \$3.15 billion, and on the other hand, they won't tell the public what's for sale. Is it the LCBO? Is it Hydro One? Apparently, no one will say, but someone has clearly done the math. Why are the Premier and her finance minister refusing to tell Ontarians the whole story about their fire sale of public assets?

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Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, we're not refusing to tell anything. We put it in the budget. We're making it clear that we're going to be reviewing assets. We're going to be reviewing the operations of our crown corporations. We're going to ensure that we maximize their value and provide greater dividends for the province of Ontario and for the taxpayer.

The council's principles are as follows: The public interest must remain paramount and protected; decisions must be aligned to maximize value for Ontarians; and the decision process will remain transparent, professional and independently validated.

What we want is to ensure that we're maximizing the value of the operations of our assets and ensure that we do better than we've been. You can put your head in the sand and pretend that there's no need, but there is. There's always a requirement for us to do more—

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

ONTARIO BUDGET

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next questions are to the Premier about Liberal promises, frankly. The Liberal plan is good news for auto insurance companies, but let's talk about what that means for families.

Yesterday, the Minister of Finance refused to commit to this year's target for getting auto insurance rates under control. If the Liberals can't keep their target this year, the question is: Can the Premier tell drivers whether they'll ever see the 15% savings in auto insurance rates?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The fact is that auto insurance rates, on average, are down more than 5%, and the leader of the third party's own candidates made comments during the election that they were getting better auto rates. The fact is we are on track. We have committed to a 15% reduction and had we been able to pass the legislation that would have taken further costs out of the system, we would be farther along. But we will reintroduce that legislation.

In terms of the impact of our budget on families, I think that the leader of the third party knows perfectly well that personal support workers will receive more money in wages as a result of our budget. The families of personal support workers will be supported. Child care modernization and investments in early learning will make an impact on people's lives.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Families are, in fact, wondering exactly what the Liberal plan does mean for them. There is a growing chorus of economists, editorialists and bond rating agencies who are raising red flags about the Liberals' ability to keep their promises and pay the bills. That puts important services in this province, like health care and education, at risk.

With this in mind, why does the Premier think now is the right time to open up new loopholes for CEOs to write off their luxury expenses in this province?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Here's what I think it's time for: It's time for us to get our budget passed so that we can move on implementing \$2.5 billion in the Jobs and Prosperity Fund over the next 10 years to help businesses like Ubisoft, where I was this morning with the Minister of Economic Development and Employment and with the member for Davenport, which has created 330 jobs since 2010 by partnering with government.

I think it's time to invest \$130 billion in public infrastructure. I think it's time to invest \$11.4 billion in hospital expansions and redevelopments. I think it's time to start developing a made-in-Ontario retirement pension plan. It's time to increase the Ontario Child Benefit. It's time to invest \$810 million in developmental services, and it's time to expand low-income health benefits. All of that is in our budget, Mr. Speaker. It's time to implement those things.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, the Liberals promised to make the tough choices, but the bottom line is that this budget opens up new loopholes for CEOs, while people who work hard every day and play by the rules are finding that life is getting harder and harder, instead of easier.

Is that what the Premier had in mind when she said "difficult choices" have to be made? How exactly diffi-

cult was it for this Premier to choose CEOs over everyday families?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, we clearly have not done that and the leader of the third party knows that. What we have done is we have brought back a budget to this Legislature that would put \$50 million in place for a new Local Poverty Reduction Fund. We've brought back a budget that, as I have said, would increase wages for personal support workers, would put new funding in place for long-term-care homes, would support in vitro fertilization funding, would expand mental health and addictions, would put in place a comprehensive aboriginal action plan and would invest billions in retrofits in our schools. That's what our budget has put forward. Those are the things that we will implement.

I know that the leader of the third party understands that and is looking for every reason not to support our budget, but there is a long, long list of reasons why she should be supporting it.

TENDERING PROCESS

Mr. Michael Harris: My question is to the Minister of Labour. Minister, the labour board recently dismissed the region of Waterloo's appeal against the carpenters' union certification bid. Do you know what the defining evidence was in that case? The region fixed a toilet handle at an addiction centre and installed a sign at a bus station. Now the region is subject to the same labour rules as a private sector construction company and, as a result, the region is now locked into a labour monopoly.

Minister, nobody agrees that the system is fair; they know it's broken. That's why they now want the government to live up to its word and seriously consider fixing the labour act.

Minister, will you agree to work with me today to restore open tendering in the region of Waterloo?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I do thank the honourable member for the question. The OLRB has released its final decision in regard to the matter that they were dealing with, with the carpenters' union and Waterloo.

Mr. Speaker, as you know the OLRB is an independent, quasi-judicial tribunal that we use from time to time in this House. As such, it would be inappropriate for me to comment or to pass judgment on the decisions of the board. However, it's important to note that if the municipality is unsatisfied with the board's decision, they're able to reapply for classification as a non-construction employer. It's that simple. The municipality has rights to move ahead in the process, and I would expect that they would ascertain as to whether they will use those rights.

We know, for example, that non-construction employer classification was granted to the Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board and the Independent Electricity System Operator as examples of where organizations have used the rights that they have to get the decision they would like to see.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Michael Harris: Minister, that's a horrible answer to a question, especially when you come into the

region of Waterloo. They've already gone through the process, Minister. They've already gone through the process, and they lost.

This isn't a political issue, because I can tell you that it isn't for the thousands of qualified tradespeople who have now been prevented from working on publicly funded infrastructure in the community where they live, work and pay taxes. This is an issue of fairness that hard-working men and women in my region want to see the government fix. They don't want to see their elected representatives stand by and allow a loophole in the Labour Relations Act to bar them from working on the very infrastructure that their taxes pay for.

Minister, wouldn't you agree that it's only fair to give all qualified tradespeople an equal opportunity to bid on public infrastructure?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: On this side of the House, we're very, very proud of our track record. We enjoy labour peace in the province of Ontario: About 97% of collective agreements are solved without any resort to strike or to job action at all.

But I'm not surprised that the member for Kitchener-Conestoga is unhappy with the OLRB's decision, because, in fact, what the parties did was they used the rules that were put in place by his party to reach this decision. This isn't something that was brought in by this government; this is something that was brought in by your government.

Certainly, if you made a mistake along the way, I'm open to suggestions as to how that might be fixed. But you've got to remember that these are rules that you brought in. You asked the parties to apply those rules. This is the ruling that has been handed down. If you have suggestions as to how we might correct what you obviously think is a mistake of yours, we'd be very, very happy to look at it.

HEALTH CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour le ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée.

I think the minister will agree that patients need to be able to trust our health care system and providers. When things go wrong, they want the help of an independent third party that they can trust. But this government refuses to listen to patients, to their families and to health care workers. The Liberals' new patient ombudsman very clearly works for the health care system and reports to the minister. It will be perceived as bias by people who have lost faith in our health care system's ability to help them.

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Speaker, will the minister explain why truly independent oversight of our hospitals and long-term-care homes is so unacceptable to this government?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'm glad to have another opportunity to say how excited I am about the proposed legislation that contains within it the creation of the position of the patient ombudsman. It's not a position that looks

across government and all sectors of society that are important to Ontarians. It's an individual, he or she, who will be solely responsible for looking at the health care sector, the needs of the patients, the clients, to make sure that individuals and their families are getting the best possible care we can provide. This is an individual who won't be housed within government—it would be in an agency of government, the most appropriate one, I believe, Health Quality Ontario—at arm's length to the government, producing an annual report which will be made public, and who will have, quite frankly, the powers that the Ombudsman has as well. The Ombudsman, I should add, has oversight of Health Quality Ontario, where this person resides.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: The minister says that the patient ombudsman will have the powers of the Ombudsman, but that's just not the case. The patient ombudsman, for example, does not accept complaints from family members or from MPPs, does not accept complaints from ambulance services, health units or homes for special care. It does not investigate decisions or recommendations. It needs a warrant or consent to enter a facility. And it is not an independent officer of this assembly.

Your decision is not based on evidence. It is not based on best practice. Why does the minister insist on saying the patient ombudsman is good enough for Ontarians when every other province and territory has Ombudsman oversight of their health care system?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'm confident that we're actually doing something which is better than those other provinces and territories. It's an individual who is wholly focused on our health care system.

We actually based the legislation on the Ombudsman Act. We consulted with the Ombudsman on the creation of this position. Here's what the patient ombudsman will be able to do: will be able both to investigate in response to a complaint or initiate his or her own investigation. Like the Ombudsman, the patient ombudsman would have the ability to enter premises for the purpose of an investigation, and the ability to require the production of information and documents in connection with an investigation without entering a premise. Following an investigation, the patient ombudsman would be able to not only make recommendations to the CCAC, the LHIN and the hospital at issue, but also produce a report which is publicly available. As I mentioned, the Ombudsman, whom we consulted with for this position, will have oversight of Health Quality Ontario, which is where this individual will reside.

MINING INDUSTRY

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Ma question est pour le ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines, l'honorable Michael Gravelle.

I think this is an important question for the minister which has deep implications for Ontario's economic future, so I hope, Minister, that you will not give us a Trojan Horse response.

Our government has committed \$1 billion for the development of the Ring of Fire. Realizing this project's full potential will not only bring thousands of jobs to the north, even Etobicoke North, but will also have a real positive impact across Ontario. That's why getting this project right is essential. Bringing together different proposals from First Nations communities, key mining companies and different levels of government is needed to ensure this project's success.

My question is this: Can the minister please inform this House about the 60-day commitment to establish the Ring of Fire development corporation?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: A good question from the member for Etobicoke North. Thank you very much. Congratulations on your victory as well.

Our government is setting very tangible benchmarks so that we can drive smart, sustainable development forward in the Ring of Fire. That is why, as of July 3, when our government laid out our vision during the throne speech, we also marked the beginning of our 60-day commitment to establish a development corporation.

We recognize the need to facilitate the creation of a business structure that can align interests and advance strategic infrastructure development in the Ring of Fire in a way that benefits all Ontarians. All of our partners will make crucial infrastructure decisions for the Ring of Fire and utilize the \$1 billion we have committed.

Our government is going to continue to work with all of our partners to ensure that we meet that 60-day deadline, our next benchmark in this great project's development.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Thank you, Minister, for the update on the strategy and the initiatives. I think Ontarians appreciate and deserve a clear, sound strategic plan that will help realize this tremendous opportunity.

It was with some degree of astonishment, however, that I realized the approach that the third party was taking regarding the Ring of Fire. The NDP seemed to demonstrate their inability, perhaps even their incapacity, to provide sound economic policy. Speaker, their recent platform allocated zero dollars—nada, nothing, goose egg, bubkes—to the Ring of Fire. To be clear, it wasn't omitted from their platform. The NDP had one line item for the Ring of Fire, and it said “zero.”

I'm encouraged that our financial commitment of \$1 billion will help build the much-needed transportation infrastructure for this project.

The minister speaks about how benchmarking is important. Would he please inform this House about how some of our government's milestones in this essential area of economic development are proceeding?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: It is a great question and a very clear point about the very muddled platform commitment by the NDP, which wasn't really there.

Speaker, this is a complex project, but with the right mechanisms and the right benchmarks, we have and we will keep this project moving forward. Certainly, signing the historic landmark framework agreement with all nine

Matawa First Nations, and Premier Wynne was part of that, was a very significant achievement. Committing \$1 billion to the Ring of Fire infrastructure is another example of how we are driving this great project forward. May I say, Mr. Speaker, our 60-day commitment is but another example of our government's strategic approach to realizing this multi-generational economic project.

PAN AM GAMES

Mrs. Gila Martow: Mr. Speaker, I have another question to the minister responsible for the Pan Am Games. On CFRB this past week, I heard the minister say that he expects GTHA municipalities to reduce traffic congestion by 20% in anticipation of the Pan Am Games next summer.

Minister, you are punting responsibility to municipalities you've saddled with these games. By spending money on things like VIP lanes, you have lost an opportunity to invest in measures like synchronized traffic lights that would make a real impact on gridlock.

Will the minister tell this House why he has chosen a band-aid solution over a plan to improve the lives of millions of Ontarians?

Hon. Michael Coteau: I appreciate that—
Interjection.

Hon. Michael Coteau: Well, it is Pachi's birthday today. So happy birthday, Pachi. It's his first birthday. Congratulations, Pachi.

The Pan Am Games are going to be an incredible event. They're going to be broadcast to over 300 million people. We will have over 300,000 people come into the GTA and the Golden Horseshoe to celebrate our athletes, not only from Ontario but from right across Canada and from many countries in the Americas.

Obviously, we're going to have to invest a lot of time and energy into making sure we get our transit right, and I know the minister responsible for transportation would like to weigh in on this question. But we are going to bring a lot of excitement here to the province of Ontario, and we're going to do everything that we can to support them.

Mr. Speaker, we're going to have a lot of people from all around the world supporting us. In fact, the last time we had dignitaries come down, I remember the party opposite turned their back on those countries.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Gila Martow: Minister, it's hard to get excited about going to see a game when you know you're not going to make it to the game because you're sitting in gridlock. I can't imagine how the athletes and officials are going feel.

Your government decided to host these games with no regard for the impact on families and commuters. Now you're telling the GTHA municipalities that they are on their own when it comes to gridlock for games you have said will be bigger than the Vancouver Olympics. You've chosen sky-high executive salaries over gridlock improvement measures.

Minister, will you apologize to the GTHA taxpayers for the transportation nightmare that is yet to come?

Hon. Michael Coteau: Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I thank my colleague the minister responsible for the Pan Am Games for his opening response and also for his outstanding work on this file.

I have the pleasure of being the neighbouring MPP to the member who is asking this question, as someone who is proud to represent a York region riding.

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I think it's important to remember that the Ministry of Transportation, working in conjunction with the other ministries that are affected, has a very strong and robust plan to make sure that we are able to move not only our regular commuters around the GTHA, but also the athletes, all of the volunteers and everyone else who is associated with the Pan Am Games, around the entire games area in the most effective and efficient way possible.

I think, with about a year left until the games are actually taking place, it would make the most sense for members on all sides of this House to work with us, to work with stakeholders and to work with municipalities and partners to make sure that these games are as successful as they will be. I call on the member opposite to work with us on this.

MUNICIPALITIES

Ms. Cindy Forster: My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Like many others, our province's mayors, regional chairs and councillors are struggling to understand a fundamental contradiction in this budget. On one hand, they're told that the funding to municipalities is going up, and yet, when you look at the actual budget, you find that it includes annual cuts of 6% per year to most ministries, in a group that includes Municipal Affairs and Housing.

The government cannot give and take away at the same time. Will the minister come clean and tell municipalities how much their programs will be cut?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Well, that's a great question. We on this side of the House pride ourselves on the relationship we've been able to develop with the 444 municipalities across Ontario. We continue to meet our uploading schedule, which neither of the other parties would commit to in the last election, and which is important to our municipal leaders.

But most important of all, we continue to dialogue with our partners at every opportunity. By the way, I'm pleased to stand in this House and say that the first thing that I'm going to do as the new minister is a tour I'm calling the "building bridges tour." We're going across Ontario to consult, over and above the AMO consultations, on issues of importance to our municipal partners in an effort to find out how we can work even more effectively together.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Cindy Forster: Table 2.19 on page 244 of the budget says something different. As the government decides how to cut 6% each year for three years, slashing budgets by a total of \$3 billion per year, history shows that municipalities are often an easy target.

As Brock University's Professor David Siegel pointed out yesterday, municipalities should be very worried with this budget. Almost 20 years ago, Mike Harris figured out that if he cut transfers to municipalities, forcing deep cuts to municipal programs, municipalities took the blame, not the province. Municipalities are still suffering those consequences.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister please tell us how much of the \$3 billion in cuts will be going to municipalities?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: We're continuing with the uploading, as all members of this House should know, and as our municipal partners expect and appreciate. We have a memorandum of understanding with the 444 municipalities, which they signed on to, and which defines the timing of the upload and how that's handled. They're happy with that.

We have since 2014, in fact, provided a combined benefit of over \$2 billion to municipalities. That's over three times the level that was in place in 2003. I think we've got a really good record and a good relationship with the municipalities, and I can pledge to the members of this House that that relationship will continue to improve under this government.

HEALTHY LIVING

Mr. Grant Crack: Thank you very much, Speaker; it's great to be back. My question is for the Associate Minister of Health with responsibility for long-term care and wellness. I'd like to congratulate you on your appointment to cabinet.

It's finally summer here in Ontario and we're spending a lot more time outdoors, especially after that long, harsh winter that we just experienced. Now, many families in my riding of Glengarry–Prescott–Russell are spending their weekends at the cottage. They're hiking or biking across our beautiful countryside, or they're finding a beach to play on or just relax on, or maybe they're just relaxing at home.

Being outdoors can and should be fun, but it also carries some risk. Families in GPR and across this province are wondering what they can do to protect their kids. Through you, Speaker, could the minister tell this House how families can enjoy the sun while staying safe?

Hon. Dipika Damerla: Thanks to the very hard-working member for Glengarry–Prescott–Russell. I want to start by saying how pleased I am that his constituents are out there enjoying the summer and being active, and I hope he will be able to join them soon.

Our government is committed to keeping Ontarians healthy, and there is no better way to stay healthy than to be active and fit. And there's no better time in a cold country like ours to stay active and fit than in the summer. I urge all Ontarians to get out there and enjoy

the great outdoors: Canoe; go hiking; go swimming. This is especially important for our kids because we know intuitively, as parents and grandparents, that our kids are not as active as they should be. In fact, studies show that our kids are spending 62% of their time inactive, and we must do everything we can to get them active. But it's really important that they stay safe, and that's why we urge them to use helmets—

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

Mr. Grant Crack: Thank you, Minister, for that comprehensive and thoughtful answer.

With the growing problem of childhood obesity, I know how important it is for our kids to get out and play and exercise. Whether it's exploring a park, participating in sports or swimming in a pond or a pool or a lake, we should all be encouraging our children to be exploring Ontario's great outdoors.

I know some people love the rain, and so do I, but the minister spoke about protecting our kids from skin cancer. I know that's something that parents actually worry about. They make sure their children are using sunscreen and wearing light clothing to protect their skin from the sun and its harmful ultraviolet rays. But the sun isn't the only source of danger, Speaker. Through you, could the minister inform the House what else the government is doing to protect our children from skin cancer?

Hon. Dipika Damerla: The member for Glengarry–Prescott–Russell is absolutely right. There's more than one way to increase one's chances of getting skin cancer. Tanning bed usage in particular presents a risk, especially for our young. The International Agency for Research on Cancer has shown the risk of developing skin cancer increases by 75% when tanning beds are used before the age of 35. That is why our government took action, passing legislation in October 2013 that will prevent young people from using tanning beds in Ontario. This came into effect, I'm happy to say, on May 1 of this year. This was very timely because previously, tanning bed use had been increasing, more than doubling between 2006 and 2012 for grade 11 and grade 12 students.

Now that we have this legislation, it's going to protect our kids from exposure to artificial ultraviolet radiation in tanning beds.

I'm just going to ask all of us to have a safe summer.

HOSPICE CARE

Mr. Jim Wilson: My question is for the Minister of Health. Minister, over three years ago I first stood in this House to raise an important issue about the discrepancy between how hospices are funded in Ontario. I have since raised this issue with your government several times and yet nothing seems to be happening. If you look at my riding, the north end hospice receives funding from their LHIN, while the south end hospice has been told that the LHINs don't fund residential hospices at all.

