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Monday 2 November 2015

Lundi 2 novembre 2015

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 2 November 2015

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 2 novembre 2015

The House met at 1030.

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

Prayers.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I'm delighted to welcome members from the Cement Association of Canada to our members' gallery. We are joined here today by Bruno Roux, president of Lafarge Canada; Marty Fallon, president of St. Marys Cement; and of course, Michael McSweeney, president of the Cement Association of Canada. I know that they're here today; I look forward to seeing them later this afternoon, and the other individuals who they brought with them. Thank you very much for being here.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'm pleased to introduce a friend from my riding of Essex, specifically Amherstburg: Carolyn Davies is here. She's a registered practical nurse, and also the spouse of my executive assistant, Merv Richards. So we'll welcome her here today.

Mr. Arthur Potts: I'm pleased to rise to welcome the Ontario Greenhouse Alliance to Queen's Park today. They're here for their lunch and TOGA party, and I invite all members to come down and get a poinsettia later on this afternoon. We have, in the members' gallery, George Gilvesy, from the Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers; Ralph DeBoer, from Flowers Canada-Ontario; and Jan VanderHout, president of the Ontario Greenhouse Alliance.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: It's my pleasure this morning to introduce a number of guests over at the members' east gallery: from the Radiation Safety Institute of Canada, Steve Mahoney; from the Canadian Association of Radon Scientists and Technologists, Bob Wood; and from the Ontario Lung Association, John Chenery, Chris Yaccato, Andrea Stevens Lavigne and Connie Choy.

Also, this morning we were treated to Mike Holmes Jr. making an announcement about Radon Action Month in November, with his group, Amanda Heath and Mark Diplock. Thank you very much for joining us this morning.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Today in the House, a little bit later on, from 11 till 12, we will be having some international students here on behalf of the Lambton Kent District School Board. They will be visiting us from Taiwan, so welcome to them when they come.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I think one of my friends may have introduced him; I'd like to introduce again Michael

McSweeney, not in his capacity with the Cement Association of Canada, but as a member of the working group on climate change, and just share with the House his extraordinary leadership and that of his industry. They have stepped forward as a leading industry on climate change, and we're very grateful for Michael's leadership.

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I would like to recognize Julia Empey, from my riding of Halton, who is page captain today. She has a lot of support here with her today: a group of family and friends in the members' gallery. Here with her are her dad, Brian Empey; mother, Catharine Murphy; brother Mark Empey; grandmother Agnes Murphy; uncle and aunt Tim and Michelle Croteau; cousins Michael and Declan Croteau; and family friend Anita Carbonelli. Thank you so much for coming in.

Please give them a warm welcome.

ORAL QUESTIONS

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Minister of Energy. Last Thursday, the Financial Accountability Officer revealed what we've known all along: The sale of Hydro One was a bad deal for Ontario. Not only did he raise concerns about future revenue, but he also showed that this deal could bring in as little as \$1.4 billion for infrastructure, not the \$4 billion this government promised.

It's because of this flawed planning that we now have 185 municipalities pleading with the government to not proceed with this deal. It's no wonder the Minister of Energy himself opposed the sale of Hydro One when he was the mayor of Ottawa.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Energy has said that the Auditor General didn't understand the electricity file. Does he now share the same opinion about the Financial Accountability Officer?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, the Financial Accountability Officer confirmed that our plan to broaden ownership of Hydro One is on track to realizing the \$5 billion to pay down debt and the \$4 billion towards our 10-year plan to invest \$130 billion in much-needed infrastructure. He did express concern about longer-term impacts, but he makes it very clear that he did not assess the economic benefits but just the company as it stands today.

His long-term concerns are more than mitigated by taking into account the extensive economic impacts of

110,000 new jobs per year from our infrastructure investments. The Conference Board of Canada says for every \$100 million invested in infrastructure, \$114 million is produced in real GDP.

We're proceeding, Mr. Speaker. This is good for Ontarians.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Minister of Energy: I just wish the Minister of Energy could listen to himself when he was the mayor of Ottawa.

It's not just that this sale may only bring in a fraction of what was promised, but the negative long-term consequences are going to last for Ontario.

The FAO revealed that the province will lose out on Hydro One's yearly revenue, as much as \$700 million a year. Frankly, that \$700 million is almost as much as you're cutting for doctors for patient care. That \$700 million won't go to paying down the debt in a province that has the largest debt in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister come clean and admit this deal is not in the best interests of the province of Ontario?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, across Canada, rural, suburban and urban municipalities face a \$120-billion deficit in infrastructure, and Ontario's 10-year, \$130-billion infrastructure plan addresses this for Ontarians.

Our \$4 billion of infrastructure—

Interjections.

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

Finish, please.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Our \$4 billion of infrastructure funding from Hydro One will not come from new debt, tax revenue or service cuts. It is smart fiscal management.

The alternative, according to the Financial Accountability Officer, is to pay for new infrastructure with more borrowing.

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

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Minister of Energy: This government is mortgaging our future for a one-time gain.

The Auditor General has warned the Premier that this debt is already crowding out services Ontarians rely on. Our debt and deficit are out of control, and now, without the profits of Hydro One, the problem will only get worse. The debt is crowding out services like health care and education. No wonder you're doing the cuts right now to the doctors and patient care.

1040

Will the Minister of Energy tell us where the government plans to cut now to make up for this lost \$700 million—

Interjections.

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

I will remind members that when I'm standing and when I sit down—thank you.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, I addressed that very question in answering the previous questions.

I'd also like to remind the leader that during the 2014 election, his party campaigned on a platform of "opening both Hydro One and OPG to investment," including the sale of shares—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Dufferin-Caledon, come to order.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: "That initial sale could later be followed by a public offering of shares to both institutional and retail investors." That's just what we're doing, Mr. Speaker.

"Selling part of these two"—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): In case the member from Dufferin-Caledon didn't hear me the first time—this is now the second time—would you please come to order?

Finish.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: This is quoting them, Mr. Speaker: "Selling part of these two provincial assets will free up"—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Excuse me.

