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Tuesday 9 December 2014

Mardi 9 décembre 2014

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 9 December 2014

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 9 décembre 2014

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

INFRASTRUCTURE FOR JOBS
AND PROSPERITY ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR L'INFRASTRUCTURE
AU SERVICE DE L'EMPLOI
ET DE LA PROSPÉRITÉ

Mr. Naqvi, on behalf of Mr. Duguid, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 6, An Act to enact the Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act, 2014 / Projet de loi 6, Loi édictant la Loi de 2014 sur l'infrastructure au service de l'emploi et de la prospérité.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure, who is also the member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore. I will also be sharing my time with the member from Durham and the member from Trinity–Spadina.

Speaker, thank you for recognizing me to speak on the second reading leadoff on Bill 6, which is the Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act. I'm really proud to stand in the Legislature and speak on this very important bill.

I'm sure all members of this House will recognize that building modern infrastructure is key to the economic growth of our province but also for the long-term prosperity of this great province. Building infrastructure means that we are growing our economy and, at the same time, creating good-paying jobs for Ontarians.

That is why—I say this very proudly—our government has invested since 2003 more than \$100 billion in building infrastructure across our province, in things that we all rely on, things that we, as Ontarians, all need in our communities—for example, schools, colleges, community health centres, hospitals; community centres, ice hockey rinks—you name it, Speaker—things that really enhance our quality of life. That's why that \$100-billion investment since 2003 has been a very significant contribution to ensuring that we do have a modern infrastructure in the province of Ontario.

That is why, moving forward, we are going to be investing over \$130 billion in public infrastructure over the next 10 years in our province, again making sure that we keep pace with the building of critical, necessary, important infrastructure that will help our province grow. To me, of course, public transit and transportation infrastructure very much comes to mind, a very important component as the population of our province grows, to ensure that we've got that kind of infrastructure available in our communities.

This investment of \$130 billion in public infrastructure over the next 10 years, Speaker, not only means that we are building much-needed infrastructure in every corner of the province, but it will also support over 110,000 jobs annually. That is an incredible opportunity that exists for our province, that by investing in infrastructure, not only are we meeting the needs of our communities but also creating good-paying jobs for Ontarians in our communities.

Experts agree that investing in infrastructure is an investment in our economy. An April 2013 report from the Conference Board of Canada found that each dollar invested in public infrastructure in Ontario raises the gross domestic product by \$1.14 in the near term. That's a very significant accelerator—accelerator—in terms of the dividend on the investment. I know I slipped a little bit on that word. In addition, our own studies show that the returns on this dollar grow to \$3.10 in the long term while supporting jobs and facilitating private investment.

Bill 6, if passed, would require our government and future governments to regularly prepare long-term infrastructure plans, so that we're really following an evidence-based plan in terms of the building of our infrastructure. This will ensure that all governments recognize the importance of long-term planning.

The Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act is part of our plan to continue to build a well-educated and highly skilled workforce. The proposed legislation would increase the opportunities for apprenticeships for a wide variety of trades; another, I think, important initiative that all members will agree that we need to engage in to make sure that more apprentices are getting opportunities to engage in trades. Again, they are very much part and parcel of that new economy, that highly skilled, highly educated economy that we are building in our great province.

In conclusion, Speaker, I want to say that this bill really represents our government's priorities of building Ontario up by investing in people's talents and skills, building new public infrastructure and creating a

dynamic business climate. I'm hopeful that all members will support this very important bill, because this really goes to the core of building our communities. Every single one of us knows of infrastructure projects that we have worked on in the past that are key to the community's well-being, and we know of projects that will help grow our communities, not only in terms of the quality of life that we enjoy but also the jobs they bring.

Speaker, with your permission, I would like to now turn it over to the parliamentary assistance to the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure, the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore. Thank you for your time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I recognize the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: I want to continue on the excellent introduction that the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services gave. I'm pleased to rise in the House for the second reading of Bill 6, the proposed Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act, 2014.

Since taking office, our government has embarked on a program of comprehensive reinvestment to put Ontario's infrastructure back onto a solid footing. Bill 6 is about securing the accomplishments of the past decade and applying the expertise we've gained as we move forward with the next generation of infrastructure investment. At its core, Bill 6 is about enshrining in legislation solid principles for long-term infrastructure planning in Ontario. We want to continue building up our province with long-term infrastructure planning that is strategic, evidence-based and addresses the priorities that Ontarians share.

0910

C'est un plaisir pour moi de m'adresser à l'Assemblée législative pour la deuxième lecture du projet de loi 6, Loi édictant la Loi de 2014 sur l'infrastructure au service de l'emploi et de la prospérité.

Depuis le début de son mandat, le gouvernement a lancé un vaste programme de réinvestissement afin de consolider les infrastructures ontariennes. Le projet de loi 6 vise à protéger les acquis de la dernière décennie et à faire valoir notre nouveau savoir-faire grâce à une nouvelle génération d'investissement dans les infrastructures.

Son objectif principal est de fixer dans la loi de solides principes quant à la planification à long terme des infrastructures. Nous souhaitons bâtir notre province grâce à une planification à long terme des infrastructures qui soit stratégique, qui s'appuie sur des données concrètes et qui réponde aux priorités communes des Ontariennes et Ontariens.

I see infrastructure investment as one of the most direct forms of economic development that any government can engage in. Of course, there are thousands of jobs created by the projects themselves, but it's far more than that. Modern, efficient infrastructure is literally the foundation upon which a modern economy is built. It enables goods to move efficiently to market, provides for timely commutes to work, and underpins our quality of

life. These factors are critical to our ability to attract business investment.

The challenge of renewing Ontario's infrastructure is immense. As a province, for too long we relied on infrastructure built in the post-war period. Since 2003, our government has invested nearly \$100 billion to modernize Ontario's infrastructure. Major progress has been made across the province, and we need to continue this momentum.

Our 2014 budget committed to investing more than \$130 billion in public infrastructure over the next 10 years. As part of this commitment, Ontario will be investing \$29 billion over the next 10 years for public transit, transportation and other priority infrastructure across the province. As you well know, Mr. Speaker, this will consist of up to \$15 billion to support transit investment in the greater Toronto and Hamilton area, and an additional \$14 billion will support investment in roads, bridges, transit and other critical infrastructure needs throughout the rest of the province.

In addition, the province is taking steps to ensure our health care sector continues to offer quality service while protecting the sustainability of the system for future generations. Ontario plans to invest more than \$11 billion in capital grants to major hospital expansions or re-development projects over the next 10 years. This will support more than 40 projects that are under construction or in various stages of planning, and includes the construction or expansion of surgical and cancer treatment services.

Ontario is also building better places to learn. Our government is making investments in education and post-secondary infrastructure, including more than \$11 billion over the next 10 years in capital grants to school boards across the province. Capital investments will help build new schools to address growth pressures in areas such as Milton, Brampton, Barrhaven and Ancaster, to name just a few communities. We've committed more than \$4 billion over the next 10 years to help address school repair needs. Funding will target critical needs and improve school conditions. It will support a safe and healthy learning environment for students and will modernize classrooms as well as help school boards reduce operating costs associated with aging infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, I shared all of this background with you and with members of the House because I wanted to illustrate the scale and complexity of Ontario's program of infrastructure investments. Through working closely with our partners over the last decade or so, we've established a solid track record of comprehensive infrastructure renewal. This experience and base of knowledge is reflected in Building Together, Ontario's first long-term infrastructure plan, which was released in 2011.

Bill 6 moves us forward from this position of strength. Under the proposed legislation, the government will be required to prepare a long-term infrastructure plan that covers at least 10 years. The first plan would be presented in the Legislature within three years, with subsequent

plans presented at least every five years thereafter. The rigour of this process will ensure that the needs of our changing province are reflected in our infrastructure planning.

Bill 6 sets out a framework and a series of guiding principles for infrastructure investment that would make our economy and our society stronger. These are principles the Ontario government and the broader public service—for example, municipalities, school boards and hospitals—should consider when making infrastructure decisions.

Although there are a number of principles listed in the bill, I'd like to highlight a few of them today.

Principle number 1: Infrastructure planning should be done on a long-term basis. We're proposing plans for a minimum of 10 years but, in fact, they could be for much longer. Furthermore, in establishing the long-term infrastructure plan, the government will take into consideration the demographic and economic trends in Ontario.

Principle number 2: Infrastructure planning should take into account fiscal plans and budgets. We're looking to find the correct balance here. Infrastructure planning needs to be conducted on long-term horizons, but in pragmatic terms, we know that circumstances change and plans need to be adapted. Our goal is continual improvement and to ensure that infrastructure investments are pragmatic and reflect prudent investment principles.

Principle number 3: Infrastructure planning and investment should promote economic competitiveness, productivity, job creation and training. We know that our infrastructure investments support an average of 110,000 jobs each year in construction and related industries, but let's look further to ensure that every dollar spent is reaping the maximum benefit for Ontario's competitiveness, productivity, job creation and training. Modern, efficient infrastructure is one of the key factors that businesses use when deciding where to invest. Business decision-makers need to know that employees and supplies can move efficiently into the workplace, and that finished products can be sent to the marketplace. We want to ensure that economic development potential is optimized for all infrastructure projects.

Principle number 4: Infrastructure planning should foster innovation and create opportunities to use innovation. Innovations encompass technologies, services and practices that enhance the overall value of infrastructure development. This will be of particular value where we can use innovations developed right here in Ontario. For example, Ontario has developed significant expertise through its made-in-Ontario alternative financing and procurement model. We'd like to see the lessons and best practices learned from that model applied where applicable in the long-term infrastructure planning process.

Principle number 5: Project priorities should be identified and should support plans. This principle is about ensuring long-term infrastructure plans properly align with existing plans or strategies at the provincial and municipal level. Let's ensure our major infrastructure investments are coordinated and complementary.

Examples of plans and strategies that would need to be considered could include: growth plans under the Places to Grow Act; municipal water sustainability plans submitted under the Water Opportunities Act; and certainly transportation plans adopted under the Metrolinx Act.

Principle number 6: Infrastructure planning should be evidence-based and transparent. Our goal is that investment decisions are made in an open, transparent manner, based on publicly available information. Wherever possible, information that relates to infrastructure planning should be shared between Ontario and the broader public sector. We need to be working together.

Principle number 7: Planning should minimize impact on the environment and infrastructure should be resilient to climate change. This would involve ensuring projects include features to maintain local biological diversity and take account of extreme weather conditions.

0920

Finally, Mr. Speaker, principle number 8: Infrastructure planning and investment should ensure the provision of core public services. In particular, Ontario priorities such as health care and education should be reflected in long-term infrastructure plans.

In addition to the principles I've outlined, the proposed Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act includes criteria that would be used by the government to prioritize proposed projects, and that's about making the greatest use of available resources.

When evaluating infrastructure proposals, the government should consider whether the infrastructure asset is already planned for in a provincial or municipal plan or strategy; whether related capital costs and operating costs expected to rise over the useful life of the infrastructure asset have been accounted for; and whether there's been an assessment of the project's anticipated long-term return on investment.

In particular, decisions would be informed by an assessment of a project's ability to stimulate productivity and economic competitiveness; maximize tax assessment and tax base growth; support any other public policy goals of the Ontario government or of any affected municipalities; and provide a foundation for further infrastructure projects.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 6 also includes provisions to promote excellence in the design of public infrastructure. My background is as an architect, so obviously this is something that I feel very strongly and passionately about; and this is something that Bill 6 will be addressing, which is very important.

Bill 6 will require that, where practicable, architects and design experts will be involved in certain new government-owned or -funded infrastructure projects over a prescribed cost threshold. The design excellence provision would apply to certain signature projects where it makes sense to emphasize design, but not to things like culverts and fire hydrants.

This is about bringing the right expertise to the table so that Ontario can benefit from enhanced infrastructure design. Our goal is to deliver signature infrastructure

projects that become worldwide beacons for Ontario-based design excellence: structures and places that will make our communities more vibrant, more attractive and further enhance our position as a leading global jurisdiction.

We need look no further than current projects like Union Station, our Pan/Parapan Am facilities and even some of our transit stations designed by local and international star architects. Many of our cultural institutions are world-renowned for their architecture, and our post-secondary campuses are among the most attractive in North America, if not the world.

Design does matter, and it does add value. Good design has been demonstrated to lower long-term operating costs by improving functionality. Good design can also help attract and retain talent and capital and contribute to our overall economic growth.

We anticipate that consultations would be held with industry stakeholders to determine the appropriate cost threshold for this design excellence provision.

Many of you will already know that the proposed legislation was first introduced in the last Parliament, as Bill 141, and was referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills. With the election being called in May 2014, the former bill died on the order paper. However, that process brought forward some constructive comments. The design excellence provision is one of the areas where we received some very useful feedback, particularly from Ontario's engineering community.

Our government acknowledges the important role that engineers play in good infrastructure design, and also as a key component of Ontario's highly skilled workforce. We look forward to working with the engineering community to ensure that the importance of their work is fully reflected within Bill 6.

We've talked about the connection between infrastructure investment and strengthening our economy. We can also use infrastructure development as a way to further enhance the skills of our workforce. Bill 6 would require that a specified number of apprentices would be employed in the construction or—

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

Mr. John Vanthof: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I don't believe we have a quorum.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum): A quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): A quorum is now present.

Back to the member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I always enjoy an audience.

We can also use infrastructure development as a way to further enhance the skills of our workforce. Bill 6 would require that a specified number of apprentices would be employed in construction or maintenance of certain infrastructure assets. This measure would gen-

erate increased opportunities for people interested in pursuing a career in the skilled trades, while increasing apprenticeship opportunities to ensure the province has the skilled workers it needs.

Some have argued that setting apprenticeship quotas will increase costs. I would respond that ensuring that the province has the skilled workers it needs outweighs the cost of hiring apprentices. I commend firms that invest in their workers and offer apprenticeships. This is something we want to encourage.

This provision would also support Ontario's Youth Jobs Strategy. We have a situation today where too many young people face great challenges in finding stable, well-paying jobs. Meanwhile, there are shortages in many of the skilled technical trades. The skills training and apprenticeship provision in Bill 6 is a smart and strategic way to help close that gap. We look forward to continued collaboration with stakeholders, including those from the construction industry, to ensure the provision is structured in a way that effectively promotes skills training and apprenticeships.

As we work to further refine Bill 6, we'd like to consult with the municipal sector on the best way to integrate municipal asset management plans into Ontario's long-term infrastructure planning. Asset management is essential for strategic, evidence-based and long-term infrastructure planning, which is what this legislation is about.

Since August 2012, the province has been implementing the Municipal Infrastructure Strategy. Asset management is a cornerstone of that strategy, and municipalities have made significant progress in addressing their core infrastructure needs and developing asset management plans. Under the strategy, any municipality seeking provincial capital funding is required to prepare a detailed asset management plan and show how its proposed project fits within it.

As a former municipal councillor, I do see municipalities as key partners in working with the province to build stronger communities. We look forward to hearing from municipalities on this point and to working with stakeholders, including the Association of Municipalities of Ontario. The proposed Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act offers a valuable opportunity to further align how we work together. We look forward to exploring this as the legislative process moves forward.

Our government views Bill 6 as a landmark piece of legislation in helping to shape Ontario's future. We look forward to working with all our stakeholders to ensure we get it right.

0930

Mr. Speaker, members of the House, fostering a dynamic and innovative economic climate that allows businesses to thrive is key to our government's economic plan. This proposed legislation would ensure that current and future governments regularly prepare long-term infrastructure plans and continue to improve how Ontario's infrastructure needs are prioritized. Bill 6 would provide a framework that could help better align infra-

structure investments with Ontario's economic development needs and the priorities that Ontarians share.

Through mandated long-term infrastructure planning we can ensure every dollar invested brings the best possible outcome for strong, sustainable communities, a fair society and a vibrant economy. We look forward to constructive debate on this important legislation.

I will now be sharing my time with the member for Durham.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I now recognize the member from Durham.

Mr. Granville Anderson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent to allow me to deliver my inaugural speech and address during this debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Is there consent for the member from Durham to deliver his inaugural speech? Agreed.

Continue: The member from Durham.

Mr. Granville Anderson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

My name is Granville Anderson. I am the newly elected MPP representing the great riding of Durham, a community that I've called home for over 27 years. I'm not so new anymore; it's six months in, but I still consider myself a new member.

It would be remiss of me if I didn't pay homage to my predecessor Mr. John O'Toole, whom you well know around this place. He served in this Legislature for almost 20 years, and he served the people of Durham well during his tenure as the MPP for our great riding of Durham.

I am proud to stand here before you as I have had an interest in politics since before I was old enough to remember. I've always had a desire to make people's lives better. To serve in the Ontario Legislature has always been a dream of mine, and a dream that finally came true on June 12, 2014.

My family has always been supportive of my political endeavours; I'm also thankful to my children Earl and Samantha and my parents for their support and their belief in me as I pursue my passion. During my time and during my community involvement—I have been a school board trustee for over 12 years in addition to my day job as a mediator—there were many nights when I was not home until well after midnight. I hope I can make them as proud of me as I am of them.

For a little background on my road here: It was only through the hard work and determination of our volunteers that we were able to pull off a victory in Durham—a victory many people did not think could be done, but we proved them wrong. I knocked on as many doors as I was able to and often received a very warm welcome, even though the riding has been held by the Progressive Conservatives from what seemed to be time immemorial. The central theme of the residents' comments was that they wanted change, and change was what they got.

It would take too long to list all of the dedicated volunteers who helped us, but I'll list a few: my campaign manager, Justin MacLean, who is all of 24 years

old, along with Ian McMillan and Karina Smith, who is all of 19 years old—and yes, we did have one senior statesperson. Her name is Susan Stuart; she was the glue that held us all together.

My campaign was based on young people—dozens of them. We worked hard and we were committed. They believed in me and I believed in them, and that's why I'm here today. So I am forever grateful to them.

A particular highlight of my campaign, and something that our team prided ourselves on, was the number of young people—I will reiterate—who got involved. Most of our office staff was under 30, as I alluded to earlier, and many under 25. I've always been inspired by the capacity of young people to work towards their passions, and they continue to amaze me.

One of my goals is to get more young people involved in the political process. Durham is growing quickly, in large part due to younger families. By engaging youth in my campaign, I believe we were able to energize the youth of our riding and get them to vote, ultimately coming together in my electoral success.

This transition of becoming an MPP is a welcomed one, but I have to tell you, I will surely miss serving as a school board trustee. For over 12 years, I had the honour to serve on the Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board. In that role, I met many wonderful people who are as passionate as I am about education and giving our young people the best possible start.

During my tenure on the board, I served for a number of years as board vice-chair and as board chair. I was able to meet trustees from all over the province, and I share their passion for education. Education is the key to success and the key to all doors for our young people. That has always been something that I strive to bring forward, and to empower young people with the ability—to try and create the ability and provide them with the skills to be the best they can be or that they could be and can be in society. I believe I have done that or shared some part of doing that.

Allow me to tell you a little bit more about my riding. Durham is a diverse mix of rural and urban land. Throughout our riding, many commute into Toronto every day, as I currently do because I enjoy sitting with my constituents and having conversation with them as they express their concerns and trying to assist them as best I can as their representative for the riding.

We also have a good economic mix of industries, including energy and infrastructure. The three municipalities that make up our riding have an incredible character and are distinct and unique in their own ways.

Clarington is bound by Lake Ontario to the south and the Oak Ridges moraine in the north, with many rivers and creeks running between them. The municipality of Port Hope lies to the east and the city of Oshawa to the west.

While a significant majority of our 90,000 residents live in Courtice, Bowmanville or Newcastle, more than 18,000 make their homes in one of a dozen smaller com-

munities, communities such as Blackstock, Nestleton, Orono and so forth—communities that make up the municipality.

Many count farms as their home, with over 400 farms in Clarington alone. The riding of Durham has probably roughly 1,000 farms between Durham, Scucog and Uxbridge. This allows for a thriving field-to-table food sector. And while the farming industry plays a key role in Clarington's economy, the municipality is also home to many other industries, not the least of which is the energy sector.

Clarington is home to Ontario Power Generation's Darlington nuclear plant. Darlington is a key employer in my riding and plays a key role in Ontario's economy, helping to ensure a reliable supply of energy to meet the province's demands.

Around Darlington, we are currently seeing a growing cluster of energy-related businesses, which are a most welcome addition to the riding.

0940

To the north of Clarington lies Scugog, with a population of roughly 21,000. The Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation make their home here as part of the Ojibway nation, one of the largest native groups in Canada. Scugog has many small communities, but its main centre is the beautiful town of Port Perry. Nestled along Lake Scugog, the municipality is a version of our country writ small, with thriving agriculture and tourism industries, a lot of history and a lot to look forward to.

The member from Burlington said yesterday that Burlington is the most beautiful spot in this country. I take issue with that: I believe that the riding of Durham is.

To the west of Scugog there is Uxbridge, found in the beautiful valley along the northern slope of the Oak Ridges moraine. The township has a population of about 11,000, with a surrounding array of hamlets and farmland. While not large in population, Uxbridge is anything but small when it comes to its arts, entertainment, recreation, culture and spirit of community.

As you have just heard, ours is a very diverse riding, with each area having different levels and types of needs when it comes to our provincial government. In Clarington, we want to bring the GO train to Bowmanville, so that the many commuters at the east anchor of the GTA have accessible transit. I also want to see the Bowmanville hospital maintained and expanded, so that our residents can receive their health care in their own community.

In Scugog, I want to ensure that we have bridges fixed and that our roadways and infrastructure are well taken care of. I want to work with the new mayor, Tom Rowett, to ensure that the tourism industry thrives, and with Chief Kelly LaRocca on the Great Blue Heron Charity Casino.

In Uxbridge, I want to solve the culvert issue, help with their historical sites and ensure that they are well-integrated and that their voices are heard in our region.

My larger goals revolve around youth employment. I am so proud to be parliamentary assistant to Minister

MacCharles; together we can work to maintain a bright future for our youngest Ontarians.

I am also passionate about the environment, especially in terms of our rural communities. Just last week, I introduced a motion in the House encouraging the Minister of the Environment to adopt a plan to deal with commercial fill and the dangers that its pollutants pose for our watersheds. The residents of my riding are concerned about their safety, and I will always intend to put good policy ahead of politics.

It is my pleasure to represent Durham, and I will do so to the best of my ability. This will mean doing what I feel is the best thing an MPP can do: putting the needs of the riding ahead of politics, and ensuring that I do all that I can to have my constituents voices heard at Queen's Park.

I will continue to do this by advocating for the needs of my community: better roads, better bridges, better schools, better hospitals; making sure that the services are there for our most vulnerable, our elderly and our young children; making sure that the safety of our children is protected; and making sure that we have proper transit services in the riding. That's why it's essential and crucial that the GO train come to Bowmanville, so that our commuters and our community can grow and we can increase and better the economy for the people of my riding.

I thank you for this opportunity to tell you a little bit about my community and a little bit about myself, Speaker.

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

Mr. Ted Arnott: I'm pleased to have this opportunity to respond briefly to the three Liberal members who spoke: the government House leader initially; the member for Etobicoke-Lakeshore, who I gather is the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure; and the member for Durham. I want to compliment the member for Durham on his inaugural speech. He was very eloquent talking about his reasons for running and his commitment to his constituents. He deserves congratulations on his election, certainly, and on his remarks this morning.

I must point out, though, that it seems rather strange—although the standing orders don't preclude it—that the minister responsible for the bill, who actually introduced the bill at first reading on July 7, the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure, who is actually given responsibility for carriage of this legislation, didn't move second reading and we haven't had a chance to hear from him. So I would hope that over the course of this second reading debate of Bill 6, we do have a chance to hear from the minister to explain why this bill has been introduced and to explain his justification for it.

Of course, as we know, the government has a larger legislative agenda, not just Bill 6, and the government is quite proud of it. Yesterday, the government introduced

Bill 56 and Bill 57: Bill 56, standing in the name of the Associate Minister of Finance, An Act to require the establishment of the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan, and Bill 57, standing in the name of the Minister of Finance, An Act to create a framework for pooled registered pension plans and to make consequential amendments to other Acts.

I would have expected that the parliamentary assistant to the minister might have touched on explaining something about what the government's intentions are with respect to this bill because we're concerned, and certainly the Canadian Federation of Independent Business is very, very concerned, about the cost of this and how employers are going to afford it. In fact, it's a substantial reduction in the take-home pay of workers, too, at a time when few will be able to afford it. I'd ask the parliamentary assistant to address that, if he indeed responds on behalf of the three Liberal members who spoke.

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

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I'm pleased to take this opportunity to make some comments in response to my neighbour and the member from Durham on his inaugural address this morning. The member from Durham and I, of course, share a border, and we also have been sharing the same community circuit, so I have been pleased to have the opportunity to get to know him in the community capacity. I live just on the border with the Durham riding, so when I look out my window, I get to see both Oshawa and his stomping ground.

I'm pleased to know that his priorities are in line with my own in terms of the environment and education with his years of being of a trustee and serving his community. But to prioritize education—that's good to know that we're on the same page there.

Also, I'd like to congratulate the member both for making his inaugural speech six months after election, but also for his plan for commercial fill and for taking that responsible environmental step.

Recently, we had the opportunity to cross paths on the holiday train, and I look forward to more of those opportunities in our community. The member and I both were perhaps unexpected elections. We're going to see a lot of change in our neighbouring ridings and certainly in the farming, food and energy industries. There's a lot to do to partner there.