Minister, hospices are there for those who require treatment at the end stages of life. The alternative for

many people is to stay in the hospital at a much higher cost. In fact, the cost can be upwards of 10 times more expensive. An intensive care bed, as you know, averages close to \$3,000 per day in a hospital, while a hospice bed averages between \$300 to \$500.

Minister, you have a clear opportunity to save taxpayers some money by supporting hospices across the province. Will you do that?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: We do support hospices across this province. In fact, we were the first government to invest in hospices. We want to be sure that, at this important moment in an individual's and their families' and friends' life, Ontarians have dignity through their final days.

We have now committed to a palliative and end-of-life strategy, and myself along with the associate minister will be working on that as we go forward. It was referenced in our platform as part of this plan. In fact, we're committing to funding 20 more hospices across the province, almost doubling the number of people in Ontario who will have access to this high-quality end-of-life care. It's important. It builds on an earlier end-of-life strategy from 2005, which at that time was a \$115-million program to provide that dignity and that important support, that quality health care, to those individuals who so badly and so importantly deserve it.

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The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jim Wilson: Thank you for that answer, Minister. You might want to adjust your number; I think it's 22 of the 35 hospices that actually receive nothing from government. The 13 that do receive limited funding just for the nursing and personal support costs. So all of the capital, as you know, is fundraised by the local community.

In fact, I wish you'd talk to the Central LHIN, because Matthews House Hospice in Alliston runs four beds. They run them completely without funding at all from the government, one of the 22. The attitude that the LHIN has taken there is, "How dare you go ahead and build a hospice and not have government approval ahead of time or government funding in place?" What a horrible attitude the ministry has. They should be thanking the people for raising millions of dollars, for putting the four beds in place and for covering the up to \$650,000-a-year operating cost. Eighty people have gone through there. The average length of stay is 10 days. According to the formula, that's \$2 million you save in health care dollars by supporting the hospice. So will you support Matthews House?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I thank the member opposite. In fact, he's making a good argument for supporting what we've proposed in the budget and our platform, which is developing a specific palliative and end-of-life strategy across the province. It's important not only that the system works better, but we want an overarching provincial policy framework when it comes to this end-of-life care. It's so important that we not do it—I'm not suggesting that in this instance this is the case, but it can't be

on an ad hoc basis. It needs to be very proactive. It needs to engage members of the community. It needs to have a provincial policy, which is the foundation of how we engage individuals in support. But the reality is that we're investing significantly more money. It's in our platform. We will be finding ways to implement that going ahead.

We're going to be basing it in part on a very important working group that was set up just last December, the residential hospice working group, which is consulting widely and is going to be providing us with the recommendations that we need to develop that important strategy for residential hospices as well as the other palliative care.

MINING INDUSTRY

Mr. Michael Mantha: Mr. Speaker, good morning to you. You should try to smile a little bit more. It's not becoming of you, having that long pout on you.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Only the members can make me smile.

Mr. Michael Mantha: My question is directed to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. Minister, your government promised during the election to establish a Ring of Fire development corporation within 60 days of assuming government, just like you promised during the election that you would go ahead and invest a billion dollars into the Ring of Fire, with or without a commitment from the federal government to match the funds, even though your budget said that the billion dollars was contingent on the feds buying in.

Well, Minister, which is it? Will you go ahead and invest a billion dollars into the Ring of Fire regardless of whether the feds sign on or not? The people of northern Ontario deserve to know.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I appreciate the question. Indeed, we have been very clear. The Premier was very clear during the campaign and we are very clear now that the \$1-billion commitment is indeed locked in place. We are going to move forward with this project. We've made a number of significant amendments, including moving forward with our 60-day commitment in terms of forming a development corporation.

But that is not to say that we should not be putting pressure on and expecting the federal government to match our billion-dollar commitment. The fact is that we want to realize the full potential of this extraordinary project, which includes community access, and indeed I would call on all members of the opposition, but certainly those on the official opposition side, to support our call on the federal government to match our dollars.

Our commitment is in place, as is our commitment to move forward on the development corporation and the great work that we're doing with First Nations, particularly the Matawa First Nations.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Mantha: Once again to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines: I'm glad to hear that

the minister now knows when his government's 60-day commitment to creating the Ring of Fire development corporation begins. Yesterday, the minister confessed he wasn't sure when the 60-day guarantee actually begins. He admitted he wasn't clear whether it was 60 days from being sworn in as minister or 60 days from the throne speech.

The minister then went on to say that the development corporation would be set up by the end of the summer. I have been asking for a briefing on this plan but have been told it was premature. Will you commit to a date to when the people of the north will see a development corporation up and running? Minister, it's day 14: tick, tick, tick.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Again, I appreciate the question, although it is coming a little bit late in question period. We confirmed earlier in question period that indeed July 3 was when the clock started ticking, so to speak, towards the 60-day deadline. We are going to meet that commitment and work with our partners to meet that commitment.

But it's a little ironic coming from a party that, during the campaign, put support for the Ring of Fire in their platform, and with that platform commitment was zero dollars. For you to be speaking about us not being sure about deadlines or timelines—we're committed to the \$1 billion. We call on the federal government to match those dollars. We're committed to our 60-day establishment of the Ring of Fire development corporation as of July 3. It started that date—that timing.

Indeed, we're committed to continue to work extremely closely with the Matawa First Nations through the negotiations on a regional process with the Ring of Fire. This is a great, exciting project. We need the support of everyone in the Legislature to make this project happen.

SENIOR CITIZENS

Mr. Yvan Baker: My question today is for the minister responsible for seniors. Mr. Speaker, as many of us in this Legislature know, the number of seniors in Ontario is growing at a significant rate. In fact, the number of seniors over 65 is projected to double by the year 2036. This shift in demographics offers opportunities but it also offers challenges. In my riding of Etobicoke Centre we have one of the largest proportions of seniors of any riding in Ontario, so the services that our government provides are critically important not only to seniors but to their families in the community.

Many of the seniors I have spoken to in Etobicoke Centre have asked where they can find more information about the services available to them, whether they be for recreational activities, life-long learning possibilities or health care options, to help improve their daily quality of life.

Would the minister explain how this government is helping seniors to access the information they need to continue to be active members of their communities?

Hon. Mario Sergio: Mr. Speaker, this is the first chance I have to congratulate you on your reappointment.

I also wish you a very healthy and long life. I know you want to smile, but it is because, at the end of your term, Speaker, you will be the longest-serving Speaker of the House. I have to say congratulations on that, too.

As well, I want to congratulate the wonderful people of Etobicoke Centre for electing such an energetic representative. I know that he will serve the people of Etobicoke very, very well.

Speaker, we know that we have a lot of seniors today and we're going to have a lot of seniors tomorrow. We don't have to go as far as 2036. We need to look at 2016-17 to know that we will have more people over the age of 65 than under the age of 14. We have the guide to programs for seniors, which is a wonderful document, and I will add to it in my supplementary

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Yvan Baker: Thank you to the minister for that response. I know that the guide that the minister refers to covers a range of topics. I also know that it's written in a variety of languages to make it as accessible as possible. I think it's important that it gets into the hands of people in our community in Etobicoke Centre and across Ontario. Can the minister please take his time in the supplementary to expand on what's in that guide? I think this would be to the benefit of my constituents in Etobicoke Centre that they understand what's contained in it—and to communities across Ontario.

Hon. Mario Sergio: Again, I have to say thank you to the member because he's on top of a very important issue that is also an issue important to the people of Etobicoke Centre.

The guide's new format is very user-friendly. On top of the English and French languages, thanks to the wonderful work of the Ontario Seniors' Secretariat we have managed to produce and deliver—make it available—in another 14 languages, including Arabic, Chinese, Farsi, Gujarati, Italian, Korean, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish, Tamil, Urdu and Vietnamese.

Speaker, the guide is extremely well received. It contains a lot of information about active living, caregiving, transportation, housing and a lot more. It also includes a key contact section with phone numbers of which seniors can avail themselves.

This is one of the plans that will continue to make Ontario the best place where seniors can age in.

1130

PENSION PLANS

Mrs. Julia Munro: My question is to the Premier. Premier, why is Ontario the only province to believe that the creation of a provincial pension plan is the best way for people to save for retirement? No other province or government thinks this is a good idea. Prince Edward Island is the latest province to back out of supporting your proposed Ontario Retirement Pension Plan.

Premier, at a time when businesses and families are struggling to stay afloat, why are you increasing payroll taxes and decreasing take-home pay?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the associate minister responsible for the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan will want to speak to the supplementary, but I really need to say that it is very important that the member opposite understand—and I think she does—that our first choice all along would have been to have had the Canada Pension Plan enhanced. We agree with provinces across the country that that is what should have happened. But the federal government—Stephen Harper would not engage in that conversation. He said that he wasn't interested. He did not want to do what every province across the country wants, which is to negotiate a new and enhanced Canada Pension Plan.

If the member opposite has a way into the hearts of the federal government, her federal cousins, we would be more than happy to work with the federal government. But in the absence of that leadership, we're going to stand up for the retirement security of the people of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Julia Munro: I would just say that the federal government understands how to answer the question about increasing payroll taxes and decreasing take-home pay.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business says the new pension will hurt small and medium-sized businesses that simply cannot afford to make the employer contributions, and says that this plan will kill, not create, jobs.

Ontario is the only province moving forward with this job-killing plan. Why are you making it harder for Ontario businesses and families to survive?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Associate Minister of Finance, with responsibility for the pension plan.

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: I would like to thank the member opposite for the question and congratulate her on her critic role for pensions.

You've asked a very important question of why: Why do we need to create a made-in-Ontario retirement pension plan? The simple fact of the matter is that people are not saving enough for retirement. We cannot put our population at risk by not taking action now.

The fact of the matter is CPP is inadequate to meet the needs of retirees, capping out at \$12,500. In fact, the average in Ontario is \$6,800, and that is not enough income to sustain people. The fact of the matter is two thirds of people are without a workplace-based pension plan, so those means are not enough as well.

We are moving forward in Ontario and providing an Ontario Retirement Pension Plan so people can retire with adequate income security.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Mr. Wayne Gates: My question is to the Minister of Education. On Tuesday, the minister said she was "delighted" that they started to talk to boards about how they can make use of school space. The members of the local community group CARE have a plan to work with

the not-for-profits, groups like the Boys and Girls Club and the United Way, to create a new community hub and to keep their school open.

Will the minister be delighted to listen to the community of Niagara-on-the-Lake and ensure that this government invest in keeping Parliament Oak school open?

Hon. Liz Sandals: I think we need to back up a little bit, because what I think the member is obliquely asking me is, will I overturn a decision by the board to close the school? In fact, I have no legal authority to overturn a decision by a board to close a school. It is the fact that during NDP government, during PC government, during Liberal government, the Education Act has always given the local school board the exclusive authority over the ability to close a school. So if what he's asking me is if I have the authority to overturn a decision that has already been made, the answer is actually no.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Wayne Gates: Minister, in your own budget it says that the government will recognize the importance of schools in small communities. But at the same time, your budget seems to focus on a plan to close schools more than anything else. This budget lays out a specific plan to use \$750 million to close schools but doesn't have a program to keep them open.

Will the minister promise to take action on the importance of small community schools and set aside a committed fund to keep schools open, like Parliament Oak?

Hon. Liz Sandals: That's a different question because in fact our budget does have in it a dedicated fund for the community use of schools. But that is a fund that would be based on application only. The school board would have to apply to the government for that community use as part of a business plan. It is not intended to suddenly give me the authority to overturn. But certainly, if a board comes forward and says, "We have a plan here that is a plan to transition us to community use of a particular building," then absolutely, there is funding in the budget to engage in that conversation. But the board needs to approach the ministry with that as part of their plan.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, it came to my attention earlier this week that one of the respected members of the press gallery, Richard Brennan, celebrated his 40th wedding anniversary—he and Vickie celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary.

We want to collectively congratulate Richard and Vickie Brennan, who were married on July 13, 1974, in Ingersoll, Ontario. They have two children, Andrew and Kelly. Kelly was married just a couple of days after the election. Congratulations to her. They have two grand-kids, Mason and Audrey.

They met in Ingersoll. They had their first date at a Christmas party in 1972. He worked at the paper and she worked at the bank. I just want to say that all of us want to especially congratulate Vickie.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Algoma–Manitoulin asked me if there was a reason for me to smile. This is it, and it's for Vickie.

I have to say, that's not a point of order but I'm sure that all of us share the joy of Richard and Vickie.

DEFERRED VOTES

BUILDING OPPORTUNITY AND SECURING OUR FUTURE ACT (BUDGET MEASURES), 2014

LOI DE 2014 OUVRANT DES PERSPECTIVES ET ASSURANT NOTRE AVENIR (MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

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

Bill 14, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various Acts / Projet de loi 14, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter et à modifier diverses lois.

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

The division bells rang from 1138 to 1143.

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

On July 16, Mr. Naqvi moved second reading of Bill 14. All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

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

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

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gélinas, France	Munro, Julia
Arnott, Ted	Gretzky, Lisa	Nicholls, Rick
Bisson, Gilles	Hardeman, Ernie	Pettapiece, Randy
Campbell, Sarah	Harris, Michael	Sattler, Peggy
Cimino, Joe	Hatfield, Percy	Singh, Jagmeet
Clark, Steve	Horwath, Andrea	Smith, Todd
Elliott, Christine	Hudak, Tim	Tabuns, Peter

Fedeli, Victor	Jones, Sylvia	Taylor, Monique
Fife, Catherine	MacLeod, Lisa	Thompson, Lisa M.
Forster, Cindy	Mantha, Michael	Walker, Bill
French, Jennifer K.	Martow, Gila	Wilson, Jim
Gates, Wayne	Miller, Paul	Yurek, Jeff

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 56; the nays are 36.

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

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to the order of the House dated July 16, this bill is referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs.

There are no further deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1147 to 1300.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

EVENTS IN CHATHAM–KENT–ESSEX

Mr. Rick Nicholls: It's always a pleasure to rise in this House, and it's also my pleasure to highlight two local festivities that are taking place this weekend in the great riding of Chatham–Kent–Essex.

First up is the cherry festival in Blenheim. Celebrating the greatest cherries in Ontario, the festival is a point of pride for Blenheim residents and it attracts guests from far and wide.

The highlight of the festival is, in fact, the cherry pit spit. I'm proud to say that I have participated in this competition in the past. Last year's champion won with a spit of 18.92 metres. I won't tell you what my personal best was, but I can give some pointers to any members interested in this Legislature if they'd like to come down and participate. In addition to the cherry pit spit, there's all-day shopping, music and dancing and the best cherry pie-eating contest in the whole province.

There's plenty more excitement in my riding this weekend with the second annual Shrewsbury Ribs n Blues Festival. Last year's event was a huge success, and they're back for more.

If you're a fan of fall-off-the-bone ribs and a little bit of that smooth jazz and blues and enjoying a cold beverage under a warm, summer sky, then this festival is for you. Co-lining will be the Howling Diablos and the Groove Council, both from the Detroit area.

Once again, I invite all members of the Legislature to come down to the great riding of Chatham–Kent–Essex for another weekend full of fun festivities.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Smooth.

The member from Algoma–Manitoulin.

MUSEUMS

Mr. Michael Mantha: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know you're looking forward to hearing my summer

send-off speech, but this is not the one. Hopefully, we'll be here a little while longer so I can deliver it.

Over the next few months, I encourage Ontarians to get out and visit their local community museums as well as to stop in to museums across the province while vacationing. Museums are critical and necessary for helping to build healthy, vibrant communities.

Through museums, we are able to have an appreciation and understanding of our connections to natural and cultural history. They provide a unique, interactive experience of getting up close to things we usually only see in books, newspapers or on TV.

Last week, I had the opportunity to attend St. Joseph Island Museum for their annual tea. During this great family event, they unveiled their new commemorative plaque and paid tribute to the Algoma Dairyman's Association, as well as the 80th anniversary of the Algoma Ploughman's Association. Founded in 1963 by the historical society, St. Joseph Island Museum now has over 7,000 artifacts, covering over 200 years of island history.

Algoma-Manitoulin has too many community museums to list, which highlight the rich culture in history in their region. You can always visit Museums Ontario online to find out museums and cultural events across the province.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to returning to Algoma-Manitoulin and spending time with my family at many of these museums and at fun events across my riding.

URBAN HERO AWARDS

Mr. Yvan Baker: I'm proud to stand in the House today to congratulate 25 remarkable individuals and organizations in Etobicoke who were recently honoured with the Etobicoke Guardian's Urban Hero Awards.

The Urban Hero Awards recognize residents who have made a difference in our community in Etobicoke and Etobicoke Centre and make our communities a better place to live, and I'd like to mention those people in the House today:

—Dolores Ellerker for expanding Etobicoke Services for Seniors;

—The George Hull Centre for Children and Families for providing critical services to families in crisis;

—Brenda Siddall for two decades with Lakeshore Arts;

—Karl Sprogis for launching the youth mentorship program UrbanNoise;

—David Pritchard and Madeleine Pengelley of Birds and Beans Coffee;

—Inesha O'Hara for her business, the Royal House of Music;

—Ellen and Eric Johnstone for 37 years with the Mighty 4th Humber West Scouts;

—Olga Clarke for her volunteer work with St. Paul the Apostle Anglican Church;

—Delia Feijo for her work as an instructor and administrator at Islington Community School;

—Ralph MacDonald for pitching in around his neighbourhood;

—Cleo Simmonds with Ernestine's Women's Shelter;

—Dr. Laurie Green for her work as a parent advocate at the TDSB;

—Keith Hoare for work with students at Thistletown Collegiate;

—Nicki Mazzuca for helping create eco-friendly programs at Rivercrest Junior School;

—Stanley Roszak for helping students build and tend gardens at Bishop Marrocco secondary school;

—seven members of the Toronto Police Service's Somali Liaison Unit; and

—the Faustina Fury minor atom select hockey team for raising \$4,800 to fund research at SickKids Hospital.

Thank you, Etobicoke Guardian, for recognizing these important individuals, and congratulations to the winners. Thank you for your contributions to our community in Etobicoke and in Etobicoke Centre.

CANADIAN PLOWING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I have the pleasure to announce that on August 14, 15 and 16 in Thorndale, the Canadian Plowing Championships will occur. Thorndale is in Middlesex county, which is part of my riding, and I am proud to have been a part of the opening ceremonies yesterday.

In 2010, Elgin county held the International Plowing Match, which was a huge success.

Over the past two years, I've learned how to plow my own furrow at the Elgin plowing match—however, not too straight, but I am able to beat MP Joe Preston every time at the helm.

I'd like to thank groups like the Canadian Plowing Organization, which allows Canadians to preserve the art and skill of plowing. It is a fun and exciting way to keep our rural and agricultural roots alive, teaching Canadians the importance of good farming practices and the importance of things like farm productivity and yield efficiency.

I'd like to thank all the volunteers who are working together to ensure this event becomes possible. Their hard work and dedication make events such as this a success.

I'd like to thank the landowners, Anna and George Taylor at Purple Hill Farms, who have volunteered their land to be used over three days, next month, to ensure a successful event.

The winners of this event get to go to Denmark for the world championship.

I wish all the competitors well, and of course I'm rooting for the hometown Elgin-Middlesex-London people.

EVENTS IN OSHAWA

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I'm pleased to have this opportunity to highlight some of the dynamic events that have been happening in Oshawa this summer and to share some upcoming events.

