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Tuesday 3 March 2015

Mardi 3 mars 2015

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Greffière
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 3 March 2015

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 3 mars 2015

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MAKING HEALTHIER CHOICES
ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 POUR DES CHOIX
PLUS SAINS

Resuming the debate adjourned on December 3, 2014, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

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

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: It is my pleasure to add actually a full hour of debate to Bill 45. Although Bill 45 was introduced on November 24, to be exact, this is the first occasion I have to do my lead. Just so you know, everybody relax; I will be taking the full 60 minutes.

You see, this bill contains previous bills of mine that I have been working on for a very, very long time. To be more precise, Bill 45 includes three schedules.

The first one is an act about healthy menu choices. Basically what this is all about is that it has to do with menu labelling. You will remember, Speaker—and I will go through the different iterations of that bill through time—that this is an issue that I have been pushing since 2009 that has now been picked up by this government and included in Bill 45.

The second schedule deals with amendments to the smoke-free act to ban flavoured tobacco. Here again, I have been working on trying to ban flavoured tobacco in Ontario since 2008. I'm quite happy to see that it's now receiving second reading under the government's Bill 45.

Schedule three talks about what is known as e-cigarettes, vaporizers or vapours, whichever one you want to call them, but basically to bring regulation to e-cigarettes.

I will be going through this bill in the order that the bill is written. Not that I care about menu labelling more than banning flavoured tobacco; all of those health pro-

motion issues are important to me. This is why I have been working on them for such a long time.

Ce matin, ça me fait plaisir de parler au sujet du projet de loi 45. Le projet de loi 45 contient vraiment trois parties.

La première partie, c'est de mettre les calories sur le menu. Comme ça, lorsque les gens iront, disons, à McDonald's, vous pourrez voir, « Big Mac : 3,99 \$ et 455 calories. »

La deuxième partie du projet de loi : on veut s'assurer qu'il n'y aura plus de tabac aromatisé en Ontario. C'est quelque chose sur quoi je travaille depuis très longtemps, et je vais vous raconter un peu de l'histoire de comment on en est venu à ça.

La troisième partie s'adresse aux cigarettes électroniques. En ce moment, il n'y a aucune loi ou règlement qui s'applique aux cigarettes électroniques, et je crois que, parce qu'elles gagnent en popularité, c'est le temps que le gouvernement s'en mêle et qu'on commence à mettre certains règlements. Je commence.

So let's start with menu labelling. It's always nice to see where this comes from. The statistics to encourage menu labelling are rather stark. Basically, things have changed. People used to cook at home. At home, we go to the grocery store. At the grocery store, when we buy food, pretty well every packaged food comes with nutritional information.

Ontarians are smart. They look at those labels and they make healthy choices. A lot of brands have changed their recipes. A lot of brands now advertise things like zero cholesterol or zero calories, and they will tell you right on the front of the package. But it doesn't matter what's on the front of the package, because on the back of every single prepackaged item that you buy in the grocery store, you get menu information—you get a lot of information. Given that more and more people eat in restaurants—we say that Ontarians right now consume one fifth of their food in restaurants—we think that the time has come to do the shift from the information you get on the back of packaged food, to bring it to the front of the menu.

When I first introduced this bill—it has been quite a while, Speaker; I will go through the history of it a little bit. I will always remember when I first introduced this bill, because I was sitting in this chamber, in that seat right there. The galleries were full. It was a Thursday afternoon. It tends to be quiet in here on a Thursday afternoon, but not that Thursday afternoon. That Thursday afternoon, I was sitting in this seat, and the gallery on the east side was packed with people from the restaurant associations who had come to lobby against the bill.

At the time I had introduced the bill for the first time, it was Bill 156. It was called the Healthy Decisions for

Healthy Eating Act. I introduced it on March 10, 2009, and that bill at the time required food premises with total gross annual revenue greater than \$5 million to disclose nutritional information for the food and drinks served, and to limit the amount of trans fats in restaurant food and drinks.

The bill was debated for second reading. Once it made it to second reading, this is when a rare thing happened, actually. After we had debated it, I could see that some people were very much in support of it and some people were very much against it. A free vote was held where—except for my party, where everybody voted in favour—from the Liberal and the Conservative sides, some people voted for and some people voted against. To my—

Interjection: Surprise?

M^{me} France Gélinas: To my surprise, it passed. It passed by the huge margin of three votes, but this is a democracy, and it passed. It passed second reading. It was the first time it had been introduced in this House; it was debated; there were pros and cons and it passed by three votes.

The people in the gallery—if looks could kill, I would be dead at this point, never to tell this story, because they were frankly not happy. They had all come with their little uniforms on, saying name brands of big chain restaurants on their jackets or t-shirts. We knew who they were, and we knew why they were here: They were here to oppose the bill. So I did what every good politician would do: After the bill had passed second reading, I met with the industry. I sat down with all of them: the beverage association, the restaurant association. I met with all of them who wanted to come and talk to me and tried to listen and tried to see what kind of compromise we could make. How could we move this forward?

0910

They were pushing very hard for what they called at the time nutrition information packaging. It became the Informed Dining program in 2011, but back then—because we're still in 2009, 2010—it was called the nutrition information program. That was a voluntary program where the restaurant industry—most of them had agreed that they would participate in this and that a bill forcing them to do things was not necessary because they were going to do this out of the industry working together. They were going to put that forward, and they showed it to me and how it was supposed to work and all of this, and it looked pretty convincing, like it would work. It had some good points to it.

But this is now 2015, Speaker. When was the last time that you saw right on the menu board the number of calories? It did not happen. Instead, what we got was—the restaurants did do their homework. They did calculate all of the nutritional information that is in their food. They standardized their portions. If you are a zealous person like myself, before you go to the restaurant you can go on their website, pre-order what you're going to feel like eating that night once you get there and check out everything that's going to be on that; or, I suppose, you could always flip it out in between your appetizer

and main course and check it out on your cellphone—not really that convenient.

Some have them on a—if you have a tray, sometimes it's at the bottom of the tray or you can flip your little placemat upside down and you'll get that information. Sometimes it's on the way to the bathroom. You will have those great big posters on the way to the bathroom giving you all of the nutritional information of the food that they offer. Sometimes it's on a free brochure.

Because I've been working on that bill for so much time, I now have a habit that whenever I go into a place where I know they should post the nutritional information, I ask for this brochure. I can tell you that it doesn't matter if I'm in Sudbury, if I'm in Toronto or if I'm anywhere in between, when you ask for this brochure, the charming little person at the cash looks at you like you're from Mars, then realizes that, "Oh, well, this lady is not going to go away, so I might as well start to look for the brochure." The entire underneath of the restaurant gets flipped upside down, and sometimes out of a dusty box comes this little brochure that they dust off and give to me, and then you can calculate your information.

This is not working, Speaker. You're getting what I'm getting at? This is not working, which is why I re-introduced the Healthy Decisions for Healthy Eating Act on May 8, 2012. The first time I introduced it, it passed second reading. After second reading, we had a majority Liberal government. They knew exactly what they were going to do with this: They were going to can it. They never called it to committee. Committee had lots of time to deal with it. The committee went on holiday, and the bill never moved forward.

But I don't give up easy, Speaker. I reintroduced it in May 8, 2012; same name but I had made some concessions. I had spoken with the industry and, by then, I had taken out the regulation that had to do with trans fats. I realized that it was something that was being worked on at the federal level. There were possibilities.

The second time, it basically looked like the first. It would require chain restaurants to display the number of calories in each item, make nutritional brochures available—remember, the dusting off—and indicate clearly which items have high and very high sodium.

By 2012, we're not talking about trans fats that much anymore because the industry convinced me that that was just too hard a step to take, but sodium was something that we could work on. So it was put in. In May 2012, I introduced it. The industry reacted but not so negatively, but I can tell you that it received a lot of support. Let me go through some of the people that supported it in a minute, as soon as I find my notes. The problem with having the same bill come over and over and over is that you end up with a lot of notes. I'm in this position where I have a lot of notes.

Okay, so the people that supported it continue to grow, and the shift started towards posting the calories and the sodium. I'm sure my list of people will pop out of my—oh, here it is. So, at this point, we have the Alberta Public Health Association that supported it, the Alberta Policy Coalition for Chronic Disease Prevention, the Alliance

for the Prevention of Chronic Disease, the Association of Ontario Health Centres, the medical director of the Bariatric Medical Institute, the Canadian Association for Enterostomal Therapy, the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists, the Canadian Association of Perinatal and Women's Health Nurses, the public health associations—Canadian and Ontario—the Canadian Stroke Network, the Canadian Women's Health Network and the Canadian Council of Cardiovascular Nurses.

It goes on: The Canadian Diabetes Association and the Canadian Gerontological Nursing Association. We have Eldon Smith, who is a professor emeritus and the former chair of the Canadian Heart Health Strategy. We have the Canadian Orthopaedic Nurses Association, the Centre for Science in the Public Interest, Cancer Care Ontario, CancerCare Manitoba, the Childhood Obesity Foundation, la Coalition québécoise sur la problématique du poids, the College of Family Physicians of Canada, the DisAbled Women's Network and the Dietitians of Canada. We also have the chair in hypertension prevention and control, the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, the BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition and the Fitness Industry Council of Canada.

We have Hypertension Canada. We have a number of people from nutrition consulting. We have the Licensed Practical Nurses Association of BC, the Ontario Home Economics Association and the Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada; although they will come back when we talk about flavoured tobacco, they also support nutritional labelling. We have the Prevent Cancer Now Board. We have the Public Health Physicians of Canada. We have the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario. We have the Sport Matters Group, a group from Ottawa. We have the University of Ottawa Heart Institute, and the list goes on and on.

I'm sure by now I'm making Hansard a little bit nervous, but not to worry; they're all written down, and I will share the list with them.

So the story goes: The first time, a little bit of support and a huge pushback. The second time, I had made some concessions with the industry, and they were still not thrilled—I won't lie—but they were starting to come to the realization that this is a done deal and they could work with us or face a hard time. More and more people were coming into the tent. More and more people had had a chance to look at the bill and look at other jurisdictions that have passed similar laws and what had happened.

One of the first ones that did that was New York state in 2008. Since 2008, if you go to McDonald's, Subway or Tim Hortons—because they have Tim Hortons even down there—you will see the same menu offerings that we have up here. The price sometimes is a little bit different, but the number of calories is exactly the same as what we can find, except that in the States they have it on the menu board. They have it directly on the menu. The exact same menu in Canada does not have that information.

0920

Just so that you know, most of those big chains change those menus boards about every four months. Through

the research we found a brand that only changed their menu board about every six months. But, basically, they have the information. They do this in other jurisdictions—the exact same menu, the exact same thing—all we're asking is for them to bring that information to Ontario.

So we're now in May 2008, I reintroduced the Healthy Decisions for Healthy Eating Act—menu labelling, number of calories, but we're also starting to talk about sodium, and I will explain that to you a little bit later. I reintroduced the bill also in 2012, but that time on October 2. What I had done is—in a few minutes, I will talk to you about the work I've done on flavoured tobacco—but, basically, on October 2, I decided, “Well, everybody in this House has talked about menu labelling, they've talked about flavoured tobacco enough,” and at the time, there were also regulations for tanning beds. So what I did was I put them all into one bill. I called the bill Healthy Decisions Made Easy, and it included three parts that had to do with health promotion: the regulation of tanning beds, menu labelling and flavoured tobacco.

Unfortunately, two days before I was to bring this to second reading—I had a horde of people ready to support the bill from all parts of the province, people coming down from up north and all of this—Mr. McGuinty prorogued. I never got to debate it. I felt like this was directed at me. He had prorogued because he didn't want my fabulous bill to go through. I'm told there were other reasons why he prorogued, maybe like a billion-dollar gas plant scandal, but to me, it was personal. It was because he didn't want my bill to go through.

Interjection: The bill went up in smoke.

M^{me} France Gélinas: My bill went up in smoke. That was it. It was gone. But I don't give up easy, Speaker. I don't give up easy.

Come April 29, 2013, I reintroduced the Healthy Decisions for Healthy Eating Act. At this point, the bill required chain restaurants to display the number of calories on each item, make nutritional brochures available and indicate clearly which items have high and very high sodium. At the time, it was the idea that if any items on the menu had more than 1,500 milligrams of sodium, they would get a double check mark, and if they had more than 750 milligrams of sodium, they would get a single check mark to indicate that it was high or very high in sodium. That was what I intended to do at the time.

It's rather interesting because if you look at what Health Canada currently defines as “high sodium,” they put it at 360 milligrams of sodium. The problem with this is—and this is very, very sad—that if I was to take Health Canada's definition of high sodium, it would become meaningless because every single item at, let's say, McDonald's, would be checkmarked. Here again—not to pick on McDonald's, but you are it this morning—if we go to 1,500 milligrams of sodium, only four items on the McDonald's menu would make it, and if we go to 750 milligrams of sodium, then we're close to 35 out of 300 offerings at McDonald's.

I'm telling you all of these boring numbers, because there is a lot of salt in the food that we consume in res-

taurants, so finding the right thing to do—by that time, in April 2013, I had gone with the high and very high sodium, putting those thresholds quite high—1,500 is very close to the daily limit, and you would have this in one item. Think about it: If you go to any fast food—I won't pick on McDonald's—and if a large amount of their food offerings have over your daily dosage, if you happen to order three or four food items, such as a burger and fries and something else—an apple pie—you will be eating a ton of salt. So this is what I did on April 29, 2013, and we prorogued yet again, so I'm not done.

I reintroduced it on November 25, 2014, and that time, I really looked at putting the number of calories next to the menu item but also putting on the number of milligrams of sodium. If you go on the Internet, you will be able to pull menus from jurisdictions in the States. The big chains have started to do this. It is feasible to put that on the menu without having a cluttered menu, and people do use this information.

The way we have it in Canada right now, one person out of 1,000—those are geeks like me, Speaker—uses the information the way we have it: on the website, on the menu board, on the poster as they go to the bathroom etc. The other 999 customers don't use that information, because it is not user-friendly.

If you put it right there on the menu board, one person out of two will use it to make an informed choice. On average, they will consume about 19% less calories and, as a bit of an added bonus for the restaurant industry, they tend to switch their choices. They still go just as much as they used to before. They just make different selections on the menu, and they tend to spend a little bit more. They spend a little bit more, make healthy choices and consume 19% less calories.

I think we're starting to head toward a win-win, where the restaurant industry has come to the realization that this information is valuable, that this information will help Ontarians make healthier choices, that it is feasible to put that information on the menu and menu board, and that it should be there.

Of course, Speaker, you will know that Bill 45, the way it is written now, talks about calorie labelling, but it does not include sodium. It does not include the amount of salt. I say that we have been working at this for long enough. People have had enough time to talk about it. It has been talked about in the press many, many times, to the point that, in the last survey that was done—it was a Canada-wide survey, not just here in Ontario—92% of Canadians, and that includes Ontarians, want to see that information. They want to see the number of calories on the menu, and they want to see the amount of sodium.

A 92% consensus on anything is quite extraordinary. We all know that in this day and age, some people would be offered paradise and would vote against it. That we have 92% of people in Canada, including Ontario, who want this to happen, I think, basically behooves us to do the right thing: to make sure, when we have an opportunity to go through clause-by-clause with Bill 45, when we have an opportunity to make changes to this bill, that not

only do we support what's in there for calorie labelling, but that we make sure we include sodium. Whether it is with a check mark for “high” or “very high”—I could live with this, but I think it would be way more preferable to simply put the amount of sodium.

Whether you use that information or not is up to you. But I can tell you, even if you never look at it and you just go and order the same thing you've always ordered because your kids like it and it's easy, it would still help you.

0930

What happens is that the people that do use that information—it basically motivates the industry to make recipe changes. If you go to a Subway restaurant and order the tuna melt, in Canada, the tuna melt clocks in at 1,825 calories. A sandwich usually is about 350 or 450 calories; you can do the math. This is a lot of calories for the tuna melt. They have changed their recipe in the States so that their preparation has less calories and less salt. Even if you never read it, even if you continue to eat the same thing you've always eaten, there's a good chance that restaurants will change their preparation. That will help all of us because they will offer the same items in a preparation that has less sodium as well as less calories in it.

Now I see that half of the time has gone by. An hour seems really long when you think about it, but when you're actually living it, it goes by quite fast. I have lots of menu items that I wanted to share with you to do a little kind of quiz, “Do you think that this has more calories than this other?” We may do the quiz at the end because I don't want to run out of time.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Is there a test at the end?

M^{me} France Gélinas: And, yes, there will be a test at the end to see if you choose wisely.

For now, what I will do is, I will talk to you about the second part of the bill, which has to do with banning flavoured tobacco. Let me change all of the notes that I have in front of me so that I can do that.

Flavoured tobacco: The story starts in 2008. In 2008, my very first private member's bill was to ban flavoured cigarillos. Those things were basically all over my riding. Every couple of weeks that would go by, the number of flavours of those cigarillos would continue to grow, and the number of young people smoking them would continue to grow.

The type of flavour that was being put forward, the packaging, the marketing, the colouring—all of this was squarely targeted at youth. The tobacco industry was smart enough to realize that cigarettes now come with quite a lot of baggage. They have those ugly pictures on the front, and they're associated with sickness and all of this. But the single-sale flavoured cigarillos didn't have any of this. They had no warning on them. They were a buck apiece. If a parent saw them in the backpack of their children, they would have no idea; they looked like lip gloss or a marker. They squarely looked like they fit into a kid's backpack, like that was where they belonged. And that was wrong.

My very first private member's bill was a co-sponsored bill. It was one of the first times that we were allowed to co-sponsor, and I co-sponsored it with the Speaker, Mr. Levac. To my delight, it passed. Not only did it pass second reading, but it passed third reading, it received royal assent, and it became law. Can you imagine, Speaker? I had only been elected to this Legislature for about a year; I got elected in 2007. That was my first private member's bill, which I debated for second reading in December 2008, and by the time I went home for Christmas in 2008, I was the proud owner of a new bill. I was beaming. I had done—my term was done.

I had come from 25 years in health care, in health promotion, and here I was able to make changes, and flavoured cigarillos were not going to be available anymore. The day was grand, and it lasted about a day. Because you see, Speaker, the bill gave the industry quite a few months to, in theory, get rid of their inventory. We didn't want to hurt the little mom-and-pop shop that had bought those things and, all of a sudden, were going to be out the money. So the royal assent gave a number of months for the industry before they had to cease making this product available.

Well, the industry was not going to sit idle during those months that we had given them to deal with their inventory. Before the ink was really dry on the last production of this bill, they had found a loophole. You see, Speaker, when we defined a flavoured cigarillo, we defined it by the number of grams. It's really a cigarette. It looks identical to a cigarette. I kept some of them. If you're interested, come and see me. They're in my fridge downstairs. They looked identical to a cigarette, except that they were flavoured and they smelled extremely good. I handled those products for a long time. It's really hard to handle those things and not smoke one up, let me tell you, but that's for another story.

When the industry saw that in the bill, all they did is put a milligram more tobacco in their products than what was in before. We had defined a cigarillo by the number of grams because we did not want to catch cigars, which were also flavoured, but they were not a way for kids to pick up cigarette smoking. I suppose some kids will go through this, but so far, at that time in 2008, cigars had never been targeted at youth. It was really the cigarillos, the little cigarettes sold individually with no warnings on them. They were targeting youth. They were targeting the next generation of smokers, and we wanted to get rid of them.

Well, by the time the bill came into effect, it was absolutely useless. They had added a milligram more tobacco into their products. They continued with the same packaging, the same price, the same marketing strategy and the same number of flavours, and I will tell you that the number of flavours increased dramatically.

They continue to hook, on average, 90,000 more young people who would start smoking using flavoured tobacco but then get addicted to the nicotine, and after a while they don't want to suck on something that tastes like a peach, a strawberry, a martini or anything like that. They

want the nicotine fix. They switch to cigarettes and they become the next generation of smokers, and we all know that 50% of them will die from it. Tobacco is the only product that, if used as directed, will kill 50% of its users. I'll let you do the math, Speaker. From 2008 to 2015, times 90,000 more young smokers: That's a lot of suffering in our future that could have all been avoided.

So, not to be undone, I said, "Let's learn from our mistakes. Let's make sure that the next time we ban flavoured tobacco there will be no loopholes; there will be no definitions. It will be very plain, very blunt and very simple: Ban flavoured tobacco. Full stop."

On April 4, 2011, I introduced the Smoke-Free Ontario Amendment Act, banning flavoured tobacco. The bill was to prohibit the sale and distribution of new tobacco products, smokeless tobacco and flavoured tobacco. So not only were we talking about flavoured tobacco, but in this it's smokeless—think about chews and every other tobacco product—and the banning of new tobacco products, because we know that the tobacco industry's ingenuity knows no boundaries. They are very creative and very ingenious to make sure that they continue to sell their products, because once they have a customer, the nicotine does the rest. The addiction does the rest. They know that they have a customer for life, until 50% of them die or go through really painful withdrawal to be able to quit this habit.

That was April 4, 2011. This bill also died on the order paper.

Not to be undone, I reintroduced it on April 17, 2012, under Bill 66, the Smoke-Free Ontario Amendment Act, which prohibited flavoured tobacco, new tobacco products and smokeless tobacco. The bill was very well received. The number of people who were joining the chorus was bigger and bigger.

0940

I always remember that Freeze the Industry / Gèle l'industrie had done pens at the time, and the pens read: "Freeze the Industry is advocating for a tobacco moratorium—a ban on all new tobacco products not yet introduced in Canada and on alterations to all current products. We need a moratorium because the tobacco industry continues to develop new, innovative products that evade and exploit new tobacco legislation designed to protect the health of young Canadians; recruit and retain youth and young adults, since 81% of current and former smokers begin smoking before the age of 18; appear to be less harmful than existing products when in reality they continue to contain the same dangerous ingredients."

Freeze the Industry is a group of young people like there are very few of them around. They are dedicated. They are informed. They are eloquent. They are taking on the tobacco industry.

To me, if there is ever going to be a group that will succeed in taking on the tobacco industry, it will be the youth of our province. I can say thank you, certainly, to the cancer society for their young advocates as well as to Freeze the Industry.

This is so good, Speaker, that I will tell you in French.

Depuis la fin des années 2008, 2009, et 2010, Gèle l'industrie a été très actif pour essayer de faire changer les choses. Ils ont fait ce petit stylo, et je vais vous dire ce qu'il dit : « Gèle l'industrie milite pour la création d'un moratoire sur le tabac—une interdiction portant sur tous les nouveaux produits du tabac qui n'ont pas encore été introduits au Canada et sur les modifications apportées à tous les produits actuels.

« Un moratoire est nécessaire car l'industrie du tabac continue de créer de nouveaux produits innovateurs qui :

« Échappent aux nouvelles lois sur le tabac ou en exploitent les failles, alors que ces lois visent à protéger la santé des jeunes Canadiens;

« Permettent d'attirer et de conserver des clients parmi les adolescents et les jeunes adultes, car 81% des fumeurs commencent la cigarette avant l'âge de 18 ans;

« Semblent moins dommageables pour la santé que les produits existants, alors qu'en fait ils contiennent les mêmes ingrédients nocifs. »

Ils ont un site Web qui s'appelle geleindustrie.com.

That's what they did back then. They will come back again in my story because, just like me, those young people don't give up easy.

In April 2012, I reintroduced the Smoke-Free Ontario Amendment Act trying to ban flavoured tobacco, trying to make sure that no new tobacco products are introduced, as well as smokeless tobacco.

On October 2, 2012, I introduced Bill 126, Healthy Decisions Made Easy, which I talked about today. You will remember, Speaker, that it talked about menu labelling, about banning flavoured tobacco as well as about tanning beds—which will become law, so we don't have to worry about that anymore. This bill was reintroduced a number of times, including in the fall of 2014.

In the fall of 2014, young people from the cancer society came here to Queen's Park. It was really, really well done. A lot of them were dressed up as flavoured tobacco products. They were dressed up as a grape to show grape-flavoured tobacco or as a cherry because there is cherry tobacco etc. They had a tug-of-war right here on the front steps of Queen's Park. Quite a few of the MPPs came, and then we held a press conference. Again, it was giving a voice to young people who work with the cancer society and who see the damage that flavoured tobacco is doing to their peers and who see the number of young people who experiment with those tobacco products that are still available and still sold in single cigarillos, still at \$1. Although years have passed by, the price has not changed. Because they experimented, they became hooked on to cigarettes and are now tobacco smokers.

Today, for the launch of my lead, we had Freeze the Industry. Remember the people who gave the nifty pen with a message to all of us? Well, they did it again. Not only did they come and hold a rally in front of Queen's Park; every MPP will have on their desk this little envelope that says, "Thanks, Ontario." I won't use it as a prop—sorry, Speaker.