The member from Leeds-Grenville, come to order.

The member from Nepean-Carleton knows better, and it's to stop.

Please.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Quoting that party, Mr. Speaker: "Selling part of these two provincial assets will free up money to pay down debt" and customer "prices would continue to be regulated by the Ontario Energy Board."

This PC energy policy white paper is the latest and only policy on energy that party has released—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question. The Leader of the Opposition.

Just a reminder to all people: third person, to the Chair.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Mr. Patrick Brown: To the Minister of Energy: The minister is ignoring the facts. As CHCH's Randy Rath tweeted on Friday, "When overwhelming evidence proves your plan flawed, it is not weakness to change the plan it is leadership." We all agree Ontario needs better infrastructure, but the Hydro One fire sale isn't the way to go about it. Frankly, your 10-year plan on infrastructure doesn't change one cent pre- and post-sale.

Last week, the Financial Accountability Officer told us that this sale will have a negative impact on Ontario's finances.

It is time the minister showed the same leadership he showed when he was mayor of Ottawa. He stood up against the sale of Hydro One.

Will the minister stick to his principles, stand up for the citizens of Ottawa, and go to your Premier and say this is a bad deal for Ontario and a bad deal for Ottawa?

Interjections.

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

Minister.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: As I said in my previous questions, this is a good deal for Ontarians. It creates 110,000 jobs per year for 10 years and meets the infrastructure deficit that we have.

He wants to talk about fiscal responsibility. First of all, the third party wants to raise taxes to pay for infrastructure. The PC Party wanted to fire 100,000 people to pay for infrastructure.

We have a responsible path forward. The people of Ontario expect the government to manage the province's finances responsibly. The \$4 billion that we're going to receive from Hydro One is not coming from taxes. It's not coming from cutting services. It's not coming from new debt. It's strong financial fiscal management.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Back to the Minister of Energy: I'm shocked that the Minister of Energy refuses to show leadership in the face of insurmountable evidence that the selling of Hydro One is a bad deal for Ontario.

As the Star's Martin Regg Cohn asked on the weekend, "What about the obscene salaries planned for Hydro One's new executive suite?" He called the \$4-million package to the CEO "unconscionable." He notes the compensation is "several times more than his predecessor got, and at least double that of his counterpart at OPG."

While the Liberals hand out multi-million dollar paycheques to Hydro One executives, the FAO projects the province would realize a permanent financial deterioration from this sale.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister explain why the Liberal government is ignoring the Financial Accountability Officer's report while they're lining the pockets of Hydro One's new executives?

Interjections.

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

Minister?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: The Financial Accountability Officer confirmed that our plan to broaden ownership of Hydro One is on track to realizing the \$5 billion to pay down debt and the \$4 billion toward our 10-year plan to invest in \$130 billion in much-needed infrastructure.

He expressed some concern about the out-years, concerning what might happen in the out-years. He does not and he did not and he admitted not taking into account the economic development, the jobs that will be realized, coming from these investments in infrastructure.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Hey, you're only speculating. That's speculation.

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

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Beaches–East York, second time.

Carry on.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: The member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke shouted across the floor that it's speculation. It's the Conference Board of Canada that says for every \$100 million invested in infrastructure, \$114 million is produced in real GDP. This is good for the province of Ontario.

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

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again for the minister: You may not want to listen to the 185 municipalities, you may not want to listen to the numerous MPPs and ministers in the Liberal government who are on the record against this, you may not want to listen to former Premier Dalton McGuinty who is against this, but maybe today you'll listen to the Toronto Star.

I have another quote from Thomas Walkom, who said in his column that the Premier's "absurd Hydro One sale fits into a pattern of dubious Liberal schemes ... ranging from the gas plant debacles to the Ornge air ambulance scandal."

He continued, "Once again the Liberals are deliberately creating a monster they" are "unable to control."

It fits right in line with what the FAO had to say last week. He said that the province's fiscal position will deteriorate and there will be a revenue shortfall.

This fire sale is a bad deal for Ontario. Can the Minister of Energy tell the House why he is going through with this despite the fact that every fact and all evidence say this is a bad deal for Ontario?

Interjections.

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

Minister?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: The strongest advocates for more infrastructure investment are the rural communities and we're delivering to that rural community. Ontario, as the largest single shareholder of Hydro One, will continue to be a major beneficiary of the company's performance. In addition, it now receives billions for new investment in infrastructure without increasing borrowing, raising taxes or cutting public services. A better-managed Hydro One will generate a host of benefits and allow the province's share to grow in value over time as the company grows.

As I said, \$110,000 per year from our infrastructure program is going to generate economic development, it's going to generate revenue and it's going to more than deal with the concerns of the report that just came out concerning the out-years. The only issue of concern about the out-years—

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

Interjections.

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

New question.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Acting Premier. When the Premier formed her privatization panel, she promised that its decisions would be independ-

ently verified. The Financial Accountability Officer finally provided Ontarians with the first independent analysis of the sell-off of Hydro One, and his report says that if the sale continues, our province will be in worse financial shape. The FAO says that that the sell-off will increase Ontario's debt over the next decade.

Will the government do the responsible thing: Acknowledge the FAO's red flags, cut our losses and stop the sell-off of Hydro One?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I welcome the question. I think it's important that every member of the Legislature takes the time to actually read the report from the FAO. It's an important piece and I'm afraid that some members of this Legislature are actually misrepresenting what in fact—

Interjections.

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

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Withdraw—are not fully understanding or reflecting what the FAO report says.

Let me just read, on page 9:

“This report does not seek to:

“—assess the merits of the decision to sell Hydro One

“—forecast the impact of the partial sale of Hydro One on electricity rates in Ontario

“—assess the prospects for performance improvements at Hydro One that might result from the partial sale....”

So Speaker, I think we'd better stick to the facts. I think the people of this province deserve that we all stick to the facts.

1050

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: According to the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, sky-high Liberal hydro rates are the number one challenge facing Ontario's business competitiveness. The FAO's report shows that Ontario businesses will continue to pay a surcharge on their bills to cover Liberal mismanagement of the hydro file—\$600 million a year via the debt retirement charge until at least 2018-19.