Oshawa's Fiesta Week is an annual week-long multicultural family festival that showcases international

cultures and foods at pavilions and cultural clubs across the city. The 40th annual Fiesta Week in June was a great success and was proudly sponsored by the Oshawa Folk Arts Council.

At Memorial Park, in June, the eighth annual Métis Heritage Celebration hosted over 1,500 guests. Highlights included Métis history, arts and culture, storytelling and family activities.

Annually, Canada Day at Lakeview Park in Oshawa draws crowds of 30,000 to 50,000. We celebrated our nation's 146th birthday with fantastic live local entertainers, vendors, tournaments and fireworks.

Oshawa will be hosting boxing and weightlifting at the Pan Am/Parapan Am Games, and we marked the one-year countdown and are looking forward to hosting international athletes and competition right in our own backyard, at our very own General Motors Centre.

Oshawa also hosted the first annual Durham Craft Beer Festival, hosted by Buster Rhino's. There was a huge turnout to this new event highlighting 12 craft breweries. Cheers to a great new summer event in Oshawa.

The 21st annual Autofest will draw auto enthusiasts from all over the province to share in our city's rich automotive history and passion, August 22 through 24.

This is just a sample of summer in Oshawa. Enjoy free Concerts in the Park through August, and Doors Open Oshawa, and don't miss the Rotary Club's 13th annual ribfest, September 5 through 7.

I'm proud to represent and enjoy Oshawa, a city with so much to offer and celebrate.

CAMBRIDGE HIGHLAND GAMES

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I ask all members: What's shriller than the skirl of a bagpipe, flashes more leg than Marilyn Monroe and flips more logs than Paul Bunyan? Why, laddies and lassies, it's the 39th Cambridge Highland Games, going on July 18 and 19.

Celebrations start in style this Friday evening with—what else?—a ceilidh. To non-Scots, that's a Scottish pub night in the tradition of a Gaelic social gathering with music and dancing, featuring the band British Beat 66. They play the music that formed the British Invasion of the 1960s: the Beatles, the Rolling Stones and Herman's Hermits.

On Saturday, the gates open early, with a highland dancing competition, Scottish pipe bands, caber tossing, an 1812 re-enactment, a sheepdog demonstration and a display of Scottish cattle.

The annual Cambridge Highland Games were first held in 1975, but were originally founded by Scottish immigrants Janet and Duncan MacLachlan. Scottish settlers helped establish the communities that make up Cambridge, leaving behind their proud legacy of beautifully crafted stone heritage architecture, culture and music.

Since their beginnings, the Cambridge games have attracted thousands of visitors, welcomed warmly by the friendly folks in my great riding of Cambridge, bringing us together in a celebration of Scottish dancing, piping

and, of course, sport. I invite all members to visit Cambridge this weekend to discover your inner Scottishness.

1310

ELECTORAL REFORM

Mr. Steve Clark: I rise on an issue fundamental to our democracy: the ability of Ontarians to cast a ballot. I'll be writing every MPP to seek their support in demanding Elections Ontario clean up its voters list and fix the terrible job it does ensuring Ontarians know when and where to vote.

I can stand for an hour and list the nightmarish stories I heard from voters at the door during the campaign and the frustrated calls on election day or in the days after. But one incident sums up the experience for too many people in my riding and across the province. On June 11, I attended an event with about 50 seniors. In the room, the overwhelming majority hadn't received a voter's card and had no idea where to vote. This was a day before the election—one day before. If I hadn't been there to help, I'm sure many would have stayed home or showed up at the wrong polling station. That's a disgrace. I'm calling on the Chief Electoral Officer to investigate why this problem gets worse every election, not better, and to explain how he will fix it.

I don't blame local returning officers. I don't blame them. In fact, if Elections Ontario officials in Toronto actually listened to those returning officers, we could solve a lot of these problems.

Canadian soldiers have spilled too much blood giving us the freedom to vote for us to stand by and allow our democratic rights to be eroded because Elections Ontario didn't do their job. As MPPs, we have a duty to demand better.

CAROLYN KHAN

Mr. Vic Dhillon: I rise in this House to congratulate my good friend Carolyn Khan on winning the 2014 Pharmacist of the Year from the Ontario Pharmacists Association. This award is presented to a pharmacist who has demonstrated outstanding achievement in all areas of pharmacy practice.

Ms. Khan has had a glorious career as a pharmacist spanning over 30 years. While working for the Wise Elephant Family Health Team and at the North Peel Family Health Team, she was instrumental in implementing and evolving comprehensive structured smoking cessation programs, and currently she's the owner and operator of Queen Lynch Pharmacy in Brampton.

According to her, the most valuable lesson she has learned while working with palliative and oncology patients is that while she could not save or cure patients, she could at least hold their hands and walk their journey with them by providing seamless care for both patients and their caregivers.

As a strong believer in personal and professional development, Ms. Khan has attended the Institute of Applied Medicine and the college of naturopathic medi-

She received a certificate in learning essential approaches to palliative and end-of-life care and completed numerous programs on the topics of diabetes and of tobacco addiction. Recently, she became a STOP practitioner for the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health.

I would again like to congratulate Carolyn on this prestigious award and for her hard work and dedication. Way to go, Carolyn.

RALLY FOR THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL

Mr. Mike Colle: Last night, I joined hundreds of members of my own community at Beth Tzedec synagogue. I know the member Gila Martow from Thornhill was there with me, too. We were there as many members of the Jewish community were praying for the safety of their relatives back in Israel, who are being attacked by thousands of rockets that have been launched indiscriminately at Israel by the Hamas terrorists.

The rally for Israel at Beth Tzedec synagogue was hosted by the UJA Federation of Greater Toronto and the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs, and Rabbi Baruch Frydman-Kohl was the host. We heard renditions of O Canada and Hatikvah by world-famous Cantor Simon Spiro. We were hooked up via Skype with a large crowd in Ottawa to hear Minister John Baird and MP Marc Garneau speak in support of the people of Israel's right to defend themselves.

The community came together to pray for peace and show support for the people of Israel's need to be protected against these indiscriminate attacks by these terrorists.

I hope—and I hope you will join me in praying—that these hostilities will end, that this terrorist warfare will come to a stop and that the people of Israel can live in peace and security, free from these attacks by the Hamas terrorists.

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

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I do have just a short announcement: Due to a special circumstance that is positive—it's not negative—five of our pages will be having their last day today, so I want to say to the five pages, thank you very much for your service to the Legislature.

Applause.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

RYAN'S LAW (ENSURING ASTHMA FRIENDLY SCHOOLS), 2014

LOI RYAN DE 2014 POUR ASSURER LA CRÉATION D'ÉCOLES ATTENTIVES À L'ASTHME

Mr. Yurek moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 20, An Act to protect pupils with asthma / Projet de loi 20, Loi protégeant les élèves asthmatiques.

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): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Thank you, Speaker. I'll be brief.

Basically I'm re-announcing my bill, Ryan's Law, which should have passed last session but did not. It basically allows students within our school system to be allowed to have their relief medication inhalers on them at all times. It also provides for an emergency plan throughout the school system, so that everybody is educated on the use of asthma medication to know what to do in case of an emergency.

This bill will protect our students within our school system and provide relief for our parents at home, knowing that their children are safe and have their medication on them at all times, including on walks home and on their bus rides to and from school.

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? Agreed.

Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: That, notwithstanding standing order 98(a), private members' public business shall not be considered on Thursday, July 24, 2014.

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

Motion agreed to.

PETITIONS

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: I have a petition which has been signed by several thousand members of my community, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas the city of Brampton held the highest rate of population growth among Canada's 20 largest cities in 2011;

"Whereas the creation of university campuses in an underserved area like the city of Brampton gives more students a full range of high-quality education in their community;

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

"That the government of Ontario create Sheridan University and as well encourage the development or

expansion of a graduate and research-intensive institution in to Brampton.”

Mr. Speaker, I sign it and give it to page Gabriel to bring it down to the Clerk.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Steve Clark: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

“Whereas home heating and electricity are essential for families in rural Ontario who cannot afford to continue footing the bill for the government’s mismanagement;

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

I’m pleased to affix my signature and send the petition to the table with page Zahra.

ALZHEIMER’S DISEASE

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I have a petition sent by people from across Ontario to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias are progressive, degenerative diseases of the brain that cause thinking, memory and physical functioning to become seriously impaired;

“Whereas there is no known cause or cure for this devastating illness; and

“Whereas Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias also take their toll on hundreds of thousands of families and care partners; and

“Whereas Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias affect more than 200,000 Ontarians today, with an annual total economic burden rising to \$15.7 billion by 2020; and

“Whereas the cost related to the health care system is in the billions and is only going to increase, at a time when our health care system is already facing enormous financial challenges; and

“Whereas there is work under way to address the need, but no coordinated or comprehensive approach to tackling the issues; and

“Whereas there is an urgent need to plan and raise awareness and understanding about Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias for the sake of improving the quality of life of the people it touches;

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

“To approve the development of a comprehensive Ontario dementia plan that would include the development of strategies in primary health care, in health promotion and prevention of illness, in community development, in building community capacity and care partner engagement, in caregiver support and investments in research.”

I am pleased to affix my name to the top and send this to the Clerk with Daniel.

ONTARIO RETIREMENT PENSION PLAN

Mrs. Cristina Martins: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas it is absolutely crucial that more is done to provide Ontarians retirement financial security which they can rely on;

“Whereas the federal government has refused to partner with our government to ensure that Ontarians have a secure retirement plan;

“Whereas more than three million Ontarians rely on the Canada Pension Plan alone, that currently does not provide enough to support an adequate standard of living;

“Whereas the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan will provide the safe and stable retirement that Ontarians need;

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

“That all members of the Ontario assembly support a plan to move forward with an Ontario-made pension retirement plan that will provide a financially secure retirement for Ontarians.”

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to affix my name to this petition and hand it over to Ayesha.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Michael Mantha: I present this petition on behalf of residents in the Goulais River-Sault North area.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario;

“Whereas we, the customers of Algoma Power, are being charged astronomical costs referred to as ‘delivery fees’;

“Whereas we, the customers of Algoma Power, would like the ‘delivery fees’ looked into and regulated so as to protect the consumer from big businesses gouging the consumer;

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

“Stop Algoma Power’s influx of fees for delivery and stop the onset of increasing these fees another 40% within four years.”

I agree with this petition, Mr. Speaker, and present it to page Brendan, who will bring it down to the table, to the Clerks.

CHILDHOOD APRAXIA OF SPEECH

Mr. Mike Colle: Mr. Speaker, I have a petition here that was compiled by David and Lisa Brennan from Mississauga. It was done for their son Matthew.

“Petition to Designate May 14 as Apraxia Awareness Day in Ontario.

“Whereas childhood apraxia of speech is a rare neurological speech disorder that affects oral motor planning;

“Whereas an estimated 3% to 5% of the world’s childhood population are diagnosed with childhood apraxia of speech;

“Whereas Ontario has excellent speech-language centres and programs that currently provide treatment for childhood apraxia of speech;

“Whereas children diagnosed in Canada with childhood apraxia of speech are eligible to receive the children’s disability tax credit to assist with therapy costs;

“Whereas greater public awareness of speech disorders and the benefits of early intervention speech-language therapy are needed in the province of Ontario;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to join the United States of America in declaring May 14 as Apraxia Awareness Day” in the province of Ontario.

I’m totally in support of this, and I’m going to sign my name to these wonderful petitions from Mississauga.

ALZHEIMER’S DISEASE

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I have a petition signed by people right across Ontario.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias are progressive, degenerative diseases of the brain that cause thinking, memory and physical functioning to become seriously impaired;

“Whereas there is no known cause or cure for this devastating illness; and

“Whereas Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias also take their toll on hundreds of thousands of families and care partners; and

“Whereas Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias affect more than 200,000 Ontarians today, with an annual total economic burden rising to \$15.7 billion by 2020; and

“Whereas the cost related to the health care system is in the billions and is only going to increase, at a time when our health care system is already facing enormous financial challenges; and

“Whereas there is work under way to address the need, but no coordinated or comprehensive approach to tackling the issues; and

“Whereas there is an urgent need to plan and raise awareness and understanding about Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias for the sake of improving the quality of life of the people it touches;

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

“To approve the development of a comprehensive Ontario dementia plan that would include the development of strategies in primary health care, in health promotion and prevention of illness, in community development, in building community capacity and care partner engagement, in caregiver support and investments in research.”

I fully support this petition. I will sign my name to it and present it with page David to the Clerk.

ONTARIO RETIREMENT PENSION PLAN

Ms. Daiene Vernile: I have a petition on planning for Ontario’s future.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas it is absolutely crucial that more is done to provide Ontarians retirement financial security which they can rely on;

“Whereas the federal government has refused to partner with our government to ensure that Ontarians have a secure retirement plan;

“Whereas more than three million Ontarians rely on the Canada Pension Plan alone, that currently does not provide enough to support an adequate standard of living;

“Whereas the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan will provide the safe and stable retirement that Ontarians need;

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

“That all members of the Ontario assembly support a plan to move forward with an Ontario-made pension retirement plan that will provide a financially secure retirement for Ontarians.”

I will put my name to this and I will hand it to page William.

OFF-ROAD VEHICLES

Mr. Michael Mantha: This petition comes from a variety of sources across northern Ontario.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas a motion was introduced at the Legislative Assembly of Ontario which reads ‘that in the opinion of the House, the operation of off-road vehicles on highways under regulation 316/03 be changed to include side-by-side off-road vehicles, four-seat side-by-side vehicles, and two-up vehicles in order for them to be driven on highways under the same conditions as other off-road/all-terrain vehicles’;

“Whereas this motion was passed on November 7, 2013, to amend the Highway Traffic Act 316/03;

“Whereas the economic benefits will have positive impacts on ATV clubs, ATV manufacturers, dealers and rental shops, and will boost revenues to communities promoting this outdoor activity;

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

“We call on the Ministry of Transportation to implement this regulation immediately.”

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

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

There being none, orders of the day.

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PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

RADON AWARENESS AND PREVENTION ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR LA SENSIBILISATION AU RADON ET LA PROTECTION CONTRE L'INFILTRATION DE CE GAZ

Mr. Qaadri moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 11, An Act to raise awareness about radon, provide for the Ontario Radon Registry and reduce radon levels in dwellings and workplaces / Projet de loi 11, Loi visant à sensibiliser le public au radon, à prévoir la création du Registre des concentrations de radon en Ontario et à réduire la concentration de ce gaz dans les logements et les lieux de travail.

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

M. Shafiq Qaadri: Merci, monsieur le Président. Je veux maintenant présenter la Loi visant à sensibiliser le public au radon, à prévoir la création du Registre des concentrations de radon en Ontario et à réduire la concentration de ce gaz dans les logements et les lieux de travail.

M. Mike Colle: Excellent.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Thank you to the honourable member from Eglinton–Lawrence for his always good wishes and constant cheerleading. I appreciate it.

Speaker, I value this time allotted to me to raise this important issue, which I think has deep public implications going forward. At the outset, of course, I would like to recognize the original parent of this bill, MPP Reza Moridi, who also serves in our cabinet in various portfolios, including the Ministry of Research and Innovation. I'm also particularly delighted to be joined by one of our newly elected members, the MPP for Kitchener Centre, Daiene Vernile, not only in her capacity as MPP

for that great riding, but also in her capacity as the parliamentary assistant to Minister Moridi. I'm honoured to have one of our newly elected members joining us for the moral and physical support of this bill.

A quick orientation with regard to what exactly radon is—and at the outset I'd like to apologize for perhaps some of the physics that is coming your way, some of the elevated science talk.

First of all, there is a famous element—it may be a dangerous and possibly even somewhat evil element—out there known as uranium-238. Of course, many of us will be familiar with this particular element, as it was originally used in a highly enriched manner to create the atomic bomb, nuclear bomb, strategic and tactical.

This issue, of course, is very prevalent because this element is not only widespread, found more or less everywhere throughout the world in our soil, but particularly here in Canada and across North America.

It's a very heavy element. What that means is that, if you look at it with schematic diagrams, it's like a balloon at the microscopic level and has lots and lots of particles inside. To physicists, these particles are known as protons and neutrons. By the way, it's 92 protons and 146 neutrons; that's what makes this stuff so heavy.

The issue—and this is where it affects us and our human health—is that all those particular particles don't actually want to stay in there. They leak, and that, of course, is what causes ill effects, including cancer, when we have radon gas produced.

When these particular particles that are embedded in that extremely heavy element known as uranium-238 leak, they create what are called daughter products. I don't think there's any sexism intended; I think the fellows who named this came up with that. But in any case, these are literally, perhaps, the progeny or the sons and daughters or the offspring of that particle.

Now, when those particular little infants populate our homes and our air, whether it's the air that I'm breathing now in Parliament or, more particularly, in enclosed spaces that are lower down—for example, basements, crawl spaces, enclosed, non-ventilated areas—that's when radon gas is concentrated, and that's when health implications come up for Ontarians.

For example, we're looking at attics, crawl spaces, in garages, perhaps. It's in the earth. It's in mines, in particular, and particularly uranium mines, and that's of course where this whole idea of radon gas poisoning unfortunately came to light. That's when the leaked by-product of this evil element, uranium, can accrue in such concentration that it leads to real impact.

I'd also like to acknowledge the wonderful assistance received from Steve Mahoney, who at the time was the head of the Radiation Safety Institute of Canada, as well as my many, many colleagues from the Ontario Lung Association for their material and moral support for this particular bill.

So what happens? Basically, when the uranium particles discharge their daughter products—their progeny, the offspring—they concentrate. You can't, by the way, wait

for this stuff to go away. It's not like you burn something in cooking, and maybe if you open a couple of windows, it's gone. The half-life of this stuff is about 4.5 billion years, which, I think, even with the most popular government, will likely exceed any one government's mandate. In any case, the stuff is not actually going anywhere fast.

When these gas products—parts of them become solid particles—what they actually do is they fly around in the air. They essentially invest themselves into dust particles and we inhale that stuff. It actually goes and sits in our lungs, literally, for the next 4.5 billion years. What happens? Well, about 15% or maybe about 20% of the lung cancers in Canada are caused primarily by radon gas.

Interjection: What per cent?

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: It's 15% to 20%. About 80% or so—as you know, of course, the fastest way to get lung cancer, not that I recommend it—is by smoking. But 15% to 20% are caused by inhaling stale air in non-ventilated areas or, by the way, inside a uranium mine, that have essentially been infested, if you would, with radon gas particles.

We know this for a number of reasons because unfortunately, as doctors, we are actually diagnosing patients with lung cancer who have never smoked. So it was kind of a big puzzle for doctors. “What do you mean that it says ‘lung cancer’? I don't smoke.” That's what led physicians and others to actually do the research and to say, “What is the possible cause, etiology, pathway or genesis of this particular issue?”

Of course, there are many other conditions or triggers of lung cancer, whether it's family history, genetic predisposition, first- or second-hand smoke, and there's occupational exposure as well. But unfortunately, one of the negative factors with regard to the causation of lung cancer is this whole area of radon gas.

Why this particular bill, Bill 11, An Act to raise awareness about radon? I think we in Ontario need to actually inspire ourselves to join and keep up with other jurisdictions, both in the United States as well as the United Kingdom, who, I might add, are much further along in institutionalizing, formalizing and codifying the monitoring, regulation and remediation of airspaces that contain or may potentially contain excess radon gas.