I know that most of you have already opened up your envelope, so I will share with you what it says. Basically, it says, "Thanks, Ontario." It's a pretty good message, if

you ask me. It goes on to say, "There are 2.75 million reasons you are making the right decision by passing Bill 45." It goes on to say, "FTI"—Freeze the Industry—"is a youth led campaign that raises awareness about how the tobacco industry makes their products appealing to young people. The tobacco industry creates products that are addictive. They target youth by adding flavours and they develop new innovative products which still cause illness and death. FTI wants a moratorium on tobacco products. The first step is a full ban on all flavoured tobacco products including menthol." I will come back to this in a minute. "To date Freeze the Industry has collected over 10,000 signatures in support of a complete flavour ban. You have the voice of youth in Ontario behind you!" And they're talking to us.

They go on with a few statistics:

—46% of young tobacco product users use flavoured products. Speaker, that's really close to one in two;

—73% of youth who use chew tobacco use flavoured products. Those are what in the bill is called smokeless tobacco; on the street, we call them chew;

—28% of young tobacco product users use menthol products. An estimated 57,300 Ontario youth used flavoured tobacco products in 2013 alone. You know what that means, Speaker? We know what that means. There are 2.75 million young people living in Ontario who will be protected by ensuring a full ban on flavoured tobacco is passed with Bill 45.

As an added little bonus, they gave us some mints. The irony is not lost on me. They gave us some mints—I'm not allowed to use that, eh? Sorry. They gave us some mints because of the link to menthol. You see, although the bill does include a ban on flavour, they give the tobacco industry years to ban menthol. I rode this bicycle before. I did give a couple of months to the tobacco industry to ban flavoured tobacco, and you all remember what happened. Remember their ingenuity? Remember their creativity? Remember what happened? Well, what happened is that they beat us to the punch. What happened is that the bill became null and void. Although it is on the books in Ontario, you can find flavoured tobacco everywhere. You can find flavoured cigarillos anywhere you go.

The youth that came this morning to demonstrate in front of Queen's Park, the youth that organized themselves so that we have this nice thank you on all of our desks, don't want this big lead time given to the tobacco industry. We will lose. They have way more resources than we have. They have, I would say, desperation on their side, because remember that almost one in four youth—more than one in four; some 28% of young tobacco products users—this is 28% of youth who smoke—smoke menthol. So to say that, "Oh, no, menthol is old people," people like me and my generation smoke menthol—sure, there are people my age who smoke menthol. But it is also a flavour that is being used more and more by our young people.

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The people who came to Queen's Park today fully understand that giving the industry years to comply with

the law basically means don't bother passing the law, because it's never going to see the light of day. It's going to go down the exact same path that we went down in 2008, when Ontario banned flavoured cigarillos. It will be a bill that does not reach its target.

I could go on and on, but I see that the time is flying by. Before I go on to e-cigarettes: Monsieur le Président, la partie du projet de loi 45 qui parle d'abolir le tabac aromatisé, c'est très bien. Ça fait des années que j'essaie de faire passer un projet de loi, et je suis bien heureuse que le gouvernement l'ait inclus dans son projet de loi 45 parce que ça va nous permettre d'arriver à la ligne d'arrivée, ou la ligne de fin, beaucoup plus vite.

Le gouvernement est le seul qui décide le projet de loi dont on parle, et si on n'en parle pas, le projet de loi meurt au feuillet. Donc, avec un projet de loi du gouvernement, le projet de loi va être capable d'avancer plus vite, et ça, c'est quelque chose de bien. Dans le projet de loi 45, il y a une partie qui dit qu'il n'y aura plus de tabac aromatisé en Ontario, et ça, c'est parfait. C'est quelque chose que les néo-démocrates et moi-même, on essaie de faire avancer ici depuis huit ans.

Par contre, lorsqu'on parle d'une saveur en particulier, lorsqu'on parle des cigarettes au menthol, là, ils veulent donner à l'industrie plusieurs années avant d'être contrainte par la loi d'arrêter de produire des cigarettes au menthol. Pour nous, ça, de donner à l'industrie autant de temps, c'est un piège dans lequel on est tombé en 2008, ce qui a fait que, vraiment, le projet de loi qui est passé—la loi qui existe en Ontario qui bannit les cigarillos aromatisés—est complètement inefficace parce qu'ils ont étudié la loi en profondeur. Ils ont trouvé une échappatoire dans la loi lorsqu'on avait défini ce que c'était qu'un cigarillo. Ils ont augmenté le nombre de milligrammes de tabac dans le cigarillo pour dire, « Bien, la loi définit le cigarillo à 9 grammes. Nous, on est à 9.01 grammes, donc on peut continuer à vendre nos cigarillos avec les mêmes stratégies, les mêmes saveurs et les mêmes emballages. » Tout est pareil.

Si on donne à l'industrie jusqu'à deux ans—quand j'ai pris le breffage avec le ministère de la Santé, c'est ce qu'on m'a dit. Il pourrait y avoir un délai de deux ans avant que cette partie-là de la loi ne soit mise en vigueur. Monsieur le Président, l'industrie va trouver une façon de continuer à vendre des cigarettes au menthol, et comme on a vu avec Gèle l'industrie, ça va vouloir dire que le projet de loi va devenir inefficace.

I will use the few minutes left to talk about e-cigarettes. This is the third schedule of the bill that talks about e-cigarettes. Basically, what the bill will do is regulate the sale, display, promotion and use of e-cigarettes in Ontario.

Section 2 bans the sale or supply of electronic cigarettes, or any component, to anyone under the age of 19. It will be very similar to tobacco. If a young person wants to buy e-cigarettes or their cartridges or any of the components, if they are over 19 but look like they're under 25, they will have to produce ID. The products will still be available, but they won't be available to young

people under the age of 19, and there will be laws for using false ID and that kind of stuff.

The bill will also prohibit e-cigarettes from being viewed or handled by customers before purchase and prohibit the promotion of e-cigarettes inside or outside any place where they are sold. The people who own the places where they're sold will be allowed to have basic information about e-cigarettes and their price, but people won't be able to handle them or taste them or do anything of the sort. There will be prohibition on the promotion or sale of e-cigarettes in any place of entertainment, and they will ban the use of e-cigarettes in hospitals, long-term-care homes, pharmacies and other places where you cannot buy e-cigarettes.

For some of you who have never seen e-cigarettes, they basically look very much like a cigarette. They tend to be a tiny wee bit bigger. If you have gone out to any bars or restaurants where young people gather, I guarantee that you have smelled them. I am old, Speaker, so I remember fully well when we used to go into a restaurant and everybody around me used to smoke. Then there were restaurants where half of the restaurant smoked and the other half didn't, which was, I guess, a step in the right direction, but it smelled like cigarettes in the whole restaurant; it didn't matter, basically, where the cigarettes were used.

It feels like déjà vu all over again, a kind of flashback that I don't like at all, because now when I walk into a restaurant in my riding or in Sudbury, it becomes quite obvious that a lot of young people are doing what I did when I was young: going into a restaurant and seeing people smoking. It sort of renormalizes smoking, which I thought we had gotten rid of, and were quite happy to have gotten rid of. And here it was coming back and rearing its ugly head.

Some of them don't smell like cigarettes at all. Some of them smell like menthol; they don't smell like cigarettes. But some of them smell exactly the same as if they were smoking cigarettes. There are no regulations about them. Although selling cartridges that have nicotine is supposed to be illegal, there are plenty of cartridges containing nicotine that you can find anywhere. You don't have to go to Nickel Belt and Sudbury; you can just cross the street right here and you will be able to buy them. We all know what nicotine does: It is very addictive. Whether you use it in a vaporizer or in e-cigarettes or in a cigarillo, you smoke it and it does the same thing to your brain: It tells your brain, "I want this over and over and over again," and then the addiction starts.

I would say the body of evidence regarding e-cigarettes as a smoking aid is still in its infancy. So if we find that e-cigarettes used in a certain way can be used as a smoking cessation aid and is successful in doing this, there is room in the regulations to allow for that. But right now, the bill is using the precautionary principle, where you look at making sure that we don't let young people get access to it, and let's make sure that when adults start to use this product, they are better informed and the product is better regulated, so that if they say it does not contain nicotine, it doesn't.

Right now, you could have the exact same product—and that was one of the studies that kind of surprised me, because there are new studies coming out on this almost every day; I would say every week I read at least three or four new studies on e-cigarettes and vapour lounges and all of this. The claim that it helps people quit smoking is weak. But you can go buy the exact same cartridge of the same flavour and they do not contain the exact same ingredients, depending on the batch, depending on the day that you buy it. So are some of the ingredients in those cartridges damaging to our health? In some cartridges, yes; in some cartridges, a little bit less. But they have the same label, you bought them in the same place, and they said they were identical. But they are not, because those products are completely unregulated. You can buy them in pretty well any corner store down here in Toronto, and you can also order them through the Internet, through—I don't know—at least 50 different sites that will mail to Canada, if you want to buy some of those.

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I'm not doing promotion of it—far be it from me. All I'm saying is that it is a product that is becoming more and more common. Here, again, the marketing looks very much like what we used to see with the tobacco industry, where they focused on youth with all of the flavours.

It's time that these products be at least regulated. As we find out more, through regulations we could make exceptions for people who use them for medical reasons or people who use them to help quit smoking. But the body of evidence is not there.

Donc, je vais essayer de résumer en une minute ce que j'ai dit pendant une heure. Du côté des néo-démocrates, ça fait longtemps que l'on veut que ces différents projets de loi-là qui ont été réunis dans le projet de loi 45 deviennent réalité. La première partie du projet de loi parle de mettre les calories sur le menu ainsi qu'une indication pour le sodium. La deuxième partie, c'est de ne plus avoir de tabac aromatisé. La troisième partie est vis-à-vis des cigarettes électroniques.

There are three parts in Bill 45. The first part, menu labelling: New Democrats have been waiting for this for a long time; we're ready to go. But in 2015, calories is not enough. We have to put in sodium.

The second part of the bill, that has to do with banning flavour: the sooner, the better. Don't wait two years before you ban menthol. It has to be done at the same time as every other flavour.

The third part of the bill, about the e-cigarettes and the precautionary principle: Let's make sure that we do this right, if new science comes out.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Comments and questions? The Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Dipika Damerla: Thank you, Speaker. It's good to see you in the chair there.

I'm pleased to rise today once again to speak to Bill 45 and respond to the comments by the member from Nickel Belt. I thank her for her advocacy.

There's no letter "I" in the word "team." Sometimes, many of us in this Legislature get carried away, thinking that these bills are ours. But really, what this is about is a team effort. This bill—or any bill, for that matter, in this Legislature—is about Ontarians and about what they need and their advocacy. So I'm really pleased to say that this bill, Bill 45, truly has been a team effort and would not have been possible without the advocacy of so many Ontarians, and some of them are here today.

I want to begin with the youth who are up there, who I had the pleasure of meeting this morning. Thank you so much. Thank you for the passion you bring. Thank you for the personal stories you shared as to why you are so committed to Bill 45 and to reducing smoking. It is your advocacy and it is your passion that give meaning to everything that we do here in this Legislature, so thank you.

Also, I know that here in the east gallery are some other members, including representatives of the Ontario Lung Association, Hamilton public health, the Heart and Stroke Foundation, KFL&A Public Health, the Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit, Toronto Public Health, Niagara Region public health and the Canadian Cancer Society. Thank you so much.

At its simplest, this bill is quite simple. It's about three things. It's about ensuring that the next generation of Ontarians don't start smoking. It's about ensuring that the next generation of Ontarians never start to vape. It's about giving the next generation of Ontarians the choices that many of us didn't have, growing up, which is to know how many calories there are when you order a doughnut or that cup of coffee. That's what this really is. It's about making sure we have a healthy Ontario.

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

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I'm pleased to stand in this House to say that Bill 45 has the support of the PC caucus.

I also want to share a quote that we received from Mark Holland, executive director, Ontario Mission, Heart and Stroke Foundation: "The Heart and Stroke Foundation commends the government of Ontario's commitment to reducing obesity and smoking rates in the province. This legislation will protect our children and youth from the deadly effects of tobacco use and will help empower all Ontarians in making the healthy choice the easy choice when it comes to what we eat and feed our families."

I stand behind that as well, Speaker. But I want to share with you and the House and everyone here in the galleries that labelling menus and calorie counts are just one part of the solution in terms of obesity. We need a wholesome strategy to increase daily physical activity for school-aged children and to help our young people make wise decisions when it comes to eating. It's one thing to put a calorie count on a menu; it's another thing to enable our next generation to choose wisely when they're grocery shopping, and how to prepare food. I think, coming from the background I have, that we need to do better in terms of increasing awareness and educating people in terms of how to eat within season.

Those of you in the House know where I stand in terms of lung health. I just want to get a plug in here about healthy eating and physical activity. I have a pretty tight family. This past winter, a really bright light in our family fought and beat Kawasaki syndrome. The residual effect is he has an enlarged artery. For the rest of his life, he has to be dedicated—as his family already is—to physical activity and healthy eating. But he needs to learn how to prepare and eat healthy, as do we all in Ontario. I'm afraid we've gotten away from our gardens and how to prepare food properly, and I'd like to see it go farther in Ontario.

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

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: It truly is a pleasure today to rise on behalf of the constituents of London–Fanshawe to be part of this debate on Bill 45, and to be part of the one-hour lead that our member from Nickel Belt has done. She is truly the exemplary example of a critic for the health portfolio. She is an advocate for health, and it's proven in the work and the history lesson that she gave us. Time and time again, she came to this Legislature on behalf of these groups and these people who have come here to advocate, to make sure that their concerns and issues—and, rightfully so—are brought to the attention of this government.

I want to thank everyone here who came out today to support this bill and who have brought their issues to France over the years. France has then articulated that to the government, and people worked together to pass this bill for the good of the health of all Ontarians. I want to say thank you, France, and I want to say thank you to the Lung Association and the Canadian Cancer Society.

A lot of things that the member from Nickel Belt had talked about really hit home for everyone. I specifically want to talk about flavoured cigarettes. When I was here in the Legislature maybe last year or the year before—I can't remember; it just seems like time has gone so quickly—they had a representative come from the Canadian Cancer Society to show us what flavoured cigarettes look like. They displayed them downstairs in the legislative dining room. I even took a picture of them. Really, Speaker, they look like candy.

Mr. Todd Smith: Candy?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Yes, absolutely. Bar none, they look like candy.

I have received postcards from many constituents asking for this bill to pass so that we can have a safer environment for our youth, our next generation, to grow into and not promote that kind of habit that we don't want to have happen to our children. When you talk about statistics, when 50% of people die from smoking, that's unacceptable. I'm glad we're doing something about it today.

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

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Good morning. I'm happy to rise and be given an opportunity to make a few comments on Bill 45, the Making Healthier Choices Act, 2014.

I want to tell you, I sat here and listened to my colleague from Nickel Belt. She covered all aspects of the bill to do with cigarillos, e-cigarettes and menu choices. But, Mr. Speaker, I also had the opportunity to sit in your chair and actually listen to the member speak on her private member's bill, which was supported by all parties on all sides. There was truly support by everyone in this chamber to make sure that the government is listening and will commit to bringing forward legislation in the future for all the issues she raised on cigarettes and menu choices etc. In fact, the Minister of Health actually commented on many of her bills, that it would be appropriate for the government to deal with legislation.

The member started out by talking a lot about why the government has not moved very quickly. I'd just like to remind the member—and I've been here as long as her; maybe a little bit longer—that when a private member brings a bill, most of the time it's done with very little research and stakeholder consultation. So the government and the Ministry of Health had to do all that work. The bill was ready to come forward, but then we had an election. So it's now coming forward a second time.

We all support this legislation. It's very good legislation, and I want to thank all the stakeholders who are here, who are supporting this. This is one of the reasons why governments move slowly sometimes: We have to consult all the people who are out there.

The one comment that she made about menthol cigarettes, or flavoured—I think the government is doing the right thing. You have to allow the industry and the distributors and everybody that is out there to make an adjustment. You cannot ban the stuff overnight. We have to be fair to everybody. Thank you very much.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the member from Nickel Belt for her final comment.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I've been here since 2007. I come from 25 years in health care, the last 11 of them focused on health promotion as I worked in a community health centre. So when I came to Queen's Park, health promotion was something very important to me. You will see through my work that I brought quite a few bills that focused on health promotion, because it continues to be something that I truly believe in. The process has been long, a little bit drawn out, but it is happening now through a government bill, through Bill 45, that big pieces of what I have been pushing since I've been at Queen's Park will happen.

Of course, I did not do that alone. If you look at the menu labelling, I reached out to people who deal with the aftermath of people who don't eat healthily, whether you look at obesity or high blood pressure or cancer or all of the diseases that are directly related to eating. So I reached out to the people I knew—to doctors, to nurses, to universities, to people who deal with nutrition, the nutritionists' association—and built a bigger and bigger tent.

When it comes to banning flavoured tobacco, certainly the cancer society was there, the Lung Association was there. But I would say the people who made the differ-

ence were the youth themselves, because they saw the effect it was having on their peers. They saw how prevalent the use of flavoured tobacco was among their peers, and they were the ones who won the show. They are the ones who made the government do the right thing and include this in Bill 45, because of all the work that they have done. For everybody who has supported the effort as we brought more and more people into the tent, I want to say thank you. It was a long journey, but it's worth it. Merci.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I'd like to thank the member from Nickel Belt and all members who participated in this debate this morning.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

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

The House recessed from 1013 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's my pleasure to be here at the assembly today. Today, my little girl, Victoria, and my husband, Joe Varner, are up from Ottawa. I wanted to welcome them. My daughter didn't want to come into the chamber—she'd rather watch cartoons up in the office—but I wanted to introduce her nonetheless.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I'm very pleased to introduce the family of Ali Rizvi. Ali is our page captain today from Pickering–Scarborough East. His mother, Amera, his brother Hassan and his sister Jehan are sitting right here in the public gallery. Welcome. I hope you enjoy your day at Queen's Park.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Speaker, it's a pleasure for me to introduce three guests from Ontario's Great White North to the chamber. We have Harold Wilson from Thunder Bay, and Tannis Drysdale and Geoff Gillan from wonderful Fort Frances joining us today.

Mr. Michael Mantha: It being convention week over at PDAC, I was proud to walk the halls along with my good friend the MP from Nickel Belt, Mr. Claude Gravelle, who is the loyal member from the NDP federally. Welcome.

Ms. Soo Wong: Today's page captain is Andrew Liu. His mother, Esther Zhou, as well as her friend Sophie Lu are here visiting us from Scarborough–Agincourt. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to welcome Claire Kubelka from the great riding of Oxford. Claire is nine years old, and she has already helped in a municipal election. I think she has a future in politics.

Claire is accompanied by her aunt Margaret Smith, who is also the mother of former MPP Bruce Smith.

I want to welcome both of them to Queen's Park, and I hope they enjoy the day.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Speaker, on behalf of the member for Mississauga South and page Natalie McLean, I'm

pleased to introduce Natalie's brother Thomas, who will be in the public gallery this morning. Please give him a welcome.

Hon. Dipika Damerla: Speaker, as you well know, youth rallied in support of Bill 45 this morning. I'm pleased to welcome them yet again in the public gallery up there.

I'm also pleased to welcome to question period representatives from the Ontario Lung Association, Hamilton public health, Heart and Stroke Foundation, KFL&A Public Health, Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit, Toronto Public Health, Niagara Region public health and the Canadian Cancer Society.

Mr. Paul Miller: I'd like to introduce four McMaster students who are studying political science: Sal Salamone, Karishma Sooknarine, Gabriel Adamo and Yasmeen Abdelkhalek.

Also, Dave Rosborough is my assistant in Hamilton.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Today in the Speaker's gallery, we have a delegation from Newfoundland and Labrador led by Premier Davis and Minister Dalley. Welcome, and thank you for being here.

ORAL QUESTIONS

BY-ELECTION IN SUDBURY

Mr. Jeff Yurek: My question is for the Premier: Premier, the Greater Sudbury Police Service commit their members to four key values. Those four values are respect, integrity, commitment and honesty. Do you believe the members of the police services board, especially the chair, are above the same values of their police servicemen and women? Do you believe the board members like your friend Gerry Lougheed are above the law?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: It's very hard on one hand to say that we have a deep respect for the police services board and then on the other hand question the capacity of the police services board to make decisions, Mr. Speaker. I think the member opposite knows full well that the police services boards act independently. They have responsibility for police services in their municipalities and I have a lot of confidence in their ability in Sudbury to do their job.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Back to the Premier: Premier, it's obvious that members of the Liberal Party do not hold themselves to the same standards. The Sudbury police commit to integrity by pledging, "We perform our duties with high ethical and moral standards." The service says, "Our actions demonstrate our respect for the community."

Gerry Lougheed has been recorded offering an apparent bribe on behalf of your party. Premier, how is he demonstrating integrity or respect for Sudbury?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Again, Mr. Speaker, I say to the member opposite, the police services boards in this province have a very serious responsibility for the provi-

sion of adequate and effective services in their municipalities, and I have a lot of faith in their ability to do that, including in this instance. The member opposite knows that there is an investigation going on. He also knows that that investigation is going on outside of this Legislature and we're going to let that unfold with the authorities and we will continue to co-operate with them.

Mr. John Yakabuski: If he doesn't have the integrity to step down, you should step down.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke will come to order, and I will keep track.

Final supplementary?

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Back to the Premier, again: Premier, let me tell you what the police service says about honesty. They say they are "truthful, open and fair." About commitment, they say, "We are dedicated to serving the needs of our community." The nomination certainly was not truthful, open or fair. It is clear Gerry Lougheed does not live up to the values of the board.

Interjection.

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

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Premier, do you believe Gerry Lougheed's actions were honest and in line with the values of the board?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I again remind the member opposite that there's a process in place when it comes to dealing with matters like this. There's a code of conduct in place that is enacted through the regulation and it's really up to the local police services board to determine whether they suspect a breach of the code of conduct. If so, they can refer the matter to the Ontario Civilian Police Commission.

In fact, Speaker, I'm sure the member opposite knows that's exactly the process that is being followed now. The Sudbury police service has been in touch with the Ontario Civilian Police Commission and I'm sure OCPC is looking into the matter. That is the proper course, that is the process that's laid out, it's at arm's length from the government. We should respect that process.

BY-ELECTION IN SUDBURY

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My question is to the Premier. Whether we're asking these questions outside or inside the Legislature, you have a responsibility to answer them.

These tapes don't lie. You obviously had not yet made the decision to appoint Mr. Thibeault on December 11 when you spoke to Mr. Olivier. Mr. Olivier said that he told you "he wanted 24 hours to think about it." If you had told him you were appointing Mr. Thibeault, there would be nothing to think about. There would be no nomination. Yet, Pat Sorbara called 24 hours later, on December 12, to tell Olivier that if he was to continue, he would put the Premier in a tough position to make a

decision about an appointment or to continue on with the nomination.

So again, the question: When exactly did you tell Mr. Olivier you were appointing another candidate?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Let me say again—and the member opposite may not want to accept that there's an investigation going on outside of the House, but there is. I have said clearly, in direct answer to this question, that I had decided after my meeting with Glenn Thibeault at the end of November, that Glenn Thibeault was the best person for our role as a candidate in Sudbury. I had made that decision. I made that statement two Fridays ago. I've been very upfront about that, Mr. Speaker. But there is an investigation going on and it's going on outside of this House.

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The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: And we continue to demand answers inside this House.

In the interest of government transparency, let's try this again. Mr. Olivier has told the police that on December 11, you asked him to step aside. You tell us in this chamber that on December 11, you told Andrew Olivier you were appointing a candidate. What you say in this chamber is not subject to perjury laws, but what Mr. Olivier says to the police absolutely is. So which version of this conversation is correct?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I have worked very hard to make it clear that I take this matter very seriously. I made a statement two Fridays ago. I talked about the decision that I made about who the candidate was going to be in Sudbury. I was very clear about that, and I have said—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm going to ask the member from Lanark to withdraw.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Withdraw.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Oh, I believe I heard it.

Carry on.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I have said that we will work with the authorities, but that work is not going to go on inside this Legislature. The investigation is happening outside the Legislature, and we need to let it unfold there.

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

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Premier, what is clear is what Gerry Lougheed said. It's on tape. What is clear is what Mr. Olivier said. It's on tape.

Interjection.

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

Ms. Sylvia Jones: What is clear is what Pat Sorbara said. It's on tape. What is not clear is what you did, what you offered, what you guaranteed. What you say in this chamber is not subject to perjury laws.

Interjections.

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

Please finish.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: The only thing that is not clear is what you said, what you offered, what you directed your staff to do. Is the real reason there are two different versions of this conversation because, in here, you're protected from perjury, and out there, Mr. Olivier isn't?

Interjections.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Again, I remind the member opposite—in fact, all the members—there is an ongoing investigation. This is not the place or the venue to be engaging in an investigation. That is up to the independent authorities to look into the matter and make a determination. I think the only proper thing to do is let the authorities undertake an investigation and make the final determination.

In fact, I will say I agree with the member from Leeds–Grenville where he said to a briefing that there is an investigation going on, that government should not be interfering. He said, “Let it run its course.”

I agree, Speaker. The member from Leeds–Grenville is right: Let the investigation run its course.