Congratulations on your inaugural speech. I look forward to hearing far more about that. Also, I'm glad that he'll be representing the communities that I have a lot of connection with. Udora: My father had lived there for a long time. It's a snug, lovely little community, and I'm glad to know it will be well represented—and Uxbridge, the various towns. We have a great sense of community. Anyway, congratulations.

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

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: It gives me great pleasure to stand up this morning and to pay tribute to the member for Durham and thank him for putting his name on a

ballot in the last election. We're very fortunate to have someone with his credentials and someone with his passion. What a refreshing speech he delivered this morning.

0950

We know that he's very involved with youth, and we need that expertise to complete our team. I had a lot of these youth helping me in my campaign, and I think that the member from Durham sees his role as a mentor for these youth in his community.

I was very touched by the member from Durham describing his community. You see the passion and dream that he has for his community, a beautiful community that represents—it's almost a microcosm of Canada. It represents cities, small towns, rural communities and villages.

He brings to the table and he brings to the House wide knowledge about Ontario and also his experience coming to the House as a trustee—of course, it's very much related to youth also—and also as a mediator. God knows that we need this expertise in the House when we present a bill and we need the support of the House to support it.

So thank you very much for coming. We are very pleased to have you on our team. Congratulations.

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

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'd like to commend the member from Durham for his inaugural remarks. I always enjoy hearing all of the inaugural remarks from the different members. You learn a little bit about their riding and you learn a little bit about them that you didn't know from their biography. It's always a very important time when you're able to stand and deliver in this House and talk a little bit about your riding, about yourself, about your family, about your volunteers and about how you got here. We all got here in different ways, in different boats, but we're all in the same boat now, and we should all be rowing in the same direction. Hopefully we can do a lot of that over the next three and a half years, as time goes on.

I'm also really happy that he paid tribute to the former member from Durham. He got to be a good friend of mine: John O'Toole. He's probably watching this morning. I know he watches the House quite regularly. He did an excellent job, as the new member from Durham said.

Interjection.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Yes, maybe he's watching from Florida on C-SPAN or something.

Anyway, I would like to pay tribute to the new member from Durham for mentioning his predecessor. It's always nice when the new members come in and pay tribute to the hard work their predecessors did. I think we all acknowledge that. We all know that there was someone before us who built the road and set the path in place for all of us, as we follow them and hope to serve as honourably and as well as they did.

It's great to hear your personal story about your work with trustees on the school board and other activities.

Everyone brings something different to this House. I think that's what makes this place unique.

Again, I acknowledge the member from Durham and congratulate him and welcome him here today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the member from Durham for a final two-minute summary.

Mr. Granville Anderson: I wish to thank the member from Wellington–Halton Hills, the member from Ottawa–Vanier, the member from Sarnia–Lambton and, of course, the member from Oshawa, my friend and my neighbour. She forgot to mention that we share the same dry cleaner as well.

It's a pleasure to serve the people of the wonderful riding of Durham. It's very diverse. It does reflect Ontario in every sense of the word. We have lakes and rivers and farms and industry and nuclear plants. Actually, my riding also has three hospitals. We have one in Uxbridge, one in Port Perry and one in Bowmanville. They serve the community well.

I hope that over the next—well, not four years anymore—three and a half years to continue to serve and continue to build up my community and create employment and make sure our seniors have the care they deserve, make sure that PSWs are there for them and make sure that our schools continue to grow and our economy continues to grow.

Hopefully at the end of four years I'll be able to get the GO train as well to Bowmanville. That was one of the key components during the campaign; everybody wanted GO train services in Bowmanville, and that's something I am working towards. With the help of my colleagues, we'll be able to accomplish that.

Again, I wish to thank the members of this House for their kind remarks. Hopefully we can work together to build a better Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Before we continue with debate, it gives me great pleasure to recognize, in the members' gallery this morning, Jennifer Mossop, member of the 38th Parliament representing Stoney Creek. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Further debate.

Mr. Ted Arnott: I'm pleased to have this opportunity to participate in the second reading debate on Bill 6, An Act to enact the Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act, 2014.

Before I begin, I want to express my own words of welcome, on behalf of the official opposition, to Jennifer Mossop for being here—the former member for Stoney Creek. She served with distinction in this Legislature a few years ago. While she was here, she introduced a private member's bill to recognize Lincoln Alexander Day. That's a bill that I was pleased to pick up, working with, actually, the member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek as well as the member for Scarborough–Rouge River, as a co-sponsored bill. It was passed into law late last year.

Recently the House of Commons passed a similar bill, and forevermore Lincoln Alexander Day will be

acknowledged across Canada. We're really pleased about that. That was Jennifer's bill at the start, and she deserves acknowledgement and credit for the idea. I'm glad she's here today.

If you'll indulge me, Speaker, I have some other good news. My mother-in-law, Mrs. Allie McCabe, is celebrating her 80th birthday today. I was able to phone her this morning. She doesn't watch this channel, by the way, unlike John O'Toole. I'm pretty sure—in fact, I'm certain—that she's not watching; she knows I'm speaking. At the same time, I certainly wanted to let the members know.

My wife's mother lives with us, actually, through the winter months and, increasingly, into the fall and spring. She has a cottage near Arnstein, Ontario, where she grew up. I know that the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka often speaks about the Argyle area, which is on Highway 522 between Highway 11 and Highway 69. That's where Allie grew up. She raised a family of six children, growing up mostly in Dresden, Ontario, and then retired in the Arthur area when I first met my wife, Lisa. We're hoping for a really nice family get-together over Christmas to celebrate her 80th birthday, and we wish her all the best.

I would be remiss if I didn't also point out that one of my constituency assistants, Karen Thomas, is also celebrating a birthday today. I haven't had a chance to call her. I know that she doesn't watch the legislative channel either because she works in my riding office and she's too busy, but at the same time I wanted to wish her all the very best for a happy birthday too.

We have Bill 6 before us today. As I said earlier, I'm looking forward to hearing from the Minister of Economic Development over the course of second reading debate on this bill. I hope the government doesn't try to ram this through without giving us an opportunity to hear what he has to say about it and why he thinks it's an important bill and why he has introduced it. But certainly our party has the opportunity to debate this bill, and we're pleased to have that chance.

Over the course of the previous round of initial speeches by the government members—I've mentioned Bill 56 and Bill 57, these two pieces of legislation that were first introduced yesterday: Bill 56, An Act to require the establishment of the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan, and Bill 57, An Act to create a framework for pooled registered pension plans and to make consequential amendments to other Acts.

Of course, as I said earlier, we're really discussing Bill 6, but I have to, again, point out that the government legislative agenda is not just one bill. The government would argue that there's a significant number of bills that have some commonality, and they're all interrelated in terms of the government's program and its plans and its budgetary framework.

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Clearly, Bill 56 is integral to what they're planning in terms of long-term infrastructure. The government, with Bill 6, of course, is suggesting that they're going to bring

forward a long-term infrastructure plan, and I assume that Bill 56 and its passage is intended largely to pay for the long-term infrastructure plan.

As we know, Bill 56 is short—it's only six pages—but it requires the government to introduce the pension plan no later than January 1, 2017. It seems strange that the government would pass a bill to require it to do something that it has promised to do. Maybe that says something about the government's promises, but this bill would require them to keep their promise. They want to pass that bill through the House to require them to keep their promise.

Section 2 of the bill reads as follows: "Obligation to create administrative entity," and then it goes down to 2(1)4:

"Holding contributions: The administrative entity shall hold the contributions, and any accruals from the investments, in trust for the members and other beneficiaries of the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan. The contributions and the accruals shall not form part of the Consolidated Revenue Fund."

That's a very important point, because the government is saying that the money it collects from employers and employees, that they're telling people is going to be set aside as a retirement pension plan, as an Ontario pension plan—separate and distinct from the Canada Pension Plan—that that money will be set aside and will not just go into the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

However, we don't see any provision in the bill that would require a complete arm's-length relationship on the part of those who are empowered to manage the funds, and we are very concerned that in the interests of the people who are making the contributions, it would seem appropriate that there be an arm's-length board managing that money and ensuring that the money that is set aside for people's retirement is invested prudently in a way that seeks the highest return for the members. That's how the teachers' pension plan is run; that's how the OMERS pension plan is run. That's how most retirement pension plans, as far as I know, are run. They're not subject to political interference, where a provincial government that sets up the plan might dictate to this board that, let's say, \$1 billion is going into a specific infrastructure project that may be desirable in its own right and may have merit in its own right, but is not necessarily generating the highest return for the members. Of course, I think we have an obligation to be truthful and honest with people, that if indeed we're going to start deducting 1.9% of their pay, almost 2% of their pay, when this pension plan kicks in, that money is going to be invested prudently, ensuring stability and an attractive rate of return for those people's retirement. In fact, we suspect, and I think the government has alluded to the fact, that it hopes to use this money as a revenue stream for its infrastructure plan. So I point that out at the outset.

I am sure that government members will want to respond to this, and perhaps the minister will provide some clarification when he speaks at second reading, but at the same time, I think it's a very important point. All

of us in the Conservative caucus have identified infrastructure needs in our ridings over the years, and I have, on occasion, brought forward the infrastructure needs of my riding in this House through meetings and various other avenues that we have as members to try to advocate for my projects, and I'll continue to do that and expect that I'll have a chance to do that over the course of this debate. It looks like I've got just under an hour to go, but of course, we're going to have to stop this debate at 10:15 for question period. I'll get a chance later on, I hope, to talk about some of the specific infrastructure needs of my riding.

But, again, let's look at the bill itself. If this bill is passed into law, the government and every broader public sector entity, as defined in section 2 of the bill, must consider a specified list of infrastructure planning principles when making decisions respecting infrastructure. This bill, if passed, would ensure that the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure must periodically develop a long-term infrastructure plan, setting out, among other things, a description of the current state of wholly or partly government-owned infrastructure assets, a description of the government's anticipated infrastructure needs for at least the next 10 years, and a strategy to meet those needs, and each long-term infrastructure plan must be made public.

Of course, over the course of the estimates hearings, when we had the Minister of Infrastructure in for, I think, 10 hours, we asked repeatedly for a list of the government's long-term infrastructure projects and the plans that they had. They maintain that they have a long-term infrastructure plan, and have for years. Obviously, they were able to do that without Bill 6. At the same time, they would lead us to believe that they need Bill 6 now to continue doing that and ensure that it continues to be done in the future.

The bill would also force the government to consider a specified list of criteria when evaluating and prioritizing proposed projects for the construction of infrastructure assets. Subject to specified limitations, the government would be required to ensure that architects and persons with demonstrable expertise and experience with design relating to infrastructure assets be involved in the design of certain infrastructure assets.

If Bill 6 were passed, it would require the government to ensure that certain numbers of apprentices be employed or engaged in the construction or maintenance of government infrastructure assets. That is a point that our caucus has some questions about. Obviously, we're going to want answers over the course of this debate. Obviously, we support apprenticeship programs. We've had a lot to say about that in the lead-up to the election, and continue to advocate for a revision of the apprenticeship ratios so that you have one journeyman with one apprentice instead of the current situation in the province in the case of many of the skilled trades.

Also, this bill would ensure that the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure would consult with potentially affected persons or bodies

before a regulation being made under the act. Again, that's something that the minister could do; it doesn't really need a bill requiring him or her to do this. I think, obviously, that would be good public policy, and you would think that the government would just do that without feeling that it has to put it in a bill.

Again, the compendium notes that were attached to the bill—and I was pleased to have an opportunity to be briefed by ministry staff. They gave us some additional information about the bill. The compendium notes inform us that the bill, if passed, would enshrine a set of principles and requirements and authorities to promote the improvement of infrastructure planning in Ontario: again, I think, a principle and a goal that—I can't speak for all members of the House, but I would be very surprised if any member would say that's a bad idea.

Section 1 of the proposed legislation sets out the purpose of the act, which is “to establish mechanisms to encourage principled, evidence-based and strategic long-term infrastructure planning”—we heard from the parliamentary assistant that that indeed is the government's key objective with this bill—“that supports job creation and training opportunities, economic growth and protection of the environment, and incorporate design excellence into infrastructure planning”: again, a principle that I would suggest and expect the vast majority of members would agree with.

Section 2 sets out a series of definitions that can be used to interpret the proposed legislation.

Section 3 sets out specified lists of infrastructure planning principles which the government and every broader public sector entity—I assume that means municipalities and others—must consider when making decisions respecting infrastructure. These principles are:

“1. Infrastructure planning and investment should take a long-term view, and decision-makers should take into account the needs of Ontarians by being mindful of, among other things, demographic and economic trends in Ontario”—again, not a controversial statement; I think a principle that makes sense and is certainly one that I would express support for, and I believe most members of the House would as well.

“2. Infrastructure planning and investment should take into account any applicable budgets or fiscal plans, such as fiscal plans released under the Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act, 2004” and budgets adopted under the Municipal Act or the City of Toronto Act, again keeping in mind that we have to live within a budget. Unfortunately, this particular government hasn't managed its finances well going back to 2003, and they have doubled the provincial debt. I'll go into that later when I get the chance, probably in the second iteration of this speech, because I'm running out of time. But certainly the infrastructure plans would have to be made in accordance with, and with respect to, an overall fiscal plan. That only makes sense as well.

“3. Infrastructure priorities should be clearly identified in order to better inform investment decisions respecting infrastructure.” Again, that's something that we talk

about all the time. But certainly in my riding, I argue that the infrastructure project ideas that are brought to my attention should be priorities of this government, and in every case I would expect to see a positive response from the government. Certainly, we make our case based on identifying priorities and ensuring that those are well understood.

1010

The fact is, the government is spending billions of dollars on infrastructure each and every year, and I continue to ask, in many cases: Where are the projects that have been brought to my attention from the people of Wellington–Halton Hills? Where are those projects in the overall government plan?

We also see that the government is suggesting that infrastructure planning and investment should ensure continued provision of core public services such as health care and education. Again, I think that's something that might be characterized as a motherhood statement; all of us support that.

Investment decisions respecting infrastructure should support economic competitiveness, productivity, job creation and training opportunities. This is something that I've actually long advocated. I think that, if indeed the government is looking at prioritizing infrastructure investments, especially in a time of economic decline or downturn, we should be looking at the projects that will provide the best long-term economic support and impact.

In past rounds of infrastructure spending, there have been times when the joint federal and provincial infrastructure plan had placed a sort of premium on so-called “shovel-ready” projects. That's fine as far as it goes, in the sense that it creates an immediate stimulus to job creation, but at the same time, if we're borrowing billions of dollars to pay for these infrastructure projects—which is, in fact, what the government bragged about, spending \$100 billion so far; it could be argued that that's all borrowed money. But if we're borrowing money over the long term, and our children and grandchildren are going to be paying the interest on that cost, and if the original principal of the debt is ever retired—it's going to be passed on to the next generation—the fact is that you would hope that some of these projects will strengthen the long-term economy of the province of Ontario, and that there will be a long-term economic payback. How else could we justify borrowing all that money and leaving the bill to our children and grandchildren? Surely, that has to be a higher priority on many of these infrastructure programs that the federal and provincial governments will be pursuing in the future.

We also know that the government's objective is to ensure that infrastructure planning and investment should foster innovation by creating opportunities to make use of innovative technologies, services and practices, particularly where doing so would utilize technologies, techniques and practices developed in Ontario. Again, I have to characterize that as a motherhood statement, something that all of us would support. We all, I think, understand and have a greater appreciation of the need to

encourage innovation in our economy—not just in the business world, but in government and in every aspect of the economy.

Roger Martin, who has recently released his final report from his group called the Institute on Competitiveness and Prosperity, has long been an advocate of ensuring that we create an innovation-based culture, and I would agree with that. I think that if we're going to be able to compete over the long term in the world economy, we have to take greater steps to encourage innovation in every aspect of our economic life. That's something that Roger Martin has talked about for years. It's something I agree with, something I would hope that all members would agree with and something that obviously has to happen going forward. The fact that it's referenced in the government's plans with respect to Bill 6 is something that I would certainly support, in principle.

Infrastructure planning and investment should be evidence-based and transparent. Subject to any legal restrictions, investment decisions should be made on the basis of public information. Information with implications for infrastructure planning should be shared between government and broader public sector entities. Once again, that makes sense to me. I think that it's something that should be done. Surely an evidence-based approach is something, when there is an unlimited number of project ideas and we have finite resources. Obviously it can't just be a political decision; it has to be evidence-based and the homework has to be done.

The government has looked to municipalities to increasingly review their infrastructure needs and prioritize them on the basis of evidence, doing it in a transparent way. Obviously, the provincial government needs to do that too, not just point the finger at the municipal sector, and ensure that these decisions are based on evidence and are made in a transparent manner.

I realized when you motioned to me, Mr. Speaker, that maybe I should consider winding up. It is almost time, but I hope to have the opportunity—because I still have about 42 minutes to go—and I look forward to that opportunity, to continue my remarks on Bill 6.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I thank the member from Wellington–Halton Hills for his contribution to the debate this morning. We will continue that at a later point in time.

With it now being 10:15, this House stands recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Introduction of guests? The minister of northern—the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. You were going to wait; I could tell.

Hon. Bill Mauro: There you go. I was going to make you drag it out, Speaker. Thank you very much.

There's a reception tonight in the dining room, I think, from 5 to 7. The Cement Association of Canada is here, and many of them are in the galleries. I'd like to introduce Bruno Roux, president of Lafarge Canada and chair of the Cement Association of Canada; Marty Fallon and Martin Vroegh from St Marys Cement; Bill Galloway and Ruksana Mirza from Holcim; Alex Car from Essroc; and Michael McSweeney, president of the Cement Association of Canada. They're all here in the galleries today, and I welcome them.

Mr. Michael Harris: For those who didn't hear the previous member's introductions, I too would like to welcome folks today to the Legislature from the Cement Association of Canada: Marty Fallon and Martin Vroegh from St Marys Cement; Bruno Roux, president of Lafarge Canada and chair of the Cement Association of Canada; Bill Galloway, of course, and Ruksana Mirza from Holcim; Alex Car from Essroc; and, of course, Michael McSweeney, president of the Cement Association of Canada.

We look forward to the cement mixer this afternoon down in the dining room.

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: I'd like to welcome to the Legislature today the family of page captain Claudia Velimirovic. Her mother, Daphne Velimirovic, and grandmother, Stephanie Giamou, are in the public gallery today.

ORAL QUESTIONS

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Good morning, Premier. My question is for you this morning. Later today, the Auditor General will present her annual report to the Legislature. It will include a look at your government's accounting practices and the province's debt burden, which you've more than doubled in the past 11 years to almost \$300 billion. Your wasteful, politicized spending now means you pay \$11 billion of interest instead of investing that money in health care, education, transit and infrastructure.

Premier, your government gets drafts of these audits in advance, so what is this year's equivalent of the billion-dollar gas plant scandal? Is it going to be MaRS? Is it going to be smart meters? Premier, how much are we adding today to your government's growing record of fiscal waste?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I look forward to the Auditor General's annual report. It will be tabled later this afternoon, as the member opposite recognizes. The opposition is heckling that we're not looking forward to it. In fact, I believe that the Auditor General plays a very important role in terms of shining a light on issues that need to be addressed by government. I welcome her input.

We welcome accountability, and the existence of the Auditor General and the work that she does is the defin-

ition of accountability. In fact, because we welcome accountability, that's why we are moving to pass Bill 8 today, which I believe will provide unprecedented transparency. I believe that the Ombudsman is here with us. The accountability that is already in place will be enhanced as we move towards the passage of Bill 8.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Premier, let's take a look at your typical response to the auditor's reports. Last year, the AG gave you a failing grade on the massive backlog for autism treatment; slow ambulance service; and mandated school lunches that kids are now rejecting in favour of fast food. On all counts, you've failed to take her report seriously.

She also took aim at your creative accounting with Ontario Northland. You claimed a savings of \$265 million by divesting Ontario Northland, yet the auditor said that it would actually cost \$820 million. That's a billion-dollar fallacy that you were happy to perpetuate.

People demand accountability from government. Premier, will you commit today to take the recommendations of the auditor seriously and act with the force and focus we all expect from the Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Absolutely, Mr. Speaker. We will absolutely take the Auditor General's report seriously. We always do take the Auditor General's report seriously and in fact act on the recommendations, the suggestions that the Auditor General makes, and work with the Auditor General.

I think that is a key part of this: to recognize that the Auditor General brings a new set of eyes to the operation of government and works with ministries to understand what it is that ministries are doing to mitigate the concerns she may have, but also to point to how we might—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): There seems to be an ongoing conversation between the President of the Treasury Board and the member from Leeds–Grenville. It will stop.

Finish, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: —to look forward as to how we might work to address the concerns that the Auditor General raises. That's the natural course of the relationship between government and the Auditor General—all governments.

We take her report seriously and we look forward to it this afternoon.

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

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Premier, the auditor isn't alone in passing judgment on your risky financial management. StatsCan says that between 2008 and 2012, Ontario ran accumulated deficits of \$84 billion. That's 10 times more than the next province, BC, at \$8 billion. Lakehead University's Livio Di Matteo says that this makes Ontario the worst economic performer in the country—he calls it a “travesty”—and that your policies have driven down private investment, suppressed productivity and econom-

ic growth, killed job creation, and caused a “deterioration of ... public finances.”

Premier, we want prosperity, better quality of life and accountability in government. Isn't it time to stop politicking and make Ontario first?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I think that's a great idea. Let's stop politicking. Let's look at the reality that Ontario has been the number one destination for foreign direct investment. Let's look at the reality that we have recovered more than 500,000 net new jobs since the economic downturn. Let's look at the reality that in the second half of question period—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock, please. I found it rather quiet when the question was being put. I want the same for the answer.

Please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: —that in the second half of question period, there will inevitably be questions from the same party about investments in the talent and skills of the people in their ridings, the infrastructure in their ridings, partnerships with businesses in their ridings. Those questions come in the second part of question period because essentially, the people across the floor understand that the pillars of our plan, the investments that people need in their constituencies, are exactly what we need to do to restore the economy in Ontario and to keep us on track.

SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Back to the Premier: Over the past two weeks we've been hearing from scores of small businesses all over this province. Their message has been clear: They want relief from this government for businesses to thrive and succeed, relief from crushing red tape—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of Agriculture, come to order.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: —relief from skyrocketing energy prices, relief from new payroll taxes like the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan you're planning to ram through this Legislature; 94% of small business want you to cut red tape, 93% want relief from skyrocketing energy rates and over half say your pension tax will result in them cutting jobs.

Premier, why don't you take them seriously?

Interjection.

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

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I certainly will look to the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure, because small businesses in Ontario have partnered with this government very well, and there are small businesses across Ontario that have benefited from investments like the regional development funds, like investments in technology, and have benefited from the

very well-educated workforce that we have that allows them to expand.

1040

But I just want to address the issue of the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan. From what the member opposite is saying, I guess he would call the Canada Pension Plan a tax, because what we are talking about is not a tax. We're talking about a plan that would allow people to put money aside so that they would have retirement security, just as the Canada Pension Plan allows for that.

We know people need this. We know that people, in fact, across the country are not saving enough for their retirement. We are going to take action, Mr. Speaker, because there are people in Nipissing who need this plan.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Premier, the most heinous example of you not listening to small business is your new pension tax. Here's what Ian Lee at Carleton University tells us. He says that forcing employees and employers to take money out of their pockets for your pension scheme will "hurt the economy," "eliminates the discretion of taxpayers," and reduces the amount that can be invested where they want. This is not a policy that helps Ontarians. This is not a policy that grows our economy, and it's not a policy that makes it easier for small businesses to stay alive and make Ontario first.

Premier, will you do the right thing and put your flawed pension tax back on the shelf?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Associate Minister of Finance, responsible for the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan.

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite knows full well that this is not a tax. In fact, this is an investment in the future of Ontario. The ORPP is an investment in people's futures and a long-term enhancement to our economy that will support three million Ontarians who do not currently have a workplace-based pension plan.

In the past few weeks, in fact, Mr. Speaker, studies have underscored the importance of closing the savings gap. This is a real challenge that we cannot ignore. We have to take leadership.

According to the Conference Board of Canada, six out of 10 Canadians are not currently saving for retirement and, in fact, half feel that they are ill-prepared to retire at all—

Interjections.

Mr. Todd Smith: Out of touch.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Prince Edward–Hastings is in touch with me.

Please finish.

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: Without action today, this has the potential to stagnate growth and to create economic uncertainty.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot allow that. We are taking action with the Ontario—

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

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Premier, all Ontarians deserve to work towards a comfortable retirement, but there are other ways a government can help make that reality rather than new taxes. When you couple energy prices set to soar 42%, an \$11-billion—

Interjection.

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

The Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs is warned.

Please finish.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Add an \$11-billion annual red tape burden and a WSIB tax costing contractors up to \$6,000 a year, and it's no wonder we lost 2,700 small businesses in Ontario last year alone. This is not how we help small business; it's how you turned Ontario into a have-not province.

Given the reduced growth forecast, and last month's dismal job report, are you ready to risk more jobs to save your own? Premier, how does running the most expensive jurisdiction in the country help Ontario first?

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: You know, the member opposite is not dealing with the facts. The fact is that this government is continuing to work to strengthen our economy today while making the necessary decisions to ward off a problem that we see on the horizon.