Uranium-238 is found essentially everywhere—soil, rock and water. It's in the air in this particular building. Probably, by the way, if we were to do particular measurements in the lovely dining room that we go to, which is entrapped in the basement with no window, I think, in visibility—this, of course, has deep implications for our built environment. When the gas is released, it dissipates into the atmosphere, but when it's caught or trapped—when there is no light at the end of the tunnel, you're looking at, unfortunately, a concentration of these decaying particles. These are fissionable particles that actually can be measured and seen, for example, with radio isotope scans and those Geiger counter-type things, if you have a sensitive enough instrument. I'll spare you the micron measurement, but what it does is, the stuff that we inhale enters our body and can go into various

body spaces and then actually leads to real cancer DNA effects in our own cells.

As I said, we knew this, for example, when we were exposed, unfortunately, in Ontario, to a horrendous history when we had, in Elliot Lake, about 220 documented deaths from lung cancer in a single complex of uranium mines because of this radon gas exposure. Even though that was way back in 1974, there were many reports. The Ontario royal commission on health and safety issued various warnings. Unfortunately, you don't have to go into a mine; you just have to find some nice enclosed space and not let it be ventilated for quite a while to essentially expose yourself to potentially dangerous levels of this stuff.

I know we're not allowed to use props, Speaker, so I will spare you that. But suffice it to say that probably the size of a largish radio—this is a radon measurement kit. Basically, you place it within a basement or an enclosed space. By the way, as a salute or shout-out to our table officers, they might suggest we contact our colleagues at the Radiation Safety Institute and maybe even do a few measurements of some of the enclosed spaces, particularly the dining room.

I've even had suggestions—I'm not sure about my feeling on this, but some have even suggested that we move that dining room to where the library is so we don't continually expose—

Mr. Mike Colle: God forbid we have a window in the dining room.

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Ms. Sylvia Jones: There are no windows in the library, either.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Oh, there are lots of windows in the library. I would invite you to visit there once in a while and you'd see it.

In any case, where the air is heaviest and it sinks and is sort of trapped for a certain period of time, if you leave that and monitor—unfortunately, it's not like a short-term measurement. It's not one of these things that we just measure the temperature or even, by the way, like a smoke alarm where it instantaneously goes off or like a carbon monoxide alarm. It does take a certain amount of time, probably I would say 60 to 90 days or so, and if you get a reading of 200-plus—again, I'll spare you the physics attached to it because it's a little on the high level, but 200-plus unfortunately is considered potentially dangerous and needs to be remediated or addressed.

Folks who are breathing this stuff on an ongoing basis—it will expose them to true radiation-induced DNA damage, and of course that can have deep, long-term health effects, as you will very easily see if you contact colleagues at the Radiation Safety Institute of Canada or the Ontario Lung Association.

What does this mean on a population-wide basis? Unfortunately, 2,000 lung cancer deaths annually; 2,000 lung cancer deaths—by the way, of the 20,000 lung cancer deaths that happen annually in Canada—are caused by radon. About 40% of those, unfortunately, 800 in terms of the number, are basically affected primarily by radon; others will have other triggers that go into it.

This is important because you can't just train a dog, buy a quick monitor or put some little acid paper out and have it turn blue and indicate the first response about radon. This stuff is colourless, tasteless and odourless, but as I say, it is very much a part of our built environment. Any time you're near any kind of an energy source, for example—by the way, with some of these newer high-powered HDTVs and you stick them in a basement, some of the energy effects that are given off may actually promote what we call ionization. The radon doesn't come out of that stuff directly, but as I say, the more energy you put near chemicals, literally it stirs up the pot.

These are very important issues. I hope we will not take another generation to realize it as, unfortunately, physicians and the broader community did with regard to things like tobacco smoking or, by the way, HIV/AIDS or the dangers of obesity. I think the time has come where we should now move on the whole issue of radon.

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

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'm pleased to rise to speak to Bill 11, the Radon Awareness and Prevention Act. I want to thank the member from Etobicoke North for bringing this bill forward. I also want to thank him for his explanation of what impact radon has on people's health and the importance of this bill coming forward.

Obviously, on the issue of the effects of radon, where it's happening and so forth, he is far better equipped to speak to that than I am, as a doctor, as he mentioned in his presentation. My presentation is really about the bill itself and the implementation and whether we're hitting the mark on how we will solve the problem and is that actually going to work.

When I was first asked to speak to this bill as critic for municipal affairs and housing, I kind of wondered how the radon awareness bill would become a municipal affairs issue. In fact, it's because it's an amendment to the building code.

The reason I bring that up is that the challenge with that, as I had with my carbon monoxide bill, is that when you put something in the building code, the only time that that's dealt with in the silos of government is when someone gets a building permit, and then they look at the building code to see what needs to be done in order to facilitate meeting all the standards that the government and the industry have set. But, in fact, after the fact for the existing buildings and so forth, that would not then come up and there's no mechanism within the Ministry of Municipal Affairs to do a lot of the things that are suggested in this bill, such as dealing with public awareness and so forth, because the consultation that the Ministry of Municipal Affairs does on the building code is in fact consultation of what changes need to be made in the building code going forward.

The reason I mention this for the member who introduced the bill is that I had the same thing with my carbon monoxide bill. When I first introduced it, it was under the Building Code Act, because that's where the

installation would normally be, you'd think. But in that place, there was no way the local fire departments could, in fact, enforce it, so we had to change it to the Fire Protection and Prevention Act in order to be able to facilitate the operation of it and to look at, first of all, the installation in existing residences, and, secondly, to go on and make sure there was some type of enforcement in place.

I also want to say that this is the second time that the member has brought this bill forward. It's actually the third time that it is before us here in the Legislature. I want to recognize the member from Richmond Hill for having introduced it for the first time.

I also want to recognize the Radiation Safety Institute of Canada and the Ontario Lung Association for their support of this bill and their work to raise awareness of the dangers of this gas. I appreciate their efforts to educate members on all sides of the House about the dangers of radon and the steps needed to reduce that risk.

Radon is colourless and odourless and has no taste. In that way, it's very similar to carbon monoxide, which was the subject of my private member's bill. Some of you may remember that it took five years to get that bill passed, but one of the things that I realized in that long time period and the many times I brought the bill forward is that it allowed us to significantly raise the awareness of the dangers of carbon monoxide, and I think that will be true for radon, as we're talking about here. The fact that the member brought this bill forward for debate again is already increasing the awareness of radon, how it is generated and how it gets into homes, and the impact it has on those who live there.

In fact, there are many people who had never heard of the danger of radon before this bill was introduced. But as my friend and the former member from Burlington pointed out during the last debate, according to estimates by the United States Environmental Protection Agency, radon is the second most frequent cause of lung cancer after smoking cigarettes. In fact, according to Health Canada, it is estimated that non-smokers exposed to high levels of radon over a lifetime have a one in 20 chance of developing lung cancer. That estimate increases to one in three for a smoker exposed to high levels of radon over a lifetime.

However, in our efforts to protect people, we need to be cautious that we aren't just overregulating. I want to commend the member from Etobicoke North for proposing that we collect all the data from the radon tests completed across the province to be able to better identify the high-risk areas. However, if the first step is creating a map of Ontario showing radon levels, then it makes sense to me that we would concentrate our efforts on those areas where there are high levels and not treat all parts of the province the same.

In fact, Health Canada did a study entitled Cross-Canada Survey of Radon Concentrations in Homes, which gave us some data on where radon issues are the highest. The study found that across Canada, 6.9% of homes had radon levels higher than the guidelines. In

Ontario, our radon levels are lower; only 4.6% of homes exceeded the guidelines.

There are 3,891 households in Ontario that participated in the survey. The study broke those results down by health units. What's interesting is that when you look at the data, there are wide variations in regions. There are some areas, like the York region, Durham region, and Peel regional health units, that didn't report a single house that had radon exceeding the guidelines. It simply doesn't make sense to force every business in those areas to go through the time and expense of testing for radon if there is no risk to their employees. It also doesn't make sense to require governments to spend money testing homes that they own in those areas if there is very minimal risk or no risk at all in those homes.

In other health units, almost 20% of the participants in the Health Canada study were living in homes where the radon levels exceeded the guidelines—20% of those homes. Obviously, that's where we need to focus our greatest attention. Let's focus our efforts in those areas. Let's raise awareness so that people test their homes and take steps to minimize the radon coming into their homes. In those areas, businesses should be testing to make sure that employees are not being exposed to high levels of radon. The mapping and tracking of data will give us the tools to reduce radon exposure in areas where there is the highest risk. I want to encourage the minister and the people in those areas not to wait until this bill is passed, but to get on with the testing now. If you are in an area with high levels of radon—and that information is available—consider testing your home or your business as soon as possible.

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I've received several emails from constituents which asked, "Protect Ontarians from cancer-causing radon gas by requiring that homes be built with features like venting in order to reduce exposure to this deadly carcinogen."

I'm pleased that this bill will make amendments to the building code to ensure that new homes are constructed in such a way that we will minimize the risk, but, as I said earlier, it would only apply to new builds.

I want to question the implementation of this bill. The minister has up to five years—and I think it's the timing in the bill for the member who introduced the bill—to make changes to the building code. The bill requires the owners of businesses to ensure that radon levels in the normal occupancy area of the workplace is measured by a radon specialist by December 2016. If they have it measured, remedial action needs to be taken. The building code does not include any information at this point to make those changes.

I have a few questions too about the specialists. The industry must use a specialist to measure it. By 2016, will we have enough specialists to actually do those businesses if it was passed? When the bill was introduced in May 2011, it included the same deadlines for the businesses, which would have given them more than five years to complete the testing. When the bill was re-

introduced in September 2013, it included the same deadlines, so that left a three-year window to make the test. Of course, we don't know how long it will take for it to get third reading, but if my carbon monoxide bill is any indication, it's possible that we will pass 2016 before we have the bill passed. So they would have no time at all to get it done. I'm just suggesting that we would be better served if we took out the dates in there to state a certain length of time after the passing of the bill.

As I mentioned earlier, there are some areas where there are no homes exceeding the radon guidelines, so why do businesses in those areas need to test?

Mr. Speaker, I have concerns about the requirements of government-owned housing. For most homeowners, a do-it-yourself kit is sufficient to test for radon. Yet the legislation is quite explicit that government housing must, in fact, be done by a specialist. It would seem to me that who owns the building should not pick up how the testing should be done.

The other part on government housing—and I know it's for, I suppose, security, and people have a right to let people in and out of their homes, but if we're going to demand that government must test all their homes and say, "But if the occupant doesn't want them in there, they don't have to do it," we're going to have a lot of challenges as to: If there was a problem detected, did the government try hard enough to get the occupant to agree, and so forth? So I think that needs to be done.

Mr. Speaker, I want to ensure that we aren't spending money that we can't afford to do testing on radon levels in buildings that should be torn down in less than a year. A lot of times, government-owned housing with people living in them, in fact—they bought them for the purposes of future expansion of infrastructure. The bill would need to make sure that we don't have to do the testing in those homes.

We need to recognize the danger that radon presents, but we need to ensure that we're focusing our limited resources on the areas where we can make a real difference; that we are focusing on areas where people could be exposed to high levels of radon over time and where their health is being put at risk.

Again, I want to commend the member from Etobicoke North for his efforts in raising awareness of the dangers of radon and the need for the testing. We would support this bill going forward, and we commit to working with him in committee to make sure that all these issues are addressed. I look forward to saving more lives in the province of Ontario.

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

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I will be sharing my time for response as well. I'm glad to speak in response to Bill 11, An Act to raise awareness about radon, provide for the Ontario Radon Registry and reduce radon levels in dwellings and workplaces.

As I mentioned in my inaugural address, I live in a lovely little townhouse in Oshawa, and it is in a newer subdivision. There are, of course, many homes in Osh-

awa that are not new, many homes with firm but old foundations. Many of those foundations might be allowing poisonous radon to seep into family homes.

Oshawa is part of a wider area that has been identified as having concerning levels of naturally occurring radon. I didn't know that when I was buying my home. I didn't know, quite frankly, that radon was something that I needed to worry about. I suspect that this is an issue that many homeowners are unfamiliar with.

Yesterday, and today as well, I had the privilege of introducing a friend and constituent who came to appreciate Queen's Park and her government at work. She isn't 30 yet, and she has had pneumonia four times. She coughs and struggles with respiratory issues constantly, and she is always sent home with the appropriate puffer and to wonder why she is so prone to being sick. After reading this bill, I wonder if her old home, with cracks in the foundation, might actually be letting radon sneak in and into her family's lungs. I wonder how many doctors would ask someone with chronic bronchial distress if they've ever had their homes checked for radon.

The concern about radon levels and health risks increases, but the education and information made available to the average person in Ontario is inadequate. It's so inadequate that even I—someone who does pay attention, is educated and informed, who takes safety precautions and looks after her health—have learned something new from reading this bill. Radon awareness and education has been much like radon gas itself: invisible.

Some experts argue that there is no safe level of radon in homes and that any radon detected should be addressed. Approximately two people per day die of radon-caused lung cancer, which is actually closer to 850 Ontarians who are dying each year because of radon. This doesn't sound like the kind of issue that we can continue to ignore, and we cannot afford to keep this health concern on the back burner. We cannot afford to wait while Ontarians are getting sick.

Cancer rates will continue to rise if preventive measures are not prioritized. So is the government going to stand behind their own bill or tuck it back in a drawer, as has happened before? I hope that this bill will be taken seriously. There is nothing we can say against prevention, education or public health and safety, and we applaud measures to increase awareness.

According to Bill 11, the minister shall encourage homeowners to measure the radon level in their homes with a do-it-yourself kit or the services of a specialist. There are questions I hope will be considered in committee. The cost of a kit is about \$60. This might not be a huge expense, but how often do they need to be bought? How often do people need to test? Will there be laboratory and registry fees that we'll find out about later? Are there any plans to subsidize these kits for our most vulnerable community members? Can there be a tax refund for these kits? If people do a renovation to prevent radon leaking into their basements, is there something to offset the cost? How long is the waiting list to access

radon measurement specialists? We hope to get good answers to these questions for Ontarians in committee.

According to the bill, the minister shall ensure that the radon level in every provincially owned dwelling is measured by a radon measurement specialist by 2021. Privately owned buildings have to have the test done by 2016. Why are there two timelines? Why does the government need five more years than privately owned buildings, until 2021, to ensure that radon levels are measured by a radon measurement specialist? Radon, as we've heard, is the second leading cause of lung cancer, second only to smoking. How many people will develop or be diagnosed with or have to die of lung cancer between now and 2021? In those seven years, I would guess those numbers would be heartbreaking.

The recommendations that are out there are for people to test for radon if they suspect they have unsafe levels in their homes. Does the average homeowner know anything about radon? Radon is invisible, tasteless and odourless. I can't imagine how people would know to test if they've never heard about radon. I can't imagine how people would know to test for radon if they can't see, smell, taste or detect it. We need to get our communities educated and aware of the dangers of radon.

The bill provides that the minister shall conduct public education programs and provide the public with information about the health risks. What will that look like? What will be done to educate homeowners? What specifically will be done to educate contractors? Is radon testing part of home inspections?

Incidentally, the government has the power to amend the building code, without needing to bring it to the Legislature. Cabinet has that authority. There is nothing to prevent the government from educating the public now, before 2021. Campaigns for public safety are not tied to the passage of a law, and even in a minority government, this could have been made a priority. It is time to get the message out, with or without the bill.

We support awareness and prevention. We support education. Since this bill and its various incarnations have been around awhile, we would expect more from it.

1400

I will vote in favour of this bill because it is an important issue and is a step in the right direction. I do not support the lengthy and drawn-out timelines, and I worry that Ontarians will continue to be at risk while this Liberal government continues to drag its feet.

This bill will go to committee. Let's hope as members and as citizens of Ontario that we will have the opportunity to give Ontarians the protection they truly deserve.

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

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I want to congratulate the member from Etobicoke North for actually bringing this forward again. I understand this is the third time that the bill has come to the House.

Interjection.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Yes, the third time. I know it might take years and sometimes ample introduc-

tions of bills for things to get through. But last session when I was here in the Legislature, there was actually a reception for radon—many MPPs were invited. I did attend, and I learned quite a bit about radon. If we didn't have that awareness lobby day or reception, I wouldn't have actually understood the explanation about what radon is and how the dangers affect human lives. We talked about this scientific explanation that the member from Etobicoke North has given. He's very thorough on that, so I do appreciate the explanation that you gave so that we can understand the dangers of radon and how it's found in uranium.

He talked about how it was found in mines. In 1976, there were over 200 deaths of miners. That's how it was brought to light, the effects of radon and the hazardous chemical that radon is, or vapour that it is. We've come to the conclusion, Speaker, that it is a silent killer: You can't smell it; you can't see it. There's no way of detecting it unless it's tested, so this bill does make sense so that we bring awareness and prevention. But testing should really be something we need to consider so that people aren't in their homes and exposed to something that's hazardous and in the long term could cause lung cancer and a detrimental outcome.

Radon is something that can seep through a dwelling through dirt floors; through cracks, as we talked about; through floors; sump pumps; gaps around pipes; basement drains; and it can move easily through concrete cracks through the walls. To me, those types of elements that are exposing us to a chemical or gas, potentially, in our homes are very serious. Everyone takes their health very seriously. We'll have our children downstairs. We'll have our grandparents downstairs. We're downstairs. We need to take this matter very seriously so that we can prevent deaths that don't need to happen if we have the knowledge that we have today so prevention can happen and people don't need to be exposed. So I think it's really important, Speaker, that we actually move this quicker through the system because people's health is at risk.

There was a report done, a study that called on the provincial government to take action. The paper was Lung Cancer Risk from Radon in Ontario, Canada: How Many Lung Cancers Can We Prevent? This was published in August 2013. A snippet of that says:

"An alternative approach to promoting individual adherence to the radon guideline is to design and install effective radon-preventive measures into buildings during initial construction through mandatory building codes. Although this is a long-term approach, it is likely to be far more effective at the population level and more cost-effective than a retrofitting remediation approach, and could drastically reduce the need for testing and remediation" overall.

I'd like to also point out that when I went on the Internet to look up more information about radon from the last session, the government of Canada does have information on radon. It's very informative, and it talks about how you can actually get it tested. It's very important, if people are going to have radon tested in their homes, as

the member from Oshawa pointed out very well—there's a cost involved. That is a factor we have to take into consideration, but also we need to make sure that a professional is going to be testing for the radon. I personally don't have the knowledge and skills to even have a home kit and to trust that home kit when I'm dealing with my family's lives and the exposure to any chemical that's potentially death-causing, so I would suggest that people go on to the government of Canada website, look that up and find out the qualifications that someone should have—a certified radon mitigation professional—if you're not too confident in your own ability or your own conclusion when you're using a home kit, if that's the way you choose to go.

So, Speaker, I do hope that this bill gets through the House and goes to committee, and that the questions from the member from Oshawa are answered. She put a lot of thought into those questions, and I know she did a lot of homework last night researching this radon bill, so congratulations for presenting such a great, thoughtful way of addressing this bill. New Democrats do support it, if it means the health and safety of workers and families—

Ms. Catherine Fife: It could be a government bill.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Absolutely. This is a good bill, and it's the third time that it has been presented in this House, so I hope that this time it will be successful.

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

Ms. Daiene Vernile: I will be sharing my time with the member from Richmond Hill. I'm pleased to speak in the House today on Bill 11, An Act to raise awareness about radon, provide for the Ontario Radon Registry and reduce radon levels in dwellings and workplaces.