BY-ELECTION IN SUDBURY

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. When did the Premier decide to appoint her Sudbury candidate?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Again, I have answered that question many times, and I actually have answered it this morning. I said quite clearly in my public statement that after I had met Glenn Thibeault at the end of November, I had decided that he was the best candidate for Sudbury for the Liberals. I think that that has been borne out. The people of Sudbury chose Glenn Thibeault as their representative at Queen's Park, and we're very pleased to have him.

As the leader of the third party knows, there is an investigation going on, but it's going on outside of this House. We will work with the authorities.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I assume a letter was sent by the Premier, because the Liberal Party constitution says, “The leader shall communicate his or her intention to make such appointment as soon as possible, and in writing, to the nomination commissioner and to the president of the constituency association.”

On what date did the Premier write her letter to the nomination commissioner and the president of the constituency association?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, again, I say to the member opposite that I have made a clear statement in the public realm; I have said exactly what our

position is. I have said that we will continue to work with the authorities.

The fact is that the authorities will be asking questions of me; I will work with them. But that investigation and that process is going to happen outside of this Legislature, as it should.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It's obvious the Premier has her version of the Liberal bribery scandal. The problem is that her story doesn't match anyone else's, and the Premier is refusing to answer the question, to provide any information that would back up her story at all.

When will the Premier provide some evidence that backs up her version of the story and makes it clear that Pat Sorbara's version is wrong, Gerry Loughheed's version is wrong, Glenn Thibeault's version is wrong, Andrew Olivier's version is wrong, the Sudbury Liberal riding association's version is wrong, the OPP's version is wrong and Elections Ontario's version is wrong?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: As I've said, the investigation is happening outside of this House. But I know that the leader of the third party would like to rewrite a version of what happened in Sudbury, because the leader of the third party would very much like to have won that election, and she didn't. She'd like to rewrite history; it's not going to happen.

BY-ELECTION IN SUDBURY

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. The Deputy Premier says that she's bored with question period, and now the Premier doesn't want to answer any questions about the Sudbury bribery scandal.

This place belongs to Ontarians, and they deserve answers. It shouldn't take a police investigation to get answers to some very important questions. But the Premier seems to think that she's above the law and above our democracy. Does the Premier think that that sort of Liberal arrogance is acceptable?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: If the leader of the third party is suggesting that I don't have the stamina to answer her questions, she's absolutely wrong. I may not be running marathons these days, but I can answer your questions. I will answer them every single time they are posed to me, as many times as you choose to ask me.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Yesterday, the Premier said—*Interjections.*

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

This is my moment to remind all of us that we are racing to the top.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, I could do without the interjection. And that goes for members on both sides, because I'm hearing the same amount of noise while she's putting the question.

Please continue.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Yesterday, the Premier said there is an investigation outside this House or outside this Legislature a full 27 times, and she has said it yet again today a couple of times.

Ontarians shouldn't need the police to get simple answers to basic questions from the Premier, especially when the Premier keeps insisting that there was no wrongdoing.

Will the Premier show some respect to Ontarians and start answering important questions like: Who decided to offer Andrew Olivier a job?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I have a deep respect for the people of Ontario, and I have a deep respect for the policy issues that our government is grappling with. I have absolutely every desire to answer questions about government policy—any questions that are posed to me. And I will answer any questions that are asked of me. I have done that; I will continue to do that.

The answer to the question that the leader of the third party has posed is that there is an investigation happening outside of this House. I will continue to work with the authorities, as I expect everyone would.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Sudbury bribery scandal, and the way that this Premier is handling it, raises some really basic questions about this government—about her government. It raises questions about whether people can believe her government. It raises questions about how a government can end up with four concurrent police investigations into its actions. It raises basic questions about trust, about whose interests the Liberals are putting first in the work that they do.

Now, can the Premier answer a simple question and tell Ontarians who gave Pat Sorbara and Gerry Lougheed their orders to offer a job to Andrew Olivier so that he would not run for the nomination in the Sudbury by-election?

1050

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Just because members shift where they're sitting during the day—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): —I have the floor—doesn't mean that it gives you the right to heckle any more or any less. You're not supposed to.

Premier, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I have said and I will say again that I take this matter very seriously. But when the premise of the question is something that I absolutely disagree with, it's important for me to be clear with the people of Ontario where we're at.

There's an investigation going on. At Elections Ontario, the Chief Electoral Officer has said clearly, "I am neither deciding to prosecute a matter nor determining anyone's guilt or innocence. Those decisions are respectively for prosecutors and judges."

So it's up to the prosecutors and the judges. It's up to that process to unfold as it should, as the Chief Electoral

Officer has said. That's why I continue to say that the investigation is happening outside of this House. It is not up to the leader of the third party to pass judgment. It is up to the authorities to undertake that investigation outside of this Legislature.

BY-ELECTION IN SUDBURY

Mr. Steve Clark: My question is to the Premier. Premier, yesterday I asked you some very simple and straightforward questions, yet after you left the House and you were admonished by a member of the media—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Eglinton—Lawrence, come to order.

Mr. Steve Clark: —a member of your staff actually answered with the truth.

Premier, I'm going to ask you again, yes or no: Have you or your lawyers been asked by the OPP for a meeting to discuss the Sudbury bribery scandal?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I have said publicly that I was going to be meeting with the OPP. I've been asked for that meeting, but I don't know that it's been set up. I don't know the date. I've said that clearly and, as I said, I will continue to co-operate with the authorities in every way.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Steve Clark: Back to the Premier: Again, this is what we face with this government. We had a debate yesterday on concurrence in supply. There are so many questions this government refuses to answer. When it comes to the gas plants committee, they shut it down even knowing that emails had been deleted and hard drives had been wiped clean.

We in the opposition, on both sides, have asked repeatedly, over and over and over again, who knew what and who directed who to make these offers. Premier, are you—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of Children and Youth Services.

Mr. Steve Clark: —going to come clean with the OPP? Are you finally going to answer those questions that members of the opposition have asked? Who authorized these offers to be made to Andrew Olivier from your party?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Let me just say again that I made a decision that Glenn Thibeault was the right person to be our candidate in Sudbury. I made that decision at the end of November. I've made a public statement about that, and I will continue to work with the authorities on the investigation that's happening outside of this House.

BY-ELECTION IN SUDBURY

Mr. Gilles Bisson: My question is to the Premier. The Premier is aware that she has the authority to appoint or revoke any appointment to a board or commission with

the stroke of a pen. Given that the appointments are done at the Premier's discretion, when will you file the paperwork to remove Gerry Lougheed from the police services board of Sudbury?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Again, I will repeat what I've said on numerous occasions in this House, and the member opposite, I am sure, knows about this process as well. The police services boards are responsible for local policing. They have both municipal and provincial appointees. The members of the boards are the ones who elect a chair, and they are all within the scope of a code of conduct. It's up to them to determine—if they suspect a breach of the code of conduct, then we have an independent body, the Ontario Civilian Police Commission, to make a determination whether a breach of the code of conduct has taken place. It is not up to the government to make that determination.

My understanding is—and I'm sure the member opposite knows—that the Sudbury police services board has reached out to the OCPC.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Again to the Premier: The Premier would know that she has the authority under the Legislation Act, 2006, section 76, which says they serve at your pleasure. Clearly, Gerry Lougheed's integrity is in question. Premier, by not using your power to remove Mr. Lougheed from the police services board, are you saying integrity does not matter to public appointees?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, the work of the police services board is extremely important. The police services boards are created pursuant to the Police Services Act. They've been given some very specific responsibilities under the Police Services Act to ensure that there is adequate and effective policing within their jurisdiction. Their work is so important that we have a separate code of conduct that is enacted through regulation to ensure that proper conduct is met.

On top of that, to ensure that the code of conduct is always abided by, we have a separate, independent body, called the Ontario Civilian Police Commission, to oversee police services boards.

You can see, Speaker, that we have taken several steps to make sure that the process is always at arm's length from the government and that the local communities are in charge when it comes to local policing. As we know in this particular case, the police services board has referred the matter—

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

HOME WARRANTY PROGRAM

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: My question is to the Minister of Government and Consumer Services. It's about government policy. I understand that your ministry is responsible for providing oversight to Tarion, an administrative authority that manages the Ontario New Home Warranties

Plan Act, to ensure that new homeowners are protected.

Every year in Etobicoke–Lakeshore, hundreds of new homes and condos are built, and people move into them. They often ask me for some advice about how Tarion functions. Purchasing a new home is very significant, and it's one of those things that most Ontarians might only do once or twice in their lifetime. It's important to ensure that these homes are properly built. I know that problems with a new home can be a major source of stress for some homeowners. Your ministry has information available which can help them handle these problems without further anxiety.

Through you, Mr. Speaker: Minister, can you share with us your recommendations for Ontarians who have a concern with a new home they've purchased?

Hon. David Oraziotti: I want to thank the hard-working member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore for this important question.

It's certainly part of our ministry's mandate to ensure that consumers are well informed and protected under the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act. We're periodically asked by Ontarians questions about Tarion, and I'm always interested to hear the feedback.

The first step for a new home purchaser is to become well informed. Like any warranty program, consumers should be aware of the terms of the agreement and make sure to report any concerns within the time frame of the warranty coverage period.

Consumers are protected for one year for any unauthorized changes. They're protected for up to two years on electrical, plumbing, heating or water issues, and up to seven years on major structural defects like the failure of a load-bearing wall.

I encourage consumers to first seek a solution with their builders, but they should not hesitate to follow up with Tarion if the issues are not properly addressed. My expectation is that Tarion will continue to help Ontarians, and I look forward to continuing to work with them.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: I want to thank the minister for all of his hard work for consumers and especially for new homeowners. Many people in Etobicoke–Lakeshore are really interested to hear about the progress Tarion is making to support Ontarians when they purchase new homes.

I know the minister has worked closely with Tarion to strengthen accountability and ensure consumer interests are protected. I'm very proud of our government for its ongoing focus on transparency and accountability. I know the Minister of Government and Consumer Services has approached his responsibilities with that in mind.

While Tarion is an independent, not-for-profit organization, I understand the minister is working with its leadership to improve its consumer protection. Mr. Speaker, can the minister please explain what steps are being taken that improve consumer protection by Tarion?

Hon. David Oraziotti: Again to the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore, I'm certainly happy to outline

ways in which we've worked with Tarion to improve consumer protection.

I'd like to start by referencing the Tarion builder registry, which was relaunched in December 2013 and tracks important information on builders across Ontario: where they have built homes; if their licences have been revoked or suspended; and how many claims have been filed against them. Within the next year, Tarion will be adding additional information to the registry.

Tarion has also doubled the warranty coverage from \$150,000 to \$300,000. They've made changes to the board, removing the majority of industry members so that there is truly a balance on the board. Speaker, these improvements are working. Data indicates that last year in over 365,000 homes under warranty, only 0.27% have had a site visit from Tarion.

We're continuing to work to strengthen the DAA legislation. I look forward to making these improvements. While the opposition talks about consumer protection, we're acting on it.

1100

BY-ELECTION IN SUDBURY

Mr. Victor Fedeli: My question is for the Premier. Good morning, Premier.

Your pattern of behaviour with your Sudbury scandal is hauntingly familiar to that of the gas plant scandal. Both have several people named in the OPP warrants continuing to hold plum, well-paying government jobs or government appointments. Pat Sorbara is still in the Premier's office, but so is Beckie Codd-Downey, who admitted to deleting gas plant emails. Leon Korbee is still advising you, yet Laura Miller added his hard drive to the list to be deleted. We're still waiting for you to ask BC Premier Christy Clark to tell Laura Miller to come back and answer the OPP's questions.

Premier, do you plan on holding any of these people to account?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Again, let me just say to the member opposite that he knows full well that there's an investigation going on outside of the House. He may have made decisions about what people did or what they didn't do, but in fact, there are authorities who are looking into this, and we will continue to work with those authorities. That will happen outside of the Legislature.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Speaker, to the Premier: It's hard to avoid those tapes and the deleted files which have been recovered. I know it's hard for you to acknowledge those.

But Premier, there's mounting evidence that the people of Ontario aren't satisfied with your handling of the Sudbury by-election scandal. As many as two thirds of Ontarians believe Pat Sorbara and Gerry Loughheed should step down while the OPP investigate bribery allegations. Your blatant Liberal self-interest is putting you out of step with the democratic values we hold in this province and indeed in this country.

When will you stop protecting your Liberal insiders and start protecting the integrity of the office you hold?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: If we want to talk about a democratic process, the by-election was a democratic process. The people of Sudbury made a decision. They made a decision in full knowledge of the situation. They chose the Liberal candidate, Glenn Thibeault, to be their representative at Queen's Park. I have full faith in the people of Sudbury and their ability to make a sound decision. We're very pleased to have the new member for Sudbury sitting with our government.

BY-ELECTION IN SUDBURY

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: My question is to the Premier. When was the Premier contacted by the OPP to indicate that they wanted to speak to her about the bribery scandal?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, as I've said, we'll be working with the authorities. I've said clearly that I will be having a conversation with the OPP. I actually don't know the date of that. I know that is being arranged. As I've said quite clearly, I will continue to co-operate with the authorities on the investigation outside of the Legislature.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I have two questions. I'm going to ask the first question again: When did the OPP contact the Premier to say that they wanted to meet with the Premier regarding the bribery scandal, that they wanted to interview her about that scandal? The second question is, when that meeting is set, will the Premier keep that meeting secret, or will the Premier tell Ontarians when that meeting will take place?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, that meeting is being set up. I don't know the date of it.

The investigation is happening outside of this Legislature. I will work with the authorities, and that is as it should be. We cannot undertake the investigation here in the Legislature, much as the third party would like to do that and much as the opposition would like to do that. It has to happen outside of the Legislature, and that's as it should be.

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: My question is to the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure and concerns things that Ontarians care about: job creation and investment.

Just last week, Ford Canada announced an additional 400 jobs to their Oakville facility. This is where the global production of the new Ford Edge crossover SUV is set to launch. This facility will be one of the most sophisticated assembly plants in the world. This is great news for Oakville, Burlington, Halton region and, indeed, our province. As a matter of fact, many of the employees who work at the plant live in my riding.

This announcement builds on one made just a year and a half ago when our government, in partnership with

Ford Canada and the federal government, announced a \$700-million investment to upgrade the Oakville assembly plant. This partnership has secured more than 2,800 hundred jobs. My understanding is that this is not the only good news in the auto sector this week. Would the minister please update the House on some of the exciting investments and partnerships taking place in our province between our government and the auto sector?

Hon. Brad Duguid: Mr. Speaker, it is great to get another question on government policy, the second today. It's good to see the member standing up for a very important announcement made by Ford in Oakville, an announcement that certainly impacts her constituents, impacts constituents in Oakville and constituents throughout the greater Toronto and Hamilton area. And it's not the only good-news announcement that we've had this week.

Our government also announced, through the Southwestern Ontario Development Fund, that we're partnering with Toyota Boshoku Canada by investing \$1 million to expand its Elmira manufacturing facility. Through this investment, Mr. Speaker, we'll be able to create and sustain 460 highly skilled jobs. This strategic investment further enhances Ontario's industry supply chain.

I know why the side opposite gets upset when we see all these great investments in auto, because if they were in power, Mr. Speaker, our auto industry would have left—

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

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: I would like to thank the minister for that update. This is great news not only for the sector but for the related advance manufacturing facilities located in Burlington that will benefit from these investments.

I know experts agree—whether it's CIBC, Toronto Dominion Bank, RBC, Bank of Montreal or the Conference Board of Canada—that Ontario is projected for economic growth in 2015 and is poised to lead the country. Indeed the Conference Board of Canada is forecasting that Ontario's economic growth will be at 2.9% this year, well above the national average of 1.9%.

Comparing this with last week's auto announcement, clearly our economic plan is working for Ontarians. Could the minister please share with the House further evidence of these kinds of investments and, clearly, the corresponding confidence in our economy that they represent?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I'll pick up where I left off. We remember that the party opposite, the PCs, said, "Let those plants close." Mr. Speaker, we did not let those plants close. In fact, we've seen \$4 billion in investment in those plants since November. We've seen investments in Alliston in Honda: \$857 million; Linamar in Guelph: almost half a billion dollars; Chrysler in Windsor: \$2 billion. Ford announced that the GT was going to be made in Markham, Ontario—the coolest car being built in North America today. GM—half a billion dollars—just made that announcement a few weeks ago. Then we

have the announcement by Ford of 400 jobs. Our auto sector is growing again. It's growing because of the investments and partnerships we made in spite of their policy, which would have been to abandon the sector. We're proud of that, Mr. Speaker, very proud of that.

Interjections.

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

BY-ELECTION IN SUDBURY

Mrs. Julia Munro: My question is to the Premier, about your bribery scandal in Sudbury.

Frankly, my constituents and I are appalled by your involvement, your deputy chief of staff's involvement and your top fundraiser's involvement in offering an inducement to last year's Liberal candidate so he would not run in the recent by-election. This is a new kind of scandal that sheds light on one of your backroom deals.

When the Chief Electoral Officer forwarded his investigation of this matter to the OPP, he said the charges, he suggests, are "unprecedented." "Unprecedented" means he has never seen such a breach of ethics under the Ontario Election Act.

Premier, are you aware of any other time that our Chief Electoral Officer forwarded his concerns to the OPP?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I hope that when the member opposite's constituents are in touch with her she goes on to tell them that Elections Ontario determined that the allegations against me and against the member for Sudbury were baseless. I hope she goes on then to tell them that I have said repeatedly that we'll continue to cooperate fully with the authorities. Then I hope she quotes from the Chief Electoral Officer, who said, "I am neither deciding to prosecute a matter nor determining anyone's guilt or innocence. Those decisions are respectively for prosecutors and judges."

I hope that she gives her constituents the full story when they contact her. I'm sure she does.

1110

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Julia Munro: Premier, this is a serious situation. This is not like any other accusations. The Chief Electoral Officer says it's unprecedented. The OPP will most likely take his interpretation of the law when considering charges. Premier, why are you acting as if this is routine, like it's a normal process for every election? We all know this is an unprecedented situation.

Premier, you have not seen fit to ask either Sorbara or Lougheed to step down. To demonstrate your recognition of the seriousness of these unprecedented charges, what action are you prepared to take?

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, again, I—

Mr. Bill Walker: "I'll delete all the names."

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Delete your comments.

Carry on, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Again, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that the member opposite, when her constituents contact her, lets them know that I have said repeatedly that I'm taking this matter very seriously, that I am working with the authorities and that I will continue to do so.

It's an investigation that is taking place; it's an investigation that's taking place outside of this Legislature, and I will continue to work with the authorities.

BY-ELECTION IN SUDBURY

Mr. Paul Miller: My question is to the Premier. This morning, Toronto 2015 unveiled the competition medals for the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games.

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I would like to do without the interjections.

Would the member put his question, please.

Mr. Paul Miller: Speaker, good news: The first gold medal will be going to the Liberal government for outstanding achievement in synchronized scandals.

Let me focus on just one: the subversion of the electoral process in Sudbury. On what date and what time did the Premier communicate in writing her intention to appoint Glenn Thibeault as candidate for the Sudbury by-election?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister responsible for the Pan/Parapan Am Games.

Hon. Michael Coteau: This morning, I had the opportunity to join the finance minister for Canada, the mayor of Toronto, Chief LaForme from the Mississaugas of the New Credit, and many others—in fact, there were about 500 people at the Royal Ontario Museum—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew, come to order—second time.

Hon. Michael Coteau: —as we celebrated the unveiling of the new medals. The gold medal is actually from Ontario. It's mined in Ontario. It's in partnership with the Royal Canadian Mint, a Métis designer and many other people.

I think we should be so proud of the fact that we have the largest international sporting event in the history of this country taking place 18 Tuesdays from today. I'm very, very proud that it's coming, and we're very proud of our record as a government when it comes to the Pan Am Games.

Interjections.

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

Supplementary.

Mr. Paul Miller: Back to the Premier: Speaker, this is a very simple, direct question, and the Premier is not

answering. Premier, I'm afraid I'm going to have to award you another gold medal for verbal gymnastics. It's a shame you won't let me hand out any medals for accountability.

The question was: On what date and at what time did the Premier in fact appoint Glenn Thibeault as candidate for the Sudbury by-election?

Hon. Michael Coteau: The medals that were unveiled today, for the first time in any international Olympic-associated games, were unveiled with Braille on them. I thought it was incredible. I know Minister Duguid is looking at the accessibility piece when it comes to Ontario. These games are going to be the most accessible games in the history of any games out there. I'm very proud of our record.

The member from Hamilton can joke and associate the Pan Am Games and make light of it, but we take these games very seriously. The accessibility piece is a serious part and we're very proud of our record here in Ontario.

VIOLENCE AGAINST ABORIGINAL WOMEN

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: My question is for the minister responsible for women's issues. Minister, on Friday of last week, the Premier led an Ontario delegation, which included you, the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, to the round table on missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, in Ottawa.

A national inquiry would provide a renewed focus on the underlying root causes. It would shed light on the severity of the issue and it would help point to potential solutions. That is why I was so proud when this House passed my motion unanimously to support the call by the National Aboriginal Organizations for a national inquiry on murdered and missing aboriginal women and girls.

The disproportionate violence against aboriginal women and girls is a national tragedy. We must work with our aboriginal brothers and sisters. Minister, will you please update the House on last week's round table?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I really want to thank the member for Kingston and the Islands for her question and her activism on this issue, not just today but since she became a member of this Legislature. I thank her for that.

The round table was a step in the right direction. We are pleased the federal government did agree to work together on a pan-Canadian awareness campaign. However, there could have been a lot more action we could have agreed upon. Based on the discussions at the round table, we identified 10 specific things from the Ontario delegation we felt were important, action we can take right now to improve the situation facing aboriginal women and girls.

We are proposing a socio-economic plan for aboriginal women and girls, supported by leaders of Canada's provinces, territories and National Aboriginal Organizations to address the root cause of violence. We need to push ourselves very hard in the coming months, as the Premier has said, to hold everyone accountable.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: Thank you to the minister for that response. I'm glad that the Ontario government presented realistic measures to end the ongoing issue of missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls. We have to collaborate with our aboriginal sisters and brothers to develop long-term community-building initiatives—poverty reduction, employment opportunities, safety and policing, and public education, to name a few.

For the last six months, I've worked with the Native Women's Association of Canada's Faceless Dolls project in my community of Kingston and the Islands to highlight the plight of the nearly 1,200 missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls in Canada.

My visits with aboriginal community elders to school classrooms and religious organizations were emotional experiences. In the absence of strong federal leadership, we must continue to lead the way in raising awareness of this grave issue.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: What were some of the outcomes from the national round table this past Friday?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: To the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.

Hon. David Zimmer: The round table was a tremendous opportunity to hear from aboriginal organizations and the families of the missing and murdered indigenous women. With the presence of three ministers—myself, Minister MacCharles and Minister Naqvi—led by our Premier, Ontario had a very, very strong voice at that round table.

As the member from Kingston highlighted, we need awareness. That is the one consensus that all of the attendees at the round table agreed upon—a pan-Canadian prevention and awareness campaign. This will build on existing initiatives and focus on changing the perception and attitudes on this issue of missing indigenous women and girls.

Despite the comments by Federal Minister Leitch, this is not just a local issue of a local individual crime. It's a broader issue. It has to be dealt with in a broader concept, and the federal government can do much, much more on this issue.

1120

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: My question is for the Premier. Can the Premier tell us of a time in the history of the province where the government, including the Premier's own senior staff, has been under four separate OPP investigations?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Again, let me just say to the member opposite what I have said repeatedly. I've been clear about my position. I made a public statement, and I will work with the authorities. But the investigation is taking place outside of this House, by the authorities. It is not taking place in here, in the Legislature. I will continue to work with them.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Speaker, this is a clear lack of integrity and accountability. Political points should never trump doing what's right. Clearly, the government, with its four ongoing OPP investigations, believes differently.

Premier, will you take the first step to rebuilding trust and demand that those who created this mess step down from their public duties?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Again, I've been clear. I've been clear about exactly what my position is. I've made that statement publicly, and I know the member opposite can access that. It's in the public realm. I made the statement to—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock, please. The deputy House leader is warned.

Please finish, Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Just to say, Mr. Speaker, that I take it very seriously. I will work with the authorities outside of this House, where the investigation is taking place.

BY-ELECTION IN SUDBURY

Mr. Taras Natyshak: My question is to the Premier. Did the Premier abide by her own party's constitution and send a letter to the constituency association and the nomination president as soon as she made her decision to appoint Glenn Thibeault?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. I've been giving serious consideration and listening very carefully to all of the questions. In most cases, the members have been able to pull everything back to government policy.

That's getting dangerously close to having no contact. I'm going to advise the member to make his question adhere to pulling it into government policy. Carry on.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As I have said repeatedly this morning, there are questions that will be asked as part of an investigation. That investigation is taking place outside of this House; it is being undertaken by authorities. I will work with the authorities outside of this House.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Yes, Premier, we, too, are anxious for the criminal trial to start. However, it doesn't preclude you from actually answering some very basic questions.