Will this government do the right thing: Cut our losses, stop the sell-off of Hydro One and address the sky-high hydro rates that Ontario's businesses are trying to deal with?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: We do acknowledge that hydro rates are an issue for business, and that's why we've taken certain steps to reduce the upward pressure on those hydro rates.

I want to remind the leader of the third party once again that the Financial Accountability Officer very, very clearly states that this report does not forecast the impact of the partial sale of Hydro One on electricity rates in Ontario. I understand there is speculation on their part, Speaker, but they cannot rely on the FAO's report to make those assertions.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Ontario's Financial Accountability Officer says that this is a bad deal and that it will cost the people of Ontario for a long time.

The FAO was clear that the economic benefit of infrastructure investments occurs regardless of how they're financed. I think the Minister of Energy should listen up to that fact. He was also clear that the province will be losing nearly half a billion dollars a year in net revenue. That is money that could be going towards infrastructure, for example. Instead, the government will now need to find that money elsewhere.

The FAO discredited all of the Premier's claims regarding this sell-off. Will the government do the responsible thing: Acknowledge the FAO's red flags, and put a stop to any further sell-off of Hydro One?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: What the Financial Accountability Officer did—and he did a very fine job and we thank him for the report—is to quantify the fiscal impact for one part of this deal. What he did not look at, and what he very clearly states he did not look at, is the other side, which is the benefit that we will all receive from making those investments.

It's about increasing productivity in this province. It's about getting people home from work more quickly. It's about making those critical infrastructure investments and putting people to work. We are moving forward because we believe that we need to double down on infrastructure spending: \$130 billion over the next 10 years. That money has to come from somewhere, and broadening the ownership of Hydro One is one way we'll get the revenue to do that.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Back to the Acting Premier: The FAO said that selling off Hydro One is the worst way to fund infrastructure in the province of Ontario.

The sell-off of Hydro One has only ever represented, however, a tiny fraction of funds that this government claims to need for infrastructure. The government has lots of options to fund those projects. The FAO suggested that they could simply borrow the money and the province would, in fact, be better off in the long run. New Democrats have suggested the government could raise corporate taxes one percentage point, and they would raise even more money than they needed for infrastructure.

Why is this Liberal government choosing to sell off Hydro One when it is the only option that's guaranteed to lose Ontario money?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: People who watch what happens in this chamber will know that no matter what the problem, the solution from the third party is to raise corporate income taxes. We have heard that money being spent for many, many, many different initiatives, and now today we're hearing about doing that for infrastructure. It's unfortunate that they've run out of ideas when it comes to making investments. Their only idea is to raise corporate income taxes; that's the solution to everything.

We actually on this side of the House—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The engagement of the government side with the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek is not helpful.

Carry on.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: We are absolutely committed to investing in infrastructure. That does cost money. We're looking at a range of ways to pay for it, one of which is broadening the ownership of Hydro One. It's creating jobs and building important infrastructure.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: All Ontarians support building and renewing our infrastructure; that's not up for debate whatsoever. But the sell-off of Hydro One isn't about funding infrastructure. It never has been. The sell-off could net just 1% of the Liberals' infrastructure promises in new cash. By plowing ahead, the Liberals are waving goodbye to nearly half a billion dollars each and every year in lost revenues. These are revenues that could actually be used to invest in infrastructure, Speaker.

My question is simple: If this deal isn't about infrastructure, then exactly what is it really about?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: It's absolutely about infrastructure. I think it's maybe an important thing to actually walk through some of the numbers that we're talking about here. We remain on track, and the Financial Accountability Officer actually confirms that we are on track to realize our estimate of generating about \$9 billion through this IPO, Speaker. We've already received into the Trillium Trust a special dividend of \$1 billion, and we will also benefit from \$2.2 billion in deferred taxes. The final share price of \$20.50 is at the high end of the initial share price range of \$19 to \$21. We are on track to proceed in a careful, staged manner to maximize the value for Ontarians and to be able to make the investment in infrastructure that the leader of the third party says she wants but doesn't have a plan to pay for.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Liberals are trying to put some quick cash on a balance sheet to try to hide 12 years of scandal and waste. The FAO has clearly laid out that Ontarians will not benefit from the sell-off of Hydro One, but it looks like some well-connected Liberal friends and insiders surely will, Speaker.

The people of Ontario deserve to hear it from their government directly: If, as the FAO says, the people of Ontario aren't benefiting from this deal, just exactly who is benefiting?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, I smell a conspiracy theory. I'm not quite sure where she's going with that, but I tell you that the people who will benefit from this are the people of this province, the people right across this province who are demanding of their governments—provincial, federal and municipal—to make the necessary investments in infrastructure. If the leader of the third party thinks that we are doing just fine when it comes to our infrastructure, well, I disagree, and the people of this province disagree.

We've been thoughtful about this, Speaker. We have looked at this very, very carefully, and the result is that

we'll be able to accelerate investments in infrastructure, and that's what the people of this province elected us to do.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Mr. Todd Smith: My question today is for the Acting Premier. The Financial Accountability Officer raised six key questions in his report last week that he couldn't answer because the government deemed the information to be a cabinet document. That means code for, "We've got something here that we don't the public to know about." In spite of the documents that the ministry withheld, the financial watchdog was still able to prove that this isn't just a bad deal; this is a terrible deal for the people of Ontario.

When your finance minister was asked if he would provide the documents, he was quick to say that the Financial Accountability Officer Act doesn't let him do that. The FAO told us, though, that there were ways that the ministry could have gotten him the information without jeopardizing anything. So, Speaker, why is it acceptable to the Acting Premier that ministers of the crown only act in a transparent manner when they find it convenient to do so?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, I think the Financial Accountability Officer might have some thoughts on how his report is being described in this Legislature. What he did do is, he looked very carefully at the numbers, and he did determine that, when he looked at one part of this—

Interjection.