This private member's bill is being presented by my colleague from Etobicoke North, who is no doubt very concerned about this. It's of especial importance to him, as he is a family doctor. With him, I would like to express my concerns in ensuring that the people of Ontario remain safe from exposure to this potentially deadly element. We should mention that this bill was initiated by the current Minister of Research and Innovation, with whom I have the pleasure of working as his new PA.

Bill 11, if passed, will certainly increase the level of safety in homes and businesses, not just for us, but for generations to come. As you've heard my members stating already, quite eloquently, radon is an inert gas that is formed by the radioactive decay of uranium-238, which you'll find in rocks and soils in the earth's crust.

Health Canada tells us that when this escapes from the bedrock into outdoor air, it's so diluted that it produces a very negligible threat to health, but when radon gas is released into a building constructed over bedrock or soil, it can seep into those structures and accumulate to high levels in enclosed or poorly ventilated spaces. Radon is invisible. You can't see it, you can't smell it, you can't taste it—but it is a silent killer. Studies carried out in Canada and across the globe have shown us that exposure

to high levels of radon has been associated with an increased risk of lung cancer.

Many of my colleagues are aware of the fact that most of the predominant locations of exposure to high levels of radon are in underground mines. It is shocking for us to learn that there are studies revealing some residential homes to be on the same level of exposure to radon as mines. As you've heard my esteemed members say, current estimates suggest that radon in homes is responsible for approximately 15% of all lung cancer deaths in Canada, making radon the second-leading cause of lung cancer after tobacco smoking.

Underground miners are at greater risk of exposure to uranium rock, which emits radon gases. Studies of uranium miners have consistently shown that these workers are at increased risk of lung cancer. Mr. Speaker, Canada is the world's largest producer and exporter of uranium, yet the efforts and preventions in place to protect these employees at these mines do not reflect this enormous number.

As miners dig the uranium-bearing ore, they release large quantities of radioactive radon gas into the mine atmosphere. These gases stay within the mines and are then breathed into the miners' lungs, where they lodge, delivering a massive dose of radiation to the sensitive lung tissue. What we are seeing is an extraordinarily high incident rate of lung cancer among these workers. There have been more than 220 documented deaths, and up to 400 estimated lung cancer deaths, at Elliot Lake uranium mines. This is an enormous human cost.

You've heard the member from Etobicoke North give us some very disturbing stats. Approximately 20,000 people die each year in Canada from lung cancer; from that figure, it's estimated that 2,000 of those occur as a direct result of radon gas exposure. Out of those 2,000 deaths caused by radon, 40% are taking place in Ontario; that's 800 deaths per year in our province tied to radon.

1410

It may be of interest to my honourable colleagues to know that legislation such as that being proposed by the member for Etobicoke North has been in place in other jurisdictions and countries such as the United Kingdom. Legislation there has led to the creation of a comprehensive radon map for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. This map allows homeowners and employees to live and work in safety by ensuring proper testing. Prevention devices are also in place so radon exposure is reduced. Bill 11 would seek to do the same in Ontario: test for radon and create a registry with maps. These maps will make it easier for control and prevention by our government.

We have taken many steps to reduce lung cancer and have seen legislation from different levels of government to reduce our exposure to carcinogenic agents. Think back to the 1980s and 1990s, how we moved to reduce and eventually eliminate smoking in the workplace. I can remember how back in January 2000, in my community of Waterloo region, we became one of the first jurisdictions in Ontario and all of Canada that banned smoking

in almost all indoor public places, so restaurants, bars, pubs, bowling alleys and shopping areas. This was considered very controversial at the time. Many of these establishments thought that they would lose business. But our health and safety authorities stuck to their plan, and many of these establishments actually said, after the bylaw was passed, that business went up. Soon we saw many other communities across Ontario following suit, using the Waterloo region model as a foundation for their own smoking ban bylaw.

Mr. Speaker, by ensuring the passage of Bill 11, An Act to raise awareness about radon, provide for the Ontario Radon Registry and reduce radon levels in dwellings and workplaces, we can continue on a path to a healthier Ontario.

I commend my colleagues for Etobicoke North and for Richmond Hill and offer my support on behalf of the good people of Kitchener Centre in promoting this very important bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

Hon. Reza Moridi: Mr. Speaker, at the outset, I would like to take this opportunity to thank my colleague the member for Etobicoke North for reintroducing this very important bill to this Legislature.

I would like to begin by first providing some background on the history of radon gas and its carcinogenic effects.

Radon gas is an inert gas formed by the radioactive decay of uranium-238. This is a radioactive element found in soil, rock and water in the crust of our planet, earth. Wherever you go on this planet, you can find some amount of uranium.

According to Health Canada, when the radon escapes from the bedrock into an outdoor environment, it's so diluted that it doesn't cause a major health threat to individuals. However, when radon gas is released into a building built over bedrock or soil, it can accumulate to high levels in an enclosed area which is poorly ventilated. Upon further decay, this gas releases particles which are radioactive in their own right into the indoor air. When this air is inhaled by individuals, they possess sufficient energy to damage the DNA molecules in our lung tissue.

Current estimates suggest that radon in homes is responsible for approximately 10% of all lung cancer deaths in Canada, making radon the second cause of lung cancer, after smoking.

Underground miners and workers are also at great risk from exposure to radon gas, as studies have consistently shown that miners exposed to high levels of radon gas are at high risk of developing lung cancer. As miners dig uranium-bearing ore underground, they inevitably release large amounts of radioactive radon gas into the mine environment. These gases stay within the mines and are then breathed into the miners' lungs, where they lodge, delivering a massive amount of alpha radiation dose to the lung tissues. That results in lung cancer. However, currently, there are stringent rules and regulations by the

Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission when it comes to mining uranium, and our underground uranium mines, particularly in Saskatchewan, are safe for miners to work in.

I should indicate that there have been more than 220 documented deaths and up to 400 estimated lung cancer deaths in Elliot Lake uranium mines, and these mines have not been operational since the early 1990s.

In 1974, the Ontario Royal Commission on the Health and Safety of Workers in Mines pointed out that Elliot Lake uranium miners had already experienced twice as many lung cancers as expected. Instances such as the ones at the Elliot Lake mines and others around the world have had enormous financial and human costs. It's important to note that Ontario had one of the worst radon-related workplace disasters in the world, and there's still no legislation and no steps have been taken by the government to combat this epidemic.

Of the 2,000 lung cancer deaths across Canada, 40% of these deaths take place in our province of Ontario, which basically means that 800 people a year die as a result of unnecessary exposure to radon gas in homes, buildings and schools. As a result of the dangers of radon exposure in homes and workplaces, this bill seeks to do the following:

—Given the large number of deaths from lung cancer from direct exposure to radon gas, the public must be aware of the health implications and take the necessary steps to protect themselves.

—It's also very important to test residential homes, schools and other buildings for exposure to radon gas. When it comes to buildings, it's very key to test schools and daycares for this deadly gas because children exposed to high levels of radon gas unfortunately are at much higher risk than adults.

—Finally, there must be the establishment of the Ontario radon registry, which all of the above testing results will be filtered through. The registry will record all the results and ultimately create a radon map for Ontario. This map will show the areas of the province where radon is more prominent than in other places. Therefore, people living in those areas will have a better idea where they are in terms of exposure to this naturally occurring gas.

It may be of interest to my colleagues to note that legislation such as is proposed here has been in place in many countries around the world.

Mr. Speaker, as a government, we have taken many steps to reduce lung cancer and have placed legislation from different levels of government to reduce Ontarians' exposure to carcinogenic agents. It's very prudent that we pass this legislation so that Ontarians will have peace of mind when they live in their homes, work in their workplaces and also send their children to daycares and schools.

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

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I listened with interest to the member from Etobicoke North. I actually followed along

when you debated this on September 12, 2013, and it was very similar—almost identical, actually—which is, I suppose, one example of recycling and reusing.

I very much appreciated the comments from the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities and Research and Innovation. I thought that you brought a lot of new information and, quite frankly, some motivation as to why we need to move quickly on this.

The member from Oshawa raised some excellent points when she said that there are actually specific items in this bill that don't need to be legislatively done. There could be some movement forward on public education programs and amendments to the Building Code Act that do not have to be held in a legislative forum. Therefore, we don't have to wait again for another year and a half.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Etobicoke North, you have two minutes for a response.

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: Thank you, Speaker. I salute all my colleagues: from Oxford and Oshawa, even the somewhat reluctant praise offered there from the member from Dufferin-Caledon; London-Fanshawe, Kitchener Centre and the Minister for Research and Innovation, particularly my colleague the newly elected Daiene Vernile from Kitchener Centre.

I think all my colleagues brought intelligent, worthy, valid points that hopefully we'll be able to work out the parameters in committee.

1420

I think we need to tell Ontarians that radon gas is everywhere, particularly in basements, attics, enclosed, non-ventilated spaces.

Unfortunately, we as doctors are seeing more and more non-smokers, for example, who are getting lung cancer—something on the order of about 2,000 diagnoses made per year. That, originally, was what led us to start researching how patients can get lung cancer without smoking. As one point was made by my colleague the Minister of Research and Innovation, if you do both—you have, for example, chronic radon exposure because you're exposing yourself to stale, trapped air and you smoke—you literally put yourself into a hyperdrive with regard to lung cancer.

As many folks have talked about, for example, the lead piping map that was released recently in the city of Toronto, I think it's important for us to do something similar with regard to radon across Ontario, because, as was mentioned, like everything, like a bell curve distribution, some homes, for whatever reason—whether it's the building materials or where they're situated or geographic or geologic spread dispersion—will definitely have more exposure beyond the limits, which is 200, by the way, of radon gas exposure.

I sincerely hope that however many times it takes to introduce this bill here, it will eventually be adopted, and that we do not take a generation to realize this serious risk, as we've done with, for example, smoking and cancer.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you. We'll take the vote at the end of private members' public business.

PROTECTING EMPLOYEES'
TIPS ACT, 2014
LOI DE 2014 SUR LA PROTECTION
DU POURBOIRE DES EMPLOYÉS

Mr. Potts moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 12, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 with respect to tips and other gratuities / Projet de loi 12, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur les normes d'emploi en ce qui concerne les pourboires et autres gratifications.

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

Mr. Arthur Potts: It is a great honour for me today to speak to Bill 12, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000—also known as the Protecting Employees' Tips Act. Some know this as an even shorter title: the tipping bill. I've had some comments from my colleagues that, as the PA to agriculture, they hope that this had nothing to do with livestock. But no, the purpose of this bill is to ban tipping out to restaurant owners and other employers who have skilled employees who receive tips in the workplace, such as hairstylists, massage therapists and others.

I brought this bill forward to honour a campaign promise. During the course of the campaign, my predecessor in Beaches–East York, Mr. Prue, who I know to have been an excellent member in the House, brought this bill forward three times. I do this also to honour him. It's a good bill. It has received a lot of support from the House in the past, and I hope it continues to receive all-party support moving forward.

In Beaches–East York, there are hundreds of restaurants all across our neighbourhood, along O'Connor, along the Danforth, Gerrard, Kingston Road, Queen Street East, and I, of course, encourage members to come and enjoy the hospitality of Beaches–East York restaurants as much as you can. Some are just mom-and-pop shops: Golden Pizza, for instance, right beside our campaign office, where we hosted a fantastic rally during the campaign, which the Premier was at. They're a fantastic family, working very hard—owner-operators—and this bill addresses their concerns as well.

The hospitality sector is an important industry across the province, across the city and certainly in Beaches–East York. It's an industry that employs hundreds of thousands of people, and they're looking to us for some direction and some leadership here.

The idea of the bill: It protects the hard-earned money of those workers who show up and do their best to get recognition, particularly in restaurants, from people who are eating there, that they have done a good job—and they get tipped out. People who are at those restaurants don't expect that when they leave a tip it's going to go to other than those who prepared the food, seated them at their table and served the food, poured their drinks etc.

When it was first introduced, Mr. Speaker, the bill had a similar goal, but it was simply one line long. It was a

very simple bill, applying the KISS principle, if you will. It was just one line long, and it was deemed by staff to be unenforceable. Last year, it came in front of a committee after second reading, and there was a significant number of amendments made to the bill. Our government worked very closely with the former member to bring those amendments forward, and it did enjoy widespread support across the House, but unfortunately the bill died on the order paper because we went to an unnecessary election—it strikes me that I should probably stop saying that, because I'm actually delighted that it happened.

Ms. Catherine Fife: An unnecessary election?

Mr. Arthur Potts: Not to me, being elected. It became necessary for me to have the pleasure to be in this House, but it was unfortunate for others.

The bill includes so many of these amendments that were made at committee through public input. There were hearings on November 27, 2013. There were people who showed up from industries, people who showed up from industry associations and many other stakeholders. They made suggestions on how the bill could be improved, and it was improved.

It was improved so that mom-and-pop shops should be allowed to participate in tip pooling when they participate as key members of the staff preparing or serving the food. It was improved to protect the practice of tip sharing between waiters and servers, which is often on a voluntary basis; it allows this to continue.

It also protects collective bargaining agreements dealing with issues around tips in unionized organizations. As an individual with a master's degree in labour relations, it's very important, I think, that in all of our legislation we keep an eye to the impact that legislation might inadvertently have in the collective bargaining environment, and this does recognize those important distinctions.

It also became very much more enforceable under the terms of the Employment Standards Act, through a complaint process which is very well understood and which employees can access if other violations happen under the act.

Unlike the previous bill, it does not include a section requiring that an employee representative be at hand for the distribution of all the tips. It was felt by many industry associations, business owners and others that this became an unnecessary bureaucratic burden on the employer and employees alike, so that one segment of the bill has been removed from the one that was in front of the House last year.

We believe that the bill strikes a very balanced approach built on fairness for both workers and business owners. I have consulted with the Ontario Restaurant Hotel and Motel Association on this bill. I have consulted with the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario, and with Restaurants Canada.

Restaurants Canada's vice-president had this to say about the bill: It's a good balance in this bill, because it "protects employee rights without creating an additional regulatory burden on restaurant owners." We're very

pleased that we're moving forward in a way that has the support of industry, and it will have the support of the workers who do this work.

As a restaurant owner myself, I want to make it clear that this bill does not call into question the integrity of all restaurant owners and employers of people with tips. It is a very small fraction of employers, we think, that have taken advantage of opportunities where they can enrich themselves through the tip-outs of their employees.

The restaurant that I co-own explicitly sets out a tipping policy and who receives what. The servers put a portion aside, and it's divided up amongst the back of the house, the bussers, the hostesses and the bartenders. Management receives nothing and never has, and it's the right thing to do.

Now, the reason that some claim that employers would want to be receiving some of the tip-out has to do with issues around repairing broken dishes or glasses, or maybe recovering credit-card charges. Often when a restaurant user or someone at a restaurant leaves a tip, they'll leave it on a credit card, and the credit card companies will charge a percentage of that, which is lost to the employer and would be lost to the employee. They've also tried to receive some of those tips in order to do capital upgrades in the restaurant, or for large holiday parties.

There are additional issues that have been identified by the hotel association that they want to address, associated with some of those issues, and these are issues that we can bring back up in committee. If there are refinements that need to be made, we'll certainly take a look at them.

Now, we know that the practice of tipping in Ontario is to help supplement the incomes of the staff who work in there. Under our Employment Standards Act, we have a minimum-wage law which allows \$11 an hour for people who are working in general industry, but it has a reduced amount for employees who are in the serving industry, at \$9.55.

1430

I understand that has come up a long way. We've been bringing that rate up, this government, over the past many years, but it's still a lower minimum rate for people in the service industry because of the fact that they receive tip-outs, which are supposed to improve their wages. If employers are allowed to take a portion of their tip-out, they're essentially removing money that should be applied as part of their minimum wage, and that's a fundamental reason why we have to make sure this practice is stopped.

We believe that protecting servers' tips will strengthen the measures that our government has taken to improve their standards of living because, as I said, they do receive a lower rate and now it will be improved.

Other jurisdictions in Canada and the United States have done this. We are not trailblazing here. Quebec has a similar program in place. New York state has a program in place, as do New Brunswick and PEI. I believe it's time that we followed their lead.

I would encourage my fellow members to vote for this bill. Like I said, it's had support in the past. I had the pleasure of speaking with the member for Toronto–Danforth earlier and he indicated that he thought he would be supportive of this bill, depending on what it looks like in its final reading. Unfortunately, I don't see him here to speak today. I was hoping he might rise and, as my member, speak in favour of this bill. Maybe he'll have a chance to do so at a later date.

I would encourage, if we could, that we refer this bill to a standing committee that I'm going to suggest should be general government, if that's what pleases the House.

Thank you very much. I do look forward to the support of all members on this bill, and thank you for allowing me to have the opportunity to introduce it and speak to it today.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I'll just make reference to the member, as a new member, that we do not at any time refer to members who are not in the House; just a small correction.

Further debate.

Mr. Michael Harris: I'm happy to be speaking today to Bill 12, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 with respect to tips and other gratuities. I had an opportunity to welcome the new member from Beaches–East York this morning. I know I'll be splitting my time with the member for Thornhill, so I'll add a few comments and turn it over to her.

I think it's fair to again acknowledge the work of his predecessor, Mr. Michael Prue, former member for Beaches–East York. This was one of the issues that I do recall him bringing forward to the House and that we debated this bill on the floor, I believe, in the last session. He introduced this bill last session. I really want to thank again Mr. Prue for his service to the people of Beaches–East York as well as to the province of Ontario.

He is a fine individual—not that he is going to be far; I know that he has a lot to contribute, not only to his local community, but to the province and our country. I wish him all the best and I wish him some enjoyment. I know that he'll perhaps be taking the odd cruise, enjoying some downtime, and perhaps picking up some new baking recipes, as I know he so enjoyed doing—and which I enjoyed consuming. I'll miss that of him in committee. We sat in estimates committee together for, I guess, a couple of years, especially at the time when we were going through the power plant debacle. He had a lot of tough decisions to make. I thank him for that, and I thank him for his service, his kindness. I did have a chance to speak with Mr. Prue following the election; I wished him all the best. I wanted to get that out of the way. I know he served this Legislature for 13 years, and I thank him for that.

This bill defines a tip or a gratuity as “a payment voluntarily made to or left for an employee by a customer of the employee's employer” or a payment “made to an employer by a customer in such circumstances ... that the customer intended or assumed that the payment would be redistributed to an employee....”

I know when we all dine out—in fact, I had the privilege of taking in Summerlicious. I guess that was one good benefit, perhaps, of us coming back in the summer session: to enjoy Toronto's Summerlicious over the last little while. It ends, I believe, this Sunday, on the 20th. My colleagues and I have had several opportunities to enjoy some of the finest restaurants here in Toronto, at a relatively affordable price. I know that we got some exemplary service from the staff at many of those restaurants over the course of the last two weeks, and I thank them for that. But I think that as consumers, when we go to a restaurant and we get good service, we leave a tip, assuming or expecting that that tip will go directly to the individual who helped serve us.

I know some will say that in certain restaurants, tips are pooled and the staff in the back, in the kitchen, the servers, etc., split that, because they are a part of the team as well. I can only imagine—I have never worked in a kitchen, only consumed what they make, and I know that folks in the kitchen are run off their feet at times and work extremely hard in conjunction with the server who comes to your table, and we want to thank them as well. I think folks expect that, at times, when they do leave a tip, often the case is that it is pooled. But I don't think that they ever would expect it to go to an owner or an employer. I just don't think that is the case. In fact, for myself, I would never expect when I leave a tip that it goes to the owner. I feel that the owner's cut predominantly would come from the food, the regular charges and so forth.