Speaker, if the Premier sent a letter that would back up her version of the story, why is she refusing—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock, please. Order, please. I know I'm on the right track when I get accused by one side of not asking these people to be quiet, and then, on this side, asking these people to be quiet, when they themselves make noise while they're answering. I will do my best in this chair, and I don't need the armchairs.

Please finish.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: If the Premier sent a letter that would back up her version of the story, why is she refusing to release it? Is it because it actually doesn't exist?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Deputy Premier.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: There are many, many differences between the NDP and the Ontario Liberal Party—many, many differences. One of those is that we have a very clear process whereby the leader of the party is entitled to exercise her right to appoint candidates.

In stark contrast, the NDP chooses to use other tactics when they have a preferred candidate. They do not have that clarity that we have in the Ontario Liberal Party, which is why we have seen the disgraceful contact in Scarborough–Guildwood, where long-time members of the New Democratic Party have been forced to leave the party because their wishes have been trampled on by the leader of the NDP. I do believe that Amarjeet Kaur Chhabra—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you; that's time. New question.

TOBACCO CONTROL

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: My question is for the Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. I know that parents and youth in Ottawa–Orléans have been advocating for this bill, and I'm proud that this morning we're joined by a group of passionate Ontario youth who are here to support swift passage of Bill 45, the Making Healthier Choices Act.

As a part of this proposed legislation, our government is taking strong action to protect youth from the dangers of tobacco. We know that flavoured tobacco products are designed to appeal to youth. We know from research that almost half of the 121,600 Ontario youths in grades 9 to 12 who have reported using tobacco products in the last 30 days have turned to flavoured tobacco.

The facts are here. Speaker, could the minister please remind the House of what we are proposing to do to protect our children from flavoured tobacco?

Hon. Dipika Damerla: I'd like to begin by thanking the member from Ottawa–Orléans for this really important question. Speaker, to tell you the truth, I was hoping that this question would have come from the member from Nickel Belt, who spent considerable time earlier this morning talking about how important this bill is to her. Alas, it's not important enough for question period, but there's still some time, and perhaps she will ask the question.

But I do thank the member for her question, and yes, she is right. Earlier this morning, Speaker, as you know, I was pleased to meet with some of these dedicated young advocates. They offered advice and, more importantly, their support to get this bill passed. I'm delighted to see so many young people who share our commitment to drive down smoking rates.

As we know, the research shows that flavoured tobacco is a gateway for young people to become regular

smokers. With flavours like strawberry, watermelon and bubble gum, there is no question that tobacco companies are targeting young people with this marketing. This bill is all about making sure that next generation of smokers doesn't begin to smoke.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Again, my question is for the Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Minister, as you know, e-cigarette use is an emerging trend in Ontario, including among our youth. We have seen a great deal of concern raised by local and international media and the medical community about the possible health effects and hazards of e-cigarette use.

In a recent national survey, it was found that 20% of youth aged 15 to 19 had tried e-cigarettes. That means 417,000 teenagers in that age group have tried e-cigarettes.

It is important that our government safeguards youth from an unregulated device that could have negative effects on their health. Mr. Speaker, could the minister please remind the House of what action she is taking to protect our youth from the possible health effects of e-cigarettes?

Hon. Dipika Damerla: Thanks again to the member for that very important question. Indeed, e-cigarettes are new technology, and it's the Wild West, frankly, when it comes to where you can vape and who can purchase e-cigarettes.

That is why we have proposed legislation that would, if passed, ban retailers from selling e-cigarettes to youth and restrict vaping in public places. In this way, we are proposing to protect young Ontarians from any harm that may be associated with electronic cigarettes.

The young people today sent us a message very clearly: They want us to help protect them and to make sure that the next generation of vapers doesn't get started.

BY-ELECTION IN SUDBURY

Mr. Bill Walker: My question is to the Premier.

Premier, you continue to put partisanship over partnership, ideology over evidence. The evidence from independent officers indicates that there has been a contravention of the law. The members of the opposition side of this House have written to the OPP and to the Chief Electoral Officer supporting their investigations. Premier, when will you demonstrate the integrity expected of your office?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Well, I think the Premier is showing exactly the respect and integrity that the independent process should have by not interfering in that process. The members opposite continue to insist that somehow the Premier should intervene in the process and come up with some sort of an outcome that they would prefer. Speaker, I think we all know that's not how the system works. It's arm's-length. It's separate from the government. Those systems have been put in place for a reason. We should respect that.

Like I said, again, I agreed with the member from Leeds–Grenville when he said on Friday at the briefing that there’s a process that’s going on. The government should not interfere in that process. He said, “Let it run its course.” He’s absolutely right. We should let the process continue as it is designed to be and respect the outcome. This is not the place to try a case or undertake an investigation because that’s the responsibility of the police and our judges, and we respect them 100%.

1130

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Bill Walker: Again, back to the Premier: This is a bit like Groundhog Day. You are allowed to give answers in this House to the question.

Premier, you have said that anything that “was offered in exchange for any action is false.” “Anything” may be defined by you as a written contract, but the law says otherwise. No matter what the title, no matter what their authority, your staff did your bidding by offering a position to Andrew Olivier.

Premier, how much longer will you defy the integrity of—your office?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Sir, with all due respect, the role of the government is to make sure that we respect the law and let the independent authorities do their work. By asking to interfere in the matter, you’re advising the government to do the contrary.

I would advise that we follow the process: that we let the police do their work, that we let Elections Ontario do its work and that we let the prosecutors do their work. That’s how the process is done; that’s how the process works well.

Let’s focus on issues that are important to Ontarians, like building public infrastructure, like making sure that we are guaranteeing retirement income security for Ontarians. That is the mandate that they have given to this Legislature. That is the mandate they’ve given to this government. We’re going to remain focused on those important issues and make sure that the retirement security and the good infrastructure that are so necessary for this province are there for generations to come.

BY-ELECTION IN SUDBURY

Mr. Gilles Bisson: My question is to the Premier. Premier, you keep on insisting that you decided to appoint Mr. Thibeault in November of last year. Your constitution clearly says that you have to send a letter in order to do that officially through the Liberal Party mechanism.

The question we’re asking you is, when did you send that letter to both the Liberal Party and to the riding association president informing them of the decision that you were going to appoint your candidate?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I remind the member opposite again, as he is well aware, that there is an independent process that is ongoing. It’s up to that process to determine the answers to all these questions and make a judgment.

We know Elections Ontario has clearly said that the Elections Ontario officer is not making any judgment. He’s leaving it up to the prosecutors to decide, so the matter has been referred to the Public Prosecution Service of Canada. They will undertake their due diligence as required by law and make a determination. Then we will respect that. I don’t think this is a place to get into all the work which is very much within their purview.

I urge all the members to refocus on issues that are important, issues that our constituents are speaking to us about every single day, such as retirement income security.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: My question is again to the Premier. The Premier has repeatedly said that she decided she was going to appoint her candidate back in November. There is a process under the Liberal constitution that says that she has to send a letter to the riding association president and to the election commissioner of the Liberal Party.

Premier, my question to you is, when did you send that letter to both the riding association president and the Liberal Party? When did you send that letter?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I think we all see what the third party is doing. They’re trying to distract from their sordid record on progressive policies that have been implemented by this government in this process.

When it comes to putting forward the most progressive budget ever in the history of this province, under the leadership of our Premier, where was the third party? They forced an unnecessary election. What was the result of that election? There was a Liberal majority government re-elected in this House. They still have not forgiven themselves for making that wrong-headed decision, and they continued on to vote against one of the most progressive budgets.

That is why they want to talk about everything else. They don’t want to talk about affordable housing, which we’re investing in. They don’t want to talk about raising minimum wage and indexing it to the cost of living, which this government brought in and they disagreed with. They don’t want to talk about the support of the governmental sector in this province.

Interjections.

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

GREENBELT

Mr. Granville Anderson: My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Minister, this past Friday, you and I celebrated the 10th anniversary of Ontario’s greenbelt. This milestone provides an opportunity to reflect on the role the greenbelt plays in protecting Ontario’s most valuable agricultural and environmentally sensitive land.

Ten years ago, our government sent a powerful message by creating the Greenbelt Plan, which designates the Oak Ridges moraine, the Niagara Escarpment and much

of our cherished countryside as protected from development. Our government told all Ontarians that we must not take Ontario's natural beauty and important farmland for granted.

Minister, as we celebrate this important anniversary of the greenbelt, please remind us of why we can be proud of this world-class model of land preservation.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I'm proud to be able to get up to declare why we're proud about the greenbelt, the largest greenbelt in the world, by the way, larger than the size of Prince Edward Island. Protecting farmland, protecting wetlands, coordinating growth—it is part of a comprehensive plan that our government has set out over the last decade, and I think it's great to be able to say, "Happy Anniversary, Greenbelt."

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Granville Anderson: Thank you, Minister. I understand that, as part of your mandate as Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Premier has directed you to lead a review of the Greenbelt Plan in coordination with reviews of the growth plan, the Oak Ridges moraine plan and the Niagara Escarpment Plan.

Minister, these reviews are an exciting opportunity to build on the plans' successes to date and to identify opportunities to improve the plans where needed. You are required to consult with each municipality that has jurisdiction in the greenbelt and to ensure that the public is given an opportunity to provide input.

Minister, what details can you share about these coordinated reviews?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member from Durham for his question and his wonderful supplementary. We announced on Friday the establishment of a panel, set up by the Honourable David Crombie, by the way, who will be heading that; "an inspired choice," according to the Caledon Enterprise. We'll be working with the Ministry of Natural Resources, holding meetings across the province to review the four plans. It will be comprehensive, it will be coordinated, and in the words of David Crombie, it will be a historic undertaking of monumental importance.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: Thank you, Speaker. I just wanted to note that everybody got a little thank-you note this morning to thank them for supporting Freeze the Industry, a group of youth who want to support Bill 45. There are mints in there, so remember menthol.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It's actually not a point of order, but thank you.

DEFERRED VOTES

CONCURRENCE IN SUPPLY

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We have deferred votes on the motions of concurrence in supply in the following ministries and offices: tourism, culture and

sport; infrastructure; transportation; community and social services; energy; finance; health and long-term care; aboriginal affairs; francophone affairs; and consumer services.

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

The division bells rang from 1139 to 1144.

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

Ms. Sandals has moved concurrence in supply of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport. All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

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

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

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gretzky, Lisa	Natyshak, Taras
Arnott, Ted	Hardeman, Ernie	Pettapiece, Randy
Bailey, Robert	Harris, Michael	Sattler, Peggy
Barrett, Toby	Hatfield, Percy	Scott, Laurie
Bisson, Gilles	Hillier, Randy	Singh, Jagmeet
Clark, Steve	Horwath, Andrea	Smith, Todd
DiNovo, Cheri	Jones, Sylvia	Tabuns, Peter
Elliott, Christine	MacLeod, Lisa	Taylor, Monique
Fedeli, Victor	Mantha, Michael	Thompson, Lisa M.
Fife, Catherine	Martow, Gila	Vanhof, John
Forster, Cindy	McDonell, Jim	Walker, Bill
French, Jennifer K.	Miller, Norm	Wilson, Jim
Gates, Wayne	Miller, Paul	Yakubski, John
Gélinas, France	Munro, Julia	Yurek, Jeff

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 58; the nays are 42.

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

Ms. Sandals has moved concurrence in supply of the Ministry of Infrastructure.

Interjection: Same vote.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Same vote? Same vote.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 58; the nays are 42.

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

Madame Meilleur has moved concurrence in supply of the Ministry of Transportation. All those in favour—

Interjection: Same vote.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Same vote? Same vote.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 58; the nays are 42.

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

Madame Meilleur has moved concurrence in supply of the Ministry of Community and Social Services. All those in favour, please rise—

Interjection: Same vote.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Same vote? Agreed.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 58; the nays are 42.

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

Madame Meilleur has moved concurrence in supply of the Ministry of Energy. All those in favour, please rise—

Interjection: Same vote.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Same vote? Same vote.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 58; the nays are 42.

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

Madame Meilleur has moved concurrence in supply of the Ministry of Finance. All those in favour, please rise—

Interjection: Same vote.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Same vote? Agreed. Same vote.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 58; the nays are 42.

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

Mr. Flynn has moved concurrence in supply of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. All those in favour—

Interjection: Same vote.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Same vote? Agreed. Same vote.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 58; the nays are 42.

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

Mr. Flynn has moved concurrence in supply of the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs. All those in favour—

Interjection: Same vote.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Same vote? Same vote. Agreed.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 58; the nays are 42.

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

Mr. Flynn has moved concurrence in supply of the Office of Francophone Affairs. All those in favour, please rise—

Interjection: Same vote.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Same vote? Same vote. Agreed.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 58; the nays are 42.

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

Mr. Flynn has moved concurrence in supply of the Ministry of Consumer Services.

Interjection: Same vote.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Same vote? Same vote. Agreed.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 58; the nays are 42.

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

Motions 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 1150 to 1500.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETIES

Mr. Jim McDonell: Although the final recommendations of the Jeffrey Baldwin inquiry were released a year ago, the government had identified the need for a new information management system for all children's aid societies years ago. They began searching for vendors in 2010 and eventually partnered with Deloitte and US-based eSystems in November 2012 in order to build the Child Protection Information Network, or CPIN.

The Baldwin inquiry recommended a February 2016 deadline for full implementation of CPIN across all CASs in Ontario. The government has admitted that it will not meet this deadline. Currently, there are only three CASs running CPIN and the two largest—Toronto and Toronto Catholic CASs—have experienced setbacks and may not be operational by the end-of-March deadline. Meanwhile, many CASs in urban and rural areas will not be able to work with the confidence and efficiency a solid information management system would provide.

This wasn't a two-year deadline. The project had been in the works for five years already and the government expects it to take at least five years more.

At the missing and murdered aboriginal women's round table in Ottawa on Friday, Premier Wynne spoke of the importance of information-sharing, benchmarks and accountability. We take her at her word. However, CPIN won't be finished for another six years, and only one in five CAS workers will be using it by the original stated deadline. This is a very low benchmark, and no Premier should consider this a success.

LEADING WOMEN, LEADING GIRLS, BUILDING COMMUNITIES AWARDS

Ms. Cindy Forster: It's an honour to be here today to extend my congratulations to six women in my riding of Welland who will be receiving Leading Women, Leading Girls, Building Communities recognition program awards. Since 2006, 400 women province-wide have been honoured for their leadership contributions to their communities. This year, six winners have been selected from my native Welland.

The two who will receive the Leading Girls award are high school students, Vritti Patel and Melissa Walls, and the four who will receive the Leading Women award are Betty Ann Baker, Huguette Brauweiler, Karen Gillespie and Bridgette Ridley.

To celebrate the award winners, I'll be hosting a celebration event in Welland on March 6—this Friday—at Holy Trinity church at 3 p.m.

These remarkable community leaders have all come from diverse backgrounds, and despite the various barriers that they have faced in different courses in their lives, they've demonstrated a commitment to community-building by promoting diversity, individuality and gender equality. These awards acknowledge the important role that these six women have played in shaping their communities over the years. Whether a high school student or a senior, each one of them is an example of leadership and commitment.

These extraordinary women have demonstrated leadership in fostering positive changes in my community, and they will be role models, mentors and shining examples of contributions that one person can make to build a stronger community.

MODEL PARLIAMENT

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I'm pleased to rise today and bring attention to some special VIPs who joined us at Queen's Park last week. From Wednesday to Friday, 107 students from across the province, each representing a riding in Ontario, took part in the model Parliament program. It's a unique and innovative program designed for students in grades 10 to 12 who are interested in civil service and current events. It's about introducing our democratic process to our young people in a real and engaging way. It was a great opportunity to bring together young, bright, motivated students and give them a chance to understand how government works, first-hand.

Mr. Speaker, I can't continue without mentioning how proud I was that not only did we have two representatives from Halton, but that one of them was my daughter, Oriana. It was a wonderful experience and she was incredibly proud and honoured to have been selected to participate.

As part of the program, the students were given tours of Queen's Park and participated in workshops and presentations about the history of the provincial Legislature

and the legislative process. They also had the chance to meet directly with a number of MPPs to find out what it's really like to be a member of provincial Parliament. Not only was it a great exercise for them to learn how provincial politics operate, but it gave us all a chance to find out what issues matter to them. Their generation will lead our province, and it's critical that we understand what issues are important to them.

It was a great three days, and I'm looking forward to meeting a new round of model parliamentarians next year.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mrs. Julia Munro: There's a serious issue I would like to address today, and that is the respect of some members of the government when it comes to answering tough questions in the Legislature.

I hear from constituents how difficult it is to trust the government these days, including the Premier. I'm embarrassed to say that I often understand these sentiments and often even agree with them. When our very own government refuses to answer questions and instead constantly deflects serious issues, it is a travesty. It hurts our democracy, and it reduces citizens' trust in government.

I will provide a recent example. Only yesterday, the member from Huron-Bruce asked the Premier about the actions of her deputy chief of staff. The Premier used the occasion to provide praise for Nellie McClung. I agree that Nellie McClung is an important historical figure, as she dedicated much of her life to ensuring gender equality in Canada. However, the Premier's refusal to answer the question and instead provide a brief monologue on a different issue is problematic. It demonstrates the lack of respect that the government has for members of the opposition and a lack of transparency.

I urge the Premier and her ministers to answer questions seriously, and I look forward to honest responses; so do the rest of Ontarians.

ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Mr. John Vanthof: On May 22, 2015, the Ontario Northland bus stations in Englehart and Matheson are scheduled to close. Service hours in other centres will be reduced. This announcement, once again, rocked the north, and you can't blame northerners for being shell-shocked. In the last four years, we've suffered the loss of the Metrolinx refurbishment contract; the cancellation of our only passenger train, the Northlander; the announced divestment of the ONTC, which we collectively fought back, only to be followed by the sale of Ontera.

We were promised an enhanced bus service, but it only happened after residents took their case to the Ontario Human Rights Commission, and then we got handicapped buses. And now, these bus stations are closed. We are told that it's going to be to streamline the

service to actually improve the service, and we have been told that so many times.

We're encouraged by the appointment of Tom Laughren as chair of the ONTC, a northerner who we hope understands—who we truly believe understands—our plight. We think that is a huge step in the right direction. But the test will now be to see, with these bus service changes, is service actually improved or is it just another attempt to put more nails in the coffin of the ONTC?

BRUYÈRE CONTINUING CARE SOINS CONTINUS BRUYÈRE

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Monsieur le Président, the Ottawa community is proud to be the home of Bruyère Continuing Care and its three locations. The staff and board at Bruyère are champions of our aging community through compassionate care, research and advocacy.

On February 20, they celebrated the 170th anniversary of Mother Élisabeth Bruyère coming to Ottawa. In 1845, Mother Bruyère and three Sisters opened the first bilingual school in Ontario. Since then, the organization has continued its cause by opening hospitals, long-term-care homes, research institutes and more.

J'étais très fière de participer au déjeuner organisé par Bruyère à la Résidence Saint-Louis. J'ai eu l'occasion de rencontrer le personnel, que je remercie pour l'excellent travail, ainsi que de partager un moment particulier avec les Soeurs de la Charité.

As members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and on behalf of the constituents of Ottawa–Orléans, I extend—in memory of Mother Élisabeth Bruyère—my sincere congratulations and best wishes in recognition of the 170th anniversary of providing compassionate care in Ottawa.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Merci beaucoup.

1510

MCCAMUS MAPLE SYRUP

Ms. Laurie Scott: This past weekend, I had the pleasure of attending the Haliburton Kawartha Maple Syrup Producers Association's 2015 annual first tapping ceremony, hosted by the McCamus family sugar shack and maple bush. Robert McCamus and his wife Mary Ellen invited local representatives to tap the first trees of the season and to bless the 2015 maple syrup harvest, followed by tasty homemade maple syrup beans and maple syrup tarts.

The McCamus family has been making maple syrup and farming the beautiful hills of Cavan township—located, of course, in Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock—since first settling in the area in 1820, after immigrating from Cavan county in Ireland. Over the years, the sugar bush has grown in size, and the McCamus family, generation to generation, has continued to produce maple syrup on the same land. Over the years, the methods have changed from horse and wagon and a

gathering team to the new pipeline systems we see today. With each generation, the farm adapts to carry on the tradition.

This year marks 100 consecutive years of maple syrup production. This amazing achievement demonstrates the McCamus family's hard work, dedication to their craft and love of their land. This winter, the McCamus family were also celebrated at the 2014 Royal Winter Fair in Toronto, receiving numerous awards, including the C.P. Corbett Trophy, highest point total and a premier exhibitor trophy.

Brad McCamus, the fourth generation of maple syrup producers, was recently highlighted in a short documentary video series which features independent artists and artisans making a living doing what they love. I encourage all to visit mccamusmaplesyrup.com to watch this short video and learn more about the McCamus family's syrup. Thank you, everyone.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Members' statements?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order, please.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I guess my patience was too good. I have another statement for people to make, and I'd like some order, please.

The member from Barrie, for your statement.

GILDA'S CLUB SIMCOE MUSKOKA

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Thank you, Speaker. On Friday, February 27, Gilda's Club Simcoe Muskoka held their annual Gildathon radio fundraising event in Barrie. More than \$21,000 was donated on Friday, with donations still coming in from local community partners. The money raised will be used to provide Gilda's Club Simcoe Muskoka's comprehensive program of emotional support for men, women and children diagnosed with cancer and everyone who cares for them.

The year 2015 marks the fifth anniversary for this great local organization. Since opening their signature red door in the spring of 2010, Gilda's Club Simcoe Muskoka's program of free social and emotional support continues to be an essential complement to medical care in Barrie, Simcoe county and Muskoka. Their talented and passionate team includes individuals such as Brenda Pinder Parsons, chair of the board of directors, Patricia Gilbert, Eileen Campeau, Deborah Loosemore, Kristen Dawson, Katherine Speirs and many more.

The men, women and children in the Gilda's Club Simcoe Muskoka program learn about cancer screening and diagnosis, treatment options and side effects. They also participate in seminars and workshops covering many topics related to living with a cancer diagnosis, survivorship, family impact, bereavement and wellness.

All funds to operate Gilda's Club Simcoe Muskoka's innovative cancer support program are raised from individuals, foundations, events and corporations. Community support is vital and ensures that their program remains free of charge, so that no one faces cancer alone.

Thanks to the Gilda's Club volunteers and staff who work to make a bout with cancer a little less stressful for all involved.

MODEL PARLIAMENT

Ms. Soo Wong: Last week I had the pleasure of being invited to participate in the 2015 model Parliament. Bringing together young people from across Ontario, the annual Queen's Park model Parliament gives them an opportunity to spend three days watching and learning how this Legislature works.

I'm proud to have seen two bright young boys in my riding of Scarborough–Agincourt, Kevin Vuong and Daven Siu, taking part in the model Parliament. Kevin, a grade 12 student at Dr. Norman Bethune, was selected to be the Minister of Labour. Daven, a grade 10 student at the Crestwood academy, was the representative for Scarborough–Agincourt.

I'd like to thank Minister Flynn and Minister Coteau for taking the time to meet with both Kevin and Daven. They really enjoyed the opportunity to meet with you and the advice you gave them.

On Friday, I was honoured to be asked to join the model Parliament participants in the chamber. I had the pleasure of being the Speaker and moderating the debate on organ donation. It was really great to see how passionate these young people were about this important health issue. I hope they continue to be engaged, passionate and interested in politics, as they were last week. We may see them back here one day as MPPs.

I would like to congratulate and thank the Clerk, Deb Deller, and her entire staff for organizing the annual model Parliament. As well, I want to thank my colleagues who participated in the 2015 model Parliament. Thank you.

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

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that pursuant to standing order 98(c), a change has been made in the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business such that Mr. Bailey assumes ballot item number 39 and Ms. MacLeod assumes ballot item number 48.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received a report on the intended appointments dated March 3, 2015, 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 ESTIMATES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Also, pursuant to the order of the House dated July 24, 2014, the Standing Committee on Estimates shall present one report with respect to all of the estimates and supplementary estimates considered pursuant to standing orders 60 and 62 no later than Thursday, November 27, 2014.

The House not having received a report from the Standing Committee on Estimates for certain offices on Thursday, November 27, 2014, as required by the order of the House dated July 24, 2014, pursuant to standing order 63(b), the estimates before the committee of the Office of the Assembly, Office of the Auditor General, Office of the Chief Electoral Officer and the Ombudsman of Ontario are deemed to be passed by the committee and are deemed to be reported to and received by the House.

Pursuant to standing order 61(b), the estimates 2014-15 of these offices, not having been selected for consideration, are deemed to be received and concurred in.

Report deemed received.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

REGISTERED RETIREMENT SAVINGS PROTECTION ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LA PROTECTION DES RÉGIMES ENREGISTRÉS D'ÉPARGNE EN VUE DE LA RETRAITE

Mr. Rinaldi moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 70, An Act respecting protection for registered retirement savings / Projet de loi 70, Loi visant à protéger les régimes enregistrés d'épargne en vue de la retraite.