Mr. Speaker, our government is confident that we are supporting the needs of business today. Ontario is the first jurisdiction in North America for foreign direct investment. Ontario's tax system, in fact, is the lowest and most competitive of any OECD country and is the lowest in North America.

The introduction of the ORPP is another way of making investments to build Ontario up, so that when people retire they will have a predictable, consistent stream of income that they will continue to spend in Ontario's economy. That, Mr. Speaker, is what we need to do to strengthen Ontario's economic future.

Interjections.

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

New question.

CHILD CARE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. The Liberal government is cutting child care in this province. Sudbury's municipal daycare manager says their budget was cut by \$2 million, and he says another \$3-million cut could be on the way.

The Liberal minister says that she doesn't understand the problem. Let me explain: Liberal cuts mean that municipal daycare centres are closing, and moms and dads are left lying awake at night trying to figure out where their children are going to be getting their child care from.

My question is, why is this Premier closing down child care centres in Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Well, what this government is doing is actually opening spaces in full-day kindergarten. That means that tens of thousands of children

are going to have access to that full-day kindergarten program that otherwise they would not have had. In addition, as we have said, the Child Care Modernization Act, which has passed through this Legislature, has the potential to open up 6,000 new, licensed, safe spaces to allow more families in the province to have access to child care.

So quite the contrary to what the leader of the third party is saying, we have worked with the child care sector. We recognize that the implementation of full-day kindergarten has meant that there is a transition in child care provision, but thousands more children have access to safe, affordable child care and full-day kindergarten because of the policies of this government.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Gee, it sounds a little bit like the children's dental plan that the Liberals pretended wasn't being cut the other day. The Liberals talk a lot about investing in child care, but here's the reality: The Liberal government is cutting child care across Ontario. The latest example is Sudbury. New investments are nowhere to be found. The municipal daycare manager says that Sudbury hasn't seen—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

Please finish.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The municipal daycare manager in Sudbury hasn't seen any "new dollars or new investments." It means moms and dads in Sudbury are worried, and rightfully so. They shouldn't have to worry about whether their child will have care next week, next month or next year.

Is the Premier proud of shutting down child care spaces and leaving parents in the lurch in Sudbury?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Let me just address a couple of issues. First of all, the drive-by swipe that the leader of the third party made on the Healthy Smiles program: The fact is that 70,000 more children are going to be able to get dental care because of the program that we are putting in place. The reality is that she is just wrong in terms of kids losing that care. We have made certain that children who are receiving dental care today will receive dental care in an ongoing way. Those kids are not losing the care. It's very clear in the program that we have put in place. Those cuts are not happening.

She was wrong on that, and she's wrong on child care. The fact is that since 2003, a 90% increase in funding has gone into child care—close to a billion dollars. We have moved from \$532 million to nearly \$1 billion. There has been a consistent increase in child care funding.

I don't know the situation in Sudbury, but I know why the member opposite is talking about—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Finding affordable child care in Ontario is already a nightmare for parents. In the southwest, Sarnia families watched as Coronation Park Day Nursery closed its doors just last month. In the north, Sudbury families are bracing for the closure of

their municipal child care centre. In eastern Ontario, the Queen's Day Care Centre in Kingston has a wait-list of 500 children, but instead of seeing investment, they've lost 137 spaces, notwithstanding the fact that they have 500 kids on their wait-list. Child care spaces across Ontario are disappearing, and families don't know what to do. It is creating chaos. It hurts children, and it hurts parents and families.

I want to know, does this Liberal Premier really think it's progressive to be shutting down public not-for-profit child care spaces across this province?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: As I said, I know why the leader of the third party is talking about Sudbury: because Sudbury doesn't have a representative in this Legislature right now.

1050

Since 2003, child care funding in Sudbury has increased by—

Interjections.

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

Finish, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Child care funding in Sudbury, since 2003, has increased by 110%, from \$75 million to—Mr. Speaker, the reality is that we have consistently increased funding to child care.

The other reality is that we have implemented full-day kindergarten. That means that there is a change in the delivery of child care around the province, because the four- and five-year-olds who may have been in child care are now in full-day kindergarten. So there are different models developing across the province, but there's more money and there are more spaces.

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Ms. Andrea Horwath: This question is also for the Premier. Today, the Auditor General will be tabling her annual report. When we asked, the Liberals couldn't seem to find the business case for the MaRS loan. They didn't know whether they were going to lose millions of dollars in city of Toronto grants, and they didn't know what the final cost of the bailout was going to be. When the Auditor General came knocking, could the Premier find the business case for MaRS, or did the AG also get the cold shoulder?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I just need to correct my record on the last question: The funding for Sudbury child care has gone from \$7.5 million to \$15.8 million.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of the Auditor General's report, I will repeat what I said to the member of the Conservative Party: We look forward to the Auditor General's report. I'm not going to pre-empt her announcements this afternoon, but she will look at the operation of the government, she will look at the various areas that she has chosen to examine and she will give us advice. She will do that having worked with the ministry, ministries having worked with her, to talk about what it is we are doing to address the concerns that she has identified, and

what we can do going forward to continue to address the concerns that she might identify.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Auditor General is also reporting on child care. Four children have died here in Ontario since 2013. No parent should ever have to suffer that kind of loss. As a mom, it's hard for me to even imagine. Now the Premier is cutting public, not-for-profit child care spaces across Ontario, meaning more kids will be in unlicensed care. Does the Premier think that cutting funding and closing down public, not-for-profit licensed child care centres, driving kids into unlicensed child care, is actually good public policy for the province of Ontario in 2014?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Education.

Hon. Liz Sandals: I think we need to deal with the facts here: The funding for child care in Ontario has doubled to a billion dollars since 2003. We have created, since 2003, 130,000 additional licenced child care spaces. In the last four years, the average creation of new licenced child care spaces has been 18,000 new spaces per year, Speaker. In addition to that, 265,000 children are in full-day kindergarten; that's all the four and five-year-olds in the province. That is not cutting; that is adding.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Auditor General will also be reporting on smart meters. Smart-metering hasn't reduced electricity consumption at all in this province, and people's bills are still going up. It's caused anxiety for people, especially seniors, shift workers and low-income families. This is the chance for the Premier to finally admit that the smart-metering program was not so smart after all. Is she prepared to do that today?

Hon. Liz Sandals: Minister of Energy, please.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I'm very pleased to answer that question, Mr. Speaker. Studies have shown that people are saving money with smart meters. Not only are they saving money with smart meters, the system is generating—

Interjections.

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

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, studies have shown that time-of-use pricing has been successful at reducing consumption by residential customers during peak periods by between 2% and 5%. In addition to that, it's generating a lot of savings in costs to the system itself; it alerts utilities when lines go down, a service that they never had before; it redirects electricity to restore power outages; it's improving accuracy—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, come to order.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: —in accounting—

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

New question?

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Christine Elliott: My question is to the Minister of Health. Concerns regarding medical tourism have been raised to your government dating back to at least 2011 by a number of health care organizations, including, among others, the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario. This practice, in which certain health care organizations attract patients from other countries on a pay-for-treatment basis, seriously undermines our publicly funded health care system, yet nothing substantive has been done to end it. In fact, in April 2014, the previous Minister of Health expressed her support for this practice.

Minister, on November 21 you sent a letter asking health care organizations not to “market to, solicit or treat international patients.” This approach clearly hasn't worked before, so, Minister, when will you introduce an outright ban on medical tourism?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I appreciate the question from the opposition. In fact, we have asked our hospitals to end the practice of actively marketing to or soliciting international patients to come to this province to avail themselves of our health care facilities. Of course, we're not talking about those important functions that our hospitals play in terms of bringing humanitarian patients to the province. I think all of us agree that programs like the Herbie Fund at Toronto Sick Kids hospital, for example, need to continue.

We're talking about a specific category of individuals who would choose to pay to gain entry to hospitals in the province. I have to say that it's a small number of hospitals that, to date, have engaged in that practice. There are very specific principles—I'll get into those principles in the supplementary—that have adhered to hospitals engaging in the practice of receiving international patients, but we've ended that practice specifically with regard to marketing and soliciting to individual—

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

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Deputy House leader, come to order.

Supplementary?

Ms. Christine Elliott: Minister, it's clear your government isn't taking these concerns seriously enough. In 2012, the previous Minister of Health warned hospitals they could only treat international patients if no public dollars were used, no Ontario patients were displaced and all the revenue generated was spent on hospital services for Ontarians. Clearly, that's not happening. These conditions were not adhered to, because another warning letter was sent in August 2014. Again, no compliance. Now we have your November statement. There is no reason to believe, based on past practices, that there will be compliance with this latest statement from your office.

Minister, will you introduce legislation banning medical tourism here in Ontario?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Perhaps the member opposite hasn't read my most recent letter—and I'm happy to

provide her with a copy. It's crystal clear: We are ending the practice of allowing our hospitals to market, solicit and receive those international patients, precisely the ones she's talking about. We are ending that practice.

Two years ago, it's true that a letter was sent by the ministry, followed up this past August, stipulating what at that time were the requirements in place: no tax dollars could go towards this practice, any revenue needs to come back to service Ontario patients, and it's very clear that it certainly couldn't impact the care that Ontarians are receiving in any way, shape or form.

We've gone further. We did a review. I initiated a review. In fact, it was my predecessor, the President of the Treasury Board, who initiated the review. We had to get more information to find out precisely what was taking place. We've ended the practice. There's no question that that practice has ended.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: My question is for the Minister of Government and Consumer Services. Yesterday, New Democrats tabled a motion that urges the government to move immediately to prevent predatory practices by payday loan companies. The motion calls for banning gift card exchanges at exorbitant rates and reducing the fees charged on payday loans from the current \$21 per \$100.

Will the government be voting for the NDP motion supporting vulnerable Ontarians, or will this government side with the predatory payday loan industry?

1100

Hon. David Oraziotti: I appreciate the member's oversimplification of the issue. As the member is aware, we have taken swift action around these organizations. With respect to Money Mart in particular, we reached out to them and expressed our displeasure with regard to the practice that they've engaged in; they suspended that practice immediately. We need to review the matter further.

As the member also knows, the rate of lending and the aspect around gift cards and the resale of gift cards is not in violation of the current Payday Loans Act, 2008. In fact, there is no province in this country that has gift card resale as part of any existing legislation.

I committed to the member that we will review the matter, and we will look at the resale of gift cards in the province of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Often doing the right thing can be very simple. Banning practices such as redeeming gift cards for cash at 50% of the cards' value is only one of the many areas in the Payday Loans Act that needs to be changed, and can be changed if the government has the will to do so.

I would have thought that forcing vulnerable individuals, already under stress during the holiday season, to pay this extraordinarily high rate for an exchange would be something that the government would be motivated by to move forward with some legislation to actually ensure

that Ontarians are going to be protected moving forward, but apparently this government is not committed to that.

In our motion, New Democrats have proposed modest, reasonable Payday Loans Act reforms that would actually protect vulnerable people from this predatory industry. Why won't this government commit to voting for this motion, to ensure that we actually support our vulnerable people?

Hon. David Oraziotti: Speaker, our government is committed to protecting consumers in the province of Ontario. We have done a consultation with the sector earlier this year, before the election, and we will be acting, going forward in the new year, on proposed changes around the legislation. We do have a new bill to introduce in relation to payday lending in the province, with standards that will continue to raise the bar to protect consumers in this province. We're committed to reviewing the issue around the resale of gift cards, and the member knows full well that the aspect of gift cards being taken for cash value was not in this instance part of any payday lending aspect. If it was, they would be in violation of the act.

We've asked them to cease. They have done that. We will look at other ways that we can ensure, through charities, that folks can receive the funding that they need with respect to those who are vulnerable in Ontario.

PENSION PLANS

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: My question is to the Associate Minister of Finance. Minister, in the past few weeks, both Manulife and the Conference Board of Canada have released studies highlighting the retirement savings challenge of Ontarians. According to the Conference Board, only six in 10 Canadians are putting money away for retirement, and most don't feel that they have saved enough to live comfortably in their golden years.

The Manulife study reveals that almost half of Canadians expect to be in debt in retirement. Mr. Speaker, I know that some of the residents in my riding expressed their concerns during my campaign about the retirement savings of their children and the impact that low retirement savings will have on our economy.

Minister, I understand that yesterday you introduced legislation that will help strengthen Ontario's retirement income system. Can you please inform the House how the new legislation will help to strengthen our retirement system?

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: Merci to the hard-working member from Ottawa-Orléans. The under-savings problem in this country is real. It has been a common thread in all my conversations with Ontarians. That is why I was very pleased to stand before the House and introduce the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan Act, 2014. If passed, this legislation would create a savings tool for the people of this province designed to give people a secure retirement-income floor that they can rely on.

This act would commit the government to establishing the ORPP by January 1, 2017, and would enshrine in law

some of the key elements of the ORPP that we discussed in our 2014 budget. This act would help millions of Ontarians save for retirement and help move forward a made-in-Ontario solution to the retirement under-savings problem.

The cost of inaction is too high. We have an economic imperative that we act now, and that's what our government is doing with this legislation.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Merci à la ministre pour la réponse. I'm very pleased to see our government stepping up and taking action to address this important concern for so many Ontarians. I know that constituents in my riding will be keen to learn about the steps that our government is taking to address the saving challenge.

Mr. Speaker, again through you to the associate minister: Over the past several weeks I have had constituents express interest in the administrative body that will administer the plan. Can you please explain to the House how the funds gathered from the ORPP will be managed?

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: Thank you again to the member for the question.

In our legislation we reiterated our commitment from the budget and the fall economic statement that the ORPP will be designed to mirror many elements of the CPP. The ORPP would be publicly administered, at arm's length from government. We will put in place a strong governance model for managing investments and administering the plan.

Ontario is home to some of the largest and most highly regarded pension funds, as stated this week in the New York Times. We will be leveraging the expertise in this sector and in Ontario's financial services sector. The former CEO of OMERS, Mr. Michael Nobrega, is providing guidance and support on the implementation of the ORPP. In particular, he will provide advice on creating an administrative entity and developing administrative and operational capacity. I look forward to continuing to work with Mr. Nobrega and the leading experts on our technical advisory group to ensure that we create the best possible plan for the people of Ontario.

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Laurie Scott: My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Family health teams across the province are losing their qualified staff and finding it difficult to find replacements. These teams, which provide valuable service in rural Ontario, are watching their staff leave to work in hospitals, CCACs and long-term care, where compensation and benefits are better. What is your plan to ensure that family health teams have enough staff to care for our communities?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: First of all, I'm very proud of the work that all our front-line health care workers do across this province. They are there, often and generally, when people are in their greatest moment of need, and they provide a vital and important service.

It's important, when we look at our health care resource challenge, that we understand that there are

issues of recruitment and retention from time to time. As a ministry, we're working hard to address those specific sectors within our health care system.

A perfect example, I think, was earlier this year, when we made the announcement—we've now implemented it—for our PSWs, or person support workers, where we will be increasing by \$4 over the next three years to make sure we are helping to attract the right people to that important profession, but also that the ability to recruit and sustain and maintain them, particularly in the home and community environment, is a viable option. Certainly, as we look at all the health care sectors, we will continue to take that approach.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Laurie Scott: While family health teams are provided funding to hire front-line care staff, they are unable to fill the positions. There is currently a 20% vacancy rate in nurse practitioner positions within our family health teams. When these positions are left vacant, how are these teams supposed to provide the services people need?

Again, Minister, what is your plan to address this growing recruitment and retention crisis—and it is a crisis?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Our plan certainly isn't—in fact, it's the opposite of what the opposition's plan was in the 1990s, when they fired more than 6,000 nurses in this province. In fact, since we came into office, more than 24,000 nurses have been added to this province to help provide health care to people on the front lines—and more than 10,000 RNs.

I met recently with our nurse practitioners—a couple of weeks ago. They have indicated that they want to work together on the issue of recruitment and retention. We know there are challenges in certain parts of the province. We have, I would say, led the way for Canada in terms of the construct of the nurse practitioner-led clinic; we now have 25 of them around the province. We will continue to work with our nurse practitioners, as with all nurses, to make sure they are able to find those jobs and stay in those jobs successfully.

PENSION PLANS

Ms. Jennifer K. French: My question is to the Minister of Finance. Yesterday, your government introduced two different pieces of pension legislation: the first, a fully-formed PRPP bill to appease your friends on Bay Street; and the second, little more than an obvious attempt to distract from the first. It is great to see the government getting into the holiday spirit and putting a bow on the PRPP legislation, but Ontarians are not that easily fooled.

1110

Why does your government continue to make deception your first priority?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. I'm not particularly enamoured with that. Would you please withdraw?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I withdraw.

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

Hon. Charles Sousa: Thank you for the question. I appreciate the member actually having listened to the announcement yesterday. She's absolutely correct. We brought forward, for the first time in Ontario's history, an Ontario Retirement Pension Plan and a retirement security system to provide greater integrity, greater choice and greater support for people as they retire in the years to come.

That, of course, includes providing a complementary plan that is also being adopted across the country. It would be ill-advised and wrong on our part not to offer greater choice to supplement people's retirement security, hence providing a low-cost, pooled retirement plan that enables all individuals to yet again provide for their security in a much more cost-effective way.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: The government has a lot to say about choice and voluntary savings options, but nearly 50% of working Ontarians will likely be exempted from the ORPP and won't have the option to join. We have years to wait—

Interjection.

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

Ms. Jennifer K. French: —for the design details of the ORPP, and hopefully we will have that opportunity to design the best plan possible. As a general rule, the greater the size of the pool, the greater the benefit to pensioners. The more people in the plan, the more money in the pool.

Rather than catering to the interests of their friends on Bay Street, will the government allow exempted Ontarians the opportunity to voluntarily enrol in the ORPP? Is the priority of this government the financial security of banks and insurance companies or the financial security of hard-working Ontarians?

Hon. Charles Sousa: The member opposite is asking about how we are going to support and provide for an Ontario publicly administered pension plan to support the people of Ontario. Hopefully more people across Canada, in other provinces, are interested in what we are doing.

You voted against that very measure and now you're standing here, asking us how we are going to provide a public plan to support those very people. You voted against it. We are offering that program. We recognize the benefit of having a pooled system that enables more people to benefit from retirement security.

Retirement security also includes other plans, other plans that are more cost-effective, and that includes the pooled registered retirement plan with the PRPPs, which is what we've advised and what we will be providing in the coming year. They're complementary; they're not plans that are—

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

SKILLS TRAINING

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: My question is for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Minister, many Ontarians are having difficulty getting back to work because they lack skills and training necessary to fill the jobs of today's economy. I have discussed this with professors and students in my riding of Kingston and the Islands from both St. Lawrence College and Queen's University. At the same time, employers are constantly looking for new ways to recruit and train qualified employees to perform highly skilled work in Ontario's competitive labour market.

Our government, along with employers across our province, understands the importance of investing in skills training and recognizes that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to developing a workforce with the right skills and knowledge for the new economy. I was able to see the benefits of the critical relationship between our colleges and universities and the workforce firsthand.

Minister, we were pleased to see that after months of leadership from Ontario at the bargaining table you recently announced that the Canada-Ontario Job Grant is open for business—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

Hon. Reza Moridi: I want to thank the member from Kingston and the Islands for that question. I'm happy to announce that businesses across Ontario can now apply for the Canada-Ontario Job Grant. This grant provides an opportunity for employers to invest in the training of their workforce with help from the government. The Canada-Ontario Job Grant will serve to encourage greater participation of employers in skills training and also enhances employment and skills across our province.

Thanks to Ontario's hard work, we gained important flexibility for funding the Canada-Ontario Job Grant and made sure that our most vulnerable workers were not left out in the cold.

The quality of our skilled workforce is our single greatest asset in this province. Ontario's economy is stronger when every Ontarian can contribute to our economy.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: Thank you, Minister, for informing the members on how the Canada-Ontario Job Grant is helping Ontarians get back to work and helping employers train their employees to do the highly skilled jobs in Ontario's competitive labour market. It's great to hear that our government is committed to taking on a leadership role in skills training programs that develop a strong and modernized workforce in Ontario.

I know from my riding of Kingston and the Islands that we have some excellent examples of programs that are supporting small businesses and local employment, particularly at St. Lawrence College. Some perfect examples are programs such as the brick and stone masonry program, computer networking and technical support, culinary management, or the more technical energy systems engineering technology program.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell us more about the efforts our government has taken to gather feedback from employers across the province and how we are helping accommodate the specific needs of our small businesses?

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

Mr. Speaker, with the help of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, we listened to what businesses across the province of Ontario had to say, and we are taking action.

To make it easier for small businesses across the province to participate in the Canada-Ontario Job Grant, they will have more flexibility on how to fund their portion of the training.

We are also asking employers to help us shape two new training initiatives. One of them is our Customized Training program, which will develop sector-specific training. The second one is our UpSkill pilot, which will provide technical training tailored for vulnerable workers across the province of Ontario.

Employer-driven training will help us continue to build a workforce at the right time for the right place in the province of Ontario.

DIABETES

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. In response to a question from the Liberal member from Cambridge, the minister recently stated in the Legislature, "I'm proud that, in fact, under our government, every single Ontarian with diabetes who wants a family doctor has one." Would the minister like to retract that statement?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, in a province with 13 million people, it is a challenge, of course, to constantly be able to provide every possible level of health care to every single individual at every single moment in time. But, certainly, the progress that we've made on our Ontario Diabetes Strategy is extraordinary. In fact, it's a model—not just in Canada, but around the world—for the progress that it has made.

That objective that we have, that every single Ontarian who has diabetes who wants a family doctor has one—that objective stands. I'm motivated and want to work closely with the member opposite if he has identified an individual in the province where that's not the case.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Speaker, some of my constituents who have diabetes are spending hours in the emergency room to receive the medical care they need. They could have told this minister that he was wrong. His comments show he's completely out of touch with the reality of the doctor shortage in Perth-Wellington.

For three years, my office has received calls from those who desperately want and need a doctor. Two weeks ago, we assisted a constituent with his diabetes assessment form from the MTO. He does not have a doctor and came to us for help with his medical paperwork. What does the minister have to say to him and others waiting for about a year on this government's Health Care Connect list?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, we've come a long way in terms of providing a family doctor to those Ontarians who want and need one. I think the figure is 94%. It may be within one percentage of that.

We've made an even more ambitious target in our platform that we're going to carry through with in the next several years. That goal is that every Ontarian who wants a family doctor in this province will be entitled to one and will receive one, whether that's a family doctor or a nurse practitioner, but certainly that primary care provider that that individual wants and deserves.

We have come a long way, I have to say, in terms of the provision of services. In fact, Health Care Connect is an important part of that, where individuals who don't have a family doctor or a nurse practitioner or a primary care provider can actually enrol with Health Care Connect, which works with them diligently to source and connect them with that individual who will provide them with health care services.

1120

INJURED WORKERS

Mr. Taras Natyshak: My question is to the Minister of Labour. Yesterday, injured workers and their advocates gathered on the steps of the WSIB. They were there to send a message to this government that it's not all right to send hefty safety rebates to companies that have been convicted of health and safety violations that have resulted in workplace deaths. They were there to tell this government that it's not all right to sneak in pre-existing conditions as a reason to deny sick and injured workers their rightful benefits.

Why is this government allowing injured workers to be harmed by these reckless policy changes, and why does it send fat cheques to companies that have been complicit in workplace deaths?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you to the member for that question. I was able to attend the rally yesterday. I had a good conversation with many of the injured workers who had shown up to express their concerns. Certainly, these are concerns that have been expressed over the years as each successive government seeks to improve the system. Often we talk about the premium rates; we talk about experience rating. I think what we need to do is remember that this system was put in place to treat injured workers, and that's what we've been doing at the Ministry of Labour.

The WSIB is doing a review on its benefits policy. It's doing a review on its pre-existing conditions. It's consulting with the injured workers' community; it's consulting with labour; it's consulting with business. I'm optimistic that at the end of this process we're going to have an improved process in place for injured workers in this province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I appreciate the minister's acknowledgment in reference to the historical significance of why we have the WSIB in Ontario, because

under the Justice William Meredith principles agreement reached in 1913, workers gave up their right to sue their employers with the expectation of receiving just and fair compensation if they were injured on the job.

Just and fair treatment is what injured workers expect and it's what this government should ensure is provided, but it's not what is happening at the WSIB these days. Every one of the members in this chamber knows that and should acknowledge that. Profoundly unfair and anti-worker policies are being brought in secretly without any oversight from this Legislature. When will this government ensure that injured and sick workers are treated with the respect and dignity that they deserve?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you to the member for the supplementary. I think we all agree in this House that injured workers in this province deserve to be treated with respect; they deserve to be treated with dignity. I don't think that's in question.

Often, from time to time, the WSIB takes a look at its own practices and policies. It takes comments from individuals who have availed themselves of the system. It talks to people from the labour community, it talks to people from the employer community and it seeks to put in place a system that is fair to all employees in this province. As a result of the input that has come in from labour groups and from injured workers' groups, changes have been made to the pre-existing policies. Changes have been made to the benefit policies. I'm hopeful, as we move ahead with the input from the three parties and from the opposition parties, that we see further changes to the experience rating program as well.

ACCESSIBILITY FOR THE DISABLED

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Ma question est pour la ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, the Honourable Helena Jaczek. Minister, as you will know, last week we celebrated the United Nations International Day of Persons with Disabilities and tomorrow will be United Nations Human Rights Day. These important days are an opportunity for all of us to acknowledge the challenges and barriers, including, of course, poverty and discrimination, that people with disabilities face every day. This is especially important in my own riding of Etobicoke North.