Within this bill, if the employer were caught withholding tips, the amount withheld would be treated as if it were wages owing to the employee.

Another statute in this is the fact that the employer may withhold tips if a statute of Ontario or Canada or a court order authorizes it, or if the employer collects or redistributes the tips amongst all or some of the employees, or other employees, as I had mentioned just previously.

We really have no issue with this bill. We did have a few concerns with the original bill as was introduced originally by MPP Prue that have been addressed.

You know what? I'll leave the rest of my time to my colleague from Thornhill, because I think I've had my say on this, but I look forward to further debate and discussion on this important matter. Again, I encourage people, if they've not already enjoyed Summerlicious in Toronto, to get out, get on the website, make a reservation and enjoy some of the finest establishments that Toronto has to offer, as we did just recently.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: It is my pleasure and my honour to rise today and speak to this bill that was introduced repeatedly by the former member of Beaches–East York, Michael Prue. Mr. Prue spent a great deal of time and energy speaking to constituents about their day-to-day concerns during his distinguished career as an MPP, and before that as a municipal representative for his beloved community of East York and Beaches.

Mr. Prue heard many, many complaints over the years from servers about the practice of tipping out. It's currently legal, and effectively it forces low-paid servers to give up a percentage of their hard-earned tip money to owners and to managers who are more highly paid.

The explanations that servers receive for why they should be giving away the tips they earn to their bosses were, in reality, the costs of running a business. Essentially, business owners were saying that in order for them to keep these people employed, they had to tip out. Apparently, servers' tips help owners defray credit fees and broken dishes, as has already been mentioned by the member for Beaches–East York. Of course, this is the reality. That's like owning a car and saying that you need a little more money in order to replace the windshield wipers or get an oil change. Those are the costs of owning and operating a car, just like broken dishes and credit card fees and paying your staff are the costs of running a restaurant. This makes no sense; it never has and never will.

I think often, actually, of the servers who serve us here in the Queen's Park restaurant. You have Richard and Joseph and Jenny and Leo. As far as I can tell, they pool their tips together, because they recognize that they are doing a collective service to the Legislature. I just want to say that I think that they do an amazing job, and we're lucky to have them here in the House.

But this tip-out bill—it speaks to Mr. Prue's qualities, his charm and his grace and his willingness to listen to everyone, that he decided to craft the initial version of this bill. Servers mentioned their frustration of tipping out, and Michael heard their concerns and followed up. He found out that while the practice was legal, it didn't need to be, and he designed the legislation to seek a little more justice on behalf of those people in this community who were already having a hard time making ends meet. It needs to be said that there's a predominance of female servers—waitresses—in this field. These are single mothers, students. They're trying to make their way through life. They need those tips to help them get to that place, those people in his community who are already having a hard time making ends meet.

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It's not that definition of what we are all here to do, but I'm sure we all understand. Some of us in this House—I know, for myself, I was a waitress. I was not a particularly good waitress and I was really happy to have the shared tips portion of that day. The question is, though: why are servers who are paid less than the provincial minimum wage not legally entitled to protection of their tip money from restaurant and bar owners and managers?

In 2010, and this is interesting, the Minister of Labour, when responding to a concerned server, told that server that he could do nothing to change this unfair practice because tips are not wages. In fact, even the Canada Revenue Agency considers tips to be wages, because servers are expected to claim their tips as income when filing their taxes. They have to claim them.

Today's debate is evidence that the Liberal government has changed its tune on whether or not anything could be done. They will be changing their tune on many issues, I propose, as they look at a 6% program cut going forward. A couple of years ago, in 2012, former Premier McGuinty publicly stated—this is a public statement from the former Premier—that Mr. Prue's bill must pass. He committed to ensure the protection of service workers who rely on tips. McGuinty's subsequent prorogation of the Legislature, of course, resulted in the bill not even making second reading debate. I remember this well because I had only been here for 11 days. I'm not bitter about that at all.

Debate was scheduled three days after the House prorogued. It's even more interesting that a member of the government has decided to revive Mr. Prue's bill. It's interesting that you're doing this.

It should also be noted that there are some restaurants that do not employ the practice of tipping out. I think it needs to be stated. We can't cast everyone in the same net. According to some sources that Mr. Prue cultivated, Milestones restaurants, for instance, do not practise tipping out to management. The Toronto Star quoted the Ontario Restaurant Hotel and Motel Association as not promoting sharing tips with management as well. So we have to be careful going forward that we don't cast everyone in the same shadow of this unfair practice.

Over the last three years, this issue has become wildly popular with Ontarians—workers and the media—as it should. I have to mention that during the by-election and the election campaign in Kitchener–Waterloo, I spoke to servers who were encouraged and heartened that a New Democrat MPP was fighting for something that really mattered to them, something that they didn't know could be changed. Isn't that the potential of this House? We all have the potential, as we take this seat, to make a positive change.

I want to commend the new member from Beaches–East York for bringing Mr. Prue's bill back to this Legislature and honouring his efforts in this way. I should add, though, that the new member has very big shoes to fill. If he hasn't already realized that, I'm sure he will be reminded of it on several occasions.

I also want to make mention that the former member for Beaches–East York used to make the best banana and chocolate chip bread known to this House. He used to have chocolate bars in his desk on a regular basis—

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Don't say that.

Ms. Catherine Fife: It doesn't matter. He's not here anymore. You can break the rules when you're not here anymore. His legend is very sound. He was a man for all seasons. Every day he came into this place he said, "It's another day in paradise," because he recognized the potential of making a difference when he took his seat.

I also want to add that even though this bill is now being introduced, obviously by the new member for Beaches–East York—congratulations—it is not being introduced as a government bill. I think a real tribute to Mr. Prue's work would have been for this government to

pass this legislation quickly. The potential of a government bill would actually have it expedited. As you can see, it's a short bill and a quick change to the law. Why not introduce it as a government bill and not a private members' bill? It may take years for this private member's bill to see the light of day. You know that's true. There are many private members' bills that sit on that list for days, for years, for decades.

However, there is one change in this version which I wish to draw attention to from the former member's bill. It's a fundamental thing that on this side of the House we fundamentally disagree with. In this version of the bill, collective agreements must expire before servers can take advantage of the bill's provisions. Why do that? It could be positive, it could be meaningful. It could recognize the work that those who serve the public in the private sector—it's a clear recognition of the work they do, yet you've missed that opportunity, as the bill is crafted in its current form.

It doesn't make much sense. If this change becomes law, then all of a sudden—you're working in a unionized environment—you don't get to benefit from the improvements made by this bill. For us, it makes no sense. If this bill in its current state were to become law, unionized servers might still be forced to tip out. That's a change to Mr. Prue's bill that we obviously cannot support. It is not the true intent of the original intention of the bill, and we will be looking to amend this. If this private member's bill ever sees the light of day, we will look to amend that, and we are giving you that notice.

I do hope that members from all sides of the House support this bill. I think the PCs will do that as well, if they've supported it in the past. I think that it's a testament that we can make it better in honour of the incredible efforts of Mr. Prue, who served this House with great integrity for many years.

I think, actually, the motivation and the emotion behind this bill is quite honestly that if we treat others the way we wish to be treated, with dignity, with grace, it says more about us as a government and the people we are. Certainly, those who serve us day in and day out in the restaurant industry need to be recognized in a more holistic way, in a more fair way. So we will be supporting this private member's bill going forward.

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

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm happy to speak on this bill. I guess we're definitely calling it the stopping-the-practice-of-tipping-out bill.

My father actually worked as a waiter. I never worked as a waitress; I would have been terrible at it. But I was offered a job once, and he didn't want me to take it because he thought it was really tough work and he was, I guess, concerned for my safety and managing—

Ms. Sylvia Jones: It's not tougher than being an MPP.

Mrs. Gila Martow: It's not tougher than being an MPP. It sounds like it's a pretty difficult job—and you are correct, the member from Kitchener–Waterloo, when you say that it's a lot of women. I think we've all been to

different restaurants, from the fast-food joints to the much fancier restaurants for special occasions. You notice that the more expensive restaurants actually do tend to have more male waiters than female, and you wonder why that is. The tipping is obviously a lot higher. I would like to have some information, if the member from Beaches–East York is able to give it, on which restaurants are more likely to do this practice. Is it the chains, the franchises? Is it the lower-cost restaurants or the more expensive restaurants? I think that might be some information that's helpful to everybody.

Obviously, we all support an end to this practice. Why? Because when we're giving somebody a tip, it's a tip. It's an agreement between two people or two parties to give some additional money to recognize the special service they did. Nobody really feels that that money should necessarily be going to anybody else in the restaurant. If the waiter voluntarily wants to pool their earnings with the other staff in the restaurant, you can certainly see why. The maître d' often gets a portion because they don't get any tips; a busboy and things like that, they're not able to reap the benefits. But certainly the owners of the restaurant—I think it's up to them to manage their business properly, and that means ensuring that there's some profit margin available to them either through food or—as we often know, the food is a loss leader and they're making the majority of their income from the drinks.

I remember my father often leaving tips in a restaurant. Whenever he could, he would pay with a credit card for the meal, but the tip he would want to leave in cash. I think that's something interesting to note and I think that's true for a lot of people, I notice, when they go to restaurants—the member is nodding his head. People tend to want to leave cash for the tip because they don't want to hear that the server had to wait days or even weeks to get their tip portion from the restaurant because the restaurant will say, “Well, I have to wait for the credit card statement to come through”—or whatever, the bank statement—“and make sure this person's credit card was good and that they weren't going to complain about the charge” or something like that and cause difficulties. Perhaps the restaurant would want to take off a percentage that was more than the actual percentage that the credit card company was charging because of maybe some kind of administrative cost for having to collect the money and then give the money out. Perhaps the server would be quitting the restaurant—often they don't stay very long in these jobs—before they even get their wages from the tips. I think that's an interesting practice that we still see where people are leaving cash tips.

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You have to wonder about taxes. Obviously, servers are supposed to pay taxes on their earnings in restaurants. We do know there's a large underground economy in Ontario that's really robbing us of revenue to build the infrastructure and provide the health care and education funding we need. If the owners of the restaurants are taking a portion of the tips, I'd like to know if anybody's

tracing that money and if they're paying taxes on the portion of the tips because an audit wouldn't necessarily know to look for that. They wouldn't be expecting a restaurant owner to be taking tips.

It's a global economy. There's a lot of tourism. We want to have those tourist dollars coming into Ontario, and I think tourists want to feel that they're being treated fairly. Nobody likes to go to Europe and get the bill from the restaurant where they're being told that there's a fee on top of the food, on top of the drinks, on top of the taxes, on top of the tips; there's a fee for the plates, for the place setting. If anybody has been to Europe, I think they know what I'm talking about. It's often in the tourist areas. Personally, there's nothing like that to turn me off going back to that restaurant.

We want tourists to come here and get great service. How do you get great service? You have smiling faces and happy servers. How do you do that? Well, when they're having to give up a portion of their income and they feel it's unfair, they're not going to be happy, and they're not going to be smiling. I don't think we would be terribly surprised at that.

I think that it's something we all want to see, especially with the Pan Am Games coming next summer. We don't want to see restaurants jack up their prices. We don't want to see long lineups. We want to see extra servers put in. We want to figure out how to feed all these visitors who are coming. We don't want to have the old—you know, after the Pan Am Games—“We should have done this” and “We should have done that.”

I think we're all here for a reason, and the reason is to anticipate all the problems going forward and find the solutions before the problems become—it happens too quickly for us to make the changes on the fly. It's certainly something we should be looking at, and maybe this should be part of it. We should be look at sort of boosting tourism and how to make the Pan Am Games go smoothly in terms of not just giving people food but giving them food with that great Ontario smile. Maybe advertise Canadian fare—things with maple syrup; there are salad dressings with maple syrup.

I'm happy to speak on and support this bill.

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

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I want to make it very clear that this bill is only being debated today because of the hard work and dedication of the former member of Beaches–East York. So I want to acknowledge his hard work for bringing this bill to light, for bringing this issue to light.

I also want to congratulate the member on his election. But I want to make it very clear that while the member is bringing forward the former member from Beaches–East York's bill, he's bringing forward an inferior bill, a worse bill. Let's talk about why.

I heard the member from Kingston and the Islands heckle about the employment law and about being a labour supporter. Let me give you a little bit of education about employment law and labour law.

Interjection.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: My apologies.

Let me give you some education about labour laws, as well as the new member from Beaches–East York. I'll forgive you for being a rookie. Let's make this very clear. Employment law indicates there are certain areas of law where if the law provides a greater deal of protection than a collective agreement, then the law should prevail. It only makes sense. If the government or the state provides more protection, enhanced rights, and if a collective agreement doesn't provide those rights, why would it make any sense to give inferior protection to an individual? Why would it make any sense that being a non-unionized member would entitle you to greater protection under the law than being a unionized member? That, in itself, doesn't make any sense.

What the member from Beaches–East York did in his bill was ensure that, much like for centuries—the law of the land is, if there is protection by the state that supersedes the collective agreement, then that should prevail; that should allow a member or an individual to have that protection.

That's something that's not here in this bill, and that's something that's certainly a weakness, and we will raise that at an opportunity that we have.

Moreover, it's so important that we recognize that service industry folks are among some of the most vulnerable people in our society. We need to ensure that they're protected, particularly given the fact that many women are working in the service industry. We need to ensure that they're protected in a meaningful way.

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

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: I am so pleased to rise today and support my colleague from Beaches–East York. The Protecting Employees' Tips Act, 2014, is a great bill, and I am delighted to have a chance to speak in favour of it.

I would like to commend the member from Beaches–East York for introducing this bill, and acknowledge the former member from that riding for the work that he did in bringing this issue forward. This bill is, in essence, about fairness.

J'aimerais féliciter le représentant de Beaches–East York pour avoir amené devant cette Chambre ce projet de loi.

This bill is about making sure that people are compensated fairly for the hard work that they do. It is also about honesty. When a customer leaves a tip, there is an expectation that it will go to the employee who helped them, and not the business owner. I know there are exceptions, which is why MPP Potts's version of the bill includes amendments that were brought forward in committee—amendments like one that understands that in small businesses sometimes the owner is also a crucial member of the serving staff and deserves tips as well.

Bien sûr, il y a des exceptions, entre autres au niveau des petites entreprises au sein desquelles le propriétaire est souvent une personne-ressource essentielle quant au service offert à leur clientèle.

Mr. Speaker, I know that many of the young people in my riding find their first jobs in the hospitality industry. Often, young people wouldn't be able to stand up to their supervisor or the owner of their establishment if they were unhappy about employment practices. This is a bill about protecting them. We want to ensure that no young person has to stand up to a supervisor alone. We want them to have the government of Ontario on their side, making sure they keep the money they are given for a job well done.

As a former businesswoman, I know how hard young people work. I was proud to give many young people in my riding their first jobs ever. But how can we ask them to work hard if they don't keep the money they've earned? This bill teaches fairness.

The hospitality industry provides massive economic benefit to the province of Ontario, and the people who work in this industry rely on the tips they receive from patrons. These workers are quite literally the face of our tourism industry.

Il ne faut pas oublier et surtout ne pas négliger l'impact qu'ont les employés du secteur de l'hospitalité sur l'expérience positive de chacune des personnes qui visitent notre belle province. Et c'est souvent le reflet de cette expérience positive qui fait en sorte que ces gens reviennent nous visiter.

They are our servers, our tour guides, our hotel staff and more. We rely on them to make sure that every person who comes to visit this great province has a wonderful experience and leaves wanting to return. They work on holidays and weekends, when everyone else is spending time with their families. I am proud to support a bill that supports workers like this. They deserve to be treated fairly.

Now, Speaker, I know that this bill is not representative of how all business owners treat their employees. But we, as Ontarians, believe in fairness and compensation for hard work. This bill ensures that the tips left for an employee go directly to them, the way it should be.

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This bill is a thoughtful piece of legislation that has the support of employees and employers alike. It is one more building block in our government's plan to support Ontarians. I encourage all members of this House to support this bill and send it to committee.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Mississauga–Brampton South.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: I'm very pleased to rise today and speak in support of Bill 12, which is being brought forward by the member from Beaches–East York.

My colleague from Ottawa–Orléans spoke very eloquently. She explained that this bill is all about fairness when it comes to shared tips and gratuities, and she is very right.

First of all, I would like to congratulate the member from Beaches–East York on his recent election win, and I'm sure he is going to be a hard-working and very effective member for his community.

Mr. Speaker, I was first made aware of this bill when it was introduced by my former colleague and the member's predecessor, Michael Prue. He introduced this bill and it was debated in the Legislature, and I would like to acknowledge the work he has done on this matter.

It went before the committee and we heard from a number of stakeholders. Unfortunately, it died on the order paper because the election was called by the NDP, which Ontarians never wanted and they never deserved. However, Ontarians elected a majority Liberal government, and they have asked us to build Ontario up. The member's initiative is very much along those lines. He has done the smart thing and he has done the right thing to put forward this bill. It's sound public policy.

Mr. Speaker, I believe this bill will provide necessary changes and benefit positively all those who are working in the hospitality industry. As a former small business woman, I fully understand the contributions employees make on an everyday basis to help grow small businesses. I'm fully supportive of anything, any initiative that will benefit employees and their families in a positive way.

So I urge all members of this House to support this bill, because it will benefit many people in the hospitality industry who work very hard—day in, day out—to support themselves, to support their families and strengthen our economy.

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

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Good afternoon, Speaker. Our government is committed to building a strong economy built on fairness, for both workers and business owners. On this side of the House, we understand that when Ontarians tip, they want 100% of it to go to the staff. Servers, hairstylists, tour guides, housekeeping staff and all other workers who earn tips in addition to their wages work hard to earn a decent living, and they deserve to be treated fairly.

Mr. Speaker, as you may recall, the last three versions of this bill were only one line long, which was neither enforceable nor did it take into account all the different types of arrangements that may exist in relation to tips. For example, we needed to ensure that fair practices, such as tip-sharing among staff, are protected. This is where management distributes the total tips between bussers, hostesses and other service support staff, indeed as Milestones does. In addition, in the case of small businesses in which the owner or operators are a key part of the staff, they should be allowed to participate in tip pooling.

We also need to take into account unionized workplaces where collective agreements include tips. Usually, when a union collective agreement is put in place, everyone votes on it and the majority rules. That's why our government worked very hard, in collaboration with the previous member for Beaches–East York, to make improvements to the previous bill while it was before committee. We were pleased to see these amendments made, and we hope that this important bill can move forward to committee once again.

Since 2003, our government has increased the minimum wage by 60%, from \$6.85 to \$11. The specific minimum wage for servers has already risen from \$5.95 to \$9.55, and if our Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act passes, the living standards for workers in the hospitality industry will also increase, as their minimum wage increases annually at the rate of inflation. Now we have one of the highest minimum wages in the country again. It was only fair after nine consecutive years of no increases under previous governments.

The previous bills put forward by the former MPP for Beaches–East York, and his approach that no tips should go to the management in any situation ever, were too simplistic. Aspects of the former MPP's bill ignored certain aspects that the now-MPP for Beaches–East York addresses. Many establishments' waiters and waitresses share some of their tips with bussers, hostesses and other service support staff. Tip-sharing agreements are between the owners and the staff and vary by restaurant, and they should be respected.

There are also small restaurants and large unionized banquet halls, for example, that need to be taken into account. Often in smaller restaurants, where the owner/operators are a crucial part of the staff, they too deserve a share of the tips.