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. Lou Rinaldi: Thank you, Speaker. The purpose of the bill is to protect registered retirement savings plans and registered retirement income funds as well as deferred profit sharing plans from most creditors. Those plans are, however, still subject to support orders enforced under the Family Responsibility and Support Arrears Enforcement Act, 1996, respecting the separation of property in family matters.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

CANADIAN AGRICULTURE LITERACY WEEK

Hon. Jeff Leal: Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to rise in the House today to recognize the fourth annual Canadian Agriculture Literacy Week. This week, in classrooms

across this great country, our elementary and high school students will connect with and celebrate agriculture. In my opinion, this is a wonderful thing.

I want to applaud the efforts of Agriculture in the Classroom Canada for building our students' food literacy. In collaboration, organizations like Ontario Agri-Food Education here in our province work to teach students about food, farming and agriculture.

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Mr. Speaker, you truly see the impact that these programs have the first time a child watches seeds they planted earlier in the year grow into vegetables they snack on at lunch, or when a high school class debates what the future of agriculture in this great province would look like. It's an incredible experience for our students and one that stays with them for a lifetime. By helping our children understand the value and importance of agriculture, we build a strong local food culture.

Our government is committed to supporting the good things grown and harvested in Ontario, and we all know that wonderful song. It is why we created the Local Food Act. The Local Food Act contains a number of provisions to help promote local products. These include Local Food Week, which happens annually at the start of June, our new food donation tax credit for farmers—I want to recognize the great work that was done on this file by the member for Sarnia–Lambton, our colleague Mr. Bob Bailey—and our newly established food literacy goals. All of these initiatives help to strengthen our local food culture and, in turn, strengthen this great province.

The Local Food Act is the first legislation of its kind in Canada and came through the collaborative support of everybody, all 107 members in this Legislature. I want to thank all 107 members for that support.

Mr. Speaker, along with building awareness of Ontario foods, we also need to look to the future. We need to encourage the next generation of agricultural leaders. Ontario's agriculture and agri-food sector is full of opportunities—unlimited opportunities. As an economic driver for our province, this sector contributes \$34 billion to our GDP each and every year and employs over 760,000 Ontarians each and every day.

All of us in this Legislature want to see these numbers grow. That's why Premier Wynne challenged the sector to create 120,000 new jobs by the year 2020. Some of these good jobs will be filled by students who have developed a passion for agriculture, in part through the Canadian Agriculture Literacy Week programming.

My ministry supports a wide variety of organizations, like Ontario Agri-Food Education, Ontario 4-H, whose model is "Learn to do by doing," and agricultural societies, as they help educate Ontario's youth and show them the possibilities of a career in agriculture.

We will continue to work collaboratively with our partners to support agricultural learning so that the next generation learns about the exciting opportunities across the entire agri-food chain, from growing and harvesting to producing and processing.

A healthy agricultural sector is crucial to the success of our province. That's why I feel that the Canadian

Agriculture Literacy Week is so important, not only to our students but to everyone who resides in this wonderful province.

I'd like to thank Ontario Agri-Food Education for all of its work to help connect our students to high-quality food grown and processed right here in Ontario.

I encourage all of my colleagues, all 107 colleagues, to spend some time this week talking to a student, a family member or a co-worker about Ontario agriculture. That will benefit us all.

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

Mr. Toby Barrett: I'm certainly pleased to speak about Canadian Agriculture Literacy Week. We certainly know that Ontario is key within our dominion of Canada with respect to agriculture, food, agribusiness. We contribute \$34 billion annually, and something in the order of 740,000 jobs. Despite these impressive numbers, agricultural literacy remains a bit of a struggle, not only across the nation but in this province as well.

This is something that comes up at the all-candidates' nights down my way. This question will come up: Do you know the difference between hay and straw? That's the benchmark to get elected down my way.

Other questions: Do you know where tofu comes from, for example? Do you know the difference between Jersey milk and Holstein milk?

Interjection: One is chocolate and the other is white.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Many people would know.

Another question: Do young people know about the good jobs that are available, not only in farming, but in food production, processing, restaurants, and agribusiness in general?

I spent a number of years teaching high school agriculture. In many ways, we have gone backwards. We lost that program. It morphed into environmental science.

I taught agriculture at the post-secondary level as well. Many of my students didn't have a farm background. They loved the course; I loved teaching it. I would see my students later on in business. Maybe they're pumping gas and their customers are farmers. Maybe they're working with their dad in a plumbing business or electrical and they're working with farmers. Oftentimes in their businesses, their suppliers come from the ag sector.

Obviously, the availability of skilled labour has emerged as a challenge for food processors. I know MPP Ernie Hardeman will recognize this statement in his white paper that was produced before the last election: 65% of food processors say they have difficulties with staffing. So, two main issues, as we know: the ability to recruit and the ability to find people with the required skills.

I commend my colleague MPP Lisa Thompson, the member for Huron–Bruce, for her work in bringing to light the need for Ontario to promote the careers that are out there in agriculture and agri-food.

These challenges were recently underscored in a report, Planning for Ontario's Future Agri-Food Workforce, from the Ontario Agricultural College. That's where I did my master's. The report identifies the need for increased awareness of the currently underutilized

agri-food post-secondary programs—I know we're focusing on elementary and secondary, which is also so important—and the need for the creation of new programs to meet the new skills and education required by the industry.

Of course, the history of agriculture goes back 3,000 years, with the Tigris and Euphrates river valleys, but in the last hundred years, obviously, we've come from the pitchfork, which is still used—many of us here probably did grow up forking manure. Many of us continue to fork manure. You learn a lot. I had a lot of very good conversations with my father and my grandfather forking cattle manure. You take a break, you lean on the fork and you talk politics. That's where I learned some of the—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It's kind of like this place.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Something like this place.

Look at today and the advent of precision agriculture, with the use of the GPS systems for precision farming—putting those seeds down a field, maybe for half a mile, in exactly that same row that you put them on a year ago.

The use of drones: Again, is there a course for agricultural instruction with the use of drones?

Again, we have to train people not only to be able to walk into a combine and know how to turn a wrench, but they've also got to know how to calibrate that computer.

What we're talking about here is ever-important for our young people and obviously for the future of agriculture in the province of Ontario.

Mr. John Vanthof: It's always an honour to be able to stand in this House. It's especially an honour to be able to stand and talk about an agricultural issue on behalf of my colleagues in the NDP caucus and my leader, Andrea Horwath.

This is the fourth annual Canadian Agriculture Literacy Week. As more and more people move away from the country and move into the city, this becomes more and more important. We all talk about the importance of agriculture.

We all know about the importance of agriculture to this province, but quite frankly, the number of people involved in the various sectors in the agri-food industry aren't a big portion of the population. Sometimes decisions are made that impact them by people who, quite frankly, don't understand the issues. That's why this is so important.

1530

As I was doing the research for my talk today, it came to my attention that Farm Credit Canada is sponsoring a lot of activities for this week in Ontario. That's a plug for Farm Credit because they sponsored me through my agricultural career as well. It ranges from in primary classes, where you can talk to a farmer—they will bring a farmer to a class to talk to primary students—to university level, where you can listen to an online streaming debate about the value of GMO foods. Those are both incredibly important issues.

I've had talks here and at committee level about the difference between organic milk and regular milk, and what the pros and cons are, because people know I used to be a dairy farmer. Those are relevant discussions.

We have so many agricultural issues that are decided by the general population through their support or non-support, by governments through their decisions, and they are incredibly complex issues. The issues we face now with pollinators, with neonicotinoids; the issue with GMO foods; the issue of whether the 100-mile diet is a good idea. But is it the answer to all our agricultural problems? Not necessarily.

The only way we're going to make decisions that are beneficial to ourselves and to our children is to have full knowledge of the sector. And the sector is more than down home on the farm, it's more than the processing sector, it's more than the farmers' market, and it's more than the supermarket. It's all of those things together, and so much more. It's easy for me to talk about things that happen on the farm; I spent most of my life there.

It was interesting yesterday what we were discussing with the wine council. I was on the board of a small cheese factory. Some of the issues that face small cheese factories regarding marketing are the same issues that face small VQA wineries. There are so many issues out there that unless you have a full understanding—and that understanding has to come from day one. Kids have to know where their food comes from, high school students have to know where the jobs come from, and we as legislators have to know what drives the agriculture sector, what drives Ontario and what drives the world.

We had an interesting discussion recently: The Agriculture Insurance Act is still on the table, and one of the issues is the impact of climate change. We hear this government talk a lot about climate change. Climate change is going to impact agriculture. It's also going to impact how farmers insure themselves. That's something we have to take into account, because if we don't take those things into account, we're wasting our time and wasting opportunities. That's the most important thing: We don't want to waste opportunities.

One of the things that I have found in the three years that I've been here is that we don't take enough time to ensure that what we say here and the laws that are created here actually work on the ground, in the country—especially when you're talking about Canadian Agriculture Literacy Week. We have to make sure that what we do in the legislatures of this country, and specifically in this Legislature, actually makes sense for farmers and for farm communities on the ground.

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

It is now time for petitions.

PETITIONS

WATER FLUORIDATION

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I have a petition here on behalf of residents of Bob Delaney's riding of Mississauga—Streetsville.

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

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

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

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

“Whereas the decision to add fluoride to municipal drinking water is a patchwork of individual choices across Ontario, with municipal councils often vulnerable to the influence of misinformation, and studies of questionable or no scientific merit;

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

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

I affix my signature to this petition and hand it over to the page.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have a petition that comes from Sudbury but also from 13 other campuses of Everest College.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas over 2,400 students and 450 Everest staff are impacted by the 14 college location closures across Ontario, putting a financial strain on students, employees and their families; and

“Whereas students have the right to finish their programs, avoid unnecessary delays with graduation dates and not incur further financial costs of having to apply to another accredited institution to complete their program; and

“Whereas the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities has been aware of the financial and legal difficulties facing Everest College and the US parent Corinthian Colleges for months; and

“Whereas students cannot afford to put their life on hold while the government struggles to sort out the mess involving another private college;

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

“To act in a prompt manner and protect the interest of Everest students by providing an extension for paying

back OSAP loans, ensuring a full refund is provided and that students can complete their program without delay at another accredited institution.”

I fully support those students in this petition, will affix my name and ask Andrew to bring it to the table.

FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and I’m pleased to support my colleague from Elgin–Middlesex–London in this. It reads as follows:

“Whereas individuals with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) and families are not being properly supported in southwestern Ontario;

“Whereas the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services and the Ministry of Community and Social Services need to develop a comprehensive care strategy that appoints a lead ministry with responsibility for coordinating FASD management and prevention efforts;

“Whereas the provincial government needs to reallocate funding to increase FASD diagnostic and treatment capacity in Ontario, increase community and educational supports and increase prevention efforts across the province;

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

“That the government of Ontario take a cross-ministerial approach in developing a comprehensive care strategy that supports and promotes best practices in FASD management and prevention and provides appropriate supports for individuals with FASD so that they may access the necessary services.”

I’m pleased to sign and support this petition and to send it down with page Julie.

TAXATION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I support this petition, will affix my signature and send it with page Natalie.

1540

DOG OWNERSHIP

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: This is a petition to appeal Ontario’s breed-specific legislation.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas aggressive dogs are found among all breeds and mixed breeds; and

“Whereas breed-specific legislation has been shown to be an expensive and ineffective approach to dog bite prevention; and

“Whereas problem dog owners are best dealt with through education, training and legislation encouraging responsible behaviour;

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

“To repeal the breed-specific sections of the Dog Owners’ Liability Act (2005) and any related acts, and to instead implement legislation that encourages responsible ownership of all dog breeds and types.”

I couldn’t agree more. On behalf of the over 1,000 dogs that have been euthanized, I’m going to give this to Dhairya to be delivered to the table.

IMMIGRATION POLICY

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

“Whereas Ontario is a province of immigrants, representing over 200 countries and speaking more than 130 languages; and

“Whereas Ontario is the primary destination for newcomers to Ontario, receiving more immigrants than the combined total of most of Canada’s provinces and territories; and

“Whereas Ontario is dependent on skilled immigrant labour to fill jobs, 2.5 million of which are estimated to be created in the next 10 years; and

“Whereas a stronger immigration partnership with the federal government will allow Ontario to work with employers and communities to assess labour force needs and bring in highly-skilled workers;

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

“That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario pass and enact, as soon as possible, Bill 49, the Ontario Immigration Act, 2014.”

I fully support the petition, Mr. Speaker, and give my petition to page William.

WIND TURBINES

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“In light of the many wide-ranging concerns being raised by Ontario citizens and 80-plus action groups across Ontario and the irrefutable international evidence of a flawed technology, health concerns, environmental effects, bird and bat kills, property losses, the tearing apart of families, friends and communities, and unprecedented costs;

“We, the undersigned, ask the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to declare an Ontario-wide moratorium on the development of wind farms.”

I totally agree with this petition. I’ll sign it and send it to the desk with Hannah.

FIRST RESPONDERS

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I’m pleased to enter this petition into the record. It reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas emergency response workers (paramedics, police officers, and firefighters) confront traumatic events on a nearly daily basis to provide safety to the public; and

“Whereas many emergency response workers suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of their work; and

“Whereas Bill 2 ‘An Act to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 with respect to post-traumatic stress disorder’ sets out that if an emergency response worker suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder, the disorder is presumed to be an occupational disease that occurred due to their employment as an emergency response worker, unless the contrary is shown;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to unanimously endorse and quickly pass Bill 2 ‘An Act to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 with respect to post-traumatic stress disorder’.”

I support this petition, will affix my name to it, and send it to the Clerks’ table through Morgan.

EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

Mr. Arthur Potts: I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas some establishments have instituted unfair tipping practices in which a portion of tips and gratuities are being deducted and kept by owners;

“Whereas employees in establishments where tipping is a standard practice, such as restaurants, bars and hair salons, supplement their income with tips and gratuities

and depend on those to maintain an adequate standard of living;

“Whereas customers expect that when they leave a tip or gratuity that the benefit will be going to the employees who directly contributed to their positive experience;

“Whereas most establishments do respect their employees and do not collect their tips and gratuities unfairly and thus are left at a disadvantage,” compared to those who do;

“Whereas other jurisdictions in North America such as Quebec, New Brunswick and New York City have passed legislation to protect employees’ tips;

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

“That all members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario support Bill 12, the Protecting Employees’ Tips Act, 2014, and help shield Ontario employees and businesses from operators with improper tipping practices while protecting accepted and standard practices such as tip pooling among employees.”

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

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 this petition, will affix my name and send it with page Ishani.

WORKPLACE SAFETY

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I have a petition collected from across Windsor and Essex county. It reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas in 2013, 16 Ontario construction workers were killed in tragic falls, almost 3,400 WSIB fall claims were accepted and many, many other falls were never even reported;

“Whereas in addition to the human tragedy of workplace falls, the financial cost of each year’s WSIB fall claims is about \$100 million;

“Whereas the provincial government of Newfoundland and Labrador implemented new fall protection training regulations on Jan. 1, 2012, after which fall claims declined by 25%;

“Whereas a similar training requirement and result in Ontario could prevent over 800 fall tragedies each year and avoid \$25 million in cost to the WSIB; and

“Whereas in 2010 the Ontario government promised to implement a similar training requirement by 2012, but still has not done so; and has thereby left workers in peril at a cost of over \$50 million in costs to the WSIB;

“We, the undersigned, call upon the Minister of Labour to make saving workers’ lives a priority and stop delaying fall protection training regulations.”

I fully agree with this petition. I will affix my name to it and give it to page Dhairyra to take up.

WATER FLUORIDATION

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I have a petition.

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

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

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

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

“Whereas the decision to add fluoride to municipal drinking water is a patchwork of individual choices across Ontario, with municipal councils often vulnerable to the influence of misinformation, and studies of questionable or no scientific merit;

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

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

I'll affix my signature to this, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I thank the member.

Just as a reminder: If you have a very lengthy petition, so that others can get other petitions in, I would appreciate it if perhaps you could somehow find a way, not to take away from the message—to still get your message out there—but to shorten it to some degree.

1550

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

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

Resuming the debate adjourned on February 26, 2015, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

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

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): When this item of business was last debated, the member for Welland had the floor, with time remaining. Is the member from Welland here this afternoon?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: You're not supposed to say that. It's against the rules.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I suppose you're not supposed to say that, either, so we're even.

Further debate? I recognize the member from York-Simcoe.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Simcoe North. Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to Bill 40 today.

I understand that it's one of these love-in kinds of bills. Everybody likes Bill 40 and the Agriculture Insurance Act. I think, if properly implemented, it probably would be a really good bill. But I look at some of the things that I worry about, and I want to bring those up today. I also want to make a few other comments and talk about how important agriculture is to me.

First of all, I should tell you that I was raised in a family in construction. My dad thought myself and my

two brothers might be bad guys at times and cause a lot of trouble and that kind of thing, so on the side he bought a farm, because he wanted to keep us off the streets. Okay? That was when we were little wee guys. He wanted to make sure that me and my two brothers, if we did have any time off after working seven days a week, could still go and work on the farm; we didn't go downtown and go to the bowling alley or any of those kinds of things.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: That's why you have the values that you do.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Yes, that's why I have those values. My dad was one of these guys that thought if you didn't work 100 hours a week, you weren't really much good. That's kind of how we were raised.

I should also say that the girl I married, Jane, is a dairy farmer's daughter. Her dad died very young, of cancer. She wasn't able to work—she was only in her early teens when her dad died.

Both of my kids—Jill has a farm. It's a horse farm and it's right across from a major horse farm. They sell the hay to the farm and that type of thing. My son, Andy, who is an excavator operator and a plumber, has a farm as well, and they cash-crop that farm. That's kind of a deal where I'm always being dragged in, because if it's not my tools he's using, he's asking me to go out and work part-time on the farm, fixing barn doors and trying to get the hay wagons together and that kind of thing. It's back to where I started 60 years ago, almost. Now my son wants to keep me off the streets, too, from working too hard.

That's my relationship to farming.

I have a brother-in-law, Ron Shaw. Ron Shaw is a hog farmer. They've got a farm, and I should point out that it's a maple sugar bush. They tap something like 15,000 trees. It has been in the family for over 100 years. Now his son Tommy and his wife, Terri-Lynn, operate that. So we've got kind of a close connection to agriculture.

Not only that, but if you talk to the Simcoe county dairy producers or the Simcoe County Federation of Agriculture, they kind of remind you if you're doing something wrong here. The Simcoe county boys have a very large voice, and they tend to get out and make a lot of comments about things that are going wrong here at Queen's Park.

When Mr. Barrett, the member for Haldimand-Norfolk, talked about crazy questions, I couldn't believe that anybody would not know the difference between hay and straw. Surely that would be everybody's top priority. I'll tell you, we see a lot of straw baled today from the big mega farms, where a lot of the guys take off wheat and oats and, of course, they bale the straw and sell it off in huge amounts. We see them piled up along the side of the road. They are sold to people in certain businesses. A lot of it used to be sold to the harness racing industry. That's gone. They don't sell any to the harness racing industry anymore.

I'll talk a little bit more about the harness racing industry in a couple of minutes, because it's a very sore point with me.

I also want to point out the difference between Ayrshires and Holsteins. Everyone knows the Holsteins are the big dairy cows; the Ayrshires are the small ones.

I want to pay a compliment to a couple of my colleagues in Simcoe county, two dairy farmers who have just become involved in municipal politics.

Rob Keffer, the mayor of Bradford West Gwillimbury, is a friend I've known since we started working on the Lake Simcoe Protection Act. Rob is a phenomenal dairy farmer, and he was just recently elected as the mayor of Bradford West Gwillimbury. I talked to him the other night at Good Roads. He's doing a great job and he really enjoys it.

Also, we've got a new councillor up in Oro-Medonte: Scott Jermey. Scott is councillor for ward 5. He runs an operation of about 200 Ayrshires. They milk about 200 Ayrshire cattle on a huge operation in Oro-Medonte. He has done very well, and we are so pleased that he brings this businesslike attitude and perspective to municipal politics in that area, because at times I feel that township is getting a little too bureaucratic. Now I'm so happy that Scott is there. I've talked to him a few times, and it's great to see the fact that some of the municipal councillors are actually running for these positions.

The farmers in Simcoe county tend to be very, very political. They drive a lot of agendas, and they try to get their concerns across. I can mention a couple of those in a second.

Bill 40: I have a couple of things I'm concerned about. I know it's covering livestock now, but it's going to be really interesting to see how this falls, like if animals die a certain way on the farm. You'd better start looking at what happens with coyotes when they kill livestock right now. That's a major problem in some areas.

I had a meeting just the other day with township people in the township of Oro-Medonte and an organization called Big Curve Acres. They feed animals and grow them for things like the Christmas villages, that type of thing. For specific reasons, they'll grow goats and reindeer and different species.

These animals are being killed by the coyotes, and it's almost a non-stop watch on this all the time. The coyotes rip them apart. When the coyotes kill a reindeer or a deer, and they're doing it all through the woods etc.—and I don't just specifically refer to the coyotes that kill the wild deer. I'm talking about ones that are killing them on farms that are growing the deer. It's sad, what happens; they basically eat them alive.

The reality is that no one seems to be paying attention to this. OMAFRA has got a group involved. MNR—you can talk until you're blue in the face. Nothing happens. I can tell you, if there's going to be a real insurance act dealing with livestock, it had better have an impact on people who are growing this type of livestock. I think it's sad, and I think that the way the government handles coyotes, and the coyote kills, is really bad.

I know there's a whole series of people who believe you can't kill any kind of an animal, and it's wrong to have any kind of a cull. They'll come out in droves with

different wildlife organizations and that sort of thing. But the reality is that if you've ever seen an animal torn apart—a goat or a lamb ripped apart by a coyote—you might have a second thought. And when it starts hitting little Fido and the little dogs in your yards, that's when you have another thought. And worse still, when something happens to children, that's going to be a problem.

I want to put it on the record today for sure. Let's make sure, if this act has any teeth at all, that in the regulations we specifically deal with animals that are predators on farm animals and on animals that are being raised for agricultural purposes. It's very, very important that that takes place. Not everyone can raise their animals in a mega barn, like some of the hogs are raised etc. Some of them are actually outside, and those are the ones that are being identified badly. I really want to make sure that's on the record.

Another thing, when we talk about insurances—I think most of our municipalities in Ontario have fairly large municipal drains in them. My wife is a council member in the township of Severn, and we've got some problems right in that township as well. The drains have not been maintained for 20 or 25 years. There has not been any kind of a program put in place to clean the drains. This is usually done with the permission of the owners; the owners pay part of those costs. But when you leave it that long, major problems develop. First of all, trees and that grow; little shrubs and trees will grow right in the ditches. That causes even worse flooding, and that worse flooding backs up on the farm fields, and some of the fields are soaked until way beyond the time when you can put in the proper crops.

1600

If there are teeth in the legislation, it also has to have teeth in the things that impact the insurance purposes. Is there someone in Ontario who actually picks up the phone each day or each year and says to the municipality, "How are your municipal drains coming along? Have you got a cleaning program in place?" Those municipal drains were put in there for a purpose, for agricultural purposes, to drain land so people can properly grow crops on land. I'm sure it happens in most municipalities right across our province. I know that there are municipal drain inspectors. I just think it's a mishmash right now. I think there are just too many unanswered questions. I think if we're going to really properly have an insurance act, then make sure that things like the municipal drains have some kind of a coordinated effort so that someone is actually keeping an eye on them so they can be properly cleaned.

The same thing applies to MNR. No one takes responsibility for trees that fall into these rivers. You just can't go out and remove a tree from the river, because then you'll kill the fish habitat, that type of thing. In some cases, it's wildlife as well, with mink and fishers and those sorts of animals. I also think that there's a responsibility here, and I know it's a complete new silo, but I think there's a responsibility with MNR and making sure that if they're going to actually look after natural

resources, when a tree falls down in a river, it's actually allowed to be cleaned out. It's allowed to be taken out, and there's some kind of effort from MNR to approve that without only dealing with the problems around the fish habitat.

Here's the problem: These trees fall in a river, and they become a dam. We're going to see a lot in Ontario in the next two or three weeks when we start getting milder weather. The conservation authorities will all be out there screaming. There's floods; flooding could happen. In a lot of cases, the flooding is not necessary. When the ice jams up against the trees, then it creates a natural dam, and the natural dam goes back on the waters and floods wetland areas as well. In many cases, it floods the agricultural lands—it's the same as the municipal drains—to the point where people can't get on the crops as early as they'd like to. It is a real problem.

I just think that when you're talking about having this new legislation—it looks like everybody is onside; it's wonderful, it's wonderful, it's wonderful. Are we actually going to be dealing with these kinds of problems, or is it going to be some kind of a part of the area where no one will really be concerned about it, and we'll be back here fighting for an amendment a few years from now?