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

Hon. Deborah Matthews: —that there would be an ongoing revenue loss. That was not news to government, Speaker, and it should not be news to anyone here. We always knew that of course when we sold a portion of Hydro One there would be less revenue, but the benefits outweigh the loss in revenues. That's what this is all about. It's why we are doing this. In the end, people will have a different kind of asset but we'll retain the control of Hydro One. We'll be able to have that public interest at heart, plus we will have the infrastructure that we need.

1100

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Todd Smith: Clearly, the Acting Premier needs to hire a new translator because that's not what the FAO said at all. The FAO said that this was going to worsen the government's fiscal position long-term. It's good to know, though, that after 12 years, this government can still play that old shell game. They'll move things around, but they're not getting the money that they say they're going to get—not new money—from this sale.

When the Financial Accountability Officer needs records from the government to do his job, they say it's the act that holds them back. When they want to try and

spike a critical report in the press before it can overshadow the beginning of the Hydro One fire sale IPO announcement on Thursday afternoon, they forget that the act is even there and, suddenly, documents are appearing to their friends in the media.

Acting Premier, since your ministries have already violated the act, will you get them to do the right thing and release the cabinet documents that the Financial Accountability Officer needs to do his job properly?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I'm sure the member opposite would actually like to hear directly from the Financial Accountability Officer that he was, in fact, happy with the level of co-operation from our government. Here's a quote from July 19: "I've been happy with the ongoing willingness of finance and energy to work with us on this file."

Let's not forget what this is all about. It's about investing in infrastructure—\$130 billion. That's 110,000 jobs. It is rebuilding the infrastructure—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke is warned.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Leeds–Grenville, second time.

Carry on.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Highways, schools, hospitals and transit will be able to do that now, not 10 or 20 years from now.

Experts have said we are not spending enough: 5% of our GDP should be spent on infrastructure. We have to remember that not making investments has a cost, too. We've looked at the whole picture.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Catherine Fife: My question is to the Acting Premier. Last week's FAO report showed that once this government sells off 60% of Hydro One, Ontarians will lose up to \$500 million a year every year in the long run. This is money that could have been spent on education, on health care, on poverty reduction.

Unfortunately, for Ontarians, that money is as good as gone, while a number of the Premier's friends and Liberal insiders stand to line their pockets.

Will the Acting Premier finally concede that the sell-off of Hydro One is a bad decision for Ontario's families and businesses?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, I think the member opposite acknowledges that we do need to invest in infrastructure. I'm going to assume that you do believe that she does believe we need to spend on infrastructure. The question that remains is: How quickly can we do it and how are we going to pay for it?

We are looking at our assets. The people of Ontario own a number of assets. We have to make sure we're getting the best value for those assets. One of those assets is Hydro One. We very carefully looked at how we could make sure that the public interest is protected and, at the

same time, unlock some of the cash available in Hydro One so we can add other assets to our portfolio. We need other assets now; we're going to invest in those assets and we're going to do that, in part, by broadening the ownership of Hydro One.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Catherine Fife: The Financial Accountability Officer did some economic modelling that this government has a responsibility to listen to. What we are hearing today is that you do not trust the FAO and that you're not listening to him, and he mentioned that in his press conference.

The FAO's report also showed that privatizing Hydro One will cause Ontario's net debt to rise. Under this Premier's leadership, Ontario now has the most debt of any subnational government in the world. More debt means less money invested in the priorities of Ontarians, and now the FAO has confirmed that the province's net debt will be even higher, leaving a significant burden on future generations and less money for health care, education and, yes, even infrastructure.

It is always Ontario's families that end up paying the price for this government's short-sighted and reckless actions. Will the Acting Premier make the responsible decision and stop the sale of Hydro One?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: We are proceeding because we need that infrastructure and we need it now. When we did embark on this, we did look very, very closely at it. We did acknowledge that there would be revenue from Hydro One that we would not be receiving in the future. We've gone into this with open eyes. We are getting the ability to build badly needed infrastructure. That's what this is all about, and we will continue with that work.

TRANSPORTATION

Mrs. Cristina Martins: My question is to the Minister of Transportation, who I had the great pleasure of hosting this past summer in my riding of Davenport for a transit town hall. One of the issues raised was traffic gridlock.

Today, Canada's Ecofiscal Commission is issuing its report and recommendations on how to address traffic gridlock. The report, titled, *We Can't Get There from Here: Why Pricing Traffic Congestion is Critical to Beating It*, outlines four key recommendations for governments of all levels.

One of the specific suggestions in the report is that our government should build new, high-occupancy toll-lane capacity on provincially owned 400-series highways. The Ecofiscal Commission believes that this could be a practical approach for reducing congestion in and around the GTHA.

I know that previous budgets have mentioned the possibility of implementing HOT lanes. Can the minister please provide members of this House with an update on what our government is doing to move forward on this file?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I want to begin by thanking the member for Davenport not only for the question today but for the wonderful job that she does representing her community.

Our government knows how important it is to manage congestion, connect people to jobs and build communities. Our government continues to make record investments in transit and transportation infrastructure.

While investing in transit is an important part of our plan, we're also studying what other tools we can use to help alleviate congestion. That's why we are bringing forward a strategy to developing high-occupancy toll lanes in the greater Toronto and Hamilton area.

Both in the 2014 and 2015 Ontario budgets, we included the commitment to dedicate net revenue gains from high-occupancy toll lanes when they become available. We have looked at other jurisdictions and observed their success when using HOT lanes to reduce daily commute times and the environmental impacts of car emissions.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I want to thank the minister for his response.

I know that to my constituents in Davenport, traffic, transportation and commuting are all very important. I know that many living in my riding of Davenport are very interested as well to know more about what our government is doing to implement HOT lanes on provincial highways.

In fact, over the summer I heard from many in my community about the success of the HOV lanes we established for the Pan and Parapan American Games. While many were skeptical about the use of these HOV lanes, they proved very successful for those travelling through the GTHA during one of the busiest summers we've seen on Ontario's road network.