Your ministry and this government have taken a strong position on recognizing individuals with disabilities, in particular their right to inclusion, support and having the same opportunities as all Ontarians. This includes introducing a landmark piece of legislation, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, almost 10 years ago.

Minister, I ask you, doctor to doctor, what has the government done recently to help people who are living with disabilities reach their full potential?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Merci au député d'Etobicoke-Nord pour sa question. The work our government has done and will continue to do in this area is crucial to upholding the human rights and advancing the quality of life of all Ontarians. As Minister of Community and

Social Services, I look forward to realizing our government's commitments to ensuring Ontarians with disabilities are better supported.

Over the past two years, our government has made significant improvements to the Ontario Disability Support Program. Now everyone who works can earn up to \$200 without having their assistance benefits reduced at all; and for earnings above \$200, benefits are reduced only by 50 cents on every dollar earned.

Beginning in April 2015, a new streamlined employment benefit will be introduced to support ODSP recipients in finding competitive employment. With the new benefit, recipients with disabilities will be able to access up to \$1,800 to help realize their employment goals.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Thank you, Minister. We appreciate your stewardship of these files, and of course the recent changes will make a tangible difference for people finding and maintaining employment.

A number of agencies in my own riding of Etobicoke North are doing great work to support individuals in their daily lives and in seeking better integration in their communities and the economy. Unfortunately, however, it's still a reality that individuals living with disabilities face enhanced challenges. In Ontario, for example, one in seven people has some type of disability. This means about 62,000 adults and 28,000 children.

The ability for an individual to pursue competitive employment can be one of the most fulfilling life experiences, especially for someone who may have thought they never could. Speaker, how is this government supporting individuals with developmental disabilities to pursue their goals in employment?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: My mandate is to drive forward the transformation of supports for those living with disabilities. This means ensuring these individuals have access to the right assistance so they can pursue the same opportunities in our communities and economy.

Recently, we launched a Development Services Employment and Modernization Fund, with the goal of making integrated employment in the community the preferred outcome for people with a developmental disability. This investment of up \$15 million over the next three years will promote inclusive work environments and opportunities for people with developmental disabilities to find competitive employment, develop successful job skills and contribute to the growth of the province.

This new fund has already received 260 submissions from agencies in its first allotment. The successful applications will be announced in early 2015.

If our province is to realize its full potential, then we must be sure that all Ontarians can reach their own individual potential.

CHILD CARE

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: My question is for the Minister of Education. Minister, your flawed Bill 10 was time-allocated through this House at record speed, with hardly any consultation and almost no debate.

During the committee hearings, your PA, the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, informed deputants that they would be part of a minister's round table that would provide input into drafting regulations. Minister, can you inform the House today when the round table discussions will take place, and if that input will include members of the Coalition of Independent Childcare Providers of Ontario? And if you are not including the coalition, are you telling the people in the province that they have to go to a court of law to get fair representation?

Hon. Liz Sandals: Yes, what will happen is we've got extensive regulations that need to be done with Bill 10. One of the amendments that people might be interested in, which we did include with Bill 10 at the hearings, was to actually put it in writing, to make our intent clear, that the new regulations for the unlicensed home child care sector will not take effect until January 2016, which means that there's a transition period of a year. We've put that right in the law so it will be absolutely clear to everyone.

What I'm saying here is that there are a lot of regulations to be developed, and we will do what we always do: We will post each and every regulation for 45 days.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Minister, I never heard an answer on that.

Are you not ashamed of how the House leader jammed this Bill 10 through for you? But I want to give him credit: He made sure you secretly made it to Ottawa, and he made sure we had 93 amendments/motions passed in less than 40 minutes without debate. I want to thank you both because we now have some excellent new candidates who want to put their names forward for our party because of the way that you treated them and the way you treated the ICPs on Bill 10.

1130

I ask again—I would just like a clear answer—when can we expect your regulation round tables, and will independent child care providers be included or not included? I just want an answer; you never included the answer. You made it up. You talk about amendments; you never answered my question.

Hon. Liz Sandals: Actually, I did answer your question. When we post something for 45 days, that means that there is a 45-day period during which any member of the public who wishes to comment on the regulation is able to do so. What my parliamentary assistant committed to is that there would consultations. When you post a regulation—trust me, we know this in the child care area. We get hundreds of responses. We collect the responses, we analyze, and then we adjust the regulation. That's what the consultation will do.

But it is interesting to know what the real interest in Bill 10 was: They wanted to recruit more candidates.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr. Percy Hatfield: My question this morning is to the Premier. Good morning, Premier. Southwestern

Ontario is home to some of the most beautiful countryside in Ontario. It includes prime farmland that feeds—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Simcoe North will come to order.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): And the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell will come to order.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I wouldn't take it any further, please.

Please finish your question.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thank you, Speaker. It's to the Premier. I'm talking about the farmland in southwestern Ontario that feeds Ontario and watersheds that flow into three Great Lakes.

It also includes the northwestern tip of the Marcellus Shale, the same rock formation that hosts fracking operations in Pennsylvania and West Virginia which have caused so much environmental devastation.

Recently, the governments of Quebec, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador, and New Brunswick have taken action to address this new environmental threat. Will the government follow their lead and impose a moratorium on fracking?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry.

Hon. Bill Mauro: I want to thank the member for the question. It's interesting: I was wondering if, perhaps at some point, we would hear a question on this issue in the House. I asked my staff some time ago to provide me with as much information as is possible, indeed, if a question had arisen on this particular issue. It's a sensitive issue. I know that the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change also takes specific interest in this issue.

What I can tell you is that should there be a need to move forward with this process in Ontario, there is legislation in effect—I believe it's called the oil and gas act—that would need to be changed before fracking could be allowed in the province of Ontario. What I can tell you right now is that there are no applications—as I understand it, because I've asked my staff to get back to me on this—before my ministry or any other ministry that I'm aware of. So currently nothing is before us. In fact, I am told that if there was, it would require a legislative change before it could move forward.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: The American company Lone Pine is suing the Quebec government under the North American Free Trade Agreement for loss of future business due to its moratorium on fracking. Lone Pine believes it has the right to frack under the St. Lawrence River.

If Ontario doesn't take action now, other companies will lay claim to our countryside and then claim a permanent right to frack before we know what the environmental risks are. At least two companies are considering fracking in southwestern Ontario. Will the government impose a moratorium on fracking now before it's too late?

Hon. Bill Mauro: As I mentioned in the original answer—and I will check further, but I've asked this question. I've been told that should anybody look to move forward with fracking in the province of Ontario, in fact, legislative change would be required. I guess if that's accurate, it would mean that a moratorium at this point is unnecessary.

Given the fact that the member has raised the question, I will endeavour again to look into this to be sure that what I'm conveying to you is, in fact, accurate. But as it stands today, the information that's been provided to me when I asked for it indicates very clearly that right now you cannot go forward and frack in Ontario unless there's legislative change in the province of Ontario.

DEFERRED VOTES

PUBLIC SECTOR AND MPP ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR LA RESPONSABILISATION ET LA TRANSPARENCE DU SECTEUR PUBLIC ET DES DÉPUTÉS

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

Bill 8, An Act to promote public sector and MPP accountability and transparency by enacting the Broader Public Sector Executive Compensation Act, 2014 and amending various Acts / *Projet de loi 8, Loi visant à promouvoir la responsabilisation et la transparence du secteur public et des députés par l'édiction de la Loi de 2014 sur la rémunération des cadres du secteur parapublic et la modification de diverses lois.*

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

The division bells rang from 1135 to 1140.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Sergeant-at-Arms is coming for you.

On December 8, Ms. Matthews moved third reading of Bill 8. All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Chan, Michael	Kwinter, Monte	Potts, Arthur
Chiarelli, Bob	Lalonde, Marie-France	Qaadri, Shafiq
Clark, Steve	Leal, Jeff	Rinaldi, Lou
Colle, Mike	MacCharles, Tracy	Sandals, Liz
Coteau, Michael	MacLaren, Jack	Sergio, Mario
Crack, Grant	MacLeod, Lisa	Smith, Todd
Damerla, Dipika	Malhi, Harinder	Sousa, Charles
Del Duca, Steven	Mangat, Amrit	Takhar, Harinder S.
Delaney, Bob	Martow, Gila	Vernile, Daiene
Dhillon, Vic	Matthews, Deborah	Walker, Bill
Dickson, Joe	Mauro, Bill	Wilson, Jim
Dong, Han	McDonell, Jim	Wong, Soo
Duguid, Brad	McGarry, Kathryn	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Dunlop, Garfield	McMahon, Eleanor	Yakabuski, John
Elliott, Christine	McMeekin, Ted	Yurek, Jeff
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	McNaughton, Monte	Zimmer, David
Fraser, John	Meilleur, Madeleine	

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

Nays

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

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 77; the nays are 17.

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

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

Third reading agreed to.

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

The House recessed from 1144 to 1500.

ANNUAL REPORT, AUDITOR GENERAL

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that I have laid upon the table the 2014 annual report of the Auditor General.

ANNUAL REPORT, PROVINCIAL ADVOCATE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I also beg to inform the House that I have laid upon the table the 2013-14 annual report of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise to recognize a group of grade 10 students from St. Mary's high school in Woodstock, which, as you know, is in the great riding of Oxford. I was pleased to see them here this morning, and I want to welcome them to

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Gravelle, Michael	Milczyn, Peter Z.
Anderson, Granville	Hardeman, Ernie	Miller, Norm
Arnott, Ted	Hillier, Randy	Moridi, Reza
Bailey, Robert	Hoggarth, Ann	Munro, Julia
Baker, Yvan	Hoskins, Eric	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Balkissoon, Bas	Hunter, Mitzie	Naqvi, Yasir
Ballard, Chris	Jaczek, Helena	Nicholls, Rick
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Jones, Sylvia	Oraziotti, David
Bradley, James J.	Kiwala, Sophie	Pettapiece, Randy

Queen's Park, even though they had to go home before I had the opportunity to introduce them in the Legislature.

Ms. Cindy Forster: I'd like to introduce two of our staff, who are here with us today: Laurie Orrett and Margo Duncan. Welcome to the House.

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I would like to welcome Rick Firth and our former colleague Jennifer Mossop to the Legislature. I'm not sure they're here just yet, but they will be arriving shortly. They are here with 20 representatives from Hospice Palliative Care Ontario, who are here for their lobby day and have a reception this evening.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It is now time for members' statements. The member for Carleton–Mississippi Mills has the floor to make a statement.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

KORY EARLE

Mr. Jack MacLaren: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the patient introduction.

On Friday, November 14, my friend Kory Earle was elected president of People First of Canada. People First of Canada is the national non-profit organization representing people who have been labelled as having an intellectual disability. They advocate for the inclusion and protection of the civil rights of Canadians with intellectual disabilities.

Kory is the former first vice-president of People First of Canada; immediate past president of People First of Ontario; and former president, executive director, co-founder and honorary member of People First of Lanark County. Kory has made a positive impact, whatever his position, and no doubt will excel in his new leadership role, given his skills, experience, determination and vision.

I take this moment to say, "Congratulations, and all the best," to Kory as he embarks on his new role as president.

LURIE ORRETT

Ms. Cindy Forster: Today, I rise to ask you to join me in wishing Laurie Orrett, a long-time New Democrat and a staff member for the New Democrats for 25 years here in the Legislature, who is in the members' gallery, a fond farewell as she moves into the next phase of her life.

In Laurie's words, "I have had the privilege and the honour to work for and with the most amazing group of people in this province," and I say that those people would say the same about Laurie.

In 1990, Laurie ran as the New Democrat candidate in York Centre against Greg Sorbara, and received the second-largest number of votes in Ontario in the historic 1990 election.

She then went to work for Margery Ward, the NDP MPP from Don Mills, who, sadly, passed away during her term.

She moved on to work for Gary Malkowski, NDP MPP for York East. He was Canada's first deaf parliamentarian, and the first in the world to actually address the Legislature in sign language.

In 1995, she went to work for Frances Lankin, who many of you will remember.

Following that, she went to work for Michael Prue, who kept Beaches–East York orange—in a landslide by-election—for the next 13 years. According to Laurie, her tenure with Michael was the best job she ever had.

So in June, when I was told that Laurie Orrett actually wanted to come and work for me, I thought I had won the lottery. Laurie is a warm, compassionate person. She has time for everyone. She is a great mentor for both staff and MPPs alike.

This is quite a career in the life cycle process.

She will now have some quality time to spend with her husband, John Orrett, a Toronto district fire chief; her daughter, Ashleigh; and her son, Jeffrey. Her daughter is getting married in February, so she'll have some time to plan that wedding; and she'll have a new son-in-law, Andrew Molinaro. But I'm sure she will continue to haunt the halls of Queen's Park on a regular basis because she's made so many friends here at Queen's Park—all parties, all staff in the Legislature.

On behalf of New Democrats and everyone here, Laurie, we wish you great success in your future path.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You're not allowed to leave until you go to the Speaker's party this evening.

MILTON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: This past Sunday afternoon, I had the pleasure of attending a wonderful concert by the newly founded Milton Philharmonic Orchestra. It was their first public performance and it was actually very lovely. Even though it was their first show, they played like seasoned professionals.

The performance took place at St. Paul's United Church. The room was packed and the performance didn't disappoint. It was incredible. The orchestra played everything from Tchaikovsky to Silent Night; it was a magical performance.

It was also wonderful to see such a diverse collection of people in the audience—music lovers, casual listeners, adults and children. Everyone was out to hear the Milton Philharmonic's first concert. It was a special afternoon and a great experience for the community.

Promoting arts and culture in our community engages residents, strengthens our local economy and allows talented people to share their gifts for the rest of us to enjoy.

After speaking with some of those who were on hand to listen, it was clear that the orchestra had produced something very special: the type of musical experience that can open our minds to new ideas and be a really uplifting force.

It was a truly enjoyable experience, and I look forward to hearing what this great collection of talented musicians will have in store for us next.

WIND TURBINES

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Industrial wind turbines are a part of the government of Ontario's green energy plan. The validity of this energy endeavour may be debatable, but care must be exercised when determining where to locate these monstrous, impeding turbines, especially when they have been constructed around airports.

I mention this not because of the rising energy costs throughout my riding of Chatham–Kent–Essex, but because of safety concerns. It would appear to me that someone was asleep at the switch when eight industrial wind turbines were allowed to be built inside already-established airport zoning regulations at the Chatham–Kent Municipal Airport.

These airport zoning regulations—or AZRs, as they are known—were established for safety reasons to protect the pilots, passengers and families of those flying in and out of the airport. Long before I became Her Majesty's loyal opposition critic for community safety and correctional services, I challenged the location of these turbines because of safety concerns.

Industrial wind turbines are a big business with even bigger returns. So does money reign supreme over lives that are being put in danger daily? There are proponents who claim there is no danger. Those are merely personal opinions; these individuals are simply “blowing in the wind,” pun intended. Their opinions are not scientifically or factually based.

You cannot put a value on life when it comes to safety. Safety must reign over profits and huge payouts. It's imperative that the right action be taken, regardless of precedent-setting.

I will continue to stand up for the people of my riding, encouraging all three levels of government to stand up and do the right thing in the precious name of safety. Failure to do so may result in body bags and huge lawsuits. No one wants this—not now, not ever.

SAMARA CANADA

Mr. Michael Mantha: Today I would like to speak about an organization I have just come to know that is doing excellent work across the country.

Samara Canada is dedicated to reconnecting citizens to politics. Established as a charity in 2009, they have become Canada's most trusted non-partisan champion of increased civic engagement and a more positive public life.

Samara Canada's research and educational program shines new light on Canada's democratic system, and encourages greater political participation across the country to build better politics and a better Canada for everyone.

1510

Every year they have a campaign called Everyday Political Citizen. Who are everyday political citizens, you might ask, Mr. Speaker? You probably know one.

As we know, many people across Ontario and the country are disengaging from politics. Some statistics suggest that 60% of people say they haven't even talked

face to face with someone about politics in the last year. Everyday political citizens are people who take the time to get a little bit political and make positive change in their community.

I had the pleasure of attending the awards ceremony last week. I met with one of the founders of Samara Canada, Michael MacMillan, and I was very impressed by the work they are doing across the country.

I encourage my colleagues here at Queen's Park to reach out to Samara and find ways to get involved. There are so many people out there working to build a better democracy in Canada. This is a great opportunity to recognize these people.

Samara Canada: Look them up.

ST. GABRIEL CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: What do a juggler, a stilt walker and three police motorcycles have to do with the first day of school at St. Gabriel Catholic Elementary School in my riding of Cambridge? Why, a special celebration of the first day in the life of a brand new school, of course.

I was there to join in the fun and was absolutely delighted to be invited back this past Sunday, December 7, for the official dedication of Cambridge's newest school. Teachers, students and families warmly welcomed the Catholic school board officials, school board trustees, Police Chief Bryan Larkin, Councillor Donna Reid and myself.

Bishop Crosby of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Hamilton presided over the blessing and dedication, and children were included in every part of the ceremony, including all of the music and prayers.

St. Gabriel school has already become a wonderful addition to Cambridge, quickly becoming a hub for the greater community. Students will make friendships and lasting connections with teachers and mentors that will empower them throughout all of their lives.

Our children and students deserve nothing but the best education that we can deliver. St. Gabriel school is an example of our government's commitment to build the best schools possible for our children, to help them reach their fullest potential.

Congratulations to principal Cheryl Casselman and to the teachers and staff of St. Gabriel school on their official opening.

WINTER ROAD MAINTENANCE

Mr. Norm Miller: I rise in this House today to speak to a very important issue that has affected residents of my riding, as well as those living and commuting between communities across rural and northern Ontario.

Over the past two winter seasons I have received hundreds of individual complaints through emails, calls, and walk-ins at my constituency offices, all concerned with the condition of highways and roadways throughout Parry Sound–Muskoka.

While considering the challenging amounts of snow-fall and persistently cold temperatures that were experienced at times, wide-ranging concerns have been raised to me regarding the amount of sand and salt used, the service delivery model and the new contract agreements.

I've had the opportunity to speak in this House in the past to question the new model for winter road maintenance, and I must say that with the experience so far this year, I maintain those concerns.

Yesterday, while debating Bill 31, I was able to voice some of the individual cases and personal experiences of poor road conditions. While fines were levied last year to contractors as a result of the poor road conditions, I believe that the current provincial model can be improved to help ensure conditions do not reach such a level in the future.

In February of last year I was particularly pleased that a motion was passed at the public accounts committee to task the Auditor General with investigating the program as a whole, as well as the contracts negotiated on behalf of the provincial government by the Ministry of Transportation.

I look forward to the findings of the auditor. This insight, along with advice from the contractors and the Ministry of Transportation, will undoubtedly help to improve the conditions that Ontario drivers face in Parry Sound–Muskoka and challenging areas throughout northern Ontario and across the province.

HAZEL McCALLION

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: This past week, the former mayor of Mississauga, Hazel McCallion, best known as Hurricane Hazel, entered a new phase of her life after 36 years of distinguished public service.

Over the past several years, I had the privilege to work with her in respect to many projects and issues relating to my riding of Mississauga–Brampton South and the region of Peel. I found that even in her nineties, age was no impediment to Hazel's alertness, energy, and optimism.

She believes—and I agree—that being a woman cannot be and should not be a barrier to success. I heard her say, “What really matters is how hard you work and how determined you are to reach your goals and fulfill your dreams.”

The new mayor of Mississauga, Bonnie Crombie, described Hazel's legacy: “Hazel McCallion has taken our city from farm fields and fruit trees to the sixth-largest city in Canada and an economic powerhouse in North America.” For that, I thank Hazel and wish her all the best.

HALTON McMASTER FAMILY HEALTH CENTRE

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: Friday, November 28 was a great day in my riding of Burlington, as I had the opportunity to attend the official opening of the Halton

McMaster Family Health Centre. Along with the leadership team from Joseph Brant Hospital, members of the clinical staff and city officials, I toured this state-of-the-art facility, which will, by its very design, connect patients to the right care in the right place at the right time.

As soon as you enter the centre, you realize it is truly focused on patient-centred care. From the calming decor, including the beautiful aquariums in the lobby, to the use of technology to facilitate patient/clinician interaction, no detail is spared.

With support from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and other partners, the centre has another important benefit: It will increase the number of family medicine residents trained in Burlington and the region of Halton. Developing this capacity will create an environment in Burlington that will encourage medical residents trained in our community to stay and practise in our community afterwards.

Mr. Speaker, one of the pillars of our government's action plan for health care is to deliver faster access and a stronger link to family health care. I'm so pleased that the Halton McMaster Family Health Centre will help us make progress on this goal by building capacity for patients in my riding of Burlington.

The centre's focus on interdisciplinary medicine and training will mean patients can stay healthier, get connected to the right care and are less likely to visit the hospital. This will also facilitate the sharing of best practices, ensuring that ideas are shared between clinicians to the benefit of patients.

The centre will also help achieve another one of our government's goals.

It's a welcome addition to our health care community in Burlington, and I congratulate the Halton McMaster Family Health Centre on this initiative.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received the report on intended appointments dated December 9, 2014, of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. Pursuant to standing order 108(f)(9), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

Report deemed adopted.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Ms. Soo Wong: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs and move its adoption.

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

Bill 7, An Act to enact the Burden Reduction Reporting Act, 2014 and the Partnerships for Jobs and Growth Act, 2014 / Projet de loi 7, Loi édictant la Loi de 2014 sur l'obligation de faire rapport concernant la réduction des fardeaux administratifs et la Loi de 2014 sur les partenariats pour la création d'emplois et la croissance.

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

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to the order of the House dated November 27, 2014, the bill is ordered for third reading.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Mr. Grant Crack: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on General Government and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum): Your committee begs to report the following bill without amendment:

Bill 35, An Act to repeal the Public Works Protection Act, amend the Police Services Act with respect to court security and enact the Security for Electricity Generating Facilities and Nuclear Facilities Act, 2014 / Projet de loi 35, Loi abrogeant la Loi sur la protection des ouvrages publics, modifiant la Loi sur les services policiers en ce qui concerne la sécurité des tribunaux et édictant la Loi de 2014 sur la sécurité des centrales électriques et des installations nucléaires.

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

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to the order of the House dated December 3, 2014, the bill is ordered for third reading.

1520

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

UTILITY TASK AND ALL-TERRAIN VEHICLES ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR LES AUTOQUADS ET LES VÉHICULES POLYVALENTS

Mr. Norm Miller moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 58, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act with respect to utility task and all-terrain vehicles / Projet de loi 58, Loi modifiant le Code de la route en ce qui concerne les autoquads et les véhicules polyvalents.

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. Norm Miller: I did introduce a similar bill in the last few weeks. This is a slightly corrected version to address two-up ATVs. I'll just read the explanatory note.

"Utility Task and All-Terrain Vehicles Act, 2014: The Highway Traffic Act is amended to provide that no person shall drive an off-road vehicle on a highway except in accordance with the stated exceptions. One of the exceptions is that a utility task vehicle may be driven on any highway on which an all-terrain vehicle may be driven, and that any regulations or bylaws applicable to all-terrain vehicles also apply to utility task vehicles.

"A utility task vehicle is defined as an off-road vehicle meeting certain specifications, including the specification that the vehicle is designed to carry a driver and one or more passengers."

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

ONTARIO RETIREMENT PENSION PLAN

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: Speaker, I'm pleased to have this opportunity to speak further on the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan Act, 2014, which I introduced yesterday in the House.

In the months since I've taken on the role of Associate Minister of Finance, I have been able to engage extensively with Ontarians about their retirement income system. What I can say is that through my conversations with business and labour, organizations and associations, families and communities, there is consensus that there is a real undersavings problem. I'm pleased to speak to this legislation, legislation that would, if passed, help address this problem, close the gap and help give Ontarians the retirement futures they deserve.

Study after study tells us that a significant portion of Canadians are not saving enough to maintain their standard of living in retirement. The reasons for this undersavings problem are many. Pension coverage is low. Fewer than 35% of Ontario workers have a workplace-based pension plan. At the same time, people are not taking full advantage of retirement savings vehicles. In 2012, there was about \$280 billion in unused RRSP room in Ontario. Even for those who do manage to save, high management fees, low interest rates and unpredictable market performance have led to lower returns. As well, people are living longer. This puts pressure on people's personal savings to stretch even further.

On an individual level, this lack of adequate savings is of great concern, but it has the potential to compromise our shared goals as well. When a growing portion of the population faces inadequate savings, they will spend less in the future when they retire. This, in turn, will slow consumption and growth and put pressure on publicly funded programs. This is not good for people. This is not good for business. This is not good for Ontario's

economy. That's why we need to take action now for the future.

Mr. Speaker, Canada and Ontario have a strong retirement income system built on programs like the Canada Pension Plan. We believe this is an efficient and effective retirement savings program. However, it does not provide enough retirement income for Ontarians to fill the savings gap. These individuals are at risk of not saving enough to maintain their standard of living in retirement.

As you know, our preferred solution is still an enhancement to the Canada Pension Plan. Our government has been advocating for this since 2010, with the Premier and the finance minister leading national conversations on the issue. But despite agreement from all provinces and territories to continue discussions on CPP enhancement, the federal government has unilaterally shut down any and all discussions on this issue.

We know the cost of inaction is simply too high, Mr. Speaker. A declining standard of living has the potential to slow consumption and growth in our economy. At the same time, it means more people would be dependent on publicly funded social services.