I also wanted to say one other thing. I don't have a lot to say on all these things, but I think what's important is, as an agricultural community, as a province that depends on agriculture, it's the heart and soul, the backbone of our history. I'm not sure how many people are aware, but we actually had at one time an agricultural party in Ontario, a farming union party. E.C. Drury was the Premier back in the 1920s. There's a huge picture of Mr. Drury out there. He wrote a book on that. I recommend it to everybody. If you ever have a chance to read the book by E.C. Drury called the Farmer Premier, you'll see some interesting things he did. For example, he was the Premier who brought in uniforms for the OPP. Who would have thought that? You would have thought that would have been some guy in downtown Toronto, a Bill Blair fan, who would have brought in uniforms for the police officers. But no, it was actually an agricultural Premier who brought that in. There are all kinds of neat things in that book that people should think of.

It was actually the last time for that particular organization. They thought they could do better than the Liberals, better than the Conservatives, better than the NDP at the time, and they had their own party, and they formed government, I believe, for five or six years at the time.

Interjection.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Pardon? Yes, they did a good job.

So back to my problem that I wanted to zero in on at the very beginning, the harness racing industry. Does anybody remember here about three years ago when the finance minister and Paul Godfrey—remember that thing called the casino modernization plan? It was a big deal. There were going to be casinos all over the place. Everybody wanted a casino. There was going to be one in

Vaughan, one downtown and more in Niagara. Whatever happened to that disaster? You know what? It went with 40,000 jobs in the harness racing industry. That's what happened to it. Where was the insurance for them? Does anybody know: Did any of those guys get any insurance? I know of nobody. I know of many, many people who were put out of business. As I said earlier, the farmers used to sell literally millions of dollars in crops like hay and straw to that industry. No longer. A lot of those farms now are for sale. They're cash-cropping it, but those people are no longer working in Ontario. There were going to be all kinds of casinos built that they said would have worked, but that whole thing was a flop, a disaster. It's hard to imagine that we're sitting here today patting ourselves on the back over the Agriculture Insurance Act, Bill 40, when we as a Parliament let that slide by us.

The harness racing industry in Ontario is a disaster, and everyone in this room knows it. There's only a few people making money, and that's the big tracks. The little guys are out of it. They're gone. They are out of business today. I find that the whole thing has been a disgrace, to be a citizen of Ontario and to allow that to happen to a really vulnerable group of people. They got no insurance—no insurance for anything. They are on their own. I can tell you of guys who used to have 30 or 40 horses; now they might have one or two, and they're not worth anything. Many of them were sold for meat for other animals or that sort of thing. It's a disgrace, what happened to a system that was a model—

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Around the world.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: It was a model around the world, and we let it slide by. Here we are today patting ourselves on the back about Bill 40 when we allowed that to happen to many of our agricultural stakeholders.

If you look back at the whole Slots at Racetracks Program, the whole thing from the very beginning was to enhance the agricultural industry. That was their mission statement, but we allowed that to slide by, and it's disgraceful that that actually happened.

So I'd appreciate comments on that, because I know I can come up with hundreds of names of people who have been put out of business by that. I'd be interested in hearing what the government says, as we pat ourselves on the back over Bill 40, about how they would handle insurance purposes on that bill or on that particular program, because it was the casino modernization plan that was the beginning of the end for the harness racing industry in Ontario. I'm not saying we don't have an industry still, but it's a fraction of what it used to be—a fraction.

So that's sort of it in a nutshell for me. I can talk here all day, as you know, but I just think that we should not—when we deal with Bill 40 and we deal with the regulations, let's make sure two things happen: first of all, that farmers know this applies to them. Many times, and we've seen it with, for example, the child care modernization plan, they didn't know what was happening to them. Many things have happened in this House where

there has been a lack of consultation. Let's make sure that farmers actually know this exists so they know what's available to them, and let's make sure it's implemented properly.

Some of the things I brought out, like the municipal drainage act and many of the things I brought out in my comments today—make sure that they are actually addressed in the regulations and not something where, you know, a year later, when there are some animals killed by coyotes, they are still fighting with OMAFRA and MNR, and this whole bill will mean nothing to them.

On the positive side, if we can take steps to help the agriculture industry with Bill 40, I'm all behind it, and I will be voting in favour of this. All I'm trying to point out is what I see as negative here, some of the things that I see that could be a barrier down the road to agriculture.

Keep this in mind: The one final comment I'd say is that people in agriculture are some of the hardest-working people that we have in our country. They don't get a lot of winter vacations, in most cases. If you're a dairy farmer today and if you don't have a huge operation, you're basically on that farm 365 days a year. That's how many of those people raise their—whatever we do with those people who work 365, let's give them some kind of a break, so that they can get less red tape, less bureaucracy. Let them earn their living and let them look after their families in a responsible and respected manner, the manner that they deserve to be respected in.

1610

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to close my remarks there. I appreciate the opportunity to say a few words very much, and I look forward to the comments.

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

Mr. Taras Natyshak: It's a pleasure to join the debate today on the bill before us: Bill 40, the Agriculture Insurance Act. I had the pleasure to speak to this bill last week, and I brought up some important ideas and concerns that members of my community of Essex have raised when it comes to agriculture, and specifically, the way that the provincial government deals with agriculture in Ontario: in an ad hoc manner, and one that really doesn't put enough emphasis and priority in terms of its position in our economy. That position is one that I think is of the utmost importance when it comes to food security, food sovereignty and the ability for your own region to feed itself, quite literally.

The Agriculture Insurance Act is enabling legislation. It allows the government to bring other commodities that are currently not covered by business risk management programs or agriculture insurance programs into the fold of the provincial government. Without any type of dollar amount attached to it, it's simply a good gesture. It's not necessarily a remedy for what we know is really important: the ability for farmers to have a predictable and bankable support mechanism to continue their operations and be able to buffer those difficult times, whether it be economic conditions or environmental conditions.

I look forward to hearing from the Minister of Agriculture in terms of how much money he's willing to

attach to these new commodities that will be brought into the fold. I would recommend that it be substantial, because there are many that will eat up the bulk amount that is currently allocated on their own if things go awry.

Speaker, there are so many things that we could be doing in agriculture provincially: a buy-Ontario procurement strategy; a standing committee on agriculture; apprenticeship programs for youth who want to join the industry. We're not doing enough. It's simply piecemeal and ad hoc, but this is a step, I think, in the right direction.

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

Mr. Bob Delaney: Although the member took a bit of liberty with the topic, I have to take one of his digressions and agree with him. I agree with the member on the coyote issue. Coyotes are an invasive species. Both in cities and in rural areas, we need effective measures to deal with non-native invasive species in Ontario. The syndrome that he described about coyotes killing livestock is no less true in the city, where they rip apart pets. Although it's a digression, I've got to say that I'm on his side on that one.

Speaker, the bill is about production insurance, which is something that covers losses and yield reductions that are caused by things against which you're insured. In other words, it's not unlike your home in that respect. Producers can choose the type and the level of coverage that best meets their needs. For example, in 2013, there were more than 14,000 insurance customers representing five million acres and nearly \$3 billion in liabilities that were ensured under the production insurance program. In practical terms, this is available for some 90 commercially grown crops, which would include, but certainly isn't limited to, such things as grains and oilseeds, tree fruits and grapes, processing vegetables, fresh market vegetables, specialty crops and forage.

A lot of us will remember, back in decades past, when you would read in the news that various levels of government would pay producers not to grow something or whatever. Most developed countries do offer subsidized production insurance, so increasingly governments are focusing on insurance-based measures to deal with random events rather than direct payments to producers.

Speaker, with that, I look forward to hearing the balance of the debate and to seeing speedy passage.

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

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I really appreciate the comments that we have heard over the last few minutes from my colleague from Simcoe North. He was very, very astute in pointing out the barriers that Ontario farmers are facing with regard to primary production in this province. He is very much on the mark when he touches on—if we're talking about true issues, legislation that touches on insurance and true issues in Ontario, we have to think about coyotes, particularly with small ruminants. He was spot-on.

The other thing that we heard him say is that this legislation—albeit that we're supporting it because it's

necessary to catch things up, we find it very fluffy. If this government of the day was truly committed to the agri-food industry in Ontario, they'd be in touch with huge issues that are happening. For instance, the member from Simcoe North mentioned his boys—his farmers—are very engaged and they let him know where things are at.

I have to say, in my riding of Huron–Bruce, we have a farming industry that is second to none. What I'm hearing is, you know, enough with the fluff legislation. Let's talk about what really matters. With the price of beef going through the roof, the feeder finance program, as it's defined today, doesn't cut the mustard any longer. I appreciate that the minister will be addressing it, but it's long overdue—

Hon. Jeff Leal: Stay tuned.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: —and I look forward to hearing about it.

Another thing that we're hearing about is the Risk Management Program. The cap that the Liberal government put in place absolutely has handcuffed some folks. With that, when we're talking about primary production, we have a provincial government that needs to be listening to all farmers across this province.

I would also like to share, in my final moments, that we need awareness and education as well.

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

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I was enthralled when the member from Simcoe North was speaking on the bill and he reminded me about the collapse of the harness racing industry in Ontario.

I have to tell you, Speaker—and I've told you this before—when they closed down the slots at Windsor Raceway, and the track eventually closed and we lost 3,000 jobs, that was the motivating factor for me to join the political party I did, the NDP. It was the first time I ever joined a party, but that was the reason. It was to get back at the Liberals for throwing 3,000 people out of work in my area. I know that my friend from Nickel Belt—Sudbury Downs was closed, and 200 people lost their jobs up there.

We can't make up for what the Liberals have done. They said they did it because the tracks weren't accountable. Instead of making them accountable, instead of looking after the little guy, they shut down the little tracks and kept the big tracks open. The big tracks were the ones that weren't accountable, that they couldn't harness in, if you will.

When I heard the member from Simcoe North talking about that, it just reminded me about the number of friends I have still, to this day, in the local harness racing industry in Windsor and Essex county.

We're trying to get a new track, Speaker. As you know, they run the races—a dozen races or so—with the Leamington Fairgrounds. We're trying to get a new track, trying to get more racing dates in Windsor and Essex county, to prove to the government that it can be done. The handle that they bring in in Leamington is higher than at a lot of the other tracks that are still operat-

ing. We can prove that we can make a track work in Windsor and Essex county, and we would like that opportunity. I call on the minister to work with us, to work with the people he has appointed to the commission. We can do it. We can make it happen. We can restore that part of the industry in our part of the province.

Thank you for your time this afternoon.

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

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I thank the members from Essex, Mississauga–Streetsville, Huron–Bruce and Windsor–Tecumseh for their comments as well.

I want to thank the member from Mississauga–Streetsville for his comments on the coyote, on a possible cull or just awareness. This is a real problem. It periodically hits different parts of our province. Right now, in Simcoe county, it's really bad. Basically, there are hardly any deer left, and they're attacking farm animals and pets as well. There's a huge coyote population. Now I'm hearing rumours of them coming to the GTA and being seen in the cities and that sort of thing. I just think it's something we have to be very careful of. I'm not sure how it exactly falls into insurance, but it does fall into awareness of what insurance should do if, in fact, farm animals are killed by coyotes, and we don't have some runaround with OMAFRA and MNR over what actually happened.

1620

In the end, one of the really good things about this bill, and I'll thank the minister for this: It does bring agriculture awareness to a piece of legislation. I thank you for that, Minister, because we need more agricultural-type bills so that we can debate and brag about the agricultural industry in Ontario.

The member from Huron–Bruce calls her riding, I think, Ontario's west coast. I believe there's more agriculture that takes place in that riding than all of the Maritimes put together. These are all parts that we should be bragging about and having awareness on.

I thank you for the opportunity to say a few words today. Of course, we'll be passing this bill, but we'll be looking very carefully at the results of it as well.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate? The member from Niagara Falls.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Good afternoon, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for allowing me to speak on Bill 40 today. As many of you know, I came from manufacturing, my background. So perhaps I'm not as much of an expert on the bill, like my colleagues and the NDP agricultural critic.

With that being said, my riding, which includes Niagara Falls, Fort Erie and Niagara-on-the-Lake, has a very active agricultural community. We have farms growing grapes for our incredible Niagara wines. We have orchards that produce world-class fruit and, of course, we have an incredible array of livestock in my riding. Even though I personally have never been a farmer, I understand the incredibly important role of agriculture in the province of Ontario and in the Niagara region.

The agri-food business brings over \$30 billion into the Ontario economy each year and fuels in some way upwards of 750,000 jobs. This industry is a major economic driver and a major job producer. Those stats alone show that this industry needs the support of government. Directly, this is driven by the upwards of 15,000 farmers in Ontario who cover more than five million acres of land.

But there's more to it. A province that can't feed itself is a province doomed to fail. Really, this isn't hard to see. It's a sad story all over the province of Ontario right now. We have families turning to food banks, turning to local charities to try to access food. We're talking about seniors and children here who don't have food.

With proper government assistance, we'll never need to worry about that in Ontario. As many of my colleagues have pointed out, we have a vibrant and innovative agricultural sector in all corners of this province, producing world-class food and products. If we work together, we can get this food to the people of Ontario who need it. We can do that by supporting our farmers.

Let me say this clearly: Agriculture insurance is a fundamental tool we can use to protect our farmers right here in Ontario. This bill we're debating today will allow for insurance to be offered to more producers in this province. This is an integral step to giving our agriculture sector the backing they need to be able to grow their businesses. With this kind of insurance, we can make sure that our farmers here in Ontario know that if something out of their control occurs, the government will be there to support them.

Mr. Speaker, we've got coverage for things like grain, fruit, vegetables and tobacco, and yet we have no coverage for things like beef and maple products. What has this meant? This has meant that when a freak weather occurrence happens, say, things like flash floods that destroy crops, the farmer has some sort of safety net so they don't lose their land or, worse, their business. Yet, things like PED in pork or BSE in beef, or when flash floods kill livestock—there's no insurance available. So if you happened to go into fruit farming, good for you, you're safe, but if you inherited a farm where your main product is beef, that's too bad. Just thinking about that is enough to make your head spin. These are jobs and job creators, and they should be treated with respect.

This isn't a new problem either. The Ontario Federation of Agriculture has been calling for this expansion of insurance since the early 2000s. Ontario lags behind other provinces in protecting these categories. This is a problem that has been brought up time and time again. Now more than ever, this sort of insurance is necessary.

It's not hard to see why. Climate change—something that I hear a lot from the other side—is greatly affecting our ability to grow crops comfortably across this province. As we see changes in temperature and in humidity, we see new insects entering into our environment where they have never been seen before. We start to see crops reacting differently to weather changes. These sorts of things put our farmers' businesses at risk.

We hear this government say that we are a leader in fighting climate change here in Ontario and that this Liberal government is a progressive government, yet, this has been happening for years, and our farmers are the ones who are unfairly taking on this burden.

These sorts of things are the exact same things that hurt our livestock farmers—those who produce meat, milk and cheese. With climate change occurring and unpredictable weather patterns, we start to see new insects and diseases affecting our livestock.

Many of you know that I have spoken in this House before about Lyme disease. It's spreading across this province because of climate change. As temperatures change, ticks are being found in places that you could never have found them before. They're biting people, and people are getting Lyme disease. This is happening so fast that our province is struggling to keep up with medical demands. I hope very soon that this government will properly confront Lyme disease from diagnosis to treatment. That's just one example of what's happening.

In certain cases there's protection for crops against these same sort of challenges, and yet with our livestock there is no protection. It makes absolutely no sense to give protection to one group of agricultural workers and not another. I'm glad there is an effort to fix this problem. I just sincerely hope it's acted upon sooner rather than later.

What they need to address this issue is strong insurance regulation—the kind of regulation that gives farmers the support they need and the confidence to do their work, the confidence to grow their businesses, to hire more workers and to put out more product. Unfortunately, this bill doesn't quite seem to do that.

Mr. Speaker, it's been clearly pointed out that this is an enabling bill. Our farmers and those working in the agricultural sector have needed this coverage for 10 years. The sentiment in this bill is one that New Democrats support, but this bill does not create anything; it just shows the intention to have insurance extended to areas where it isn't today. That's great—

Interjection.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Pay attention—and we support the need for this legislation, but let's put in some solid plans to get it done.

There are some facts at play which worry New Democrats that this may be nothing more than an enabling bill. The Minister of Agriculture—who is here, by the way, listening, and I appreciate that. Thank you very much for being here.

Applause.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Yes, give him a hand. It's good. I think it's important that he's here. I think he should hear this.

1630

It's slated for around a 6% budget cut this year, according to the 2014 budget. Now, I know we're going to get a new budget in another month or so. This bill, if you read it, clearly says nothing concrete about funding. It doesn't say anything about funding—which is import-

ant to the farmers. Right now agriculture insurance is paid 40% by the farmers, which I'm sure you know, 36% by the federal government and 24% by the provincial government. That's all there is to it. If you just read the numbers, you can see why this is a concern.

This bill claims that there will be extended insurance coverage. Well, some of that has to come from the government; some of that insurance money has to come from the government. Yet there's nothing here to say where that money is coming from. I think that's important. If there are no new funding streams being introduced, then it would have to mean cuts from somewhere else. Of course, we can debate the merits of those cuts, but in order to do that we have to know what those cuts are going to be; if not, it becomes pretty clear that this is nice to say to the farmers but doesn't actually support our agricultural sector, which we're all trying to do.

Mr. Speaker, there's another important aspect to our local agriculture as well—and that's buying local. You can drive to my riding, to Niagara-on-the-Lake in the summertime and really experience what Ontario farmers can do. The fruit they grow down there is second to none—second to none. If somewhere else in the world made a better product, I could see them arguing that we should buy that, but when it comes to agriculture here in Ontario, we are the best. The tomatoes, the peaches, the strawberries, the corn: It's absolutely unreal how delicious our local food is. Honestly—

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'm hungry.

Mr. Wayne Gates: That's good. You've got another eight minutes before you can go and eat.

But honestly—and I'm glad the MPPs are listening, because I invite every MPP here today to take some time in the summer and come down to my riding in Niagara. You can go to a market like Orchard Glen and get some of that fresh food for yourself. And—this is something that I know you'll all enjoy—you can drive the length of the Niagara Parkway, all the way from Fort Erie to Niagara-on-the-Lake, and you can stop at any one of the dozen local fruit stands. The drive is beautiful. Winston Churchill—anybody remember him?—called it the most beautiful Sunday drive in the world. While you're enjoying yourself there—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I never thought I'd hear you quote Winston Churchill, Gatesie.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I did. You have to quote him when he's right, and he's right about Niagara.

You can see for yourself why the products we're growing in Niagara are second to none. I'm proud to see this is catching on. You can go down to the farmers' markets in my riding, and they're absolutely packed in the summer. The Ridgeway market is an example. It's always busy with people. We've got just as many visitors as we do locals down there. They know that the food is fresh, they know it's delicious and they trust where it came from.

When we buy local, we support our local economy right here in Ontario. When we buy local, we know that our products are being held to a very high standard and

that they're going to be healthy for our families, which is important.

I'm happy to see that so many people in my riding take advantage of this. I wish we could see more of this right across the province. We need to support our agriculture industry just as much as this government needs to support this industry. We used to have the capacity to do it. In Niagara Falls—and I know a lot of people would probably remember this—the last canning company closed down: Del Monte. They were good-paying jobs. What happened in that situation—the federal government paid almost \$30 million to the farmers to tear out their peach trees, rip them right out of the ground. I know that's a federal issue, but again, I go back to what I said earlier in this speech: If you're a country or a province that can't feed yourself, you're going to be in trouble.

There is no way that we should have been tearing perfectly good peach trees out of the ground so that Del Monte could ship those same peaches in from China and Third World countries. It made absolutely no sense. This meant the loss of hundreds of jobs right here in Ontario. It's not hard to see the net benefit for Canada in making sure this industry is strong.

Interruption.

Hon. Jeff Leal: The speech is so good, the lights are going out.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I don't know if that's a good thing or a bad thing.

When we talk about spinoff jobs related to agriculture, this is what we mean. These are decent jobs for people. Ontario farmers were creating an Ontario product, canned and delivered right here in Ontario. With some of the cheaper products coming in, we've begun to lose this. But you go to the farmers' markets these days and you can see that that's beginning to turn around, and that's good news.

That's the sort of stuff that will be impacted by this bill. If we cover all of our agricultural products like we currently cover our crops, then those in the industry will have the confidence to begin operating again. When they start producing food, jobs start being created, and the development isn't hard to understand.

As you all know, I'm a big supporter of "buy local." I love to see people supporting their local farmers, the same way I love to see them supporting local contractors and local workers, like I mentioned here last week. That's how everyone can do their part. When it comes to this legislation, the government needs to do their part—

Interruption.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Am I good?

Interjection: Keep going.

Interjections.

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

Mr. Wayne Gates: Do you want me to keep going? Okay, I'm going to keep going, but I'm not going to use a cheap joke here and say, "Did you guys pay the hydro bill?" I'm not going to go there. I'm just going to continue on my speech. Is that okay, Mr. Speaker?

Interjections.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Mr. Speaker, I invite every member to come back to my riding with me for a few days. While you're there, you'll be more than welcome to come with me to see the Niagara IceDogs play. You can show the importance of this Legislature.

Niagara is getting hit with one of the toughest winters we've ever seen. Luckily, it's beautiful in the winter. When you're down there, you can see the falls—some of which have briefly frozen over and look incredible—or tour the fantastic wineries, like the Ravine or Two Sisters wineries. We get thousands of tourists who come to Niagara Falls in the winter, who stay in our great hotels and visit our stores and, of course, support our local businesses. Thankfully, there is a lot to do in my riding in the winter. Nevertheless, it's cold.

During this time last year, I had just finished knocking on doors in my by-election. We were hearing then about how the unpredictable weather was affecting harvests. Grape growers were having their seasons affected by the length of the winters, that were particularly cold. Those who had insurance had the peace of mind to know that one bad year wouldn't completely ruin them and their businesses, but there are a number of people in this province who don't have the same peace of mind. As my colleague from Welland noted, some areas lost 50% of their buds last year. Crop insurance is one of the tools these farmers use to survive year after year.

Local students at Brock University have been working hard to try to fix the problem. Students in their courses have worked with leading researchers in helping to make grape crops sustainable during harsh winters. Before, vineyards might lose their entire ice wine harvest to bad weather. Today, because of our talented and brilliant young minds, they can save their harvests and continue to get our amazing Niagara wines into the LCBO.

1640

Of course, while we're on the topic of supporting our local agriculture, we should briefly mention supporting our local grape growers and wineries. This can be done easily, by expanding their shelf space at the LCBO. Instead of economic growth going to places outside of Canada, we can put that money back into businesses right here in the province. They can do this just by giving local wineries more space on the shelves of the LCBO. After all, shouldn't the province be supporting our local businesses? The point is, it shouldn't just be up to them to help the agriculture sector. Government needs to play a role as well when things out of the farmers' hands occur.

I spoke with a local beekeeper in Niagara-on-the-Lake. They tell me directly that when the winter is this long and this harsh, it affects them too. They can't feed the bees properly and the bees start to die. One hive can house as many as 50,000 bees in the springtime, and they're not cheap to replace. We start to hear that in Niagara people lose 10 to 50 hives, the entire bee population, over the course of the winter.

I still have a few pages left but I'll finish up. Thanks very much for my time and for listening.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I thank the member from Niagara Falls for casting additional light on the subject.

I now move over to questions and comments. I recognize the Minister of the Environment and Climate Control—Change.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Climate control, yes.

I always thought, Mr. Speaker, that this was a conservation initiative, lowering the lights. It improves the esthetics in here; I've never seen you all look so beautiful.

I want to—

Mr. John Yakabuski: That's harassment.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Coming from you, John—please.

I want to agree with my friend opposite: There are a lot of challenging dynamics here because the climate is changing in dramatic ways and there is a greater call for insurance.

I also want to address, Mr. Speaker, the idea of the importance of the relationships between urban and rural Ontario. Part of the reason we can do that is we have the biggest building boom going on right out those windows there, building a tax base, and it is that tax base growth that is so essential, because many small rural communities need infusion of capital. They don't have the property tax base or the commercial tax base to do that. If we don't realize the interdependence fiscally of large centres—we wouldn't have banking in Toronto if we didn't have mining in the north. We had mining banks. We wouldn't have a healthy financial sector here if we didn't have a strong rural Ontario.

This is the time where the insurance model of transferring wealth within the province is particularly important. So I want to thank the Minister of Agriculture and Food for his leadership here, because he's the first leader since 1996 to address this issue. It's been sitting around for the better part of two decades now, and I'm really pleased to see this happen.

I also just want to say a few things about—part of the competition in Niagara is that we have an exploding wine industry, and it is displacing a lot of our fruit production. Part of the reason Del Monte left is that we have more wineries down there, and wineries and grape-growing generate a lot more revenue. We have challenges right now.

Also, if you look at the numbers, and you look at the conversions from forage crops to soy and corn, we have a different profile now of food production, and that's going to be another important part of looking at food security going forward. It's very interesting to read the last couple of OFA reports on the food mix in Ontario.

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

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I want to commend the member from Niagara. I really appreciate the pride that exudes out of him with regards to the riding that he represents and I am so glad to hear him talk about the importance of buying local and supporting our farmers,

and the fact that he appreciates and values the fruit farming in his riding.