Can the minister please tell members of this House more about when we can expect to see HOT lanes rolling out on Ontario's highways?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Again, I thank that member for her question. This past summer, we saw 235 kilometres of temporary HOV lanes established on GTHA roadways for the Pan Am/Parapan Am Games as part of our games route network. Of course, the Pan and Parapan Am Games were extremely successful, and we're proud that our transportation plan made sure that all athletes got to their competitions on time and kept the region moving.

Now we're taking the information that we received to inform future transit and transportation planning, including how to implement HOT lanes. We know that there is a lot of public interest in how HOT lanes could be implemented on Ontario's highways, and we want to make sure that we get it right. This is why we will carefully consider location as well as how HOT lanes will help manage traffic congestion.

While the exact locations of future HOT lanes are still under study, we do hope to be able to provide an update on our implementation plan by the end of the year.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. John Yakabuski: My question is for the Minister of Energy. Families all across Ontario will face impossible choices this winter due to the government's irresponsible hydro policies. Ratepayers are choosing between paying their hydro bills or lining up at the local food bank.

This is because as of yesterday, they are paying 17.5 cents a kilowatt hour for on-peak electricity. That's over four times more than it was when this government came to power. The primary reason for these devastating increases is the exorbitant contracts they have signed under their failed Green Energy Act. If the government continues to sign these contracts, they are going to increase hydro poverty even more.

Will the minister finally address the reality of skyrocketing hydro rates and stop signing these unaffordable contracts?

1110

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: The member knows that our 2013 long-term energy plan projected rate increases over a 20-year period, and that the increases announced several weeks ago are below those projections.

In addition, the member knows we are continuing to mitigate rates through a new Ontario Electricity Support Program that will reduce rates for modest-income families by \$360 per year. In addition, the debt retirement charge imposed by the Conservatives is being removed from bills starting in nine weeks, saving homeowners \$70 per year. These are in addition to existing programs—the Ontario Energy and Property Tax Credit, which will give seniors up to \$1,131 per year, if they qualify. The Low-Income Energy Assistance Program continues, in addition to the new OESP. We're taking significant steps to mitigate rates.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. John Yakabuski: Again to the minister: The minister knows that this shell game of programs is just a drop in the bucket compared to the problems the Liberals created for energy ratepayers all across the province. The increases that came into effect yesterday mean that the average ratepayer will pay over \$120 more per year, with more of that still coming down the pipe over the next half-decade. These increases are going to hurt rural and suburban Ontarians even more because those ratepayers are more likely to live in a detached dwelling.

The minister knows that energy poverty is deepening in this province because of his policies. How can the minister justify continuing to go down such a dangerous path when he knows of the misery it will create? Or does he simply not care about the people of Ontario?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: We continue to create programs to mitigate rate increases. We continue to communicate that to the public so that they can get some relief from electricity prices.

But I wonder how many times the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke has actually put in his householder that there is a credit of up to \$1,131 for

seniors, that we have an OESP which will take \$360 per year off modest-income families. I'd like to know why he doesn't sell programs that make sense for consumers in this province instead of standing up here, grandstanding and exaggerating the increase by 2.5 times what it actually is.

TEACHERS' COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: My question is to the Acting Premier. This week, education workers, students and Ontario families are once again facing growing uncertainty. Over the summer, the Minister of Education assured parents that their kids would return to a routine fall semester. The education minister failed to get the job done.

In September, education workers withdrew select services, and in October, extracurricular activities were put on hold. The education minister failed to get the job done.

After months of botched attempts to reach a negotiated settlement, will the Acting Premier finally assure families that schools will return to normal in November?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I can assure the member opposite, and all Ontarians, that our top priority has always been to protect the gains we have made in one of the world's finest education systems. We very much want to ensure that students and teachers have a great year, a school year with full programming available. We want students in their classrooms and teachers in the classrooms right across the province.

We have been engaged in discussions with ETFO, with CUPE, with OSSTF education support workers. The minister is not here today because she's engaged in that bargaining, which has been very, very intense over the last several days. At this time, bargaining is continuing. We do look forward to providing an update later today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Back to the Acting Premier: The reality is that under the leadership of the Minister of Education, Ontario has undergone labour unrest not experienced since the Harris era.

Let's be clear: Teachers want to teach, education workers want to do their jobs effectively, and they all deserve to be respected while doing so. Students want to learn. Parents want quality education for their children.

The failings of this Minister of Education are impacting an entire generation of students. Our kids are paying the price for the minister's failure. Will the Acting Premier show her government is ready to end the chaos in our schools by firing the Minister of Education?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, I think credit where credit is due: I'm sure the member opposite would acknowledge that these have been very difficult negotiations, because we are in a very difficult fiscal situation, but nonetheless, this Minister of Education has led successful negotiations and has achieved contracts with OECTA, Ontario English Catholic teachers; with Ontario's Secondary School Teachers' Federation; and with AEFO, the francophone schools. We have had significant

success and I think the member opposite should congratulate this Minister of Education for doing a very, very fine job indeed.

SMOKE-FREE ONTARIO

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: My question is for the Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. I know this government has worked tirelessly to achieve the goal of making Ontario smoke-free, and I know first-hand that we have come a long way towards making that goal a reality. Smoking prevalence has decreased from 24.5% in 2000 to 17.4% in 2014, representing 408,257 fewer smokers. However, the use of tobacco products remains the leading cause of preventable disease and death in Ontario. More than two million Ontarians still smoke, and thousands of youths still take up smoking every year.

While we have made great strides in reducing the number of Ontarians who take up smoking, Mr. Speaker, through you, I'm very interested in finding out how we are going to reduce the prevalence of smoking among Ontarians.

Hon. Dipika Damerla: I would like to begin by thanking the member from Kingston and the Islands for the question. She is absolutely right: We need to continue to drive down smoking rates in Ontario, and I appreciate the opportunity to speak to some of our initiatives.

To accomplish the goal of reducing smoking in Ontario, my ministry has invested over \$340 million since 2007-08 for tobacco prevention, protection and cessation. We have listed smoking cessation drugs on the Ontario Drug Benefit Formulary and expanded access to nicotine replacement therapies for those undergoing addictions treatment.