Finally, we needed to account for unionized workplaces where collective agreements include tips.

I agree with the member from Beaches–East York, and I think we should pass this bill.

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

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I'm rising on a point of order, just to correct my record. I referred to the member from Kingston and the Islands incorrectly. I meant to refer to the member from Barrie in my remarks, so I apologize for that mistake and I would like to correct my record.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Any member is allowed to correct the record.

The member for Beaches–East York, you have two minutes for a response.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Thanks very much to my colleagues from Ottawa–Orléans, Mississauga–Brampton South and Barrie for their kind comments in support of this bill. I appreciate very much the support you give us, as new members and veteran members, to bring this thing forward.

I also would like to thank the member from Kitchener–Conestoga, both for his support of the bill and his support of restaurants in Toronto during Summerlicious.

I'd like to direct my comments to the members from Kitchener–Waterloo and Bramalea–Gore–Malton: Thank you so much for your tribute speech on behalf of the former member from Beaches–East York. I share your affection for him. I've known him for 25 years. He's a great guy. I know he worked hard in the community, and I wish him well in his future endeavours.

I also appreciate your commendations—congratulations on your own elections, but your commendations for

me, having brought this bill forward. Let me say that I brought it forward in tribute, and I brought it forward as a campaign promise. Better than a government bill, I can bring this forward personally. I think it does greater honour, and I look forward to your advice as to how we can move this through committee faster.

What I heard from the members of the official opposition is support for this bill. What I heard from members of the third party was support from this bill—with some minor amendments, possibly, but support for this bill.

I would like to specifically address this collective bargaining issue that arose. Before I get lectured on what's proper labour relation policy, as a rookie, I think veteran MPPs should recognize the fact that I do have a master's in the labour relations field, and I understand this area of law quite well.

Under the Employment Standards Act, there is a question of greater benefit to be taken into consideration. I respect collective bargaining contracts. When I change a law, I want to make sure that we don't unilaterally rip up a collective bargaining agreement, go in there and make changes. Whether it's to benefit the employer or the employee, I respect the sanctity of collective bargaining contracts, and they should as well. It's very important.

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When you look at that bill, we don't know what the trade-offs were. We do not know what the trade-offs were with respect to wages, working conditions or hours of work that go along with the tipping policies of a restaurant. So you can't just say that they would get a better benefit. They may have already received a better benefit, and that's how the Employment Standards Act reads. You need to maybe take that course that I designed at Seneca College, which explains these things in very, very clear detail.

So I appreciate your support. I hope we can work together at the committee to make sure—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you. We'll take the vote at the end of private members' public business.

ONTARIO BIKE MONTH ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR LE MOIS DE LA BICYCLETTE EN ONTARIO

Ms. McMahon moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 13, An Act to proclaim the month of June as Ontario Bike Month / Projet de loi 13, Loi proclamant le mois de juin Mois de la bicyclette en Ontario.

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

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: I'm very pleased to have this opportunity to introduce Bill 13, An Act to proclaim the month of June as Ontario Bike Month.

Speaker, I want to start my remarks today by thanking the member for Mississauga–Streetsville for providing

me with the opportunity to introduce this bill, as it was one he rose in the same place and introduced just a few short months ago.

At that time, as many members of this House will know, I was the CEO of the Share the Road Cycling Coalition, Ontario's provincial bicycle policy and advocacy organization. In that capacity, I asked the member for Mississauga–Streetsville if he would consider tabling a private member's bill asking all members of this Legislature to consider supporting a simple idea, one that would allow us all to celebrate cycling in communities across Ontario by declaring June as Ontario Bike Month.

Now, as his colleague, I'm honoured that he has asked me to introduce this legislation, and I would like to thank him for his consideration and generosity. I look forward to his comments, as I do those of my caucus colleagues and those across the aisle, as we debate this legislation. It is also worth noting that the member for Mississauga–Streetsville, as I learned recently, enjoys bicycling, as I know a number of members of this House do as well.

As members will know, several communities across Ontario consider June as bike month already. In fact, Speaker, I'm pleased that a number of key organizations and partners who lead cycling initiatives across our province are here with us today. With your indulgence, I'd like to introduce them: Marlaine Koehler, the executive director of the Waterfront Regeneration Trust, one of the leading cycling tourism organizations in North America; Teresa Di Felice, director of community and government relations and driver training at CAA South Central Ontario; Jacquelyn Hayward Gulati, the manager of active transportation at the city of Mississauga; and Chris Drew, who lives here in Toronto and is a staunch advocate for cycling at Cycle Toronto. Thank you for being here.

Mr. Speaker, these individuals and organizations undertake and sponsor activities with communities right across our province, initiatives which serve to celebrate the love of bicycling. They also lead activities which encourage people to choose their bikes more often.

From Windsor to Warton, from Cambridge to Caledonia along the Grand River, from Kingston to Westport, from Sarnia to Lake Erie and along the newly minted waterfront trail, to the Greater Niagara Circle Route and along the stunning shores of Lake Ontario, from Mississauga to Mississippi Mills, to my beautiful riding of Burlington and the beauty of the Niagara escarpment, from the Ottawa Valley to our nation's capital and the Quebec border, and west to North Bay and Mattawa, from Manitoulin Island to Sault Ste. Marie and east to Sudbury, in Thunder Bay, Red Lake and along the shores of Georgian Bay, Ontarians are enjoying the simple freedom and convenience of riding their bicycle in growing numbers, and Bill 13 celebrates this fact.

Whether it be Bike to Work Day, Bike to School Day, the Becel Ride for Heart, the Ride to Conquer Cancer or the Manitoulin Passage Ride, there are a number of ways in which Ontarians choose to celebrate the joy of getting

on two wheels instead of four. Indeed, what is there not to like about the opportunity to feel the wind and the warmth of the sun on your face as you experience your community in the best way in which to truly see it: at a human pace from the seat of your bicycle?

Speaker, my own community of Burlington is but one example of a community where a growing number of citizens are choosing to ride for reasons related to economics, convenience, good health or just plain fun. In short, bicycling is, especially for those short trips under five or even 10 kilometres, often the healthiest and most cost-effective way of getting around. The fact is, according to Environment Canada, over 40% of our trips in Canada are under five kilometres. In Burlington, as in most places in Ontario, this is absolutely and eminently doable. Burlington has 49 kilometres of bike lanes, 22.5 kilometres of bike boulevards, 19 kilometres of shared-use paths and 21 kilometres of multi-use paths that provide an excellent array of choices, whether it be on a trail, on the road or along our jewel of a waterfront.

Every day, when I arrive at the GO train station, the bike racks are full. Last night, when I arrived back in my riding by train, I saw a number of folks getting on their bikes, enjoying the opportunity to stretch their legs after the commute home and unwind in the best of ways. All of these are signs and evidence of the fact that bikes are here to stay, and the good news is that a growing number of cities, large and small, are making the accommodation of bicyclists an important priority.

The tabling of this legislation comes at an interesting and exciting time for bicycling in Ontario. Just last year, in my former professional capacity, I had the pleasure of launching CycleON—Ontario's first bicycling strategy in over 20 years—with the member for Toronto Centre, who was then the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure.

Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank the member for Toronto Centre for his unwavering support for cycling and his commitment to creating a more bicycle-friendly Ontario. This commitment and, indeed, our government's commitment was reflected by the development of a 20-year vision for cycling in Ontario and an action plan to address five key areas: design healthy, active and prosperous communities; improve cycling infrastructure; make highways and streets safer; promote cycling awareness and behavioural shifts; and increase bicycling tourism opportunities. I look forward to continuing this important work on bicycling policy and legislation with the new Minister of Transportation and all members of this House. Indeed, I'm proud to say that a number of the initiatives outlined in the strategy are already under way.

An important commitment by this government to supporting cycling and one of the most critical is \$25 million in funding for cycling infrastructure contained in the recently tabled budget as part of the government's overall commitment to strategic investments in infrastructure. This funding for municipalities, the first in our province's history, will enhance their ability to keep their

citizens safe and encourage Ontarians to bicycle more often. It will also encourage the development of cycling tourism networks, contributing to economic development and job creation in communities large and small, urban, suburban and rural, too.

Bicycle tourism investments around the world and in fact closer to home in both Quebec and our neighbours to the south have proven to be a huge economic boost. In Quebec, the government there has invested over \$200 million in the Route verte, a 4,300-kilometre route system spanning the province. The economic impact of those investments is clear. Bicycle tourism brings \$134 million to the Quebec economy annually. In addition, cities like Montreal have become one of the most bicycle-friendly in the world.

Further, in the United States, bicycle tourism is a \$49-billion economic item, with a 50,000-mile route system currently under development in a partnership between federal agencies, state local governments and the Adventure Cycling Association, the leading bicycle travel organization in the US with 47,000 members. Closer to home, Ontario is poised to do the same with, again, the cycling strategy leading the way.

Ontario is becoming more bicycle friendly, and the numbers are clear. In yearly provincial polling done by the Share the Road Cycling Coalition, 4% or 540,000 Ontarians are riding a bike every single day in this province. That's a big number. An additional 28% report riding weekly or monthly. So in total, over 4.3 million Ontarians are riding their bikes at least once a week.

There's a pent-up demand for cycling, too. A majority of Ontarians want to ride their bike more often—54%. Topping the list of priorities that will encourage them to do so include investments in infrastructure, more bike lanes and trails; "better infrastructure," 67% of respondents said.

Finally, there's strong support for cycling tourism, too. Some 70% of Ontarians agree that our province should do more to promote cycling tourism so that they can enjoy the beauty of Ontario by bike.

Making cycling safer—making our roads safer—is a priority for, dare I say, most, if not all, of us in this House. In fact, I look forward to the potential of once again debating the safer roads for Ontario act, which contains amendments to the Highway Traffic Act consistent with the recommendations outlined in the coroner's review into cycling deaths.

1520

As many of us know, cycling has enormous benefits. It is a tool for mitigating congestion, lowering health care costs, and the benefits are clear and well documented. In short, there is no better time than now to celebrate bicycling in our province, with numerous initiatives, programs, partnerships and activities under way, all with the express purpose of encouraging Ontarians to cycle more often and celebrate the over half a million Ontarians who ride daily now.

I hope that the members of this House will embrace both the spirit and the intent of this bill as we all work

together to make our communities and our province more bicycle friendly.

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

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm happy to speak on Bill 13, An Act to proclaim the month of June as Ontario Bike Month. Je suis très heureuse de parler au sujet de la bicyclette. Maintenant, je suis la critique pour la francophonie, et je devrais pratiquer mon français. Je vois que tous les Libéraux et les membres du NDP parlent souvent en français. Alors, je vais faire l'effort. I'm going to make the effort, as the francophone critic for the PC Party, to say a few words in French every now and then so that you can see as I improve through my French lessons, as we make progress.

I'm delighted to have the opportunity to speak on behalf of the Ontario PC caucus today in support of Bill 182, Ontario Bike Month Act.

In the province of Ontario, we're fortunate to have 13,000 kilometres of bike trails and some of the world's most beautiful scenery. Some 1.2 million bike riders take to the roads and trails every year, and that number continues to increase as biking becomes one of the most affordable, convenient and enjoyable methods of transportation.

We all know that there are different people on bicycles. There are people who are just trying get somewhere. It's their main transportation, and it does become a problem in the winter months. There are the hobbyists who have the neat shorts with the extra padding that looks a little silly when they get off the bike—

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Hey!

Mrs. Gila Martow: Not to judge anyone.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: You need that extra padding.

Mrs. Gila Martow: You need that extra padding—well, we'll talk about that a little further. It depends how far you're going on the bike. I've got some of the built-in padding, maybe.

The reality is that we do have to share the roads with cars.

This morning, as I was just about to get onto Avenue Road, a bike came flying right beside me and got snagged in some red construction fencing, some plastic fencing that was loose and caught onto some part of the cyclist. He slammed into the car in front of me. It was that moment when your heart just stops. Luckily, we were all kind of crawling at a red light. If we had been moving quickly, that could have been one of those terrible, tragic stories that we often hear on the news.

I think we really need to make an effort to have the bikes ride safely on our roads.

I know I'm often doing something that isn't really legal—and I hope the police officers, because I'm so short, think I'm a child; with my helmet it's hard to tell, maybe. I ride on the sidewalks. I'm afraid to be on the roads where the cars are going quickly. We're not going to win in an accident between a bicycle and a car.

It's all great to advance cycling on the roads, but it has to be appropriate.

I believe it's great to let bicycles on the highways because there are shoulders. Why not allow the cyclists to use those shoulders, as long as they're not in the regular lanes with the cars?

There are roads, such as Eglinton, where there are bike paths, or there are trails not far from Eglinton. Why should we be building bike lanes when there are trails that we could use nearby?

I think the cyclists should really be taken off the major roads whenever possible. But when they do need to be on the major roads, we have to find a way to share the sidewalks. Maybe we don't need to have as wide sidewalks. Maybe we have to look at some of the things that are blocking the way on the sidewalks. Too often, there are garbage cans and things like that that could be put up right against buildings.

Bike Month has taken hold in some of our major cities. I have some notes here that say that in Toronto, Ottawa and Hamilton they're already celebrating June as Bike Month. I think the precedent is there. Obviously, we need to invest in infrastructure throughout the province if we're going to make it a Bike Month for the entire province not just for some of the major cities.

A little bit before, I mentioned tourism when we were talking about the restaurants in Toronto and in Ontario. I think that Toronto could really advance itself as a tourist destination for cyclists around the world. Bicycles are now able to come apart so much easier to take on a plane. I was sent a video of some kind of motorbike that was able to fold up and go into a duffel bag. With the right tools, they're able to take them apart and put them back together.

Maybe we could have better rentals for bikes, not just those clunky looking things but better bikes with helmets. Maybe with room to carry—that's always the issue for people: How do you go shopping and purchase things and bring them back on your bike? It doesn't exactly help our retailers if everybody is coming to their stores on bicycles and saying, "Oh, I would love to buy that, but unfortunately I'm here on a bicycle, so I can't make the purchase." We do have to think about these things and how we can advance bicycles with tourism while providing a safe route for everybody.

Obviously, this is Toronto—we're not living in California—and we do have brutal winters here. Maybe we have to have a system where, in some summer months, we do disrupt the traffic. We find that there is less traffic during the summer months; a lot of people are on vacation. Maybe we could have lanes that are used for bicycles in the summer, but the rest of the year, not so much—they would have to share the roads with the cars. We don't see as many cyclists, certainly up in York region, during the winter months. Maybe it's because we haven't been encouraging it enough, or maybe it's because people just aren't able to manage in the winter months.

I'm in touch with some people in York region, in the city of Vaughan, which is where I live, in the riding of Thornhill. They're called Vaughan BUG; it's a bicycle

club. They're really promoting themselves. I urge people to follow them on Twitter and to look them up. They have a Facebook page. They're trying to organize some events. I'd like to get back on track—the recent election derailed me a bit—to do a ride with a brunch or a picnic and to encourage people.

I have a regular—I guess I'd call it a hybrid bike, where it's not a race bike and it's not a mountain bike. But now we're seeing a lot of electric bikes. I think that that's going to be the challenge for all of us in the Legislature. How are we going to deal with these electric bikes? They're not scooters, and they're not motorcycles, but they aren't exactly bicycles. Too often people find ways to skirt the laws. I think we're much better off to see the future of cycling and to make the changes that we need in our regulations so that we can anticipate all the future problems.

I noticed, coming down to Queen's Park from my riding of Thornhill, that it is downhill most of the way, which is a fun way to bike. I've thought about it, but the problem is how to get home when it's uphill most of the way. Electric bikes, I believe that every time you brake, you're charging the battery, just like an electric car. The battery life is about 30 minutes, from my understanding, and that will help you get up the hill. Then when you're riding on more level ground, you're recharging the battery. I'm hoping that that's something I can try out in the near future.

I will be going to Colorado to visit a friend near Vail to do some cycling, which I've done for the last three summers, at the end of this month, since the Legislature won't be in session. It's a wonderful place, Colorado. Basically they have bike trails between towns, from town to town, with community centre sort of little hubs in between that you can stop at. You can get some water, and there's a washroom, and there's vending machines and little parks and benches and things like that.

The bike trails actually make use of the golf courses, which kind of surprised me because I always thought the golf courses wouldn't allow that. But you're wearing the bike helmet, so you're pretty safe from the golf balls, so it sort of makes sense. Maybe it's something that we could look at here, allowing cyclists to somehow use all of our many golf courses, and speak to the golf courses about what would be involved in that. They'd get some visitors to their clubhouse for food and things like that, so maybe they'd like it.

1530

Lots to talk about, but I'm going to leave some time for somebody else from the PC caucus to speak. I'm really looking forward to some new legislation on bicycle riding and to celebrating the next June as Bike Month in Ontario.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: There is so much work to be done on the cycling portfolio, so much work. We can all agree on that. It has been a long time coming.

I, too, want to acknowledge the good people from CAA. I have to tell you, the research that they provide is

of the highest calibre. We've come to depend on it—a valuable partner on this file, and happy to see you here today.

It is a pleasure to rise today to speak about another piece of legislation inspired by the hard work of another New Democrat, Jonah Schein. In this case, he was a tireless advocate on this file. He was an endearing social justice advocate in this place. We will miss his activism.

We will, of course, be supporting any progressive move on the cycling portfolio. I wanted to start off by saying that.

It is important, though, also to acknowledge the history on this file. Mr. Jonah Schein, of course, proposed this private member's bill to create Bike Month back in 2012. His Bicycle Month Act would have also designated each June as Bike Month. If anyone was listening to previous debate on Bill 12, this of course will sound familiar. Jonah's bill was never debated because Premier McGuinty prorogued the Legislature, and over 100 pieces of legislation died on the order paper because the heat got too hot in this House and we needed to take a break, Mr. McGuinty, who now has been welcomed back in the fold. So we've moved on. On this side of the House, we're trying to move on.

New Democrats have been strong advocates, obviously, for a real cycling strategy, with timelines and with targets to increase ridership and funding commitments, to ensure needed objectives for cycling infrastructure, safety and awareness are met. I must remind this chamber that it was the NDP that created Ontario's first cycling strategy, way back in 1992. But today, after two Tory governments and 11 years of Liberal government—actually, 12 now—Ontario's cycling infrastructure investments continue to lag behind other provinces like BC and Quebec. We should look to those jurisdictions for leadership. They have great models. I know the member from Burlington knows this, because she has been talking to this Legislature for almost 12 years on this issue. There is room for improvement; let's agree on that. So June Bike Month—some progress.

The bill before us today would make each June Bike Month in Ontario. We do need to create a space in this province to talk more about what is needed to protect cyclists' safety. It is certainly important symbolically to recognize bikes and cycling, but the symbolism needs to translate into action. Ontarians deserve more transportation options and relief from congestion. Biking is a great way to both avoid and reduce congestion. But in order to make cycling safer and therefore more appealing as an alternative to the car, we need more cycling infrastructure. Cycling infrastructure is crucial to support active living, sustainable transit. The reason why we must take the time to mark Bike Month every June is because this provincial government absolutely must do more to raise awareness. Raising awareness is a good place to start, so obviously we will be supporting this month.

There are so many good reasons to support increased cycling safety in the province of Ontario. In 2012, the deputy chief coroner concluded an investigation, A

Review of All Accidental Cycling Deaths in Ontario From January 1st, 2006 to December 31st, 2010. There are four recommendations I'd like to bring to the House's attention. They examined 129 cycling deaths over a five-year period, including 16 children. Two thirds of these deaths occurred in urban areas. Eighty-six per cent of those killed were male. "The vast majority of cycling deaths occurred during clear weather, on dry roads, with good visibility."