But some of his comments reminded me of the initiatives that OFA embarks upon. In 2013, they hosted a field day in late July at the farm of Phil Armstrong just north of town—just north of Brampton, actually. It was a really good initiative to talk about how crops are grown and the ins and outs of the dairy industry.

This past summer, in 2014, OFA was going to host a field day northeast of the GTHA, and I was really looking forward to it, Speaker. I grew up on a beef cash crop farm, I live on a meat goat and cash crop farm now, the rest of my in-laws are all dairy farmers, and I was really looking forward to this particular field day because it was on a fruit farm, and we were going to visit a market garden. I was really dismayed because the OFA had to cancel this field day because there weren't enough members interested in participating in that particular initiative. We all have to do our part in understanding the diverse agri-food industry in Ontario if we're going to properly represent it here in this chamber.

When we talk about making sure our farmers do not lose their land—and we have to be very sensitive to the type of insurance that our farmers in Ontario have—I have to say there's no insurance against industrial wind turbines for farmers. Currently, because of some big wind companies not being happy with particular farmers in my riding, they're going to try to bankrupt them with charges. It's not right, and we need to do better by them.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: It was very interesting and, in parts, entertaining to listen to my colleague from Niagara Falls talk about Bill 40, the Agriculture Insurance Act.

The bill has good intentions to cover more people in agriculture with insurance—not just crop insurance, but every other part of agriculture. But it is just that: intentions. We don't see how much money is being designated to this. We don't see exactly how this will be rolled out. Who will be in? Who will be out? It's still a big question mark. The intentions are good; the details are sparse. That was a point well made by my colleague.

There are lots of risks to being in agriculture. There is a huge amount of investment that needs to be done so that you can have the trailer, the tractor, the barns, all of the equipment that you need to farm and to be in agriculture. The risks are great, so insurance makes sense. But who will be in? Who will be out? There will always be, basically, risks associated with growing a crop.

My colleagues from before mentioned that the Sudbury racetrack no longer holds racing, which means that everybody who grew hay to feed those racehorses now has no buyers, which means severe financial hardship for about a hundred of them. There's no insurance for that, Speaker.

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

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: Scarborough Southwest is part of Toronto, so I'm a city member.

I really like people to speak and make some comments. The member from Niagara Falls, before I make some comments, I just want to share a small story with you and the members here.

When I was practising law, I was representing a client who just came from the Ukraine. We were talking in my office, and he said, "I want to go to Niagara-on-the-Lake." I said, "You mean Niagara Falls." "No, I want to go to Niagara-on-the-Lake." I said, "Okay, but you want to see Niagara Falls." "No, I want to see Niagara-on-the-Lake." So we went on a Sunday, and he said, "I want to buy some peaches." I learned a lesson. We bought a basket of peaches just picked that day. I can say in all truth that it was the tastiest peach I ever tasted in my life, right from his riding—not from China, not from any other country, but from Niagara-on-the-Lake. It was just off the tree, a couple of hours later. I've been back several times. The best peaches are right from Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The bill in front of us, Bill 40, provides insurance to cover other crops and allows the Minister of Agriculture, who's here today, and the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change—it's important that he's here, too. I honestly believe there's going to be more and more climate change. It's going to affect the crops all over Ontario, especially in Niagara-on-the-Lake, where so much is grown, not just grapes, but so many other things as well.

1650

I agree with a lot of his comments and hopefully this bill will go to committee, we'll have a discussion and it will come back for final third reading.

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

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'd like to thank all my colleagues for their comments. I would like to say thanks to the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of the Environment for being here today to hear this important topic.

I didn't get a chance to talk about a couple of things—I didn't get through all my notes—but I do want to talk a little bit about the horse racing industry. Because the reality is, in my hometown we've had a really tough time around the Fort Erie Race Track, trying to make sure that we have enough dates there. This year we're going to get an extra three dates. We're going to go from 36 dates to 39, but the reality is, if that's going to be a long-term business that's going to last for a long time and protect the 1,200 jobs here, we've got to get that up to 75 to 80 race dates. The only way we're going to be able to do that is through the slots program or through some form of betting. I've been talking about single-game betting. Although that's a federal issue, I think it's one that would help the Fort Erie Race Track in that particular area; it would also create some more jobs there.

The other thing I'd like to talk about is, the Premier talked about how she's challenging the agricultural sector to create 120,000 new jobs. I believe if you bring all-way GO service to Niagara, we can bite into that pretty quickly.

I want to say to the Minister of the Environment—he talked about how the wine industry is booming. You're absolutely right. Niagara-on-the-Lake is in the top 10 tourist areas in the entire province of Ontario. Some of that is not only the wine industry growing, but also the quality of the restaurants and some of the other stuff that people are coming down for.

But on the canning factory itself, when I talked about the federal government and pulling the peaches out of the ground, it wasn't a winery that went in its place; what went into it was development of homes, which really didn't make a lot of sense. So I want you to just understand where I was going on that.

Thank you very much for listening. I appreciate it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I thank the member for Niagara Falls and all those who added to the debate.

Pursuant to standing order 47(c), I am now required to interrupt the proceedings and announce that there has been more than six and a half hours of debate on the motion for second reading of the bill. This debate will therefore be deemed adjourned unless the government House leader specifies otherwise.

Deputy government House leader.

Hon. James J. Bradley: The government wishes the debate to continue.

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

Mr. Grant Crack: I'm going to have the privilege of sharing my time with a couple of my colleagues, the members from Northumberland—Quinte West, the honourable Lou Rinaldi; Ottawa South, Mr. John Fraser; Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Mr. Peter Milczyn; and Ann Hoggarth, the member from Barrie.

Hon. Jeff Leal: What a lineup.

Mr. Grant Crack: It is a great lineup, Minister.

It's a pleasure for me to rise this afternoon and share my comments on Bill 40, the Agriculture Insurance Act, 2014. As one of the members who previously spoke had indicated, any opportunity to speak about agriculture in this House is a great opportunity, and I couldn't agree more.

I'd like to thank the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, the Honourable Jeff Leal, for introducing this excellent piece of legislation. Our government, since being elected in 2003, has been incredibly committed to the agricultural industry in the province of Ontario. That's why it continues to prosper, and we are going to continue to take those measures that are necessary to ensure its long-term viability in the province of Ontario.

There has been a lot of positive response from the members opposite with regard to this bill. I'm very, very pleased to hear that. It would be my preference to move this bill into committee as soon as possible, so that we could actually hear from stakeholders, but we're going to continue to debate it for a little bit longer. That's a welcome thing as well.

I must tell you that I was honoured when former Premier Dalton McGuinty gave me a call, shortly after

the 2011 elections. He said, "Grant, would you be interested in being the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs?" I was obviously honoured by the request that the Premier made of me and I accepted. Now that position is held by the member from Beaches—East York, Mr. Arthur Potts, and he is here in that role to ensure that we can bring the rural area and agriculture into the urban area as well.

My riding of Glengarry—Prescott—Russell is predominantly agriculture. It's the main economic driver in our area. We have cash crops. We have dairy, eggs, poultry, pork—and goats as part of the dairy as well.

Ms. Soo Wong: Do you have sheep?

Mr. Grant Crack: We have Skotidakis. I just want to give a little plug in for Skotidakis—

Ms. Soo Wong: Sheep, sheep.

Mr. Grant Crack: We have sheep as well. But Skotidakis in St. Eugene—

Interjection: Beau's brewery. You've got Beau's brewery.

Mr. Grant Crack: We've got Beau's brewery as well.

I've had the opportunity to meet with the Chicken Farmers of Ontario, the Egg Farmers of Ontario and the Dairy Farmers of Ontario and develop some pretty strong relationships with them. But I can tell you that the great relationship that our government has with our stakeholders is part of the reason for the co-operation that we've had on some of the programs we've implemented, specifically the business risk management program that was designed by farmers for farmers. We took that and made it into a piece of legislation. We're moving forward and this is going to actually enhance some of the programs that we have in place as well.

But let me talk about le collège d'Alfred in my riding of Glengarry—Prescott—Russell. Alfred College, as we well know, was under threat last year with the decision by the University of Guelph that they would be closing both the Alfred campus and Kemptville campus. But I can tell you that our government has worked hard. I would like to thank the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, as well as the minister responsible for francophone affairs and all of my colleagues for the support as we continue to work towards that long-term solution that is going to be necessary to ensure that francophones across this great province, and particularly in my riding of Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, have the ability to have their education in agriculture in their language, which is, of course, French.

The united counties of Prescott-Russell—I know my time's almost up, but too bad, gentlemen and ladies. The united counties of Prescott-Russell just recently met with the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs at the ROMA/Good Roads conference. They reiterated how important the collège d'Alfred is to our region in Glengarry—Prescott—Russell. They did the economic impact study. It was about \$12 million lost to the local economy

if Alfred College was to either relocate or close completely.

We're working very diligently with our community partners and with the various ministries involved, and we will continue to work to ensure that Glengarry–Prescott–Russell and all our farmers right across this great province of Ontario continue to prosper in the long term.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Now I turn it over to the member from Northumberland–Quinte West.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: It is indeed a pleasure whenever I get the opportunity to talk about agriculture and rural Ontario.

Let me just be very clear. I'm not a farmer, but my house abuts a farm right behind me and I see the great work and the long hours that they work.

Let me also tell you my interest in agriculture and rural Ontario. When I first entered municipal politics, I had the privilege of being the reeve of what was then Brighton township, a totally rural community. I was able to put together a number of farmers to act as an advisory group to the township to help us, as municipal leaders, deal with issues.

When I got elected in 2003, provincially, if you would remember the price of some commodities like grains and oilseeds, frankly, they were tanked. We talked every day—calls from farmers, how they would survive. I then went back to my script book. I appointed an agricultural advisory group, not to talk about the low price of corn, but how could we move the yardsticks forward? We could talk about those things, but I was looking for solutions, and they were a great help.

Let me just go down a road that, frankly, I'm a little bit confused.

1700

Interjection.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: No, I'm going to go there, because what I'm confused about is that there is a party across that professes to call themselves champions of rural Ontario, champions of the farming community. So I'm confused: They stand here and tell us they support the bill, and then—so if you support it, let's get it to committee to try to refine it. That's what they're asking for, Speaker.

Same as the NDP. They want to support it. I think I heard it loud and fairly clear that they want to support this. So let's get it to the committee. Let's end this, go to committee and let's get it sorted out, because, frankly, I get calls from farmers in my community who want this. They have been asking for this. They want this to happen.

Interruption.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Speaker, it happens to the best of us, so join the crowd.

To kind of wind this down, because I know my colleagues want to speak about this, I urge the members opposite—they say they support it—let's get to committee, because the farmers in my community want this done.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Speaker, on a point of order: Could you please clarify for me whether or not cell-phones are allowed in the chamber? I'm just curious.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): That is not a point of order.

I will turn it back for further debate. I recognize the member from Ottawa South.

Mr. John Fraser: It's a pleasure to speak to Bill 40, the Agriculture Insurance Act. I'd like to congratulate the minister on bringing this forward. As the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change mentioned, nothing has been done since 1996. I'd like to congratulate him on his commitment to managing risks with our agricultural partners.

I know the minister is hard at work, because every morning, when I get to the gym, which is about 6 o'clock in the morning, he's already there and he's already working up a sweat. So I know he's out there working hard first thing in the morning. The member from Northumberland–Quinte West is often with him, so I'm sure the member is lobbying him.

I come from the community of Ottawa South, and we have no farms. We used to have one farm, but about 10 years ago that farm left. But I do come from a community—and the member from Nepean–Carleton would know—that is the capital city with the most farms of any capital city. It's a very big part of our community. I know she has many farms in her community. Of course, with our farmers' markets—

Hon. Jeff Leal: ByWard Market.

Mr. John Fraser: The ByWard Market. There's the market at Lansdowne Park right now. It's also the home of Canada's experimental farm, which really is still functioning, but is also a monument to agriculture being the base and the foundation of how we built this country.

Now, I spent 22 years in the grocery business, from a buyer of produce and fresh goods to managing stores. One of the issues that is very important to me is food security. In the last 10 or 15 years, we've started to talk about this a bit more.

It's important for us to have a robust agriculture sector to ensure that we have food security, because if you can't feed yourself, it's pretty hard to be productive. I think that the expansion of production insurance is an important step to support food security, and I congratulate the minister in bringing it forward.

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

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: It's a pleasure to rise today to speak to the Agriculture Insurance Act and to congratulate the Minister of Agriculture on his tremendous leadership on this file and every other file in his ministry.

Mr. Speaker, my riding of Etobicoke–Lakeshore does not have any farms in it, but I dare say that Etobicoke–Lakeshore has one of the most significant agri-food clusters of any community in this province. We have the Ontario Food Terminal there, which allows many farmers in Ontario to bring their products from the field to the table in an urban area. We also have very many major

food processors in my riding, like Campbell's soup. We have a number of producers that have chicken products. We have a number of other companies that produce the frozen foods that we all enjoy in our busy lives, because we can't always get home and cook fresh food. Much of that is made from Ontario produce.

It's very important that we have protection for our farmers, so that when they experience a bad year because of weather, or because prices are reduced because of some market situations, they can continue to be healthy and vibrant and continue producing food for us, because that supports so much of the rest of the economy of this province. There are so many tens of thousands of other jobs in Ontario that depend on our farmers being able to continually produce some of the best food in the world, which can be brought to our cities and to our communities for us to enjoy and eat, and also for us to add value to and create other products that we can then export.

When I read this and I see that this is going to bring Ontario on par with other provinces in the country, that it's going to create a level playing field for Ontario farmers, that's very important. I know that's part of the Premier's mandate and everything that she does. She wants Ontario to be a leader in this country and wants to make sure that Ontario and other provinces have a level playing field when it comes to all kinds of economic activities. So that's very important.

Also, in terms of the ability of the provincial government to be able to better forecast its expenditures, having a program in place that's premium-based and that's going to avoid some of the one-off, ad hoc programs that we sometimes have, to support our farmers and other agricultural producers, is very important also, in terms of managing the finances of the provincial government more effectively—having a system in place that's predictable and that is cost-shared with our partners in the agricultural sector.

I hope that all members in this House will support this bill. It's very important. I heard today that nothing has happened since 1996 on this file, which tells me that the previous government, during its entire tenure, did nothing. I'm very happy that under this government strong action is being taken. We have a Premier who understands rural Ontario and who understands agriculture, and we have a tremendous Minister of Agriculture right now who I know is working on this day in, day out.

Mr. Speaker, just to summarize, while this is a program to support the farmers in Ontario, this is also a program that's going to support thousands of other jobs in communities big and small throughout Ontario that depend on our farmers being able to deliver the best produce that they can to the markets throughout this province.

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

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Although I've never lived on a farm, my ex-husband was raised on a farm. Also, my parents sort of thought I lived on a farm, because in my basement in the city I raised little chicks. We had

bunnies. We had everything there was, including—one Valentine's Day, my ex gave me a lamb, which I raised in the city, in the basement, until it kicked over the water heater, and I got it out of the basement before my father could come home. I love all kinds of animals.

The member from Niagara: I'd like to tell him how wonderful his area is. My family goes there regularly for the fresh fruits and vegetables and for the beautiful sights and scenes. My house is filled with Trisha Romance pictures, which I love a lot.

This bill is very important. It amends the Crop Insurance Act (Ontario), 1996, to expand the scope of the act. Currently, the act applies to agricultural crops and perennial plants. This bill would expand the act so that it would apply to all agricultural products that are designated by the ministers by regulation.

1710

Ontario made a commitment to expand production insurance beyond crops and perennial plants when the ministry signed the federal-provincial-territorial Growing Forward 2 agreement in 2013. Currently, production insurance covers grains and oilseeds, tree fruits and grapes, processing vegetables, fresh market vegetables, specialty crops and forage.

Over the long term, this act will allow the province the opportunity to consider strategies that include moving away from provincial-only support towards tools that attract federal funding. The proposed amendment has no immediate financial impact.

Approval of this request for enabling legislation will, if passed, align the province with the rest of Canada and enable Ontario to participate in innovative production insurance programs that are currently being explored in other parts of the country. Ontario's agriculture sector has huge potential for growth, and the Agriculture Insurance Act will, if passed, allow this growth to happen.

It's very important that we pass this act. I think we need to get it to committee, get looking at possible amendments and get it through committee so that it's passed as soon as possible to help out the farming communities and the agri-food businesses in Ontario.

The Premier and this government have made it very clear that we are very supportive of this very important business. I think the Premier made that clear when she became the minister before she was the Premier.

Also, I can't tell you how much I've learned, by being part of the rural caucus, about innovations in the agri-food industry, including a wonderful discovery or development made by a woman on a farm where she discovered a hop that grows—apparently, and I did not know this before I became a member, hops are very difficult to grow. She has developed a hop that is quite—

Interjection: Hardy

Ms. Ann Hoggarth:—dependable and hardy and has changed the level of business for farmers here in Ontario. It's used all over the world, I believe. There have been many other wonderful innovation awards given all over Ontario. I'm very happy to be part of this, and I urge everyone to support this bill.

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

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's a pleasure to rise today to debate agriculture in this fine assembly. I must say that the last 20 minutes, listening to the Liberal caucus speak about agriculture, had to be the most bizarre experience I have ever had, listening to people talk about farming and agriculture and rural Ontario, particularly from three members from Toronto, Barrie and more urban Ottawa than anything. In fact, let me say I thought the comments made by the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore were not only absent of reality, they were absolutely absent of truth. Let's be quite literal, Speaker. This is a member who said in—

Interjections.

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

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Sure, I'll withdraw.

It's absolutely incredulous that this member would suggest that the previous Conservative administration did nothing, when the last time this legislation was implemented was during a Conservative government. They, however, have had now four mandates where they have done nothing.

But I'll tell you what they have done. They closed Kemptville College, the longest-running agricultural college in Canada. They destroyed the Ontario horse racing industry, and my friends from Windsor and my friends from Niagara are nodding their heads. They remember those 60,000 jobs in rural and agricultural Ontario.

This is a government that has exacerbated the rural-urban divide in this province. They have done it through their crazy policies like their wind turbine developments. They've done it, as I've said, with horse racing. They've done it with the canneries. Tim Hudak often stood up here, day in and day out during that initial crisis, talking about that. Of course, as I mentioned, the devastation we're facing in eastern Ontario over the closure of Kemptville College.

Speaker, I will not listen to this Liberal government talk to me and my constituents about agriculture. They know nothing, they see nothing, and unless they are destroying something, they do nothing.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: Speaker, I beg your indulgence to introduce two people who have been sitting here in the gallery. This is Nora Meszaros and Chris Alexander. They're both journalism students from Conestoga College. I wish to welcome them to Queen's Park.

Ça m'a fait bien plaisir d'écouter le député de Glengarry–Prescott–Russell nous parler du collège d'Alfred. Le collège d'Alfred, c'est le collège d'agriculture francophone de l'Ontario depuis toujours. Il y a des générations et des générations d'agriculteurs en Ontario qui ont été formés dans le collège d'Alfred, et la survie du collège d'Alfred est encore en péril. Et ça, vraiment, c'est sous le règne du gouvernement libéral en place.

Pour les francophones, le collège d'Alfred, c'est des racines profondes. Ça fait partie de notre culture, de notre

agriculture. Ça fait partie d'un acquis de la francophonie ontarienne, et maintenant, vraiment, on ne sait pas exactement ce qui va se passer.

Le rapport qui a été mis de l'avant nous parle d'une structure corporative. Peu importe comment je le lis, je ne viens pas à bout de comprendre. Puis pour tant de structures corporatives—avec Ornge, j'en ai vu. Mais là, je lis ce que le gouvernement nous propose, puis je ne viens pas à bout de comprendre ça.

Oui, l'agriculture, c'est important, mais former les prochains agriculteurs qui vont travailler partout dans l'Ontario français, ça aussi est important. Puis pour faire ça, ça veut dire que le collège d'Alfred doit survivre. En ce moment, la survie du collège d'Alfred—moi, je n'en suis pas certaine du tout.

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

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: It gives me pleasure to rise in the House today on behalf of my constituents, not only in Cambridge but in North Dumfries township, where I reside, in rural Ontario, on Rural Route 4, in North Dumfries township. It brings me pleasure to be able to rise and speak to this wonderful bill today.

The member opposite from Nepean–Carleton suggests that those members on this side of the House today are not from rural Ontario, and I beg to correct the record, because I certainly live in rural Ontario.

Interestingly, every day when I'm at home, I pass by my neighbours' fields. We grow soybeans and corn, and we have mixed farming and cattle in my particular area. So I see each and every day the effects of weather, the effects of some of the events. I know when it's a good crop here. I know when crops have had some challenges. So I'm very happy today to stand up and really suggest that the Agriculture Insurance Act is going to be very good for my area.

My next-door neighbours grow cattle and grains in their fields. She's also the driver of our local school bus. We talk very regularly about the issues in farming and in rural Ontario. They're very happy to know that this government is going to be bringing forth some relief for them when weather events and other issues are out there for farmers.

I know that Ontario is committed to helping its agri-food partners manage the risk. I know very well that our producers, our growers, who actually sell their wares in our local Cambridge market—one of the oldest operating markets in Ontario—are very happy to know that we'll be helping them to manage risk with insurance.

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

Mr. Bill Walker: I'd just like to start off by saying that I certainly support expanding and streamlining crop insurance programs, and changing provincial purchasing policies so Ontario produce is on the menu at schools and hospitals. This brings our farmers in line with the rest of the country, where farmers have long enjoyed this level of protection from their provincial governments. I'm pleased to see that they're looking at some of these programs, but I do have to bring up the concern of Agricorp.

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In my riding, I have one specific farmer who had an overpayment of \$75,000 clawed back. He was one of 4,500 that actually got funds and had them clawed back with no understanding that there was ever going to be a repayment. It has created a lot of challenges for those farmers in my backyard, Mr. Speaker.

I'm going to echo the comment made by my colleague from Nepean–Carleton: The member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore made a comment that nothing has happened since 1996. Well, they've had 12 years—four mandates—to do a lot of things, a lot of good things, if they truly cared about agriculture and wanted to do that.

But I'm going to bring up a couple things that they've done over their tenure, Mr. Speaker. They've decimated the horse racing industry, which my colleague from Simcoe North brought up in his remarks—60,000 jobs which were supposed to be an enhancement to an industry. As we've heard in this House, they've closed Kemptville College. They've taken abattoirs virtually right out of the province. A lot of producers, a lot of people, have been impacted by that negativity.

They are the government that implemented the Green Energy Act out in rural Ontario, which has decimated, again, a lot of our manufacturing sector and is making it extremely difficult for our farming community, our agricultural producers, to remain competitive in our own backyard, Mr. Speaker. That cost is one borne by all of us, and it's something that, again, this government has to step up and take onus for.

I'm pleased to see the minister's trying to address some things, expanding some of the insurance. I certainly want to just caution that Agricorp has not always been good at getting those programs right. I hope that when he's doing it he's going to implement it and ensure that we have a strong, productive system.

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

Mr. John Fraser: I'd like to thank the members from Nickel Belt, Cambridge and Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound for their contribution to the debate. It's clear that they're interested in agriculture and farmers and talking about this act.

I would like to address the comments made by the member from Nepean–Carleton, and suggest to her that all of us in this House have a mutual shared responsibility for agriculture in Ontario. It's not exclusively one party or another's.

I would like to point out that in describing my riding, she called it an "urban riding." Well, I represent a lot of people who came from farming communities and who depend on farming communities. I spent 22 years working in the grocery business. I understand food. I understand how hard farmers work. I understand the risks to our economy if we don't have a stable food supply. I really take great umbrage at that comment. I don't think that it's useful in debate. It's divisive. It's suggesting that people from urban ridings can't possibly understand where farmers are coming from, which is totally false.

Many, many people who live in members' ridings—on either side of this House—in urban ridings understand farmers because they came from farming communities.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's healthy to have good debate. I didn't agree with the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, but I do appreciate his comments because they were made in the spirit of trying to get something done in this House and a difference of opinion, not dividing people and pointing fingers.

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

Mr. Jim Wilson: I'm pleased to rise this afternoon for a few moments to speak to Bill 40, the Agriculture Insurance Act.

We all know how vital the agriculture industry is to Ontario. With more rural members than any other party, the PC caucus knows that at first hand and better than other parties in this House, I think.

As you know, this bill will allow crop insurance to be expanded to cover livestock. Livestock insurance is long overdue. If passed, this bill will allow farmers who choose to pay insurance premiums to tap into the larger pool of funds to compensate for the loss of their livestock.

However, this bill is not perfect. This bill does not actually create these programs; instead it allows them to be created by regulation. If this bill passes, it's important that the minister implement these programs swiftly.

Not only does the minister control the timing of these programs, but he controls which commodities will be eligible. I would encourage the minister to make sure that he does not pick and choose only a few commodities to be eligible for the programs. If cows are included, but sheep are not, we may see farmers abandon sheep altogether. Not only should the main commodities like sheep, hogs and cows be included in the program; this is an opportunity to extend the program to some lesser-farmed commodities like exotic animals or smaller birds like quails and pheasants.