While it is true that we have the second-lowest smoking rate in Canada, as I said earlier, there is still more work to be done. That is why effective this January, our government bans tobacco sales on university and college campuses and prohibits smoking on playgrounds, sport fields and restaurant bars, and we are moving to prohibit the sale of all flavoured—

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

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: I commend the minister for all her hard work and dedication to this issue and for sharing this great news, but I do wish to touch upon the last point that the minister made about kids taking up smoking or other bad habits. Research shows that the younger a person who starts smoking, the more difficult it will be to quit later in life, and many start to smoke in their teenage years. In 2011, smokers continue to report that on average they smoked their first whole cigarette at the age of 16 and started smoking regularly at 18 years of age.

Electronic cigarettes, or vaping, have been identified as emerging trends in Ontario. As a mother, I was concerned to see very young teenagers using these products, and I wonder if e-cigarettes are dangerous for our children and youth. Can the minister fill us in on how the

Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care is addressing these concerns of parents?

Hon. Dipika Damerla: I'd like to once again thank the member for her question, and to take this opportunity to thank her for all of her work on the e-cigarette file that she has done so far, especially in committee last year. Thank you.

Our government is taking a responsible and cautious approach to protecting Ontarians, especially our youth, from any potential harm by regulating the sale and use of e-cigarettes. Specifically, we propose to ban the sale and supply of e-cigarettes to anyone under the age of 19 and to prohibit the use of e-cigarettes in certain places where the smoking of tobacco is prohibited. To be clear, our approach does not ban e-cigarettes or vaping, but what it does do is to regulate e-cigarettes and vaping.

TEACHERS' COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Mr. Michael Harris: While the Premier and minister play hot potato—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Who to, please?

Mr. Michael Harris: To the Acting Premier.

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

Mr. Michael Harris: While the Premier and the minister play hot potato on the need for receipts for their “you scratch my back and I'll scratch your back” payout to teachers' unions, people of Ontario see their game for the distraction it is. If they wanted receipts, they would have written it into the agreement right where the government commits to the payout, but it's not there.

Will the Acting Premier tell us where in the memorandum of settlement is the direction for the union to show receipts?

1120

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Let's just understand that the member opposite is talking about a process that is successful, that has been successful. Students have remained in the classroom.

Interjections.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Members opposite might not think that's an accomplishment, but having students in the classroom is successful, and it is in line with the net-zero framework, which is very, very challenging indeed. We've been able to accomplish this without making cuts to the classroom.

We did provide support to both our education partners: teachers' unions and school boards. The funds do not come out of the classroom; they come out of other changes to the contract. The money has not flowed. Unions will be required to provide accounting to show costs were incurred, and we will make those details public.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Harris: Yes, don't forget the success to the Liberal Party.

Speaker, there is no requirement for receipts, and there never will be. The memorandum is clear: “The crown shall pay to the OSSTF ... \$1 million”—no receipts are ever mentioned.

The receipt ruse is a red herring taken straight from the Liberal scandal-distraction playbook.

Given that there are no required receipts, and given that the government handed over millions to teachers' unions just one year after those unions spent millions on election ads to prop up the Liberals, the people of Ontario are concerned over the potential misappropriation of taxpayers' money.

Will the Acting Premier direct her caucus to vote in support of our call to bring in the Provincial Auditor to get to the bottom of this mess? It's a simple question: Yes or no?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The member opposite wants a simple answer; he's getting one. The answer is yes. We are supportive of having the Auditor General look at this.

MANUFACTURING JOBS

Ms. Jennifer K. French: My question is to the Acting Premier. The Trans-Pacific Partnership will have a profound impact on Ontario families, businesses and industries. Unfortunately, those families, businesses and industries can't prepare for what that impact will be, because the details of the agreement are still under lock and key.

The Ontario Auto Mayors caucus, which includes Oshawa's Mayor John Henry, has called for the release of the TPP in its entirety, to “help determine the impact of the agreement.”

Will the Premier stand with the Ontario Auto Mayors and Ontario's auto communities, and call for public disclosure of the TPP?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, I think we all acknowledge that Ontario's auto sector is absolutely key to our economic growth. It's kind of remarkable to think that it contributes \$16 billion to our economy. It supports over 100,000 direct jobs and hundreds of thousands of indirect jobs. These are very important jobs, a very important foundation to our economy.

Throughout the TPP negotiations, we called on the federal government to conduct open and transparent discussions. Recently we've learned that some sectors of the auto industry may benefit from the TPP, like Toyota and Honda, which are key assemblers in Ontario.

Yet while the proposed TPP promises new market opportunities for Ontario firms, we are concerned that new, weaker rules for vehicles and auto parts may negatively affect the industry's ability to attract and retain investments. We're also concerned about the proposed tariff reduction schedule, so we're looking forward to learning more.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: To answer the comment made by the Acting Premier about their conversations with the federal government regarding open and transparent discussions: During the federal election, Justin Trudeau was offered a private briefing on the details of the TPP. Through a spokesperson, he declined this invi-

tation, because he wanted to “release the text of the agreement for Canadians to see.”

Canadians deserve to know what this secret deal will mean for them. They deserve to see the details. Will the Acting Premier call on Mr. Trudeau to stand by his promise and release the text of the TPP for Canadians to see?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I know we all look forward to the swearing-in of the new government. That will be happening. I think we all are optimistic that we’ll see a refreshing change in Ottawa, certainly in terms of the relationship with the provincial government.

The briefing that the leader of the Liberal Party did not take in was the same briefing that the leader of the NDP did not participate in.

I am very optimistic that there will be a refreshing change blowing across this country.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr. Bob Delaney: This question is for the Attorney General.

Minister, governments at all levels need to, try to and want to consult widely and encourage public comment on legislation and other public issues. To assist people in organizations to bring their best ideas forward on an ongoing basis, this Legislature recently passed the Protection of Public Participation Act. Concerned people in organizations with valuable input to offer need to know that when they present their ideas in public participation settings, they can do so securely and without fear of harassment. The members of our province’s legal community agree and have supported the bill.