The deputy chief coroner made 14 recommendations, including—I'm not going to go through them all—the adoption of the "complete streets" approach, so we know that when we plan for cycling, cyclists are safer; the legislative change under the Highway Traffic Act, the Municipal Act and relevant municipal bylaws aimed at ensuring clarity and consistency regarding interactions with cyclists and other road users; and the implementation of mandatory helmet legislation for cyclists of all ages. Actually, I'd like just to mention the former member for Kitchener Centre, Mr. Milloy. He brought forward this piece of legislation back when I was a trustee. I was supportive of it then; I'm supportive of it now.

The establishment of a one-metre rule for vehicles when passing cyclists: The member for Parkdale–High Park has brought this forward, as has the former member Jonah Schein.

The NDP has consistently called for numerous changes to improve cycling infrastructure, from complete streets, to side guards, to a review of the Highway Traffic Act, to clarity of the mandate of public health officers to include health and safety in the built environment. These are long-standing recommendations.

So while I think it's amazingly powerful and empowering for the member from Burlington to bring forward this piece of legislation—it must feel very good to have been an activist and an advocate and then to be here in this house and bringing forward this piece of legislation—these are long-standing requests that need direct action. While I'm happy to contribute to this debate on the bill to enact Ontario Bike Month, cycling advocates like the new member from Burlington will know how much New Democrats have tried to push this Liberal government to make—

Interjections.

Ms. Catherine Fife: You know what would be helpful, member for St. Catharines? If you actually listened instead of heckled, that would be helpful.

In fact, the member from Burlington knows better than most because she has paid close attention to the comments of New Democrats over the years. I know this personally because she took some of the comments that I made in this House and some of the comments made by the former member for Davenport, Jonah Schein, and they were included in some of your election material under all-party support. I know the previous member, Frank Klees, took exception to this.

I still stand by those words. When I talked about the advocacy and the courage that it takes to push this

government to do what they said they were going to do in the first place on cycling safety—I stand by those words here. I will stand by those words for a long, long time.

But what we need is action on cycling safety. So it is my pleasure, my privilege, to support June as Ontario Bike Month because it has been a long time coming. It could be a government bill, but it's important that we all acknowledge that this is a first step in the province of Ontario, one of many going forward.

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

Mr. Bob Delaney: It is a pleasure to stand and to support the efforts of my colleague, the new member for Burlington, an outstanding member in just the very short time she has been here. It was also my pleasure, not that many weeks ago, to have introduced very much the same bill. The operative part of this bill can be summed up in a single sentence: This act designates June as Ontario Bike Month. That's it. That's all there is in the bill.

I think the beauty in the bill is in what it empowers people to do. For example, it will enable groups of cyclists to educate other cyclists and motorists to enhance safety when they're on the road. It reminds people to be aware of cyclists. It encourages people to take up cycling.

To give you an idea of just how widespread cycling is in our province, if one were to compare, as the member for Burlington did in talking about how many people are regular cyclists—if that were compared to some of our dynamic multicultural communities, it would be like adding together the Italian community and the Chinese community and the Indian community, and even then, the number of cyclists would exceed that. That just gives you an idea of scale, of how many Ontarians are avid, active cyclists.

Speaker, we've got some members who really want to weigh in on this with some of their thoughts, and I thank you for the time. I especially thank the new member for Burlington for having brought forth this bill. I look forward to its passage and its proclamation.

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

Mrs. Julia Munro: I'm pleased to join in the debate today. I think all of us recognize the value of the bill before us today and the kind of impact that it has. I am particularly aware of the increase in bike paths and the kind of opportunity that provides for families and individuals in safe biking.

1540

I think that's really where I want to concentrate my comments this afternoon, because I'm in a car and I am terrified of bikes. They often do not follow the rules of the road. They go across in the middle of a red light.

The other day, I was right here at the corner of Wellesley and Queen's Park Crescent, and a bicycle came within inches of knocking down a pedestrian because the bicyclist was going to go across on the red light and just barely missed the person who was legally stepping off the curb to cross the road.

This is far more frequent than it should be, so I hope that one of the impacts of this, assuming that it is to pass

here, will be to encourage those bicyclists to actually follow the rules of the road. Another one again was further over on Gerrard. Again, a bicycle turned in right in front of a pedestrian and said, "Oh, sorry!" and kept on going. But fortunately, the pedestrian was all right.

I know in my case that biking is very popular in my neighbourhood, but there is a great concern about the lack of safety for people using a road that has an 80-kilometre speed limit, and it has no shoulders. It has farm equipment, it has big trucks. It's an alternate for a very busy road with many traffic lights, so therefore people all use the road without the traffic lights. I think it's critically dangerous.

I think that taking a hold of those realities is something that June Bike Month should do. At the same time, I think there is a tremendous opportunity to promote tourism, safe biking, and building more and more bike paths throughout the province of Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Before I begin, I want to start off by congratulating the member from Burlington on her election and also congratulating her on her dedication as a cycle advocate, and for bringing forward this bill. I think it's a great initiative and I want to congratulate you for it. I also want to take some time to acknowledge the great work of our previous member from Davenport and his cycling advocacy.

I also want to join in welcoming the other cycling advocates who are here today. Thank you for your continued work. It's a job or a duty that is often unsung and doesn't get a lot of respect, or doesn't get a lot of the attention and praise that you deserve, so this is one chance where at least I and some of the people in this House can take an opportunity to thank you for your great work and encourage you to continue doing it.

While the bill is simple in the fact that it's setting forth a month to celebrate cycling, what it does—and I think what some of the members have alluded to—it can be a great vehicle, pun intended, to encourage and promote the idea of cycling, and to look at our culture and the way that we have focused, or not focused enough, on cycling.

I think that cycling provides a great opportunity to combine a number of issues. If we look at some of the concerns that we're facing right now in our society, there are concerns around health, there are concerns around the environment and there are concerns around transportation and transportation gridlock. Cycling offers a great solution to all three of these issues. It's a time when not only can we look for solutions around these three quite different issues; it also provides an opportunity where all three—urban, suburban and rural—communities can agree that cycling is something that can benefit all of these communities. It's something that matters to people, whether you live in an urban centre, a suburban community or in the rural communities.

But what we need to do—and I think some of the comments have really raised this issue—is we need to really look at cycling and consider as a society what

value we place on it. How important is it? Because if we acknowledge that cycling is something that really helps out our health, if we acknowledge that cycling is something that can actually have a positive impact on our environment by decreasing the amount of reliance on vehicles, and if we acknowledge that more cycling and encouraging cycling will actually improve gridlock, then we should, in our culture and in the way that we view cycling, put it as a priority. So we don't consider it a battle between cars and bicycles and concern ourselves with whether they're following the laws or not. Of course we want to encourage safety and encourage that everyone follows certain parameters to make sure cycling is safe. But if we really value cycling as a solution to these different issues and we really recognize that it's an issue that matters to all of these three different, disparate communities, then we should start shifting our view of cycling and say, "Listen, the fact that someone's cycling—they're actually doing me a benefit if I'm in a car." They're actually benefitting the environment because they're not another car on the road. They're actually taking care of their health and, indirectly, improving our health care system because they're taking the initiative to improve their own health, which would put less burden on the health care system.

If we look at cycling as actually doing all of us a favour, that more cyclists on the road means a better and safer, healthier society in general, then I think we would have less of the issues around whether cycling is cutting into our roads and whether there's this concern between drivers and cyclists. If I see someone riding down the street on a bicycle, I should look at that, we should all look at that as they're doing a great civic duty. They're helping out our society in a number of different ways. I think that's something that we can use this Bike Month for, as a vehicle to encourage and promote the concepts around prioritizing cycling in our society.

The other very important thing that we can use Bike Month for—and I think it's so important—is that while we celebrate cycling and while we can encourage and promote it, we also need to back that up with specific investments in infrastructure. We need to make sure that cycling is something that's not only encouraged and celebrated, but something that's easy to do. We've found very often that one of the mantras of health is that if you make the healthy choice the easier choice, more people will then take that healthy choice. Similarly, if we make cycling or other alternate forms of transportation the easier choice, we'll see more people take up cycling. I think that requires a real investment on the part of the province, on the part of all levels of government to ensure that we can actually promote this very healthy and very important activity.

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

Mr. John Fraser: Mr. Speaker, let me take this opportunity to congratulate you on your appointment to the Chair. It's good to see you back there.

I'm pleased today to stand in support of Bill 13, An Act to proclaim the month of June as Ontario Bike

Month. I'd first like to congratulate the member from Burlington on her election. We've known each other for quite some time. I know that she's going to be a great addition to our caucus and to this Legislature, and I congratulate her on that. I know the people of Burlington will be well served by you.

I also know that she's been a very dedicated advocate for safe cycling, a tireless advocate, and she's brought this to this Legislature. I know she cares very deeply about Ontario's cycling strategy, and I commend her for that. I commend her for making this a priority coming into the Legislature. She's been here three weeks and she's already putting forward a bill, and that's to be commended as well.

In my community of Ottawa South and across Ottawa, cycling has grown exponentially, from people riding to work to recreational cyclists. You just don't see it on the roads; you see it in the number of bike shops that are popping up along Bank Street and actually all over Ottawa and Ottawa South.

I'm very proud that the city of Ottawa has a cycling strategy and in the last two years alone has invested \$18 million in cycling initiatives across the city. Most recently, in my riding the city opened a recreational path along Sawmill Creek between Hunt Club and Riverside, which will help cyclists get downtown on a stretch of road, the Airport Parkway, which I've ridden before. It would be better to not ride that. So I commend them on doing that. In fact, in Ottawa we have bike Sundays. They have that across many communities in our province, where the parkways and pathways are open Sunday mornings for family cycling. It's a great activity. I also commend the NCC, the National Capital Commission, for taking that initiative. Often the NCC gets criticized, but it's really a great initiative that's been going on for I don't know how many years.

But Ottawa is a very bike-friendly city, and I am really very proud of our mayor and our city council for the initiative they've taken. The comprehensive cycling strategy for 2013 is available.

I'm a recreational cyclist. I'm now going to be a little bit more sensitive after the comments from the member from Thornhill, but I ride. I ride in the city. I ride in the country. I like long rides. Cycling is my way of clearing my head. I love riding. It also gives you a feeling of freedom.

1550

I'm also very aware of the dangers of cycling. I have had a few close calls myself. In my riding of Ottawa South, there is a memorial on the corner of Bank and Riverside for a woman named Meg Dussault, who tragically lost her life last year. It's a white bicycle memorial. Her family takes care of it very well, and it's very noticeable. It's a great memorial. It would be good if we saw fewer of those memorials, and I think that Bike Month is an important step in that direction.

Proclaiming June as Ontario Bike Month will help us in making sure that cyclists, drivers and pedestrians understand what it means to share the road and what their

responsibilities are. It will also help us to promote healthy and active lifestyles; it would be good for our health care system. It will get more cars off the road, which is good for our environment.

It will also be an opportunity for us to promote cycle tourism. That will be great for wine country and in the more rural areas of our province. I think that's a real benefit in the tourism sector that we're just beginning to reap.

In closing, I believe that this is a bill that we can all support. What I've heard on both sides of the Legislature is that people support this. Different people at different times have brought this type of idea forward, or other legislation in that regard. So I encourage everybody to support this bill. I congratulate the member.

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

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Thank you to the member from Burlington for asking me to speak on this very important issue, Bill 13, the Ontario Bike Month Act. I want to congratulate the member from Burlington on her hard work on this and on her win. It's a privilege for me to lend my voice in support of another member, and a good friend from the Halton region, by bringing this matter forward.

The health and fitness of Ontario residents is crucial to the overall success and well-being of our society. Healthy bodies lead to healthy minds and communities. Cycling is a fun and easy way for people young and old to enjoy the outdoors while also getting some valuable exercise.

I know this first-hand, because my family have been avid cyclists for many years. For years, my husband and children have been biking along the beautiful roads and trails in Halton. Whether it's going to ride along the winding roads through the escarpment or on the stunning trails at one of our local conservation areas, our family has done it all.

We have been involved in cycling for years because my husband, Randy, and our kids, Galen and Oriana, have regularly spent their summers and winters training for the MS Bike Tour. It's part of our family's yearly commitment to raise funds for multiple sclerosis. The close-to-200-kilometre bike tour—which is an overnight tour, by the way—in support of MS Canada is a truly great event for a truly great cause. It is the highlight of our summer.

The region of Halton is the perfect place to cycle, whether you're training for an event or just trying to get some exercise. It is one of the most bicycle-friendly areas in the province. In fact, Burlington, Oakville and Halton Hills have all been designated bicycle-friendly communities since 2011, and I understand that Milton is also submitting a plan to be designated as a bicycle-friendly community.

With a brand new state-of-the-art velodrome being constructed in Milton for next year's Pan/Parapan American Games, Halton will truly become one of the foremost cycling centres in North America. It will be a cycling mecca. The velodrome will be the first of its kind

in Canada, and it is already attracting a vibrant cycling community to the riding.

New infrastructure that will engage cyclists and businesses throughout our community is being built every day, and these investments will benefit the people of our community for generations to come. They will ensure that cycling remains a safe and supported activity for local residents. By declaring June Bike Month in Ontario, this bill will help to promote a healthy lifestyle for Ontarians. It will encourage people of all ages to get out and see our beautiful back roads and green spaces from the seat of their bikes. I can't think of a better way to enjoy our stunning countryside, get some exercise and spend time with family. Bike Month will engage Ontario families in an important, fun and easy way to get outside and get fit. It will also reduce the number of vehicles on our roads and get people moving.

I think this is a great private member's bill, and I want to thank the Burlington member for her hard work on this and for bringing it forward. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Davenport.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I'm proud to speak in favour of Bill 13, introduced by my colleague the member for Burlington, entitled An Act to proclaim the month of June as Ontario Bike Month.

Ontarians are avid cyclists. We can be proud that Ontario has the second-lowest cycling injury rate of all Canadian provinces. We benefit from an existing network of bike paths that provides recreation or a commute to work for thousands of Ontarians.

But we can do better. That's why I'm proud to be part of the government that introduced, to much acclaim, CycleON: Ontario's Cycling Strategy, developed in partnership with cycling stakeholder groups such as Cycle Toronto, a group that is active in my riding of Davenport. The strategy calls for a new way of thinking about how we promote cycling.

Why is the strategy important? Of course, everyone knows that cycling is good for you. It's exercise that you can do with your family and you can carry on throughout your life. This new way of thinking in CycleON means more than just increased funding; it means a change of mindset where we share the road.

These changes were proposed in government legislation inspired by private members' bills tabled by MPPs from both sides of the floor, which is evidence of growing all-party support. This wide support makes sense, given that the results of province-wide surveys show an increased level of support for a road-sharing approach in transportation planning and a greater focus generally on cycling infrastructure investments.

The member for Burlington's bill not only reflects our government's commitment to cycling, but also recognizes the tireless work by cycling advocates across Ontario.

For these reasons, I proudly stand in support of the member for Burlington's bill, and I encourage members from both sides of the floor to join me in supporting it.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Burlington, you have two minutes for a response.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: I was so encouraged by the comments. I want to highlight and thank the members from Thornhill, Kitchener–Waterloo, Mississauga–Streetsville, York–Simcoe, Bramalea–Gore–Malton, Ottawa South, Halton—my neighbour—and Davenport.

J'aimerais féliciter, entre autres, la députée de Thornhill pour son élection. Et, à l'occasion de parler en français avec elle, félicitations.

Sharing the road, as the member for Thornhill mentioned, is a priority for all sides of this House, and I think that was outlined in all of the comments today. The member mentioned paved shoulders, and I'd like, in response to that, to thank the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka for his private member's bill and his staunch work in this area. That private member's bill, the member will be happy to know, has been embodied and embraced, in the spirit of sharing the road and sharing great ideas, and will be brought forward as part of the Keeping Ontario's Roads Safe Act, which the Minister of Transportation, I understand, will reintroduce this fall. I look forward to more conversations with the members in that regard.

There's not enough time, of course, to expand on all the ideas that you put forward, many of which resonated, but I would just underscore that cycling in the winter does happen, and in some of the greatest countries where cycling is so frequent and so much a part of daily transportation, notably the Nordic countries, for a good time of the year there it's winter, actually, and they do accommodate cyclists. So there's a growing global conversation. In fact, I attended a winter cycling congress in Winnipeg this year to look at cycling in winter, to look at the numbers of cyclists who ride now and those who want to and what it's going to take for us to accommodate them. So thank you.

There were lots of other comments from the member for Kitchener–Waterloo. I just want to close and thank her for her cycling advocacy—she was the co-chair of our cycling caucus in the last House and is a fabulous advocate for cycling—and finally, the former member from Davenport for his inspiration as well.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

RADON AWARENESS AND PREVENTION ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR LA SENSIBILISATION AU RADON ET LA PROTECTION CONTRE L'INFILTRATION DE CE GAZ

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We will deal first with ballot item number 1, standing in the name of Mr. Qaadri.

Mr. Qaadri has moved second reading of Bill 11, An Act to raise awareness about radon, provide for the

Ontario Radon Registry and reduce radon levels in dwellings and workplaces.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the bill is being referred to—Mr. Qaadri?

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Thank you, Speaker, for your support, and to all members. I refer it to the Standing Committee on General Government.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member wishes the bill to be referred to general government. Agreed? Agreed.

PROTECTING EMPLOYEES'
TIPS ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR LA PROTECTION
DU POURBOIRE DES EMPLOYÉS

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Potts has moved second reading of Bill 12, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 with respect to tips and other gratuities.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the bill is referred to—Mr. Potts?

Mr. Arthur Potts: Thank you to all the members of the House who indicated support for the bill. I would like to refer the bill to the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member wishes it to be referred to Legislative Assembly. Agreed? Agreed.

ONTARIO BIKE MONTH ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR LE MOIS
DE LA BICYCLETTE EN ONTARIO

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Ms. McMahon has moved second reading of Bill 13, An Act to proclaim the month of June as Ontario Bike Month.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the bill is referred to—the member for Burlington?

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: I'd like to thank all members of this House for their conversations today and their input to this legislation and for their support. I would ask that this bill be sent to the Standing Committee on Social Policy.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member has requested that the bill be referred to the social policy committee. Agreed? Agreed.

Orders of the day? Minister without Portfolio.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The Minister without Portfolio has moved adjournment of the House. Agreed? Agreed.

This House stands adjourned until Monday, the 21st, 10:30 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1602.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, Anne Stokes

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

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Anderson, Granville (LIB)	Durham	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Baker, Yvan (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Ballard, Chris (LIB)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
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Cimino, Joe (NDP)	Sudbury	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
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Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure / Ministre du Développement économique, de l'Emploi et de l'Infrastructure
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	

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Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Associate Minister of Finance (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan) / Ministre associée des Finances (Régime de retraite de la province de l'Ontario)
Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
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McGarry, Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	
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McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	

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Milczyn, Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
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Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
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Laurie Scott, Jagmeet Singh
Soo Wong
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Lou Rinaldi
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Indira Naidoo-Harris, Daiene Vernile
Bill Walker
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Peter Tabuns
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Laura Albanese, Bas Balkissoon
Cheri DiNovo, Christine Elliott
Sylvia Jones, Jack MacLaren
Cristina Martins, Monique Taylor
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

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