I encourage the minister to be open and listen to all commodity groups who may wish to be included. Which groups will be included is just one of the many questions left to be answered.

Another important question is, what constitutes a death? Will the program cover animals that are killed by coyotes or predators? Will it cover animals that die of natural causes? Will it cover stillbirths or animals that have to be put down because of serious injury? These are important questions which we hope will be answered soon.

For anyone who has ever been around sheep, they know that sheep, unfortunately, die easily. Sheep have been known to suffocate in the snow or even to eat themselves to death. One farmer in my riding joked: "The easiest part of a sheep's life is its death." These are all things that the average member of this House wouldn't necessarily find out on their own, so it's very important to make sure we listen to farmers when deciding what commodities will qualify.

I think that everyone in this chamber can agree; it's ironic that when one of the Premier's loyal flock leaves this job, they get a severance, but when a farmer loses a sheep, they get nothing.

Another question that requires serious attention from the minister concerns the value of each animal. Breeding animals are commonly valued higher than non-breeding animals. We have all heard of prized racing horses used for breeding, but the same goes for cows and hogs.

I'd like to bring up an example of this very important problem. In my riding of Simcoe–Grey, John and Marie Miller own a very unique dairy farm just outside of Creemore. The Millers' dairy farm is not just a farm; it's also a micro-dairy where they produce and sell their own dairy products. The Millers ship their products across the province, and I am happy to have met with them just a few months ago to talk about how they can expand into big box grocery stores.

What makes the Millers' farm so unique is their use of Jersey cows, which make up only 4% of dairy cows in Ontario. Jersey cows give their milk products a distinct taste that is difficult to replicate. The Millers are the perfect example of the questions surrounding this bill. In the unfortunate event of the loss of one of the Millers' unique Jersey cows, would John and Marie be paid more than if they lost a more common Holstein? These are questions which cannot be answered without the input and expertise of the many important agricultural groups across this province. The minister must consult with these groups before making decisions that will affect the livelihood of farmers in both Simcoe–Grey and throughout Ontario.

Speaking of the province's agricultural groups, I'd like to talk briefly about some of those groups. I don't know if my constituents would let me speak about farming without mentioning the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, with which I've had a 25-year history of good relations. I'd like to take this time to congratulate the OFA's Don McCabe on his recent election as president and thank former president Mark Wales for all his work over the years. I'd also like to congratulate my good friend and constituent Keith Currie on his election as the OFA's vice-president. Keith and I have known each other for many years, and I'm happy to have such a strong advocate for Ontario's farmers within the borders of my riding.

When we asked Keith for his thoughts on the bill that we're debating today, he said, rather bluntly and accurately: "If you have livestock, you have dead stock." I think it's important to remember: No matter how good a farmer is at their job, there will always be circumstances outside of their control. Be it natural disasters, wild animals or natural causes, farmers are faced with the difficult challenge of keeping their livestock healthy. They spend countless hours and much money caring for their animals. The government should be there to help them when these unfortunate circumstances occur.

For years, this province has recognized the economic impact of the unexpected loss of crops, but we have yet

to realize the same cost that comes with the loss of livestock. But it's not just the OFA that should be consulted. The province has many key agricultural groups with thousands of members who have dedicated their lives to farming, be it the Beef Farmers of Ontario, Ontario Pork or the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario, to name a few. These organizations know their commodity groups better than anyone—yes, even better than the minister—and should be consulted as much as possible.

I was pleased to meet with many of these groups at the plowing match this year, which was held in my riding, in the beautiful village of Ivy. When the member for Haldimand–Norfolk—our party's critic for agriculture—Toby Barrett, and I met with these groups, they brought up this very issue. In particular, Ontario Pork was very vocal about the need to create a mortality insurance program for livestock.

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As many of you know, Ontario's pork industry was hit hard in the last year. The PED virus came to Ontario, including my home area of Simcoe county. The virus has nearly 100% mortality rate for piglets and young hogs. That type of death rate is devastating to a farmer both emotionally and financially, to say the least.

With that said, I'll just wind up by saying it's about time the government step up and be there for our farmers when they need us most. Ontario farmers need us to pass this bill, and they need us to do it quickly. Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to support Bill 40. It's long overdue. I just want to say to the government, which says that we don't have a right to speak on this bill, that we're holding it up—that isn't true. Farmers need to be heard. On this side of the House, we're very much in touch with farmers and the rural community.

I just remind you—because you've been saying this on other pieces of legislation and during question period, when we bring up the bribery allegations in the Sudbury by-election—that we need to get to work on other things. Well, you've got five committees of this Legislature essentially closed. Five of—what do we have? Seven standing committees?

Interjection: Nine.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Nine. So over half of the committees are closed; they're not working. As you know, Mr. Speaker, much of the work that needs to be done is work that needs to be done—

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Point of order, Speaker.

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

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Speaker, I was hoping to come into the House to enjoy a productive debate about this bill, and we seem to have swayed off the bill, per the standing orders. May I suggest that adherence to the bill be followed. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I thank the member. In my opinion, the member was addressing the bill.

Back to the member: Please continue.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good ruling, because I was referring to comments—disturbing comments—made by members of the government side. Any time you say that we're not working on issues that are important to people of Ontario, I'll just remind you that you've got this place more than half shut down. Shame on you.

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

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I suppose that if Minister Leal had a farm, E-I-E-I-O, the government would be spending more time talking about farmers and their trials and tribulations, and they'd have fewer IOUs.

It is interesting that this bill is in front of us—overdue. I think it should be supported. I think when the member from Ottawa South was talking about how everybody in the House has some kind of a farm connection—I know if I wasn't jigging squid or cod in Newfoundland with my grandfather, some of my favourite summer vacations were spent in New Brunswick, in the hayfields of my friends and neighbours. Spending time on the farm I thought was good for growing up, good for life's experiences, and certainly can help prepare you for when you come here.

Earlier, I talked about the collapse of the harness racing industry in Essex county. I know back when my brother-in-law was a groom and a trainer and an owner of horses, my kids, when they were younger, would go to the barns and clean out the manure from the stables and get to know what harness racing was all about. I remember my brother-in-law one time had a goat, Jack the goat, because if a horse went off its feed, the goat would go into the stall and the horse would see its feed going somewhere else. He'd get hungry again and start eating.

In fact, the CBC did a story one time on Jack the goat, because every day at 3 o'clock, when *As the World Turns* or one of those soap operas came on and the theme music came on in the TV in the barn, no matter where that goat was in the barn, Jack would come running, watch that soap opera until the theme music faded away, and then he'd go back and cause—

Interjection.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Jack the goat. He was on Wayne Rostad's program on the CBC.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I recognize the Minister of Children and Youth Services and minister responsible for women's issues.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I'm very pleased to speak to the Agriculture Insurance Act, 2014, An Act to amend the Crop Insurance Act, 1996. I'm always interested in these kinds of bills from a business point of view. What's the real impact? What does it mean for this sector?

I'm learning a lot studying this bill, including that Ontario generated \$12.1 billion in farm cash receipts, or 22% of Canada's farm cash receipts. But there's a recognition, too, that the agricultural markets are volatile, and these fluctuations are why it's very important to have effective business risk management programs in place. Expanding the ability to offer production insurance to more ag commodities is indeed helpful.

I think there's a question about what do we put in place for farmers experiencing difficulties. My understanding is producers who are facing financial hardship are encouraged to contact the ministry to discuss some options, to look at the individual circumstances.

Ontario is committed to partnering and cost-sharing in a national set of business risk management programs. When we do, we understand the programs will be reviewed by our provincial and federal funding partners to ensure they meet the needs of producers. We want to make sure, and I'm confident that Ontario will be an active leader at the federal-provincial table, making sure that we do understand those impacts on our producers.

We know that many of these producers make up what I call the majority of businesses in Ontario. Small- to medium-sized businesses of this nature do drive our economy. I think that these considerations I've touched on are very important to this bill going forward.

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's my pleasure to comment on the speech earlier today by our leader, Jim Wilson, here in the House. He talked an awful lot about Bill 40. We are supporting the bill, but our members do want to have the opportunity to speak for farmers in our ridings as well. I hope that I'll have a chance; I only have two minutes here with the rules under this circumstance, but I hope I get that opportunity to speak on behalf of the farmers in my riding.

I did want to comment on the reaction of the government when my leader, Jim Wilson, talked about how they are basically shutting down committees of this Legislature. Immediately, the minister jumped up on a point of order because, you see, it hurts them to hear the truth. They're hoping that the world out there is not listening, but we're telling you, folks, they're not letting bills get through committee—and then they say that the opposition is holding up the business of the Legislature. My goodness gracious. Here we have an opportunity to get the words on the record—

Interjections.

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: —and they're shutting our leader down.

But anyway, back to Bill 40—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Stop the clock, please. I've asked for order. I'll start naming you if it continues.

The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke has the floor. Please continue.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the way you brought order to this place, and I hope it stays throughout the few moments I have left—not left in this world; just left in this speech.

In the few moments I have left, I just want to say that we are supportive of the bill. There are some good things in here for farmers and it's about time, because as I heard from the member from Ottawa South, there's been

nothing done since 1996, which was the previous provincial government. They've been here for almost 12 years and nothing's been done. I'm quoting the member from Ottawa South when I say that: After 12 years, nothing has been done. Well, it's time to get something done, I say to my friends on the other side.

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

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'm going to follow up on the same line that my colleague from Nipissing—

Hon. Michael Coteau: Are you sure you want to do that?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Yes, I absolutely do—Renfrew-Nipissing, because I heard the government bemoan the fact that we want to continue to debate this important issue. They want to shut it down after six and a half hours of debate. That's the signal that you're sending out to rural Ontario, to those who work in the agriculture community: "Let's shut it down. This is only worthy of six and a half hours of debate. Let's move it along," after 12 years of having done really, absolutely nothing.

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But I don't fault you that much. I know that successive federal governments, both Liberal and Conservative, have failed you at the federal level. We saw failures within the NISA program, we saw failures within CAIS, we saw failures within AgriStability—

Interjections.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: No, there were lots of problems with those two as well. They never adequately addressed the issues of trade implications, of commodities, fluctuations of all the different factors that have led to a degradation of rural Ontario and agriculture production in Canada.

You don't get it, I don't think you get it, because you don't really emphasize food security, food sovereignty and food production. This is easy stuff. Go and find out. Go speak to those in rural Ontario in the agricultural sectors. They will tell you what they need.

This bill is enabling legislation; it's not prescriptive, it does not lay out any type of policy, and it definitely doesn't lay out any type of financial allocation to these various commodities that are going to be brought under the fold. These are important questions to ask. I hope the government and specifically the minister is listening, because there are a tremendous amount of questions that are still out there.

We appreciate having a full debate in this House. I would hope that the government would appreciate the questions that the opposition are putting forward.

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

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: First, let me say, in full disclosure, I am a proudly urban member from downtown Toronto—lived there all my life but for two years when I was in the wonderful riding of Huron-Bruce, and I'm going to talk about that in a minute.

To my colleagues to the right I want to say a couple of things. No party can speak for our agricultural base, for

our farmers. We all have roots. In fact, the New Democratic Party, coming out of the CCF, came from farmers on the prairies: Tommy Douglas, a Baptist minister from the prairies, spoke for farmers and farmer co-operatives; J.S. Woodsworth, a Methodist minister, came from the farming community, spoke for farmers on the prairies; Agnes Macphail, came up through the farmers party, spoke for farmers in a progressive way—that is the history of Canada. Those are the roots of the CCF-NDP. Those were not only progressive roots, they were radical roots, because they spoke for a community—I don't even have to segue into the Winnipeg general strike—that had deep needs, that were, in fact, suffering. They were hungry. That is where Medicare came from. It came from rural communities. Those are the communities that birthed it. So to say that farmers are inherently conservative is absolutely wrong. Let's just put that in the record.

Second of all, I have to say—and this was brought to my attention—that nowhere in this debate has been mentioned the 120,000 migrant workers who work on farms, so I want to give them a shout-out as well, because those are also a community—a community that are hard-pressed, a community that don't have the rights they should have. So let's just put that on the record as well.

Now, I've got seven minutes and 43 seconds left to talk about my two years in Huron-Bruce. So picture me, the first female United Church minister sent to the town of Brucefield-Kippen. They'd never had a woman before as their minister. They had never had anyone with a last name like DiNovo, because all of the names I encountered in Huron-Bruce were—let's say it—WASP last names.

One of the first things I did there was introduce taking communion by intinction, as it's called, which they immediately thought was somehow strangely Roman Catholic—because there are Protestant towns and Catholic towns; we all know this about the rural area around there. So I had some work to do. They also had never welcomed somebody who was an exponent, who was an activist, around LGBTQ issues. They welcomed me there even so.

When I went, I was a vegetarian. They welcomed me with a beef barbeque, and I ate the beef. Why? Because I did not want my two years of ministry there to be about food. It was one of many lessons that they offered me.

You will never find a better community than the community of Huron-Bruce and Brucefield-Kippen—phenomenal people. But the only thing we had in common when I got there was English. We spoke the same language. For an urbanite like myself who grew up in the city of Toronto downtown, lived in New York, lived in the Beach, lived in the west end, lived in the Annex, but had never experienced rural life, it was a real eye-opener. I think it's important to talk about that, because that was my agricultural literacy education.

What did they teach me? Well, a couple of serious lessons, and I think they're incredibly important ethical agricultural lessons.

One of the things they taught me out there was about money: the value of money and not the value of money.

They worked so hard. Farmers work so hard, especially—animal farmers work all year round. My cash crop farmers worked, of course, putting in the harvest, taking out the harvest. Everybody worked really hard all year long.

They sat on these vast tracts of land—because quite frankly, Speaker, you need vast tracts of land now to make a living in agriculture in Ontario. So I said to them, “You know, a downtowner like me would sell off their acreage, buy a BMW, head down to Florida and sit on the beach for the next 20 years,” because they had that much money in equity. I remember in my Bible study class, there was a group of women who were in their eighties—beautiful, wonderful women. They turned to me and they said, “But then what would we do?” That kind of work ethic, that kind of understanding that human beings are not put on this earth to sit on a beach in Florida and drive BMWs, but are actually put on this earth—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Excuse me. I just would care to remind the member that we are addressing the crop insurance bill. I would ask that you get to the point, because you only have about four minutes of your 10. Thank you.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I’m talking about the best agricultural insurance there is, Speaker.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Excuse me. I would remind the member from Eglinton–Lawrence that when I’m standing, I would appreciate quietness so that others can hear what I have to say. I have made a decision.

Again, I would turn it back over to the member from Parkdale–High Park.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Agricultural insurance? Yes. This bill is an enabling bill. Should it go farther? Absolutely. It doesn’t really do anything. Okay, there you go. That’s the bill, Bill 40.

But the real agricultural insurance are the people who work the land. That’s who I’m talking about. I’m talking about that group of 80-something women who said that their real purpose in life was to actually keep that land going, to keep producing food for the next generation and to keep producing jobs for their family and their family’s family. They had been on the land for three or four or five generations already. That’s who I’m talking about. That’s the real insurance that keeps our agriculture going. Those were the women who taught me something about the value of money versus the value of land and the value of hard work. That’s number one.

Number two, they taught me about relationship, the other insurance that goes into the agricultural community. Quite frankly, while I was there as a minister, just like everywhere else in the world, there were difficulties in families. Some of those families didn’t have marriages that worked out, and as a pastor you’re used to that. You deal with that, right? But what was really interesting to me was that in the city, when two people get a divorce or separate, they’re gone. They do not come back to the same church every Sunday. They do not take part in the

same events all the time. They distance themselves, whereas in rural Ontario, in Brucefield-Kippen, people who had gone through that kept coming back to the same church, kept attending the same events. It was amazing.

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I asked them, “Why? Why do you do this?” They said, “Because we have to live together for the next three or four generations. We may not keep our marriage together, but we must maintain community and friendship.” That was a phenomenal lesson in agriculture and the difference between rural and urban. I was impressed, and I saw that as real agricultural insurance. It’s that bond of community, it’s that bond between people, that even if you get separated, even if you have your differences, you’ve got to work together, you’ve got to live together and ride it out. You’ve got to make things work. That’s agricultural insurance.

What else did I learn? I learned this, Mr. Speaker; I learned it very quickly—I’ve only got a minute left. There was a bird that got into my bedroom in the manse next to the church, and I didn’t know what to do. I opened the window and the bird didn’t go out, so I called my farmer neighbour and I said, “What do I do?” He came over with a tennis racquet and he went “Whack!” The bird was dead; that was it.

As a city-dweller, I felt a little guilty.

Mr. Mike Colle: You should have opened the window and let the bird out.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I did, I tried, but the bird wouldn’t go. So I felt a little guilty.

All I can say—I’ve got 39 seconds left—is, number one, I would suggest to anybody in an urban reality, spend some time in the country. Learn the differences, because there are—they’re dramatic. The second thing I’ll say is that if this agriculture insurance bill actually wants to have some teeth, it actually has to do what it says it will do, because Ontario is the only province that does not allow production insurance for a broad range of agricultural products.

With that, I’ll stop; I’ll sit down. Let’s hear it for Huron–Bruce.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions or comments? The minister of sport, culture and recreation.

Hon. Michael Coteau: That’s close enough, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much.

I’d like to thank the member from Parkdale for her comments and her story about whacking those birds back in her younger days. But I want to talk about this incredible bill, the Agriculture Insurance Act, 2014, and talk about this government’s commitment to working with the agricultural sector here in the province of Ontario. As members know, in this House in the last session we had the Local Food Act, which I was so proud of.

Applause.

Hon. Michael Coteau: Yes, let’s give ourselves a big round of applause, because I think that was an incredible piece of legislation—and the risk management program that took place well before I got here.

Mr. Speaker, I have a lot of respect for the agricultural sector here in Ontario. Like the member from Parkdale, I grew up in an urban setting, but I had the opportunity as a young man to go and visit my grandfather in Grenada who's a farmer—a very different type of farming. But the thing that connects farmers all around the world is that they're hard-working and they're the backbone of any country. We need to make sure that when we put forward legislation like this, it's there to protect our farmers.

I believe without a question that we need to make sure that the agricultural sector here in the province of Ontario is set up so it can continue to be successful. It's a \$34-billion sector. I believe that as the planet expands in population, Canada, and most importantly Ontario, is going to have such a large role when it comes to food development, not only to feed people across this country, but around the world. I see it as a huge economic benefit to this province, a huge economic benefit to the country.

We need to protect our farmers so that if they get into this type of business that's so unpredictable—you know, weather changes, patterns can change—

Interjection: Climate change.

Hon. Michael Coteau: —climate change—unexpected things happen all the time. We need to make sure that government partners with our agricultural sector to ensure that they're set up for success.

I want to thank the minister responsible for this file for his extraordinary work in agriculture. I hope that every single member in this Legislature works with us to support our farmers.

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

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I'm really appreciative of the opportunity to stand up and remark on the member from Parkdale—sorry—

Interjection: High Park.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: —High Park. With that, the Kippen-Brucefield area in my riding is right within the bread basket, if you will, of Ontario's west coast. It's a huge cash crop area, but unfortunately, there's another crop that's springing up everywhere that has no insurance to negate the negative impacts. That crop is industrial wind turbines.

Speaker, it's a travesty what's happening in that area that the member so fondly remembers. If she were to come into that area today, I'm quite positive she wouldn't even recognize it. She'd be appalled at the manner in which unwilling communities have been absolutely annihilated with this development.

This bill, Bill 40, is about crop insurance. The member recognized the value of land and the value of relationships. It's interesting, because the growth of industrial wind turbines in my riding has negatively impacted the value of land and the value of relationships. Again, if she were to come into the area now—it's a travesty.

What makes it worse is we've had four families in my riding who are farmers, who are out on the land, day in and day out, and in their barns caring for their animals—unfortunately, because they chose to stand up and fight

against a failed green energy scheme that has totally destroyed their communities, we have wind companies billing them charges for standing up for the rest of Ontario. Crop insurance won't cover the \$340,000 that these four families are subjected to because of a failed green energy scheme. It is disgraceful.

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

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'm pleased to comment on my colleague the member from Parkdale–High Park's comments. She of course understands the importance of rural Ontario to the entire province. Coming from downtown Toronto here, she knows the connectivity that we all have, and also referenced our party's deep history when it comes to acknowledging and working alongside those partners in agriculture.

I had the good fortune of meeting with our local president of the Essex County Federation of Agriculture along with my colleague from Windsor–Tecumseh. We met with Lyle Hall—big shout-out to Lyle Hall and to all the folks at the Essex County Federation of Agriculture; they do great work. Lyle gave us an article from the Ontario Farmer dated January 20 that says that Ontario is shorting rural municipalities. It references the Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund, which was decreased by \$10 million in 2013, \$25 million in 2014, with an additional \$35 million in 2015, making the cumulative savings over three years \$115 million. I don't think those add up, but it is 35% that will be cut out. That's a large hit.

There is a fear that maybe even the business risk management program or the crop insurance program could suffer the same fate. There's nothing that mitigates against the government reducing the payout under the crop insurance or the agriculture insurance program. Even though they're going to bring in new commodities, the most important component of this bill and of the bill that you bring forward to enable yourselves to bring them in will be the dollar amount attached. It has to be significant. It has to be substantial. It will send a signal to the agricultural community that you actually are ready to partner with them and protect them should the industry suffer.

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

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: I'm happy to stand here today in support of Bill 40 in response to some comments from my colleague across, the member from Parkdale–High Park—a very hard-working member, if I may add.

I grew up in Windsor, Ontario, although I'm now the member from Burlington. Windsor, as the members opposite may know, is in Essex county, or the breadbasket of Canada. So I'm well acquainted with the importance of our agricultural producers, as are so many members on this side of the House, of course. They are of the utmost importance to our food security and strong contributors to our economy, so it's our responsibility to do what we can to protect them and their livelihood. Allowing them to have affordable insurance coverage, which is what this

bill will do, for the fruits of their labour goes a long way and is a critical component to ensuring the viability of this sector of our economy.

Last year, we had an extreme weather event in Burlington. We had a flood. We had 200 millimetres of rain in a matter of five hours. We can just imagine what that would do to devastate some of our agricultural producers, had this been the case. They could lose an entire year's crop and subsequent income in a matter of hours. A premium-based insurance, where the government shares the cost with producers and helps to spread the risk between both parties, is something important which, over time, will help lower the overall associated costs.

So it's not just the producers themselves, though, who are important in this conversation; it's the tertiary industry. In my riding of Burlington we have food processors and we have packagers, and they're going to be impacted too—people like the Ippolito Group and EarthFresh Foods, incredibly important job creators, important in our food security conversation. We need to think about them, too.

I'd like to thank my colleague the Minister of Agriculture for his hard work on this legislation and urge all members of this House to support Bill 40.

Climate change is another issue which is impacting all of us, and we need to be sure to give our farmers the tools that they need to protect their livelihood and our food security.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the member from Parkdale–High Park for final comments.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Thank you to everyone who weighed in on the debate. A couple of things I didn't get a chance to say: One is to give a real shout-out to the West End Food Co-op and the Sorauren Farmers' Market, a phenomenal endeavour. We see this all across our city: farmers coming into the downtown core, selling

their produce directly, co-ops springing up. It's a wonderful way for urban people to know what agriculture is all about and to actually speak to farmers first-hand.

To all the co-ops and all the farmers' markets out there—particularly, of course, my own Sorauren Farmers' Market and the West End Food Co-op—a shout-out for them.

I want to particularly, of course, highlight the member from Essex's comment, because absolutely, if there is not money behind this initiative, then really there is no initiative. In terms of insurance for our farmers, our agricultural producers, yes, they do need money. They need money behind any program that's going to protect them. That is critical.

Finally, another name that I didn't mention—and I think it's really important for my Roman Catholic friends in the room who talk about liberation theology, again going back to our farmers. Is rural Canada inherently conservative? No, it is not. Liberation theology came out of rural Canada. It came out of a man named Ben Smillie on the prairies, not from Central and South America, as is commonly thought, and Oscar Romero, great as he was. It came out of our own Canadian experience and it came out of our own agricultural experience. That merging of faith and social justice is the very roots of our party and the very roots of our country. I think we have to acknowledge that because I think we've gone away from that, both here and south of the border.

So here's to the radical and here's to the social justice farmers, because they're there. We know they are. They were the birth of our party. They were the birth of all progress in this country. Thank you.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Seeing as the time for debate has now expired, this Legislature will adjourn until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1803.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
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Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, Anne Stokes

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Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
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Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
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French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
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Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
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)
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Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
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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	
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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
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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
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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	
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Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
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Thibeault, Glenn (LIB)	Sudbury	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
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Gila Martow, Kathryn McGarry
Peter Tabuns
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Comité spécial de la violence et du harcèlement à caractère sexuel**

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Marie-France Lalonde, Harinder Malhi
Kathryn McGarry, Eleanor McMahon
Taras Natyshak, Peggy Sattler
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