Would the minister tell the House what type of difference the Protection of Public Participation Act will make to ensure equal access to justice in Ontario, especially for concerned people with strong feelings or good ideas on projects and proposals within Ontario?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: First of all, let me thank the member from Mississauga–Streetsville for his very important question, a very important idea for all Ontarians in that proper access to justice needs to be maintained. By protecting citizens against strategic litigation, our government is standing up for the values that the people of Ontario cherish.

This law will allow courts to quickly identify and deal with strategic lawsuits, minimizing the emotional and financial strain on defendants, as well as the waste of court resources. By protecting citizens against strategic litigation, our government is protecting the right of Ontario residents to speak out on matters that are important to us.

I am very pleased to say that Bill 52 passed third reading, meaning that after royal assent, the people of Ontario will be protected against meritless strategic lawsuits.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Bob Delaney: Minister, we need a balance between the two poles of intervenors unjustly making false allegations against proponents and organizations aiming to do something, and of companies with deep pockets

using civil litigation to intimidate public participants and cause people with legitimate concerns or ideas to shun the public participation process. To be specific, residents of a community with concerns about a project or a proponent should not fear a process server ringing their doorbell at night to serve a statement of claim on a frivolous and vexatious lawsuit.

Intimidation by lawsuit is still all too common today. We heard from some of the blameless victims on the bill’s committee hearings about the loss and the turmoil that such suits have caused in their lives.

Minister, please tell the House how the act rebalances the justice system and stops meritless lawsuits while allowing legitimate defamation, libel and slander actions to proceed.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: The proposed legal test for identifying strategic lawsuits is carefully balanced to ensure that lawsuits about expression that seriously harms reputation, business or the personal interests of others can continue. This bill will not allow anyone a licence to slander. This bill will even the playing field but will not guarantee that expression will always win over reputation.

We have worked hard to develop a proposal that balances the interests of defendants and plaintiffs in defamation suits. The test for identifying strategic lawsuits is carefully balanced to ensure that lawsuits about communications that seriously harm the reputation, business or personal interests of others can continue.

ONTARIO RETIREMENT PENSION PLAN

Mrs. Julia Munro: My question is to the Associate Minister of Finance. The Premier has said she would cancel the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan if the Liberals were elected. Well, they were.

For years, the Premier said her preference would be an enhancement of the Canada Pension Plan to help people with their retirement. She knows the new Prime Minister agrees with her but the Premier still refuses to put the ORPP on hold. Now the Premier has directed her government to issue a request for proposals tender call for the ORPP investment strategy when it won’t be needed. The Premier is still spending taxpayer money on this pension plan.

Will the government stop this bait-and-switch melodrama, stop spending taxpayer money preparing the ORPP payroll—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.
Associate Minister of Finance?

1130

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: I want to thank the member opposite for her question. This government ran on a plan to boost retirement security for the people of Ontario and that is what we intend to do. We know that two thirds of Ontario workers have no pension plan. In fact, when you look at younger workers, that drops to one in four young workers who have a pension plan.

Absolutely, we have a new government in Ottawa and that means we have a government that is willing to co-operate with Ontario on the priorities that we see are important for the people of Ontario. We know that Prime Minister Trudeau is not able to enhance CPP alone. He will need the co-operation of the provinces and the territories in order to do so.

We are absolutely willing to be part of that conversation, but in order to ensure that we have adequate security for the people of Ontario when they retire, we're moving—

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

Mrs. Julia Munro: Again to the associate minister: Ontarians want to know if the Premier wants both her new ORPP as well as a bigger CPP. Ontarians and their employers need to know how much more government is going to take from them by raising payroll taxes and reducing their take-home pay.

This is a frightening question. I don't know if I want to hear the answer. Can the associate minister tell us, is the Premier now thinking of keeping her job-killing ORPP payroll tax on top of an enhanced CPP?

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: Our Premier has been very, very clear that we are moving forward with the implementation of the ORPP. We know that Ontarians deserve a secure retirement future when they retire. We've communicated to business and advised them of the implementation schedule and the rollout schedule, which will happen gradually. In January 2017, we will enrol the largest corporations, moving to medium-sized and then finally, in 2019, to small businesses. We will phase in contribution rates gradually over time as well.

Two thirds of Ontario workers have no pension plan. We've committed in legislation to enrol these corporations in a phased-in, gradual way, also ensuring that it is done arm's length from government so that the members of the plan will benefit from the plan when we implement it.

PAY EQUITY

Ms. Peggy Sattler: My question is to the Acting Premier. At last week's launch of the gender wage gap consultation, many of those in attendance raised concerns about the Liberal government's lack of enforcement of existing pay equity laws. In particular, the government has failed to live up to its own pay equity obligations for public sector workers in developmental services, in child care and in home care.

Given that pay equity is a critical component of closing the gender wage gap, how can Ontario employers be expected to take the wage gap seriously when the government is refusing to fund pay equity for some of the lowest-paid women workers in Ontario?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The minister responsible for women's issues.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I want to thank the member opposite for the question and for joining us at the very

important announcement last week about closing the wage gap in Ontario.

We know there's more to do. We know that Ontario's Pay Equity Act continues to be recognized in Canada and internationally as one of the most progressive pay equity standards in the world. It was the first province to recognize Equal Pay Day. We're committed to building on those milestones and to make progress for women in the workplace.

In my mandate letter, the Premier asked me to support the work of the Minister of Labour in developing a wage gap strategy that will ensure Ontario continues to close the gap. I think we heard some very good advice at the launch last week from people across the sector.

As the member opposite knows, the government has appointed a steering committee to lead the development of a wage gap strategy. Consultations are under way now, and a report will be forthcoming—draft reports this fall and a final report in the spring.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: There are several things the government can do now to narrow the gap without waiting for recommendations from the gender wage gap steering committee. One of these is to apply a gender lens to budget decisions, to look at the impact of tax credits and other budget measures on women.