But in the absence of leadership at the federal level, our government is taking action to ensure Ontarians have the secure retirement future they deserve. So we are proceeding with a made-in-Ontario solution. This is why we have introduced the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan Act, 2014. This act is a major step forward in establishing the ORPP. If passed, it would require the government of Ontario to establish the ORPP no later than January 1, 2017. It would also require that the Minister of Finance or another member of the executive council introduce a bill that provides for the operation of the plan, the administration and investment management of the plan through an administrative entity and the basic requirements of the plan, including those set out in the schedule to the act. The legislation would also require the establishment of an administrative entity to administer the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan and specify some of the administrative entity's duties. And this act would require the government to introduce further legislation detailing the plan's terms, operational requirements and compliance system of the ORPP.

Let me tell you a few highlights about the plan itself. Building on the strengths of the CPP, the ORPP would assist those most at risk of undersaving. The ORPP would expand pension coverage initially to more than three million working Ontarians, helping to supplement their retirement income by ensuring a predictable stream of income in retirement. The ORPP would aim to provide a replacement rate of 15% of an individual's earnings up to a maximum annual earnings threshold. Combined with CPP, this would supplement voluntary savings measures and ensure a secure retirement income floor for life.

The ORPP would be mandatory for all eligible employees working in Ontario who do not currently benefit from a comparable workplace pension plan. It would require contributions to be shared equally between employers and employees, with each contributing not

more than 1.9% of salaries and wages between the minimum and the maximum earnings thresholds.

As well, ORPP benefits would be earned as contributions are made, ensuring the system is fair and younger generations are not burdened with additional costs associated with older workers' benefits. By pooling longevity and investment risk, members would be able to benefit from a cost-effective approach to investment management.

Responding to a decline in workplace pension plans and an increasingly mobile workforce, the ORPP would allow plan members to contribute to and accumulate benefits as they move between employers participating in the plan. This is especially important in addressing the changing nature of our workforce. Young workers are expected to change employers, careers even, multiple times throughout their lives. This feature of the plan means that eligible workers will be able to build a pension, even if they change employers often during their working life or if they work at more than one job at a time, when their employers do not offer a comparable workplace plan.

The reality is that today the cost and administration involved in certain workplace pension plans has made it difficult, if not impossible, for some employers to offer them. The ORPP allows employers, who may not otherwise be able to offer their employees the opportunity to contribute and accumulate benefits, to help them save for their retirement years.

The ORPP will be administered by an entity at arm's length from the government. The entity will collect contributions and invest them, and it will administer the benefits.

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The assets of the ORPP will be managed for the benefit of the workers and members of the plan and will not be included as part of overall government revenues.

Finally, by pooling longevity and investment risk, the ORPP can provide members a cost-effective approach to investment management.

Of course, there are some who worry about how the ORPP would impact businesses. Let me assure you, Mr. Speaker: We're taking steps to help minimize those impacts. For instance, enrolment would occur in stages, starting with the largest employers, and contribution rates would be phased in over two years. This would especially assist small businesses with the transition and help lessen the short-term impact. And we are committed to introducing the ORPP in 2017 to coincide with the expected reductions in employment insurance premiums.

We know that employees who feel more secure about their own futures tend to be more productive. More than that, we know that business owners care about the well-being of the people who work for them. The ORPP would be a cost-effective way of helping workers achieve a secure retirement income floor they can rely on so that all of us can rest assured about our collective futures.

In the end, we need to take action now to support our economy in the long term. David Dodge, former

governor of the Bank of Canada, has said that any short-term costs of this enhancement to our retirement system would be offset by the long-term gains to the economy.

As I stated earlier, Mr. Speaker, the introduction of the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan Act, 2014, is the first step in the process to establish this plan. Throughout this process, we are working closely with businesses, labour, organizations and associations, as well as individuals, families and communities across the province as we develop the design and approach to the ORPP. More formal consultations will begin in 2015 to ensure that the ORPP properly balances retirement income security with any impact on business and meets the needs of a 21st-century workforce. I'm travelling to the four corners of the province and I'm listening to what all Ontarians have to say about the ORPP.

We're also working with our Technical Advisory Group on Retirement Security, gaining from their expertise. I want to thank these individuals for their advice, opinions and support: Keith Ambachtsheer, Susan Eng, Murray Gold, Melissa Kennedy, Jim Keohane, Bill Morneau and Barbara Zvan. As well, I am very pleased that Mr. Michael Nobrega, a former CEO of OMERS, will be advising us on implementation. It's through these conversations that we'll be able to design the best plan possible for the people of Ontario.

The ORPP is an integral part of the government's four-part plan to invest in people and help working families build a more secure retirement future. Passing the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan Act, 2014, is an important step in strengthening the retirement income system in our province. I am asking the members of this assembly to support this important legislation for all Ontarians.

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

Mrs. Julia Munro: I'm pleased to have the opportunity to respond to the introduction by the Associate Minister of Finance on the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan.

When I look at this, there are obviously some initiatives that are important, but one of the things that this fails to look at is the need for jobs in this province. As a caucus, we have raised the issue and many, many questions and comments about the need for jobs and that that is more important at this point than a provincial retirement plan. The reason I say that is that for every one of those people who is unemployed—they are not eligible for any kind of pension. So I think we have to understand that immediately: We aren't having a conversation with all Ontarians; we're having a conversation with those who are currently employed.

When you look at the size of the province and its workforce, it's about seven million people, but amongst those will be the broader public sector, who would not be part of this proposal, and we have a group in the private sector who are called those with "comparable pensions," and we have no idea how many people that includes. So when we talk about—and the minister referred to—

millions of people, I would suggest that, in fact, there are a number, obviously, who would benefit, I guess, but it's certainly not clear-cut on the number of people we're talking about.

One of the other messages that the government responds to in explaining this piece of legislation is to compare it with CPP. I think there are some very important exceptions to that notion, one of which is the fact that CPP is universal, so it includes a base of an entire country. As I've just suggested, this pension plan would be a fairly narrow group of people.

The Canada pension, which was enacted in 1965, took 10 years to transition into its full responsibility. Clearly, the government has talked about the deadline of enabling legislation as 2017, but we're not clear on when the cheques would actually be rolled out.

The final point, I think, that needs to be made in comparing it with the CPP in a manner different than the government is the fact that CPP has built its resources on not only the contributions of the members but also the kinds of investments that they have made. Those investments, in many cases, are factored at a rate of return of 6% to 8%. In today's financial reality, we're nowhere near that kind of number.

The bill itself is enabling legislation. What that means, from what I hear, is that it's consultation by invitation, and obviously not a public process. I think that on something that is so potentially influential, we certainly need to start out with something that has a little more transparency.

In the few moments that I have left to speak, I want to just talk about the burden that this puts on the private sector. Small business has been pleading with this government for some months, through its organizations and papers they've published—on the burden of the 1.9% that would be their payroll tax.

Pensions were created when there was a strong economy, when people in the private sector were able to provide money for that. Today they are concerned about the hydro bill. They're concerned about meeting their obligations to their employees and their customers. They are concerned about the amount of red tape that eats up non-billable hours. For them, this is a huge burden.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the statement by the Associate Minister of Finance.

Yesterday the government introduced two pieces of pension legislation, and I am going to take this opportunity to speak a bit about both.

In this chamber, we do disagree on a lot of things. We disagree on what should be done, we disagree on when it should be done and, most often, we disagree on how we're going to go about doing it. But there are a few things we can all agree upon, and I think that one of them is that Ontarians deserve the right to retire with dignity. We may disagree on the details, but ultimately we all agree on the importance of retirement security. So I am pleased to be able to stand in this proud Legislature and speak about a progressive and vital topic: pensions.

Coming out of the public sector, specifically education, I know the value of a pension. Pensioners know the value of a pension, and those who work and wonder how they will survive or thrive after their working years also know the value of a pension. As New Democrats, we have always and will always continue to believe that all Ontarians should have access to a strong defined benefit pension plan, and for those who don't have one, it is our duty, as representatives of this province, to provide it.

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We want Ontarians to have good pensions, but let's talk about what a good pension really is. A pension is a safe, protected, low-cost vehicle for individuals to not only save money, but for employers to add to that savings, and for that protected savings to grow and eventually provide benefits and financial predictability and security into retirement.

Life doesn't stop at retirement. People will want to know that there is money and that they have health and wellness support as they age and improve.

Defined contribution plans are insufficient in terms of providing for pensioners, and they are more costly to the system in the long term. The shift from defined benefit to defined contribution is turning out to have been a short-sighted, corporate-driven, costly shift. As reports like Brown and McInnes's *Shifting Public Sector DB Plans to DC: The Experience So Far and Implications for Canada*, and HOOPP's report *The Advantages of Defined Benefit Pension Plans: Independent Research and Case Studies*—as these reports are coming to light, we are seeing the benefit—pardon the pun—in prioritizing DB plans over DC plans. Our hope is the government will take counsel from those who are writing the reports and who actually—and actuarially—know about designing pensions.

The government consistently speaks about voluntary options and their role in supporting Ontarians in their retirement. Well, we support options, and we support Ontarians. We will have a lot of conversation about what plans are comparable and which groups are going to be exempt.

However, let's have this conversation: Let's give those who are exempt and looking for voluntary savings options a viable, low-cost way to contribute both to the success of the ORPP and their own retirement security. The more people in the plan, the more money in the pool; and the more money in the pool, the more security and benefit for pensioners. We can talk about who will be exempt, but let's also talk about who will be able to participate or opt in.

If this government is truly committed to the idea of helping Ontarians plan for and afford their futures, if they truly believe in retirement security and stability, then they should be leading with public pensions and not with the PRPPs, which send pensioner savings to banks and insurance companies through high fees with low transparency and both accumulation and decumulation fees.

Hard-working Ontarians are going to retire eventually, and two thirds of Ontarians do not have a workplace

pension. They deserve to work and retire with dignity. As I've said before, banks and big business are doing just fine, and they are not planning to retire any time soon.

I imagine the government has immense pressure from the banks and insurance companies to make changes to grow their industry. I'm not interested in standing in the way of business, but we are interested in workers and families and in the average individual who is trying to get by and, hopefully, get ahead.

The Bay Street lobby groups are likely to be quiet for a while, now that the government is rolling out their promised PRPP legislation so far ahead of any real ORPP legislation. As I learned from the Ministry of Finance at estimates committee, there will be three pieces of ORPP legislation. The first, as we see here, is little more than a shell game by the government to distract Ontarians from the private option that the government has tabled to appease the banks and insurance companies.

There is a lot of work to be done. As I stated earlier, we all agree on the importance of retirement security. But as we all know, the devil is in the details, so we will look forward to seeing more of the details of this plan and we will fight to ensure that the plan is strong, progressive and available to as many Ontarians as possible.

As a New Democrat, I know the value of a strong defined benefit pension, and we hope that the government does too.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I thank the member from Oshawa and all members for their statements. It is now time for petitions.

PETITIONS

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Todd Smith: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately implement policies ensuring Ontario's power consumers, including

families, farmers, and employers, have affordable and reliable electricity.”

I agree with this and will send it to the table with page Ethan.

LYME DISEASE

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

“Whereas Ontario does not have a strategy on Lyme disease; and

“Whereas the Public Health Agency of Canada is developing an Action Plan on Lyme Disease; and

“Whereas Toronto Public Health says that transmission of the disease requires the tick to be attached for 24 hours, so early intervention and diagnosis is of primary importance; and

“Whereas a motion was introduced to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario encouraging the government to adopt a strategy on Lyme disease, while taking into account the impact the disease has upon individuals and families in Ontario;

“We, the undersigned, petition the government of Ontario to develop an integrated strategy on Lyme disease consistent with the action plan of the Public Health Agency of Canada, taking into account available treatments, accessibility issues and the efficacy of the currently available diagnostic mechanisms. In doing so, it should consult with representatives of the health care community and patients’ groups within one year.”

I wholeheartedly agree with this petition and present it to page Vida to bring down to the Clerks.

WATER FLUORIDATION

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly. It is entitled “Fluoridate All Ontario Drinking Water” and is passed to me by a number of very concerned people. It reads as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“That the ministries of the government of Ontario amend all applicable legislation and regulations to make the fluoridation of municipal drinking water mandatory in all municipal water systems across the province of Ontario.”

I wholeheartedly sign and endorse this petition, and I’ll send it down with page Mikaila.

ALZHEIMER’S DISEASE

Mr. Bill Walker: “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 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 it and will affix my name and send it with page Ella.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario ranks ninth of 10 provinces in terms of the total per capita funding allocated to long-term care; and

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“Whereas the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care data shows that there are more than 30,000 Ontarians waiting for long-term-care placements and wait-times have tripled since 2005; and

“Whereas there is a perpetual shortage of staff in long-term-care facilities and residents often wait an unreasonable length of time to receive care, e.g., to be attended to for toileting needs; to be fed; to receive a bath; for pain medication. Since 2008, funding for 2.8 paid hours of care per resident per day has been provided. In that budget year, a promise was made to increase this funding to 4.0 hours per resident per day by 2012. This has not been done; and

“Whereas the training of personal support workers is unregulated and insufficient to provide them with the skills and knowledge to assist residents who are being admitted with higher physical, psychological and emotional needs. Currently, training across the province is varied, inconsistent and under-regulated;

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

“(1) immediately increase the number of paid hours of nursing and personal care per resident per day to 4.0 hours (as promised in 2008);

“(2) develop a plan to phase in future increases so that the number of paid hours per resident per day of nursing and personal care is 5.0 hours by January 2015;

“(3) establish a licensing body, such as a college, that will develop a process of registration, accreditation and certification for all personal support workers.”

I share this on behalf of the people of Niagara. I will sign it and give it to page Albany.

FRENCH-LANGUAGE EDUCATION

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I have a petition for an east Toronto French secondary school, grades 7 to 12, addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

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

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

“Whereas there is no French secondary school (grades 7-12) yet in east Toronto, requiring students wishing to continue their studies in French school boards to travel two hours every day to attend the closest French secondary school, while several English schools in east Toronto sit half-empty since there are no requirements or incentives for school boards to release underutilized schools to other boards in need; and

“Whereas it is well documented that children leave the French-language system for the English-language system between grades 7 and 9 due to the inaccessibility of French-language secondary schools, and that it is also well established that being educated in French at the

elementary level is not sufficient to solidify French-language skills for life; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

I agree with this petition, affix my name to it and give it to patient page Tyler to bring to the front.

ALZHEIMER’S DISEASE

Mr. Todd Smith: “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 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 agree with this and will send it to the table with page Nicole.

PRIX DE L’ESSENCE

M^{me} France Gélinas: C’est une pétition qui me parvient de partout dans le nord de l’Ontario :

« Alors que les automobilistes du nord de l’Ontario continuent d’être soumis à des fluctuations marquées dans le prix de l’essence; et

« Alors que la province pourrait éliminer les prix abusifs et opportunistes et offrir des prix justes, stables et prévisibles; et

« Alors que cinq provinces et de nombreux états américains ont déjà une réglementation des prix d’essence; et

« Considérant que les juridictions qui réglementent le prix de l’essence ont : moins de fluctuations des prix, moins d’écart de prix entre les communautés urbaines et rurales et des prix d’essence annualisés inférieurs ... »

Ils demandent à l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario :

« D’accorder à la Commission de l’énergie de l’Ontario le mandat de surveiller le prix de l’essence partout en Ontario afin de réduire la volatilité des prix et les différences de prix régionales, tout en encourageant la concurrence. »

J’appuie cette pétition et je demande à Ethan de l’amener aux greffiers.

CREDIT UNIONS

Mr. Arthur Potts: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. You’ll be pleased to know it’s not relating to French schools in my neighbourhood.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

—maintain current credit union provincial tax rates;

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

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

I agree with this petition. I sign my name and leave it with page Jenny.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Bill Walker: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Green Energy Act has driven up the cost of electricity in Ontario due to unrealistic subsidies for certain energy sources, including the world’s highest subsidies for solar power; and

“Whereas this cost is passed on to ratepayers through the global adjustment, which can account for almost half of a ratepayer’s hydro bill; and

“Whereas the high cost of energy is severely impacting the quality of life of Ontario’s residents, especially fixed-income seniors; and

“Whereas it is imperative to remedy Liberal mismanagement in the energy sector by implementing immediate reforms detailed in the Ontario PC white paper Paths to Prosperity—Affordable Energy;

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

“To immediately repeal the Green Energy Act, 2009, and all other statutes that artificially inflate the cost of electricity with the aim of bringing down electricity rates and abolishing expensive surcharges such as the global adjustment and debt retirement charges.”

I fully support this petition, will sign it and send it with page Joshua.

VISITORS

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Point of order: the member from Windsor—Tecumseh.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thank you, Speaker. As you know, sir, this is a day where members of the hospice communities across Ontario are visiting and saying hello. I see two representatives who were meeting earlier with the member from Niagara Falls, and I just want to say: Welcome to the Ontario Legislature.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Technical, that is not a point of order, but we do fully recognize and appreciate the fact that you have brought that to our attention.

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ORDERS OF THE DAY

SAFEGUARDING HEALTH CARE

INTEGRITY ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 DE SAUVEGARDE DE L'INTÉGRITÉ DES SOINS DE SANTÉ

Mr. Bradley, on behalf of Mr. Hoskins, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 21, An Act to safeguard health care integrity by enacting the Voluntary Blood Donations Act, 2014 and by amending certain statutes with respect to the regulation of pharmacies and other matters concerning regulated health professions / Projet de loi 21, Loi visant à sauvegarder l'intégrité des soins de santé par l'édiction de la Loi de 2014 sur le don de sang volontaire et la modification de certaines lois en ce qui concerne la réglementation des pharmacies et d'autres questions relatives aux professions de la santé réglementées.

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

Hon. James J. Bradley: This proposed legislation essentially consists of two parts. First, this new statute would clearly and unequivocally prohibit paying people for blood and plasma donations. Canadian Blood Services would be exempt from this prohibition so that they may pay blood and plasma donors if they deem such a measure to be necessary. This is in line with the commission of inquiry led by Justice Horace Krever that recommended measures to ensure that donors of blood and plasma not be paid except in exceptional circumstances.

Our revisions also make it clear that researchers would be exempt from the prohibition against paying for blood donations when the collected blood is being used exclusively for research purposes like clinical trials.

The proposed legislation will also strengthen our regulatory enforcement tools so we can take swift and decisive action in case of violations. We are taking this action in order to maintain the integrity of our public, volunteer blood collection system in Canada.

The second part of the bill would amend the Drug and Pharmacies Regulation Act, so that the Ontario College of Pharmacists can inspect and license all hospital pharmacies operating in Ontario as a means to ensure that hospital pharmacies meet the appropriate standards set by the college.

At the same time, we are making amendments to the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991, and the Public Hospitals Act, that would enhance communications among health care system partners, including health regulatory colleges, public hospitals and others, to strengthen oversight of health care practitioners and better protect patients.

With this legislation, we will be able to act decisively to protect the integrity of our current blood donation system and our hospital pharmacy services.

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

Mr. Bill Walker: It's my pleasure to speak to the bill this afternoon. I sat in the social policy committee last week. We actually had 20 deputations, many people for the bill and many people concerned with some pieces of the bill. It was very informative to sit through that. Certainly, what I found sitting through was that there were a lot of different aspects to take into account. I'm going to try to share those with the folks here today in the room.

I'm going to start off with the folks—there were a number of people in the deputations that were very personal stories to people, who were directly affected by the tainted blood scandal. Some 30,000 people were infected with HIV and hepatitis C. There was \$17 million spent on an exhaustive federal inquiry, and \$5 billion has been paid in compensation, and sadly, thousands have died.

One of the presenters lost her uncle to AIDS. She had some strong suggestions for us, including: "Our domestic blood system cannot sustain any competition regardless of what private companies want to use it for, whether it is research or for export to make medications. It is the sole responsibility of Canadian Blood Services to collect blood and plasma in our country. Exploiting the vulnerable is not a shared Canadian value and we must make great efforts to stop commodifying human tissue."

The Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario support only a self-sufficient national blood system comprised of altruistic donations.

I think, though, we ought to engage more and hear from more groups in order to get this right, Mr. Speaker. We're talking about the security of our future blood supply.

I want to preface most of what I'm going to say today: Absolutely, I think that anyone in this House takes this responsibility very seriously. The health and safety of the people we are given the privilege to represent have to always be the absolute key, and I certainly went into those discussions—even the deputations, when I was asking questions—with the mindset that we, of course, would have all of the safety and health regulations built in that we would have in our existing system.

I stood in this House very frequently and spoke of those people who voluntarily give blood. It is a very safe system, and I think, certainly, that we would expect nothing less than that as we go forward; whether it's for plasma protein or transfusion, we still have to maintain extremely rigorous standards of safety and health to ensure that everyone has that going forward.

We have to worry about that future blood supply. I found a lot of interesting pieces of information which I'm going to share in my talk today, both for and against the bill the way that it's currently proposed. I think that what we want to do is to find a healthy balance; if not, we face the risk of failure to provide for patients who may need that medication.

I spoke with one mother. Whose son needs blood protein products for his actual life. Currently a lot of the

blood that's imported for plasma and protein, about 70%, is coming from the United States, and it certainly is paid and unpaid; it's a combination. I asked that mom very directly in a conversation after the deputation, "Do you really care, at the end of the day, whether it's paid or unpaid if it's going to be the life-saving medication needed for your son?" She said no.

Certainly I think her preference would be that there not be paid if there was that ability, but I'm not certain that anyone in this room, as legislators, can guarantee that supply. When I look at this issue, I certainly come from that perspective: that we have to have diligence; we have a responsibility to ensure that there is a safe supply, both for transfusions and also, significantly, those who need plasma protein products.

I understand, certainly, why some people are strongly opposed to any paid plasma donations. There is that concern, particularly if we go back to the generation of HIV, when we had the tainted blood scandal. Certainly no one wants us to go back to that day, but I think we also heard in that room that a lot of technology has changed and a lot of rigorous programs and services have been put in place to ensure that a supply and a safe system are in place to ensure that happens.

The system no doubt failed back in the 1980s. In fact, it failed 30,000 people and killed thousands of Canadians. To them, the primary objective is a permanent, voluntary, unpaid blood donation system in Ontario, per the Krever commission. As I referenced earlier, a lot of money was spent on that Krever commission, to try to ensure that that can never happen, and certainly none of us want that to happen going down the road.

But to all of us, I think we have to look at this as—we need a stable, secure and sustainable blood supply. I found it interesting that a number of the presenters that day shared with us that sometimes enough product for one patient for one year requires hundreds, sometimes over a thousand, donations of blood to be able to get the quantities that they need for their purposes. To a person who requires such medication, this is a life-saving situation.

It is my responsibility to ensure that there is enough supply to meet that demand, and it's certainly something that I take very seriously. I did certainly enjoy all of the time in that committee hearing from the various presenters, trying to look at it from a balanced perspective and asking, "How can we do it to try to ensure that we have a safe and sustainable blood supply system for all of the people out there?" There certainly are lots of emotions with this issue, and it was certainly very interesting to hear all of the presenters.

The committee heard from the association representing collectors of source plasma and the manufacturers of plasma protein therapeutics. They were endorsed by the National Hemophilia Foundation, and I found it very interesting.

There's a group called the Network of Rare Blood Disorder Organizations, known as NRBDO, and they referenced, as well, the Dublin Consensus Statement of

2011. Participants in that include—are not limited to, but include—the European Hemophilia Consortium, the Irish Haemophilia Society, the World Federation of Hemophilia, the International Plasma Fractionation Association, the International Society of Blood Transfusion, the International Federation of Blood Donor Organizations and the National Blood Authority of Australia.

It was interesting—I'm going to quote from some of the summary—that at this time, when they had their meeting and this coalition of organizations got together to speak about this—"We submit that paying Ontarians is no more or less ethical than paying Americans, as we do today for most of the plasma-derived medicinal products used in Ontario and across Canada....

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"In 2014, the member organizations of the NRBDO endorsed a background document and a policy developed by the Canadian Hemophilia Society ... that similarly acknowledged the role of both paid and unpaid donation systems for producing an adequate supply of plasma for the manufacture of medicinal products. The NRBDO, therefore, believes that Bill 21, by forbidding payment for plasma donation, fails to promote the best interests of patients who need plasma-derived medical products."

Speaker, I took that to heart, that there is concern out there by groups that are very intent on following this very closely—they're obviously much more knowledgeable than I'll ever be on this. But I think we need to ensure that we can do that, and if there's not a guarantee of supply through a voluntary system, then I think we have to be open to it. We can regulate. We can make sure there are all the safety precautions, but I think we do need to give at least that opportunity to be discovered.

We also heard from the life sciences sector, companies on the frontier of designing life-saving therapeutics. That's one of the things that I certainly see—I presented a petition earlier today with the mention of Alzheimer's. It's one of those that I think is coming through and it's a huge tsunami that's coming at us, to use that term, to show the significance of what I believe is coming at us, and we need to be developing therapies and, hopefully, some medications that are going to be able to help that—and, at some point, I truly hope it can cure it—and we're going to need that blood plasma protein to be able to do that.

We need to encourage innovation. Currently, it's happening all over the world, paid donations. Part of me says, "Why would we not want to be a leader? Canadians are great—the BlackBerry, the arm on our spaceship"—

Mr. Todd Smith: Canadarm.

Mr. Bill Walker: Canadarm. Thank you to my colleague from Prince Edward-Hastings—always here helping me out, a valued colleague—

Mr. Todd Smith: I try. I do my best.

Mr. Bill Walker: —who is very much a colleague and a help.

We have that ability, Mr. Speaker, and I do think it's something, again, to be open-minded as Canadians and Ontarians specifically, that we want to be leading

innovation. We want to be at the forefront, particularly of health care and things that are going to be able to help the greater masses of people we serve.

These medicinal applications treat a variety of rare and serious genetic diseases: emphysema, immune deficiency and bleeding disorders. Everyone wants that to be a safe supply and to have a supply that we can have, both to serve as medication but also for those research-based, innovative opportunities. They want to ensure they can continue to import for manufacturing purposes.

One person in the committee said, "What's the difference? You're buying it now from the States, 70% which could be paid. What's the difference of paying a fellow Canadian who may wish to actually have a paid donation?" It's great to, again, say that we want voluntary only, but at the end of the day we need to ensure that that supply is there.

A very specific life sciences company, Complex Biologics, is looking to invest another \$200 million to expand their work. Not to make light of the situation, but I want to just reach out to the government across the floor—perhaps that is a company that could fill up the empty MaRS building right now and help them out with one of their challenges over there on the revenue side of the ledger, Mr. Speaker.

I found this very, very informative: Dr. Graham Sher, who has been the head of Canadian Blood Services for 15 years, was one of the presenters. I found his information shared to be very enlightening. To be honest, Mr. Speaker, when I first heard of him coming in, I thought he would only want the exact system that we have today, but he was actually very open-minded and balanced in his approach, saying, "We need to explore. We need to look at that."

I'm going to quote a little bit of information that he shared with us. He assured us that our patients are "100% sufficient in blood for transfusion purposes." That's wonderful news, currently. That's a great thing, and I applaud, again, all of the people at Canadian Blood Services for the work they do and, more importantly, those volunteers who come out and give their blood—I'll use their slogan, "It's in you to give." I'm one of those proud people, as many people in this House are, who can and are able. I think that's wonderful.

The opposite side of that ledger, though—which he shared with us—is we're nowhere near sufficient with plasma protein products, hence our heavy reliance on importation. We are unlike the United States to the south of us, which has a surplus in blood plasma proteins and collects 24 million litres a year.

Dr. Sher testified that we're currently not meeting patient needs in this aspect: "We are not sufficient in meeting patient needs for a number of these drugs—not just the immunoglobulin drugs, but also albumin." To become self-sufficient in plasma collection, we need to quadruple our collection to 850,000 litres annually. Again, it's great to say we think we can have a voluntary system that would do that, but what if we don't? What if we can't do that on a voluntary basis? And that family

that I alluded to earlier, that young child that needs that medicine—how do you look in that mom's eyes and say, "There is a solution, there is a way we can do this, but our legislation is going to prevent us from paid donations"?

Yet, again, we're doing it through the States. We're currently buying now. So I'm a little bit challenged on this one, Mr. Speaker, because I can't really understand how we can accept it on this hand but we're going to say "absolutely not" when it's from a Canadian in our country, an Ontarian who may wish to do that.

My research is still going out there to try find more information and see where I will land on this.

Some would suggest you can't do it on a voluntary system alone. No country can do it, especially not a country as vast as ours. One of our colleagues, I think France Gélinas, mentioned that one of the clinics was closed in—Thunder Bay, I think it was. Again, it's interesting that we know we have a need, we know we have nowhere near the ability to provide, and yet we're closing a clinic there. That was one troubling fact that I heard, and I wonder why we have done that and why we're not taking other actions to ensure there is more supply.

Again, that's where I think this came up: in regard to a company wanting to come into our great province to provide that service right here in our own backyard.

Dr. Sher also shared with us that all countries have co-existent systems. "Virtually every country in the world depends on the paid commercial industry to meet patient needs. Patient groups support this."

Both systems can be safe. "Paying donors is not an issue of safety. Decades of evidence have proven that drugs made from plasma derivatives today are inordinately safe and just as safe as those made from volunteer donors. This is not the 1980s, and 20 years of advanced science and technical improvements have made these products extremely safe."

To balance both systems would cost us too much. "It will require enormous public expenditures for Canada to be 100% self-sufficient in plasma, and in fact that would be a risk strategy, putting all our eggs in a single basket.... Without access to these products, a great percentage of Canadian patients would not get the care that they need."

Most importantly, "Patients ... in this country are receiving products from paid donors, which today, in the current day and age, are extremely safe products."

Finally, "We have to recognize that a safe, successful and necessary commercial plasma industry coexists with the voluntary blood industry side by side, and we really do need to recognize that patients depend on both systems in order to provide products for their care. We're not talking about paying blood donors." It's more for the plasma protein, not for donors for transfusion purposes.

As I said earlier, there's a lot of challenge in regard to the emotion in this. There are people who have lost loved ones, and I certainly empathize with every single one of those. We would never, ever want to go back and have a repeat of that happen here.

Again, I'm going to use the fact sheet that was given to us: "Canadian Blood Services does not pay individuals to donate blood. The organization operates a volunteer system for blood donation in Canada. Canadian Blood Services collects and separates donated blood into components (red blood cells, platelets and plasma) for transfusion into patients.

"The safety of blood components is assured through a multi-tiered process, including rigorous donor screening, transmissible disease testing, and product manipulation."

From my perspective, I would expect that exact same standard to be there for plasma protein purposes. If someone is going to donate for that, they would have to go extremely through that. I believe, when this is happening in other places around the world, and certainly south of the border, that there have to be all of those types of safety systems in place now. No one is going to want to allow blood to come through just willy-nilly and go into a system for those, because again the same life-risk concern is there, Mr. Speaker.

"Plasma for transfusion is plasma that is directly transfused into patients for treating clotting abnormalities and bleeding.

"Canada is 100% sufficient in plasma for transfusion—meaning patient demand is completely met within the country.

"All donors in this process are Canadian volunteers. They are not paid for their donations."

They go on to talk about plasma for fractionation. "Plasma for fractionation is plasma that is manufactured (or fractionated) into pharmaceutical drugs. These drugs are used to treat conditions such as immune disorders, bleeding disorders, and trauma and burn injuries.

"Canada, like many other countries, is not self-sufficient in plasma for fractionation. The demand for these products is increasing as new therapies are identified. For some patients, these products are life-saving treatments for which there are no alternatives."

Again, I go back to that point: We need to ensure we have a reliable, adequate supply when we need it. We can't be saying, "Oh, well, we'll get to it. Although we failed in the voluntary side, we'll try to find it." We need to ensure that that's there for that patient who needs it today.

"Broadly speaking, Canadian Blood Services meets patient demand for plasma products in two ways:

"(1) It collects plasma from volunteer Canadian donors. To this supply it adds voluntarily donated plasma purchased from the United States. This material is sent to two fractionation companies (one in the United States and one in Europe). The finished products are returned to Canada for distribution to hospitals. This process meets approximately 30% of the overall patient need for intravenous immunoglobulins, or IVIG, a broadly used plasma protein product.

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"(2) It must also purchase a variety of other plasma products from the international commercial plasma industry, which does pay its donors and has done so for decades."

I think one of the things that I remember Dr. Sher saying is that every country needs a pay option except the US, but safety is prevalent in every one of those, and there are people all over the world benefiting from this life-saving, life-altering medication that allows them to live the life they need.

"Plasma protein products:

"Most of the world's supply of plasma products comes from paid donors. This is known and accepted by patient groups around the world.

"More than two decades of clinical experience show that drugs derived from paid donors are as safe"—as safe, Mr. Speaker—"as those manufactured from unpaid donors.

"Because the growth in demand for these drugs continues to rise, it is not economically feasible for Canada to be 100% sufficient in Canadian plasma collected for fractionation."

So one of the challenges, again, that we certainly heard in those couple of days of committee was that we are having increasing demand certainly in the need for the number of products that are out there, but also from our research, because of what I said earlier, with a lot of our seniors' population and the need for more medications to deal with the diseases that we're seeing in our world these days, and the risk strategy is becoming a challenge. We need to be prepared for that risk. Whether it's blood for transfusion or the protein products used for life-saving medication, this is not something that we can put off into the future. This isn't something that we can just wish to happen. From my perspective, when I was in that committee for two days listening intently, it was, "How do we strike a balance to ensure that we're going to have those supplies when we need them?"

As I said earlier, I tried to come at this as a very balanced thought process. I want to ensure that we have both the absolutely safest system in the world for anyone who is going to donate blood, to ensure that all people have that safety as their number one concern, but we also need to ensure that we have the ability to supply demand, particularly on the side of plasma protein for medications and therapeutic realities that we need for new, innovative cures for diseases like cancer, like emphysema, like dementia and Alzheimer's that we continually talk about and need to think about even more.

I want to assure the people who are listening out there that I certainly came to that table with an open mind. I tried to ensure that I listened to every single presenter and took from them what they were saying and tried to find a balance in the middle where we can ensure that there is a safe supply. We will never, ever allow our standards to be lessened. I think Canadian Blood Services, again, does a stand-up job, but I think they're open—even as they are the leaders in the industry in our country, they are even open to saying there may be other ways we need to look at doing business to ensure we have the supply to meet the demand that we're going to continue to see. At the end of the day, I think we need to do that. We will certainly be looking at that from our caucus's perspective, and we'll vote accordingly.

At this point, Mr. Speaker, I think there's about 20 minutes left on the clock, and I'm going to turn the rest of my time over to my colleague Mr. Todd Smith from Prince Edward–Hastings.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I thank the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound.

Further debate? I recognize the member from Nickel Belt.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Thank you, Speaker. I was waving at you but you were not—anyway, thank you for recognizing me.

It is my turn to say a few words on the record about Bill 21. As has been said by the previous two speakers, Bill 21 is a three-headed-affair kind of legislation. They have combined pieces of legislation that existed in the previous Parliament and have made it Bill 21, so the main part that everybody has been talking about has to do with the blood collection.

What Bill 21 would allow us to do is to put into law the number one recommendation of the Krever inquiry. That is many, many years later, but nevertheless, it will be put into law, and that is a ban on paid-for donation. Deputant after deputant who lived through the tainted blood scandal, who had loved ones affected or were themselves affected by receiving a blood transfusion or blood products that were infected with HIV actually came and made deputations. Sometimes it was their family members, because so many of them have passed from the disease they contracted from the tainted blood scandal. So this part, the first part of the bill—it is clear it will ban.

Of course, that was something that could have been done quite a bit of time ago. Canadian Plasma Resources, which is the business that had set up shop in Ontario, intended to collect plasma that could be sold on the international market to make those plasma-based medications and products that a lot of people use. They had already set up shop; three of them, actually, in Ontario. But we knew this since 2012. This is now December 2014. If there is ever a case of a government asleep at the switch, I would say that this is it, Speaker. Why is it that, two and a half years later, we come to this? I say this partly because, as much as I did not agree with Canadian Plasma Resources and what they had intentions to do, I don't believe that we should treat business that way.

I want to read a little bit from the record because Dr.—I will try really hard to pronounce the name properly—Barzin Bahardoust came. I'm sorry; I know this is not the right pronunciation of his name. He is the CEO of Canadian Plasma Resources and, although he knew that most of the people in the room were opposed to his business, he came and took the time to make a deputation, to talk to us and basically try to explain to us the message that we are sending to the business community.

I had the opportunity to question the CEO of Canadian Plasma Resources and I asked him—I'm reading from the record—"Can I ask how much have you invested in Ontario so far?" His answer, and here again, I quote from

the record: "We invested approximately \$8 million in the three plasma collection centres that we have right now, which two of them have gone through Health Canada audits. One has not, the one in Hamilton."

He had introduced the three locations. Two of them are right here in downtown Toronto. He went on to say, "We invested approximately \$40 million in industrial property for the future fractionation plant, which is now going to be used for development and we don't have" a need for that property anymore.

I went on to say, "What led you to believe that that was going to be a successful business? I mean, this is a lot of money." We're talking about \$48 million that the CEO of this company had invested right here in Ontario. This is money that had already been spent. I asked him, "Didn't you do your due diligence before spending that kind of money?"

He answered, "Well, we are using the same model that our competitors do in the United States." He talked about the company: "This company ... is the fifth-largest producer and supplier of plasma protein.... We believe that ... our model" would work.

I asked him, "So you did not see this coming ... that this bill was going to come forward and that your ability to have a successful business was going to be taken away...?" This is what he said. The CEO of Canadian Plasma Resources, on the record, said, "We met with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, with the chief of staff ... almost two years ago. We had told them at the time—and the Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Employment....

"We had indicated to them" what they had the intention to do, and that "we will not be able to recruit donors without compensation—enough donors to make the business viable" without compensation.

So I asked him, "What was their response?" Here again, reading from the record: "They told us that this seems to be a good idea and they never contacted us back. We told them, if there were any concerns, to please get back to us."

So I pushed him and said, "Did they get back to you?"—which they didn't do—and he went on to say that, no, the government had never reached back to them.

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I do not, by any stretch of the imagination, want that business in Ontario; don't get me wrong. Canadian Plasma Resources was there to collect plasma, to change our system completely, to pay donors for their donations and then sell it on the open market. It was not going to help us. It was not going to help Ontarians. I did not want this business model to be there, but I did not want this business to be treated so badly, because that sent a chilling effect throughout all of the high-tech health care industry, that Ontario is not a good place to do business.

This is not a good message to send out, when a company invests that kind of money, when the company takes time to go and meet with the Ministry of Health and meet with the ministry of development, trade and all of this, and they are told: "That sounds like a good idea";

and the government, obviously, did not think it was a good idea because they support Bill 21, which basically means that the investment they have done is a complete loss. The renovations they have done on their site on Adelaide Street cost in the millions of dollars. Those are all for naught. The investment they've done in the training of their staff and setting up and going through the process with Health Canada to be accredited—this is all for naught.

Here again, it's not because I wanted them to succeed—far be it from me. But two years ago, in 2012, when they first came to Ontario, I raised the alarm bell. Anybody who follows health care knew; every week when my taxi would bring me from the airport back to Queen's Park I would go to Adelaide Street and look at the site being renovated and we would bring this forward: "How could this be? How could you allow this business to continue to invest when we are about to cut the grass right under their feet?" And for over two years, the government sat on its heels and did nothing, and now we have this.

We're not going to have paid plasma donation in Ontario and I'm really glad, but things could have turned out differently had the ministry acted two years ago, when this company first alerted the health care system that they were going to come and start doing business here.

Now, the Canadian Blood Services agency has the mandate to collect plasma in Ontario and throughout Canada, except for Quebec, which has Héma-Québec. They also came and did a deputation. Everybody wants to know—we are self-sufficient for the plasma products that we use directly. We are not self-sufficient when it comes to fragmented and manufactured medication that is made with plasma. We buy those on the open market. Some of it is made specifically with Ontario and Canadian plasma, sent overseas, manufactured and brought back; the rest of it we buy on the open market. So the question becomes: Why are we not self-sufficient?

The answer that came from Canadian Blood Services was a little bit puzzling and I certainly didn't see a strong business plan moving forward, saying, "We will. Here's how we will make sure that it will happen." We had some wishful thinking: "Trust us; it will come in the future" type of an answer. I was not really comfortable with that, as the member before me mentioned.

I used to be a plasma donor in Sudbury. I used to go every Wednesday at lunchtime. It was always the same group of people. Basically, it's the same office space where the blood was collected, but all of the plasma—we would be rushed to the side where all the big plasma collection machines were. They knew we were coming. We were there at lunch and within my lunch hour it was done and I was back at work.

But this closed, and they told us that they were moving to Thunder Bay. It was true. The plasma collection run by Canadian Blood Services moved to Thunder Bay. But this, too, has closed. Although I'm the health critic—I follow the health portfolio pretty closely—I

couldn't tell you where I could go to make a plasma donation. In northern Ontario, frankly, I don't think it exists anymore. Yet, I can tell you that there are lots of people like me who would be more than happy to donate. So there's a bit of a disconnect here.

We have a company who says that they can make a business of collecting plasma because it is needed on the open market, and then we have Canadian Blood Services, which receives most of its money from Ontario. Although we cannot tell Canadian Blood Services what to do, we can certainly have an adult conversation with them. Given that we're the ones who hold the millions of dollars that allow them to be there, I have a feeling they would listen to us. But no conversation is taking place. The Ministry of Health or the government has never written a letter or asked for a chat—sent a tweet, maybe; I'm not too picky. But it's not happening, Speaker; it's not happening.

Meanwhile, we have this Bill 21 happening and we have people who are worried about the products that we will buy on the open market that come partly from paid donors and wondering if we are using two different sets of ideology to deal with this thing. Let it be clear: The voluntary donation system in Canada is worth protecting. What we have is good, and the work that Canadian Blood Services does is good. But if it is true that we need more, if it is true that there are risks to our patients, to our families, then let's address this. Let's put a business plan in place, let's act upon it and let's change things. When was the last time you saw an ad in the paper that says, "We need more plasma donors"? Never. It has never happened. What's the disconnect? I don't get it.

The discussion we've had with Bill 21 certainly has exposed some of this: that the number of collection sites, the number of units collected—all of this seems to be part of a business model that collects less and less and less. Then, every now and again, we have people who pipe up and say, "Our supply is at risk because we don't collect enough." Well, we have a system in place to do the collection. If we don't collect enough, let's put a plan in place to change this. Given that Ontario is the biggest payer of the bunch, if we want to say something, let's make sure our voice is heard. None of that is happening.

Nevertheless, that part of Bill 21 will certainly go forward and the ban will be in place and this will be a conversation that will be closed and done with unless something happens in another Parliament where this bill is changed. But for now, Canadian Blood Services will have an exemption to pay for donations if the case is made for really rare blood types. I know that this already exists, in a small part—I think it's in Winnipeg, that has a small collection program for people with really rare blood types where they pay their donors. It's a very small program. So there's a little bit of an exemption for Canadian Blood Services, but for everybody else, for all that we're concerned, the number one recommendation from the Krever commission will finally be put into an act, into a bill, and the people of Ontario will continue to donate for altruism reasons.

There were 20 deputants who came and talked to us: people like Mike McCarthy, who used to be vice-president, I think, of the hemophilia association, who has also been infected by hep C. He talked about how important it is to make sure that we manage this resource so that it meets our needs and continues to be done on a voluntary basis.

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We had Andrew Cumming. He's also a hemophiliac and has been infected with HIV and hep C. Mr. Cumming never told anybody that he had been infected. He works in investment banking. He called himself a capitalist. It was quite interesting to see that he supports business—this is what he does for a living, making sure that private business succeeds and makes money and creates jobs and all the rest of it—but he was quite convincing when he said that he wants our plasma collection to continue to be on a voluntary basis.

Victoria Kinniburgh is the mother of two kids. Both of her kids have hemophilia. She wants our system to be safe, and she wants our system to be voluntary.

There were lots of other people who came and talked to us. Kat Lanteigne is a playwright, and has written *Tainted*. I know that they had a special showing of the play here at Queen's Park, and I had the opportunity to go and see it. I certainly encourage every MPP who has an opportunity, or anybody else who is listening and has the opportunity, to go and see the play. It really put things into perspective. It is well done, historically accurate and shows us the dangers of the past, to make sure we don't repeat them again.

The registered nurses' association came, Canadian Blood Services came, as I mentioned, the Canadian Immunodeficiencies Patient Organization also came, the Ontario Hospital Association came. We had a number of deputants that came for other parts of the bill—the Network of Rare Blood Disorder Organizations etc.

We had Mr. David Harvey, who also came. Mr. Harvey is a retired lawyer. He had the difficult task of representing the victims of tainted blood. He wants our blood system to be as safe as can be, and made it clear that what we had done with Bill 21 will never replace the four years and a hundred million pages that Justice Krever had done when he did his investigations, and really made the point that allowing paid-for plasma to be set up in Ontario was not going to help the Canadian market. It was not going to help the people in Ontario who need blood and plasma products—plasma, in this case—because it was clear that the plasma was going to be sold on the open market to the highest bidder; it was not going to be used for the people of Ontario.

People like Michael Decter also came. I think he is a well-known figure in health care; certainly somebody I respect immensely. He talked about: If we want self-sufficiency in plasma and plasma products, what are we waiting for before we put a plan in place? Certainly, to set up paid-for donation of plasma next to an at-risk population did not seem like the best way to treat that public resource and was not very respectful of the

principle that safety is paramount. This is what the voluntary system does. It puts safety first and paramount.

Some of the other comments have already been talked about, and I see that time is flying.

I'll go to the second part of the bill. The second part of the bill had to do with the regulation of pharmacies. For this, too, we had deputants who came and talked to us, one of them being the College of Pharmacists and their association.

This recommendation came from Dr. Thiessen. Dr. Thiessen is a very well-respected pharmacist who was asked to look at how to improve the system after the diluted chemo drug scandal, or affair, that we had in Ontario. One of his recommendations was to make sure that the pharmacies in hospitals would be overseen by the College of Pharmacists. Every other retail pharmacy in Ontario already has the oversight of the College of Pharmacists, but the pharmacies within our hospitals don't.

There were some good reasons why they were not included, one of the reasons being that they already have at least three levels of oversight that I can think of. They work within hospitals that receive accreditation, that have an accountability agreement. Everybody who works there belongs to the College of Pharmacists. So we already have many layers of oversight for our hospital pharmacies, but we will now add at least a fourth layer of oversight to those pharmacies with the College of Pharmacists.

I'm not opposed to this idea, by any stretch of the imagination. The fit is not as good as you would think, though, because most of the items already in place to do the oversight are meant for an environment where there is a money transaction.

When you go to the pharmacy, whether you have coverage or not, there's a money transaction that takes place. You will either present a card to show that you're insured, or you will take out your credit card or your cash to pay. A lot of what the accreditation does—not all of it, but a part of what the College of Pharmacists does when they go and inspect a pharmacy is they make sure that the public is protected in that money relationship.

Of course, when you translate this into a hospital setting, the hospital never sells their drugs. The hospital dispenses the drugs to the patients who are there. So this level of oversight is a bit like a square peg in a round hole: It doesn't work that well.

I wanted to make sure that there was enough time in there to allow the college to make the changes that are necessary but also for the hospitals to make the changes that are necessary, because some of it also has to do with space and location that applies to the retails and that will now have to be applied to hospitals.

I could think of a few hospitals where the pharmacy department is so jam-packed—12 feet high and every inch of space is used—that when they start to use some of the College of Pharmacists criteria, some of the hospital pharmacies may have to look at moving the pharmacy, expanding their pharmacy, changing the layout.

Everybody knows that renovation in a hospital is always expensive, never easy. There aren't too many of our hospitals that have extra room that they kept empty just in case the hospital pharmacy came knocking and needed extra room. So all of this had to happen.

I'm happy that one of the recommendations—that is, the one with the blood part of the bill—will come into effect as soon as we receive royal assent, but that part of the bill that has to do with oversight of pharmacies won't.

I had told you that the bill has three pieces. The third piece of the bill is where—how can I say it?—weird things happen.

You're talking about a bill that has been in the works for about two years. When the government reintroduced it, they copied what they had introduced the last time and pasted it into Bill 21.

But we had already started to talk about the previous bill. We had already pointed to some very weak pieces of legislation. I wouldn't call it sloppy work—but basically a little bit of a rush job to get it. Then they had the opportunity to fix all this but they didn't. They did the copy-and-paste of what we had before, so the same mistakes that were in the bills before were in the new version of the bill.

1650

That was a first for me, Speaker, and that was rather interesting—and I will go into a little bit more detail—where the government actually voted down entire sections of their own bill. We had taken the time to listen to the public, to front-line health care workers, to health organizations, and brought forward amendments to improve that bill. We had shown them in the previous Parliament that those were amendments that needed to be done. But they did not listen in the previous Parliament and, unfortunately, defeated most of our amendments in this Parliament.

The fact that the Liberals put out a bill and then voted against five entire sections of their own bill is—I think this is a first. If you did not like those sections in the first place, and we had already told you that they were problematic, why didn't you do your homework and put forward a bill that already had those corrections done?

So here we are with the government members on the committee voting down five sections of their own bill, and they gave no guarantees at committee that those provisions would come back as legislation. I quote the MPP from Ottawa South in committee, who said, "It would come back either as another piece of legislation or as regulation."

It is remarkable to see a government deleting its own legislation but refusing to accept good amendments from New Democrats that are supported by front-line health care workers, by people in the field and by Ontarians in general.

The amendment to change when the act came into effect passed but everything else was defeated. One of the main parts that we would have liked to see go through had to do with strengthening our pharmacy procurement program so that the problem we saw with the diluted

chemo drugs would never be allowed to happen again. Those are recommendations that were supported by all three parties through the work of the social policy committee. Unfortunately, the members of the Liberal government voted them down.

Those changes were nothing out of the ordinary. We were asking for more transparency when it comes to group purchasing organizations, when it comes to the business of giving rebates, when it comes to the business of being able to follow taxpayers' money as it moves from one provider to the next, knowing full well that the minute this money leaves the walls of the hospital we have no more oversight. If group purchasing organizations want to pay their CEO, like maybe match Dr. Mazza at \$1.4 million a year, they would be—

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Nice.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Yes, it's a nice gig if you can get it—they would be free to do this because there is no oversight of group purchasing organizations. Well, it got voted down. The same thing with the salary disclosures; the same thing with giving the Auditor General the right to oversee them; the same thing with giving the Legislative Assembly the right to call them in front of committee. They voted all of that down.

Then, the third part of the bill has to do with changes to regulated health professionals. This is where we saw where most of the sections of the bill that had to do with this, the government voted against their own sections and defeated them.

What we were left with was pretty thin and certainly would not allow us to respond to what Ontarians are telling us. They want more transparency; they want to know the results. Why aren't we sharing infection results when a college finds out? Why aren't we sharing what a member is doing? None of this is there.

Unfortunately, I see that the time on the clock is running out. Those are the comments I was able to put onto the record. Thank you, Speaker.

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

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Mr. Speaker, I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent to allow me to deliver my inaugural address during debate on this bill today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The member is seeking unanimous consent for her inaugural speech. Agreed? Agreed.

The member from Halton.

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to lead off third reading debate of Bill 21, our government's proposed Safeguarding Health Care Integrity Act, 2014, which was introduced on July 22, 2014.

This legislation, if passed, would combine our government's actions to prohibit compensation to blood and plasma donors with the regulation of hospital pharmacies and other actions to strengthen oversight and improve patient safety. I'll start with the regulation of hospital pharmacies and then move on to blood donation.

This part of the bill, if passed, would amend the Drug and Pharmacies Regulation Act so that the Ontario

College of Pharmacists can inspect and license all hospital pharmacies operating in Ontario. Additionally, amendments would be made to the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991, and the Public Hospitals Act, to enhance the sharing of information among health system partners and strengthen the oversight of health care practitioners.

The second part of the bill relates to our government's actions to prohibit compensation to blood and plasma donors in Ontario.

Every year, thousands of Ontarians voluntarily give blood and plasma to help others survive accidents, surgery or life-threatening conditions. This is a system that has been managed by Canadian Blood Services, a public, not-for-profit organization, for more than 15 years.

Our government is taking steps to protect the integrity of our national public blood donation system. As a first step, we amended two existing regulations under the Laboratory and Specimen Collection Centre Licensing Act to strengthen licensing requirements and prohibit payment to donors for their blood or plasma.

As a second step, this legislation includes a revised version of the previously introduced Voluntary Blood Donations Act, 2014, which, if enacted, would clearly and unequivocally prohibit paying people for blood and plasma donations.

It's important to note that Canadian Blood Services and its donors would be exempt from these prohibitions, so that CBS is not prevented from paying donors in Ontario if it deems such a measure to be necessary. Moreover, researchers would be exempt from the prohibition against paying for blood donations when it is being used exclusively for research purposes.

The proposed legislation would also strengthen our regulatory enforcement tools so that we can take swift and decisive action in case of violations. This is very important.

Let me be clear: This decision to prohibit payment for blood or plasma donations will in no way reduce the supply or availability of blood or blood products for Ontarians, but it will protect the integrity of our current blood donation system, a system that works. I'm very proud of our voluntary life-saving blood donation system, and I am also proud of the quality care that health professionals in Ontario provide to patients every day. I encourage all Ontarians to donate blood if they are able to do so.

I have full confidence in Canada's national blood system, and I know that Canadian Blood Services has the ability to successfully manage the blood and blood products supply for Ontarians.

I'd like to thank our valued partners for their support on all parts of this legislation. Speaker, I am confident that all members can support this proposed legislation. Thank you.

1700

Mr. Speaker, it is now an honour for me to give my inaugural speech in this Legislature. It's a privilege to

join all the MPPs before me who have stood up in this great House to give their addresses.

I want to do three things in this speech, Mr. Speaker. I want to tell you about my path to get here, to show what has prepared me to serve the people of Ontario in Kathleen Wynne's government. I believe we are entering a new period of openness, prosperity and equality in Ontario, and I am proud to be a part of it. I want to outline my service goals for Ontario and for my riding of Halton. This is the best province in the best country in the world. And if I may say, Halton is the best riding in the best province in the best country in the world. Finally, I would also like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the many people who have helped me arrive at this point in my life.

I truly believe that who we are and where we come from is the force that drives us forward. We are our history, and history must shape the future. Let me tell you about my history and my path. It is a path that has given me the tools and courage to meet the challenges of public life and turn them into opportunities for everyone. It is a path that has given me great respect for the value of education, and it is a path that has instilled in me the belief in public service and the dedication, the strong work ethic and the understanding I need to serve the people in my riding of Halton and in Ontario.

My path has taught me about opportunity, education and service. You see, I was born in Durban, South Africa, under apartheid. To me, as a child, that meant going to a restaurant and being asked to leave because of the colour of my skin; it meant going to a fair, and not being able to ride on a Ferris wheel because of the colour of my skin; and it meant going to a park and not being able to sit on a bench or swim in the ocean because of the colour of my skin. These are small things, in a way—the small daily oppressions of a vicious system. But they add up to something very big: the attempt to define someone as inferior, subordinate and unworthy. I know what it feels like to be oppressed, belittled and ashamed. I know what it feels like to want a voice, but to be denied and unheard.

These are the real-life lessons I had to learn at a young age. It's a feeling that children nowhere should have to endure. Living under apartheid taught me that justice, democracy and opportunity are worth fighting for. It also taught me that governments should work for people, not against them. That is why opportunity for all is an important part of what I want to accomplish for Ontario and for Halton.

As a young girl, I immigrated with my family to a small town in Alberta, Canada. My parents chose Canada. They saw the opportunity for a new and better life in Canada, where human rights are protected, where democracy is valued and where we could pursue our dreams. Both of my parents were educators. My father was a teacher, then a high school principal and finally a superintendent of schools. My mother taught for more than 40 years. In fact, she was eventually voted one of the 100 most memorable teachers in the 100-year history of the Alberta Teachers' Association.

An important part of the dream my parents pursued in Canada was the education of young people, giving them the tools and helping shape their values to build a future for themselves and their community. That is why I believe a quality education is one of the most important gifts we can give our children. It is one of the only things we can give our kids that can't be taken away. It will pull them up, regardless of their situation.

With my belief in education and my democratic concerns, I studied political science at the University of Lethbridge, earning a bachelor of arts. I followed that with graduate work in political science at the University of Alberta and Queen's University. I also met and married my husband at university, and we moved briefly to the US where I began my career in broadcast journalism—with a sense of mission, I might add.

I believe truth, facts and a well-informed public is the best guarantor we have of a strong democracy.

My first positions were at NBC and PBS stations in Albany, New York. When we moved back to Ontario, I joined CBC Ottawa as a reporter, eventually becoming an anchor for national newscasts at CBC Newsworld, Newsworld International and National Radio news.

I also hosted and produced a show on environmental issues, an education show at TVO, as well as anchoring and producing a nightly newscast at OMNI Television where I met my friends MPP Laura Albanese and Associate Minister Dipika Damerla. I also wound up anchoring at CTV Newsnet as a national news anchor.

I interviewed Prime Ministers, Premiers, world leaders, actors, musicians, the head sommelier at the Trianon Palace—even suspected terrorists and a real pirate. I got to talk to people when they were experiencing some of the most challenging times of their life—as bombs dropped, as they climbed Mount Everest and as they mourned the loss of loved ones, princesses, Popes and innocence. I learned first-hand about some of the serious challenges people face on a daily basis in the world and in our province.

I have always believed in the importance of public service, and my career as a journalist eventually showed me that reporting was not enough for me. I learned about the problems, but I wanted to help.

That is the path that brought me here, Mr. Speaker, a path that has deeply instilled in me the values of opportunity, education and service. It is also a path that has wound through my community, my riding, my Halton, for more than 20 years now. It is our home. Our children were born there. We have raised them there. We have been actively involved in this vibrant, growing community. One of our first engagements in public life was helping to fight against the closure of a local school. We were successful.

That is why I am thrilled to be here today, representing Halton as the elected member of provincial Parliament. Halton is my home, and as Halton's new voice at Queen's Park, I've been busy.

Soon after the 41st Parliament of Ontario began sitting, I was named the parliamentary assistant to the

Honourable Dr. Eric Hoskins, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. It is a great honour and privilege to work with Dr. Hoskins on such an important portfolio.

I'm especially pleased to be working on the province's first-ever strategy for dementia and Alzheimer's.

Applause.

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Thank you. I'm proud of that.

I know the devastation these conditions can have on individuals and families. My own family suffered through it with my father-in-law for years.

As Halton's voice at Queen's Park, I will work hard on implementing my vision for our community. It's a vision borne out of the personal and professional experiences I've gained throughout my life, but it also comes from my years of visiting local shops, meeting neighbours on the street and watching our young people grow and flourish as they prepare to become tomorrow's leaders.

I want to help create a place in which local leaders at all levels work together to make Halton a place where residents have the pride and comfort of knowing they live in a place where the opportunities for success are without limit.

To do that, we need to make sure that jobs and the economy remain a top priority. I want to re-establish a strong working relationship between the Ontario government and our local business community.

Now, I also know many of my constituents have serious concerns about transportation. Insufficient transit systems not only make it harder for us to get to our places of work, but they take away from the time we could be spending and enjoying our families. That's why we need to keep investing in roads and bridges to make sure they're safe and able to handle the rigours of daily traffic. And we need public transit to be affordable, convenient and reliable.

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I also want to expand local health care services so that we can continue to provide the people of Halton with top-tier health care, and I want to make sure we're investing in our children and giving them the best education we possibly can.

I told you how I came from a family of educators, Mr. Speaker. You have heard about my parents. This tradition has continued. My husband is a professor at a local university, and I have taught at a regional college myself. Even our teenage daughter teaches dance to little ones.

Coming from this tradition of education, I want to make sure that we continue to support the world-class education system in this province and in Halton so that our schools continue to turn out bright, innovative and skilled graduates.

These are just some of the things I want my public service to focus on over the next four years. These are the things that I am passionate about. These are my values. They come from my history, my path from South Africa and oppression to Canada and freedom, to Ontario and opportunity, to Halton and community and now to here, with all of you, at Queen's Park.

But, of course, Mr. Speaker, I did not travel this path on my own. None of us can make it this far without the love and support and belief of others. So now, if you will indulge me, I would like to take my final moments to give my thanks to those who have been with me on this journey.

To my parents, Pixie and Larry, and my parents by marriage, Dorothea and her late husband, Tommy, and my late stepdad, Barrie, thank you for your love and for believing in me. We are nothing without our parents.

To my Liberal family, former MPP Walt Elliot and his wife, Anne, who helped me from the beginning, and to our amazing PLA: Gerry, Yvonne, Ken, Gillian, Dr. Ric, Beth, Martyn, Allison, George, Rob, Veronica, Bob, Brian, Alex and too many more to mention—thank you for your tireless efforts and hard work.

To my fantastic campaign team—Jason, Mora, Mike, Brian and Jonathan: you walked miles with me. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

A big thank you also to Pat Sorbara, David Hurley, Carol Price and, of course, our amazing Premier, Kathleen Wynne.

To my friends Marianne, Lynda, Shelley and Paula and my neighbours Jack and Joan, who is now gone; Carol and Bill, who is also now gone; Urs, Tess, Jen, Chris, Sonia and Dave—many people who have been with me for a long time—thank you for the laughs and thank you for being there. You are all amazing and wonderful people.

Finally to local supporters: the Honourable Betty Kennedy; Jack Manchisi, who has now passed away; John and Kelly Ayres; Darryn; Abbas; the Rizvees; Jennifer Stebbings; Jeff Raulino; Zeeshan; Parveen; Katie and Sam—thank you for all your support and hard work.

To the tireless, selfless volunteers who knocked on doors, made countless phone calls, organized rallies, put up lawn signs and helped me to fill the riding with a positive energy: Thank you.

Finally, to my family: Randy, my husband; my son, Galen; and our daughter, Oriana. I know I would not be standing here today were it not for your endless love and support and belief in me. So thank you.

I'd like to leave you now with a tweet that I recently found my daughter had sent out about me this week. She said, "I'm proud of my mother every single day for going from not being able to vote because of the colour of her skin To being voted for, and winning."

So thank you to all of you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you for allowing me to address this Legislature. I am forever grateful, and I am pleased to be the voice for Halton.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I thank the member from Halton. One of the nice things about inaugural speeches: There's a song in there. It's called Getting to Know You.

Further debate? I recognize the member from Prince Edward–Hastings.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Oh, we already know him.

Mr. Todd Smith: You know too much already, right?

Interjection: Maiden speech.

Mr. Todd Smith: I've done my maiden speech already. I'll tell you what: As impressive as my maiden speech was, back in 2011, that was pretty darned impressive, I must say, so congratulations to the member for Halton—a very lovely presentation, obviously emotional and heartfelt. Congratulations to her and her family for everything they've accomplished.

Before I say too much more about that, I think we should also maybe point out the contributions that the previous member for Halton made in this Legislature—a very good friend of all of us here on this side of the House, Ted Chudleigh, who spent 20 years here at the Legislature. I now occupy his office up in 416—a lovely office. Thanks very much for leaving it to me, Ted, but thanks so much for everything that you did for the people of the Halton region and for the people of Ontario during your tenure here at Queen's Park as well, as a member of provincial Parliament.

I must say to the new member, as emotional as that maiden speech was—and it was very emotional—congratulations on the long distance that she has come. Being that girl who wasn't allowed on the Ferris wheel—I mean, there aren't very many of us in this room who can relate to what that must have been like for her in South Africa, to not be able to get on that Ferris wheel because of the colour of her skin, to now being an elected official here in this great country and in this great province that we call Ontario. Congratulations again.

Now, with all of those niceties out of the way—the new member has a lot of work on her plate, as she alluded to, because this province—in spite of the fact that we are a very fair place to live, and a democratic society, we have our problems here in Ontario. They were outlined in great detail today by the Auditor General.

She is the parliamentary assistant for health, and there were a lot of issues that were on the plate for the Auditor General today. Bonnie Lysyk, I thought, did a wonderful job of exploring and emphasizing the shortcomings of this government and this Premier and especially this cabinet.

I know that the new member from Halton is not in cabinet, but she has a very strong voice. You can sense that. She's a broadcaster. She knows how to deal with facts and figures, and she knows that the state that this province is in right now is not an enviable one for members of that cabinet. They're the ones who put us in this position, Mr. Speaker, and it's going to take people in those back rows and surrounding that cabinet to talk some sense into these people, to help us get out of the hole that we're in in Ontario. It was an unbelievable Auditor General's report today, and you're going to be hearing a lot more about it in the days to come.

But let me, first of all, deal with this bill. I'm sure I'll probably go back into the AG's report on a couple of items here in my next 17 minutes, as we talk about the Safeguarding Health Care Integrity Act.

I've got to be honest: The title of this bill is excellent—the Safeguarding Health Care Integrity Act—

but from what we saw today, I wouldn't trust this Premier or this cabinet to walk my dog, let alone protect my health care. They have made such a mess of our health care system.

There are members over there—there's one there in rural Ontario, and I know he knows the dire situation that we are in in the Quinte region when it comes to health care in rural Ontario. They're having to cut \$12 million more from Quinte Health Care. They walked nine people out the door last week. Nine people were walked out the door last week by officials there. Another 30 more are promised to lose their jobs in the coming weeks—Merry Christmas from the province of Ontario, from this Liberal government and from Quinte Health Care. Another 30 more are going to be walked out the door. That's just the first piece of the pie. They have to find another \$12 million at Quinte Health Care—hospitals in Belleville, Trenton, Bancroft and Prince Edward county.

I don't think this government has what it takes. We've had so many scandals when it comes to health care. We had the Ornge scandal. We had the eHealth scandal. We find out today in the Auditor General's report that there's no plan for palliative care, in spite of the fact that study after study shows that investing in our hospices is good value for money. That was the whole focus of the Auditor General's report today—value for money—and we didn't find a whole lot of good examples of that in the AG's report.

1720

Let me talk about the bill for a second. The bill doesn't deal with any of the problems that we're facing in Ontario right now. The substance of this bill deals with voluntary blood donations and measures to safeguard the pharmacy system in this country against chemotherapy dosage problems like the one we experienced in this province almost two years ago. Both of those are things that it's hard to argue against. Since I'm supporting the bill, I'll be making my argument in favour of the bill, but not in favour of the cabinet and the Premier—

Hon. James J. Bradley: Oh, I thought he would.

Mr. Todd Smith: All sympathies to the minister without portfolio, possibly the next president of the Toronto Blue Jays.

Health care is a core Canadian value, and keeping it public, accessible and cost-effective are all things that should be above the usual partisan rancour that we hear from time to time in this House, and maybe you just heard some, although the Auditor General's report backs up what I've been saying. And she is not partisan; she's an officer of this Legislature.

While we're on it, Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk, with her report today, talked about overspending in our electricity sector, and there is a connection to the shortcomings that we're seeing in our health care right now.

The smart meter plan that was rolled out by Dalton McGuinty and this Liberal government has proven to be anything but a smart decision. There was no value-for-money audit that was done on this, except for the one we

found today that showed, once again, that the government is \$1 billion over budget on its smart meter program, which hasn't reduced consumption of electricity—

Ms. Soo Wong: Point of order: The member is not debating Bill 21; he's talking about the Auditor General's report that was presented this afternoon. I believe we're debating third reading of Bill 21, the Safeguarding Health Care Integrity Act. Can you just remind the member opposite to stay focused on Bill 21? Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I thank the member for bringing that to my attention. I have been listening intently and am seeing correlation to the bill, so I will continue back to the member from Prince Edward-Hastings.

Mr. Todd Smith: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

What I was going to say was that money being wasted in the electricity sector could be better spent in our health care system. If we weren't making poor decisions in our energy sector—

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: I'm glad you said "we."

Mr. Todd Smith: Not me. If they weren't making poor decisions in the energy sector—somebody has a keen ear over there. If they, the Liberal government, weren't making so many mistakes in their energy sector, then maybe we would be able to afford proper health care services. I know that the member who just stood up on the point of order cares deeply about health care, because she is a nurse, and she is another one of those people that we're counting on having the ear of the cabinet and the Premier to make sure that our health care is being safeguarded, as in the title of this bill. I will go back to the bill.

We currently collect enough plasma for transfusion in this province. We purchase almost 70% of our plasma protein products from the United States, both paid and unpaid donors, so what we're doing isn't keeping material acquired from paid donors from getting into the system; we're just keeping it from being sold in Ontario. The reason for doing this isn't as hypocritical as it actually sounds; we have a belief in this country in this universal medicare system that we have: the belief that an Ontarian, regardless of their economic circumstances, is entitled to access to health care without the risk that the cost could bankrupt themselves or their loved ones. Health care is not an entitlement; it's a public trust here in Ontario. It's an investment that this province makes in ensuring that equality of opportunity is provided to all. That's why it's important that we ensure that donations of blood in this province are strictly voluntary.

However, we have to ensure that we're meeting demand here in Ontario so that we're importing fewer plasma products from the United States. My colleague the member from Parry Sound-Muskoka, Mr. Miller, spoke eloquently about this a couple of days ago, about the need for plasma products when this bill was before the House. Currently these plasma products are being used as treatments for Alzheimer's disease and other illnesses where we're likely to see an increase in demand as the population in Ontario ages.

This is very near and dear to my heart, as the member for Prince Edward–Hastings. As you'll know from the many times I've stood up in this Legislature, we have one of the oldest populations in the province in my riding of Prince Edward–Hastings, specifically in Prince Edward county.

We have a real issue in Prince Edward county right now. We have a hospital that is continuously having services reduced. I have a little bit of a timeline here and I would just like to share a little bit of this, if I could, from the Times; it's a newspaper in Wellington, in Prince Edward county. In 2005, that hospital that was built by the community a long time ago had 24 medical beds. At the time, in 2005, the president and CEO of Quinte Health Care said this: "There are no more rabbits left to pull out of the hat. We've taken" \$13 million "out of operations over the last four years." Again, this was in 2005; that's almost 10 years ago. Now they're going back again and they have to take another \$12 million out of the system this year.

That hospital that had—let me make sure I get this right—24 beds is now down to 12 beds, 10 medical beds on certain days. The people of Prince Edward county are very worried about the future of their hospital there and the ability of this government to safeguard their precious Prince Edward County Memorial Hospital, because they've seen the waste. They've seen the scandal. They've seen the misappropriation of funds.

Today in the Auditor General's report, a million flu vaccinations are unaccounted for. The Ministry of Health doesn't know where a million flu vaccinations have gone, yet we're going to continue to trust these guys to fix the situation that we're in right now? They can't do it. Nobody knows where those flu vaccinations are. It's unacceptable, the lack of oversight that's occurring.

Prince Edward county is unique. Rural Ontario is unique. I know there are members over there who understand that, but I think there are a lot of members who maybe don't understand that over there. We can walk out the front doors here at Queen's Park in this beautiful building, on the front grounds—I think the tow trucks are gone now so you would actually be able to walk down University Avenue. You can walk down the street, 500 metres from here, and you can walk into the lobbies of some of the best hospitals in Canada. You can walk down and you have a choice of four or five different world-class hospitals right here in downtown Toronto.

But people in Prince Edward county—and that's just one small part of my riding; keep in mind, my riding is huge; it's the size of Prince Edward Island. In Prince Edward county, which is the same geographic size as Toronto, there's one little hospital, and a number of beds are continuously being removed from that hospital. The services are continuously being removed from that hospital, so you can understand why people in rural Ontario are scared.

A lot of those people who now live in Prince Edward county used to live here in Toronto where they had access to those world-class hospitals within a stone's

throw of their condo or their home that they sold for \$2 million. Now they're in Prince Edward county, and the reason that they went there is because there's a very viable hospital there, but the services are continuously being ripped out of that hospital. You can understand their concern in Prince Edward county and also at the north end of my riding in Bancroft too, with the North Hastings Hospital that's there.

We have a lot of people who used to live in the GTA who spend six months of the year during the cottage season up in Bancroft in North Hastings. They question the ability of this government to manage properly, and they certainly don't trust what's been happening in this sector for the last several years with the creation of the local health integration networks, the LHINs.

1730

Money is being poured from the Ministry of Health into this new bureaucracy that continues to grow, and they're not seeing the money make it to the front-line services at North Hastings Hospital or Prince Edward County Memorial Hospital or Trenton Memorial Hospital or Belleville General Hospital. Those rural hospitals are continuously having their services cut back, and they're seeing more and more money leaving this building, leaving the Ministry of Health and filling up LHIN offices, that layer of bureaucracy in the middle, and not preserving our health care.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: You're wrong.

Mr. Todd Smith: I can't believe the member from Northumberland–Quinte West is saying I'm wrong. I am not wrong. I can't wait to talk to the Trentonian about that statement.

We continuously let standards lapse so that we can let bureaucracy grow, and bureaucracy has grown. That LHIN office in the South East LHIN started with 25 people; there are now close to 60 people working at that LHIN office. It's unacceptable.

Buildings that were constructed to house in-patient beds at Belleville General Hospital are now filled with administration; they're not filled—

Interjection.

Mr. Todd Smith: I certainly have. I talk to my LHIN people all the time. You should try it sometime.

Let me move on to another story. We are talking about pharmacies here. One of the parts of the bill has to do with pharmacies. What we should be doing is providing our pharmacies with a greater role in our health care system.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Can you name a pharmacist?

Mr. Todd Smith: I actually can name a pharmacist. I was talking with Monette McFaul not that long ago. Monette McFaul works at the Metro pharmacy in Belleville, and I had the opportunity to spend an hour or so with Monette and just watch as she was providing health care services at the grocery store there. People were coming in, they were getting the flu shots—those were the flu shots that actually made it to their destination, not the million that went missing that the Ministry of Health has no idea where they are. I know the truth

really does hurt sometimes, but we've got a lot of mistakes that are being made by this government, and they just don't want to own up.

These pharmacists are providing a valuable service and they're relieving some of the strain on our health care system, relieving some of the strain on our emergency rooms and our doctors as well. They are providing the flu vaccination shots, they're providing some counselling services—in the case of a lot of seniors who are juggling 10 or 15 different medications, there are some counselling services that are now being provided at the pharmacies—but there is a lot more opportunity that could be given to them to work to their full scope of practice. They're extremely well-trained people. They spend a lot of time in school, and they are a great asset to our health care system. I had the opportunity back in October to spend an hour with them, and they are providing a great service.

Everybody knows that a small percentage of the people who are visiting our hospitals and emergency rooms are accounting for the large portion of hospital expenses. But when we're talking about medication, we're talking about patients who suffer from some of the worst illnesses that we struggle with as families, as a province or even among the survivors right here in this very House. We cannot provide too much oversight. The Ministry of Health has, at several points, failed with its procurement processes, and this should become part of a larger discussion that we'll have to have regarding how we can better provide health care services for Ontarians.

We heard several months ago about helicopters that were procured by the ministry that were too small for paramedics to perform CPR in. That was part of the Ornge scandal. We owe it to patients to ensure, at every step along the way, that we're providing them with the medication they need, that their safety has been ensured to the best of our ability and that our experts, namely, the pharmacists who are often charged with administering and dispensing these medications, are able to apply their extensive knowledge to the process as often as possible.

We have a few medical officers here in this House, but few of us are able to comment with any expert knowledge both on what directly transpired and the tools that will be required by pharmacists, technicians and other professionals along the line who have to deal directly with patients.

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

Mr. Todd Smith: Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate? The member from Algoma–Manitoulin.

Mr. Michael Mantha: It's like a song to my ears, Mr. Speaker. I always enjoy you referring to my riding of Algoma–Manitoulin.

I want to start off by commending the member from Halton on her inaugural speech. I remember it wasn't that long ago that I found myself talking about my family, particularly my biggest fan, which was my mother, and I found it very difficult in delivering that. But it's nice to

see that some of her colleagues were here, and some of my colleagues were here, supporting her through this. You are going to be a really big shining star coming through this.

I also wanted to comment on my friend across the way, the member from Prince Edward–Hastings. He has a knack of drying eyes really quickly when he addresses individuals in this House, and he always has that art of getting fingers pointed at him. You would think that he is a target, but he is an individual who is passionate in regard to what he believes in. He always comes in, brings his A game and speaks to the issues, particularly for the people that he represents in his constituency.

Again, to the member from Halton—a very heartfelt speech. You will certainly bring, and I hope that you will bring, a new level of decorum in this House, and I look towards you on many occasions. You are a very elegant speaker, and I look forward to being in this House on many occasions to be part of your discussion. Again, I will always offer that heartfelt handshake. I look forward to working with her, going forward.

I think some of the views that she brought in her comments are, why do we get involved? Why do we choose to become politically active or pursue an avenue? That's because we believe in changing individuals' lives, and that's what we want to do.

Today, we are talking about Bill 21, the Safeguarding Health Care Integrity Act. I want to take my time to highlight a wonderful, talented person that I met through this process. I had the opportunity of actually having a chat with her and meeting up with her. She is a very extraordinary person, and she did quite a bit of work on protecting the blood system in Canada by actually working on developing a film.

Her name is Kat Lanteigne. She is an actor, writer and producer. She completed her classical training at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School. Kat's play, *Tainted*—something that the member from Nickel Belt highlighted in her statement earlier; I would encourage everybody, if you haven't seen it, to go out and see it—premiered in Toronto last autumn to critical acclaim. Kat was named one of the people who made Toronto a better place by the *Grid* magazine in 2013 for her play, *Tainted*.

I have met Kat here at Queen's Park when she spent countless hours lobbying members of the importance of the blood system, as well as reminding us of the dangers of past mistakes and not following that path again. She brought her play, *Tainted*, here to Queen's Park for members and staff of Queen's Park, and later, she brought it to Parliament Hill.

Until the late 1990s, people gave no thought to the blood system in our country. Kat recalls walking into her living room in Abbotsford, BC, and seeing her mother sitting in front of the TV, crying, after watching the news report about tainted blood victims. At that moment, something was seeded that took Lanteigne 20 years to put forth as a play about the tainted blood scandal.

Kat has said she "really wanted to find the common experience of Canadian families across the country, so I

could have a fair representation of what people lived in their living rooms.”

She really wanted it to be authentic and to have the depth it needed to resonate with people.

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She based the play on interviews she did with individuals and families across the country. She found nearly half of her \$110,000 budget through crowdfunding. Aside from one high school effort, however, Lanteigne had written only one stage play in the mid-1990s for a small theatre in Vancouver. She shopped her blood-scandal idea to every independent theatre company in Toronto, and all of them turned her down.

Kat was ashamed at how the government treated people involved in this scandal, and became determined to not let something as important as the Canadian blood system become jeopardized again.

She also wanted to ensure that Canadians didn't forget this unfortunate part of our history. Through her play, and through her one-on-one meetings with legislators across this country, she is not only retelling the story, but she is holding Legislatures to account for policies being implemented and how they can and will change our health care system, for better or worse.

I just wanted to take this opportunity during the debate of Bill 21 to highlight Kat Lanteigne for her outstanding dedication, determination and fighting for the protection of our blood system, as well as her creativity with Tainted and sharing those stories with us and letting us not forget an important part of our history.

I think this is one remarkable individual. There are many other remarkable individuals, but this is something that we certainly need to learn from, Mr. Speaker. This is an opportunity for people just to sit down for a couple of hours with a loved one and experience it for yourself from your own living room.

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

Mr. Han Dong: Mr. Speaker, I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent to allow me to deliver my inaugural address during the debate on this bill today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The member from Trinity–Spadina has requested unanimous consent for him to deliver his inaugural speech. Is that the wish of the House? Carried.

Back to the member from Trinity–Spadina.

Mr. Han Dong: Thank you.

Applause.

Mr. Han Dong: Thank you, kind members of this Legislature, and thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to begin by congratulating my fellow Torontonians on yet another successful election. I want to thank the electors in my home riding of Trinity–Spadina. You have endured three elections in less than five months. Thank you for exercising your democratic rights. It's truly an honour to be entrusted by you to serve in this great Legislature.

To our newly elected mayor, Mr. John Tory, congratulations on a successful campaign. You earned it.

To Toronto city council, in particular my counterparts at city hall—Mr. Joe Cressy, Mr. Mike Layton and the local school board trustees, Ausma Malik and Jo-Ann Davis: I look forward to working with you on the issues that are most important to our community. I look forward to working with them alongside our good federal member, Adam Vaughan, who was elected recently during the summer.

Finally to the newly elected mayors: Her Worship Bonnie Crombie, mayor of Mississauga—actually, her son used to be president of the U of T Liberals, and we worked closely during that by-election.

To our very own former minister Linda Jeffrey, mayor of Brampton: Congratulations.

As a new member, I have yet to master the art of debating and public speaking, unlike the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke or my good friend from Toronto Centre, Mr. Murray. I have much to learn, but I would like to take this opportunity to tell you a little bit about myself and what I want to achieve as the representative of my beloved community in this provincial Legislature.

A few days ago, my colleague the member from Brampton–Springdale, Ms. Harinder Malhi, delivered a moving maiden speech in which she mentioned that she's the youngest member of this Legislature. I will also attempt to put on record that I could be the newest Canadian serving this Legislature, I think.

I'm humbled to stand here today in this Legislature on behalf of the people of Trinity–Spadina, entrusted by them with the responsibility to speak up for the community. I think many members, as they sit during these sessions and stay in Toronto, will find the people of Trinity–Spadina are like their neighbours. But I stand here more humbled as the first Liberal elected since 1990 from that riding, and 1990 is a very special year to me personally, and you'll see why.

I want to thank Mr. Rosario Marchese, my predecessor, for his dedication in representing the people of Trinity–Spadina.

Some 24 years earlier, another Chinese Canadian, Mr. Bob Wong, stood proudly as the provincial representative of what was then called the riding of Fort York—he, by the way, was the first Chinese Canadian cabinet minister in Canadian history. That member, during his last few months in office, acted in what would later become a bit of a karmic final act prior to his unfortunate defeat by Mr. Marchese—although my colleagues across the floor will probably think otherwise—the act that changed the fate of a local newcomer to Ontario, a man I call Dad.

My father first arrived at the beautiful eastern coast of St. John's, Newfoundland, as an international student. Soon, he decided to forgo his previous career in film to pursue a better life for his daughter Difei and his son Han. My father knew Canada was going to be our new beginning, but he was struggling to get his family here. He approached Mr. Wong, the empathetic and compassionate individual that he is, and Mr. Wong took it upon himself to go the extra mile. He inquired about my

father's immigration file and helped my dad to settle in the welcoming community which his son now has the honour to represent. With Bob's help, my father obtained his landed status, and on September 23, 1990, my family was reunited. I still remember my father was working two jobs at the time, and he was three hours late picking us up that night.

That year, I was 13, and oddly—or my mentor would say that that's not odd—I was fluent in Mandarin and the Shanghai dialect but I couldn't speak a complete sentence in English. Like a newborn baby, I was mesmerized by the night view of Toronto coming off the Gardiner Expressway. Who would have thought at the time of the odds that that young boy would one day have the great privilege of representing the residents in that beautiful skyline—only in Toronto, only in Ontario, only in Canada.

Once my family settled in Toronto, the sense of home and the community was overwhelming. Our neighbours, in the lead-up to the Thanksgiving weekend, approached us with gifts and essentials. I still recall our reaction then, as we didn't know what was going on. We couldn't understand. My sister actually had to look up the word "Thanksgiving" in a dictionary. Words cannot express the joy and the sense of belonging we felt at the time that that small act of a few had on us.

I also cannot express how much I cherish this opportunity right here, right now, to learn what I've learned, to see what I've seen, to listen to what I've heard and, most importantly, to have the opportunity to say what I have to say on behalf of the constituents of the great riding of Trinity–Spadina. That 13-year-old boy stands here today as a husband, a father, a privileged member of this assembly, thanks to the great constituency work done by former member Bob Wong. That assured me that small acts by elected officials could have a lasting impact on one's life and on one family's fortune as well.

In 2003, I was given a very fortunate opportunity to work in the constituency office of the honourable Maria Minna, former federal member for Beaches–East York, helping individuals, many like my father when he went to Mr. Wong's office. Those experiences, complemented by two others, have been most beneficial as I interact with young people in my role as an MPP and as a parliamentary assistant to the Honourable Dr. Reza Moridi, Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

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First, working as the marketing director for a seafood processing company, I was tasked to identify and develop new international opportunities and markets, proudly promoting made-in-Canada food products.

Today I'm so excited to see that our province is moving in the right direction. Premier Kathleen Wynne's vision of an open Ontario has never been more crucial, and I'm very lucky to be part of her team.

While working abroad, and in the private sector, I witnessed the growth of emerging economies and the lack of opportunities offered to our new grads. So I decided to put together an international internship program

with the help of Industry Canada and the Canada Shanghai Business Association. We successfully provided job opportunities to 15 interns for six months, where they would be trained domestically for three months and abroad for three. Out of the 15, 12 obtained permanent employment or started up their own company, so in our minds, that was a very successful program.

I look forward to bringing that experience to my role as a parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Those experiences, combined, made me understand the importance of economic development and the crucial impact that even a small effort can have on young people's lives when we lend a hand to support their career growth.

Those experiences, dating as far back as 24 years ago, helped in shaping my political perspective and are what drove me to run for public office, helping the good people of a great riding that I call home.

Trinity–Spadina is a unique riding. I'm so honoured to represent a riding that has so many of Toronto's best-known landmarks: the CN Tower; the Rogers Centre, formerly known as SkyDome; the Air Canada Centre, where our Raptors are—

Interjection.

Mr. Han Dong: I was going to use another word, but—

Mr. Mike Colle: They won last night.

Mr. Han Dong: Yes, that's right. They're currently having the best season in their history.

The CBC centre, the Toronto Eaton Centre, Roy Thomson Hall, Four Seasons, the Metro Toronto Convention Centre—where I believe Her Majesty's third party recently had their convention—and city hall, where a former member of this House will soon be installed as mayor.

It's home to Ontario Place, which once again will become one of the province's top tourism and leisure facilities. I, like many of my constituents, was very excited to hear that our government is pledging a multi-million dollar investment to revitalize Ontario Place, turning it into a modernized, all-season facility that will create wonderful memories for families from across the province. I'm excited to work with the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport on that initiative.

My riding is one of the most diverse in the province. Almost 37% of the residents of my riding speak a language other than English or French, according to census data. Whether it's Little Portugal on Dundas, Little Italy on College, Chinatown on Spadina, Koreatown on Bloor or Kensington Market, they are mosaics of so many different cultures and ethnicities.

If any of the out-of-town members wants to go and find a good restaurant, I have good tips. I'll tell you where the best dumplings are and where the best bulgogi is. We've got a great Mexican restaurant on Baldwin—

Mr. Chris Ballard: He's taking us for dinner.

Mr. Han Dong: Yes, that's right.

I'm fortunate that my riding also houses Canada's largest university, one of the top 20 universities in the

world. I'm speaking, of course, of the University of Toronto. This world-class institution is producing not only great scholars but also well-educated and well-prepared young individuals who are ready to enter the workforce to help Ontario compete in the new global economy. Indeed, one of my own staff, my OLIP intern, Justin, is a recent graduate from this institution, and he's doing a marvelous job.

I'm equally as proud of OCAD, the Ontario College of Art and Design, the province's premier art and design university. This place has produced some of Canada's best-known artists and designers.

I was recently at the Sharp Centre's 10th anniversary. The progress this institution has experienced over the years is tremendous. The students' work can be seen throughout the riding. If you ever get a chance, go to their annual graduation exhibition. By the way, next year will be the 100th centennial exhibition. Last year, it was a good mix of more than 550 graduating students working in 12 undergrad programs, presenting their final thesis work to an audience of more than 26,000 guests. You'll get a chance to see, and to purchase, some excellent art from these bright and hard-working young individuals in this province.

Throughout the election period, I had the opportunity of running into many seniors in my riding. What's unique about these seniors is their diversity, but what's common is a rich heritage and strong sense of community. I know that by 2016, for the first time, people over 65 will account for a larger share of the population than children aged zero to 14. That's why we need to look after them. As elected public servants, we must stand firm to ensure our elderly can age with dignity and security. I would like to commend the work that our minister responsible for seniors, the Honourable Mario Sergio, has done, but we also must continue to support him in delivering these promises that we made during the recent campaign.

I've listened to many challenges throughout the riding. One of them has been accessing health care for these seniors. Their challenges are very unique to my riding compared to other places in the province. For other places, accessibility may be an issue of the physical proximity of the doctors; for my riding, which has many unique, diverse communities, our challenge is language barriers. For the aging members of the Italian, Portuguese or Chinese communities, that is a serious problem, where a patient's ability to communicate with their health care provider is limited.

I'm doing my best to understand these issues in greater depth. Just this last weekend, I visited the Mon Sheong Foundation's Christmas community party, where I heard the seniors again echo our announcement previously. They agree with our direction for the Aging at Home Strategy.

Another issue during the campaign, I learned, is the affordability of staying in their community. The recent spike of real estate values in the downtown core has made it very challenging for seniors to stay in their community. I'm glad that our government has introduced a

few measures to help seniors, such as the Ontario Senior Homeowners' Property Tax Grant.

We've got to keep our seniors engaged and active. I'm very happy to learn about programs like the Age-Friendly Community Planning Grant and the Seniors Community Grant Program, announced last year by the Premier. I'm looking forward to more announcements like that, and I'll work hard in support of the minister in delivering on this mandate to our seniors.

City planning and the decisions that define how cities and our neighbourhoods are built—the city planning issue is a very popular issue at the door. We often hear that the OMB is hampering or running counter to some of their principles. I'm of the belief that these decisions must be made locally and should stay local. My predecessor has introduced a private member's bill to try to tackle some of those challenges. Although I don't agree with the content of the bill, I do agree that the OMB needs to be reformed.

In conclusion, I stand here, humbled, in this Legislature as a proud young member of our Liberal caucus under the true progressive Premier, Kathleen Wynne, who has received a majority mandate from the people of Ontario.

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I stand as a proud father, husband and Canadian who calls Ontario home. I am humbled by the trust given by the people of my community.

I've outlined some of the issues that are dearest to my heart, and those are the issues I heard at the door and I will be working very hard to combat.

Lastly, I want to thank the people who supported me. Without them, I would not be here, like the member from Halton just mentioned. I want to thank my mentor, a former member of this Legislature, Mr. Gerry Phillips. He taught me many things, many campaign tips, but I think most importantly he taught me how to be a decent person. I want to thank my campaign co-managers, Jason Alexander and Ted Lojko, but more importantly, I want to thank my family. Without them, I would not be here. I know my wife, Sophia Qiao, is watching this. I want to thank her for all of the understanding and all of the support. To my colleagues, thank you very much for the warm welcome. I've made a few friends; Percy is right there.

I want to wish everyone a merry Christmas and a very happy new year. Thank you.

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

Pursuant to the order of the House dated November 25, 2014, I'm now required to put the question.

Mr. Bradley has moved third reading of Bill 21, An Act to safeguard health care integrity by enacting the Voluntary Blood Donations Act, 2014 and by amending certain statutes with respect to the regulation of pharmacies and other matters concerning regulated health professions.

Is it the pleasure of this House that this motion carry?
All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Do not change the channel.

“Pursuant to standing order 38(h), I request that the vote on third reading of Bill 21 be deferred until deferred votes on Wednesday, December 10, 2014.” That is signed by the chief government whip, Mr. Delaney.

Third reading vote deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Pursuant to standing order 38, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

CHILDREN’S SERVICES

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The member for Hamilton Mountain has given notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given on December 4 by the Minister of Children and Youth Services. The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter, and the minister or parliamentary assistant may reply for up to five minutes. I’ll recognize the member from Hamilton Mountain.

Miss Monique Taylor: Thank you, Speaker. I’m pleased to have the opportunity to address once again the issue of a child having to be made a crown ward to receive the services he needs. Honestly, I should not have to go through this process to ensure that I have the minister’s attention for this very important matter, because this is neither unique nor a new situation.

In May 2005, the Ombudsman published his report *Between a Rock and a Hard Place*. The report presented his findings from an investigation into parents being forced to place their children with severe disabilities into the custody of the children’s aid society to obtain necessary care. This report went into great detail on seven different cases, but let me just quote from the very first paragraph of the report:

“Jennifer Bray’s story is not unique. Her 11-year-old son, Wesley, is under the care of a children’s aid society and her custodial rights have been legally suspended. If she wants to visit Wesley, she needs to report to the children’s aid society. She has had to turn over her son’s health card. Technically, she has lost the right to make legal decisions on Wesley’s behalf. Yet Jennifer Bray is not a neglectful or incapable parent. She is a loving and able mother. Fate gave her a child who, because of his severe developmental delay, is unmanageable. In return, we in Ontario have given her something almost as cruel. We have given her the choice of either abandoning him, or going without the care he requires. We are making her give up her rights as a parent even though she is not standing in the way of him getting the support he needs.

We are doing this for no good reason other than bureaucracy, technicality and entrenched position.”

Of course, in addition to telling a series of tragic stories, the Ombudsman made some recommendations in his report. Among them, he recommended that the Ministry of Children and Youth Services should immediately ensure that in situations such as this parental rights are restored and that funding is provided for residential treatment outside of the child welfare system. That was in 2005.

In 2013 and into the start of this year, I, along with other members of the Select Committee on Developmental Services, heard testimony from parents of children with severe developmental disabilities. Here is part of what was reported in the committee’s interim report.

“One mother struggling to look after both her terminally ill husband and her severely disabled daughter told the committee that she had ‘begged’ for help. Told that there was no funding available, she made the ‘horrendous’ decision to relinquish custody by refusing to bring her daughter home from temporary respite care.” In her own words: “‘It was heartbreaking, painful, and unthinkable, but it was all we could do to cope with the situation. What we did get out, and the word ‘abandonment’ was used. It was devastating. It is my belief that our family was abandoned, and it forced us to surrender care.’”

This story became national news, and I remember meeting with that mother in October 2012 and listening as she shared with the Queen’s Park media her awful situation, a situation that no mother should have to face. Funding was finally found—but I can’t imagine what that mother endured.

Although it appears that no government ministry keeps track of cases of abandonment, the Peel Crisis Capacity Network indicated to the committee that between January 2011 and August 2013, 44 individuals were abandoned in the Peel and Halton regions.

Last week, Speaker, with this history in mind, I raised the situation being faced by Dr. Nicole Desmarais and her son Niko Leduc, of the Greater Sudbury area. Yet again, here was a mother of a child with a severe developmental disability, who was faced with the unthinkable decision to give up her parental rights so that her son could receive the treatment that he so desperately needs.

At that time, little Niko was in CPRI in London, but he was scheduled to come home the next day, which was last Friday, and he would be coming home with absolutely no supports. Niko’s disability is so severe that it’s impossible for the family to care for him at home, and the treatment he needs is certainly not available anywhere in the Sudbury area. While she wanted with all of her heart to pick up her son on Friday, Nicole Desmarais was left with no choice but to leave him there so he could get the treatment—she had to abandon him.

In addition to his treatment, this child needs the loving support of his mother—and I see I’m out of time, Speaker. But I just really need to ask the minister, again,

as I did last Thursday, do you believe that taking a child away from their mother is an acceptable way to deal with a situation like this?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I now refer to the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Youth and Children Services, the member from Durham.

Mr. Granville Anderson: I would like to thank my colleague from Hamilton Mountain for her remarks.

Our goal is that care meets each child's unique needs whenever and wherever that need may be. In this case, ministry staff has, since the beginning, been working to develop a solution that best suits the needs of all involved.

While it would still be inappropriate to comment on the specifics of this case, it is important to note that, since 2013, we have invested close to \$900 million in mental health services. Through increased investments in child and youth mental health initiatives, we are transforming the system so children have the best access to the right services that meet their needs.

Through our comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy, 50,000 additional children and youth are receiving mental health support. We have hired more than 770 mental health workers for our schools and our communities. We have also begun the implementation of the new Ontario Special Needs Strategy. The new strategy incorporates the feedback we have received from families and clinical experts.

We have heard from families that navigating the service system can be a stressful and tiring process. That's why we will be hiring service coordinators to make planning for children's care easier on families.

We have heard from experts that early intervention is of paramount importance. That's why, as part of this strategy, we will introduce new preschool developmental screening that will connect children and families to the services they need sooner.

We also heard that access to rehabilitation services is inconsistent as children move through the system. That's why we are integrating the delivery of these services by making access seamless from birth through the school years.

Transforming how services are delivered is important, but increasing investments is important as well, and we continue to increase our investments in Sudbury. This year, nine agencies received over \$11 million to provide children's mental health services in the region. This

includes the Child and Family Centre, as well as the Children's Community Network.

We have also provided close to \$3 million for developmental services and children with complex special needs. We continue to increase supports in Sudbury for children, youth and their families, and yet the NDP continues to vote against them.

Across the province, we increased funding by \$5 million for children's treatment centres. This meant that the CTC at Sudbury Regional Hospital could serve more children, yet the NDP opposed it.

The budget also expanded our Student Nutrition Program so that organizations such as the Sudbury Better Beginnings Better Futures association could serve more children. The NDP voted against that as well.

Our government continues to support Sudbury, yet the NDP are nowhere to be found. They like to pretend that they stand up for children and families; they like to pretend that they stand up for the north, yet at every opportunity they have had to show their support they have been missing in action. Our government continues to invest in our children and families, and we continue to invest in Sudbury.

The Ministry of Children and Youth Services is a great example of how our government continues to make these investments. Child and Community Resources received more than \$5 million this year to provide autism services. The School Support Program received over \$1.3 million.

Since 2003, we have increased funding to the Sudbury and Manitoulin children's aid society by 44%. We provide funding to the Sudbury YMCA for the Youth in Transition Worker Program to support youth leaving the care of children's aid societies. We also provide the YMCA with funding for the Youth Opportunities Strategy. This has helped 130 young people find employment.

Our government continues to make investments so that children and youth have every opportunity to reach their full potential.

Miss Monique Taylor: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I thank the member. There are no points of order. Both sides were given five minutes.

As a result, there being no further debate, I deem the motion to adjourn to be carried. This House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 1814.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, Anne Stokes

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Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Anderson, Granville (LIB)	Durham	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Baker, Yvan (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Ballard, Chris (LIB)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade / Ministre des Affaires civiques, de l'Immigration et du Commerce international
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Long-Term Care and Wellness) / Ministre associée de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée (Soins de longue durée et Promotion du mieux-être) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure / Ministre du Développement économique, de l'Emploi et de l'Infrastructure
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Associate Minister of Finance (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan) / Ministre associée des Finances (Régime de retraite de la province de l'Ontario)
Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGarry, Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	
McMahon, Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Milczyn, Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change / Ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique
Naidoo-Harris, Indira (LIB)	Halton	
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Orazietti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors Affairs Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Vacant	Sudbury	

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Présidente: Cindy Forster
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Monique Taylor
Bas Balkissoon, Chris Ballard
Grant Crack, Han Dong
Cindy Forster, Michael Harris
Randy Hillier, Sophie Kiwala
Monique Taylor
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Présidente: Soo Wong
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Peter Z. Milczyn
Laura Albanese, Yvan Baker
Victor Fedeli, Catherine Fife
Ann Hoggarth, Monte McNaughton
Peter Z. Milczyn, Daiene Vernile
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: Grant Crack
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Joe Dickson
Mike Colle, Grant Crack
Joe Dickson, Lisa Gretzky
Ann Hoggarth, Sophie Kiwala
Eleanor McMahan, Lisa M. Thompson
Jeff Yurek
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: John Fraser
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Cristina Martins
Vic Dhillon, John Fraser
Wayne Gates, Marie-France Lalonde
Harinder Malhi, Cristina Martins
Jim McDonnell, Randy Pettapiece
Lou Rinaldi
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
la justice**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Bob Delaney
Jack MacLaren, Michael Mantha
Cristina Martins, Indira Naidoo-Harris
Arthur Potts, Shafiq Qadri
Todd Smith
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tamara Pomanski

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
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Chair / Président: Toby Barrett
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Garfield Dunlop
Granville Anderson, Bas Balkissoon
Chris Ballard, Toby Barrett
Garfield Dunlop, Eleanor McMahon
Laurie Scott, Jagmeet Singh
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
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Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Han Dong, John Fraser
Ernie Hardeman, Percy Hatfield
Lisa MacLeod, Harinder Malhi
Julia Munro, Arthur Potts
Lou Rinaldi
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
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Chair / Présidente: Indira Naidoo-Harris
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Kathryn McGarry
Robert Bailey, Lorenzo Berardinetti
Jennifer K. French, Monte Kwinter
Amrit Mangat, Kathryn McGarry
Indira Naidoo-Harris, Daiene Vernile
Bill Walker
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

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

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: France Gélinas
Granville Anderson, Vic Dhillon
Christine Elliott, France Gélinas
Marie-France Lalonde, Amrit Mangat
Gila Martow, Kathryn McGarry
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

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