Will the Acting Premier commit to applying a gender lens to the 2016 budget, especially with regard to the budget impact on women who experience the widest wage gaps; that is, racialized women, indigenous women and women with disabilities?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Again, thanks to the member for the question.

The question of the gender lens came up at the session last week. If the member will recall, I spoke to that. That is also in my mandate letter to address. Our Women's Directorate works across government ministries to ensure that gender considerations are integrated in all aspects of policy-making. There's work in the OPS through the Diversity Office. They play a key role, and the new gender wage gap steering committee is consulting to understand better how the wage gap affects women in workforces.

I do want to say that this government has taken a number of measures to address the wage gap, whether that's raising minimum wage, full-day kindergarten, supporting programs to help women in the trades and information technology. We have a micro-lending program for women who want to start businesses. And we're the only province in Canada to introduce comply-or-explain legislation for—

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

ANSWERS TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Huron-Bruce, on a point of order.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: According to the order paper, I submitted a question to the Minister of Health

and Long-Term Care, and it's overdue. I was just wondering when he could tell me when my answer or response should be expected.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Yes, that is a point of order. It is overdue, and I would ask the House leader if there is an answer pending.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Mr. Speaker, we will make sure that that answer gets in in time, forthwith.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, on a point of order.

Mr. John Yakabuski: On a point of order, I would like to welcome the family of page Julia Cooper, from Whitby–Oshawa, here this morning. We have her mother, Tara Cooper; her father, Greg Cooper; her brother, Nigel Cooper; and her grandparents, Jane and Clifford Cooper and Linda and Robert Mitchell, all here to see page Julia this morning.

MEMBER'S BIRTHDAY

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Point of order, the member from Nepean–Carleton.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I know all members in this House will be excited to wish happy birthday to the member from Niagara West–Glanbrook. He doesn't look a day over 58.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I don't know about how correct a record of him that is, but still.

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 draw of October 5, 2015, for private members' public business such that Madame Gélinas assumes ballot item number 3 and Ms. Fife assumes ballot item number 20.

DEFERRED VOTES

STRENGTHENING AND IMPROVING GOVERNMENT ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LE RENFORCEMENT ET L'AMÉLIORATION DE LA GESTION PUBLIQUE

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

Bill 85, An Act to strengthen and improve government by amending or repealing various Acts / Projet de loi 85, Loi visant à renforcer et à améliorer la gestion publique en modifiant ou en abrogeant diverses lois.

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

The division bells rang from 1139 to 1144.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On May 14, 2015, Madame Meilleur moved second reading of Bill 85. All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

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

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

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 93; the nays are 0.

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

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

Attorney General?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: We refer the bill to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): There are no further deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1148 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: They may not have arrived yet, but I want to introduce Doug DeRabbie and Matt Hiraiishi from the Insurance Bureau of Canada. I want to thank them for their work to promote the need for carbon monoxide detectors in all residences in the province of Ontario.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

EVENTS IN NOVEMBER

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I'm pleased to rise in the House today to recognize the beginning of November. Not only did November 1 mark yet another increase in electricity costs introduced by this province's government that seems disconnected from individuals who are finding it tough—we had a hydro increase in May, and as of yesterday, the cost of electricity goes up again. Enough is enough.

But with that, I want to park it because the beginning of November also marks so many other important milestones.

Of course, the beginning of November marks the beginning of Lung Health Month. We all know that it's very important to take care of our lungs and support the people who advocate for proper procedures and access to drugs that make life a little easier for people who find it difficult to breathe.

Also, the beginning of November marks a very special event in Toronto. That's when the country comes to the city. I just want to remind everyone that the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair kicks off this Friday, November 6. It runs through to the 15th. It's an amazing venue where Ontario's best of the best is celebrated, from the cattle shows through the horse shows through the jams and jellies and square dancing. The list goes on and on. I'd be remiss if I didn't talk about the excellent education centres that are happening there.

Go by the goat exhibit. You might see some Boer goats from Maple Crest. They're the best Boer goats ever.

LONDON COFFEE HOUSE

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I am always proud to stand in this House on behalf of my constituents of London–Fanshawe, but I'm even prouder today to stand and share the phenomenal work done at the London Coffee House, a program of the Canadian Mental Health Association funded through United Way in partnership with the Salvation Army.

I was very happy to have visited the London Coffee House on World Homeless Action Day and to have spent some time with participants. The program offers support for mental health, addictions health and housing stability in a safe and welcoming environment. It is open to anyone aged 16 and older for drop-in, socializing, connecting, information and referral, friendships and peer support.

I'd like to share a poem written by Bob, who often attends the London Coffee House and is a member of their baseball team, who explains how valuable this program is to him.

It's a simple thing
A bat, a ball, a glove.

It's a simple thing
To be with friends you love.
It's a simple thing
To be out there
On a sunny field
And great fresh air.
It's a simple thing
To be part of the team
Where hopes are built
And one can dream.
But the truth is
My friend, you see?
It's not a simple thing
For you, or me.
We have our demons and our ghosts.
We even have our darkest hosts.
The battles we fight day by day
Bring us to this simple thing
Just to forget if only for a little while.
That's why this program is so valuable!

That's why the program is so valuable to Bob and the other participants. Thank you for the time to share this statement today with the House, Speaker.

GLENGARRY–PRESCOTT–
RUSSELL DAY
JOURNÉE DE GLENGARRY–
PRESCOTT–RUSSELL

Mr. Grant Crack: On October 7, I had the great pleasure of hosting the sixth edition of Glengarry–Prescott–Russell Day here at Queen's Park. First, though, I want to thank the staff of the United Counties of Prescott and Russell and of the township of North Glengarry for their hard work in organizing GPR Day, as this day allows our region to showcase local food products in front of the entire Legislative Assembly. Once again this year, more than 200 people took part in the event, including the Premier, who came by, and multiple members of cabinet and my colleagues.

This year's GPR Day included all nine regional mayors representing the UCPR and the township of North Glengarry, as well as many local members of council. Each municipality benefited from the opportunity to meet with several ministers and their staff in order to advance economic development projects in their region.

I would also like to thank the local producers who contributed to this great event, which showcased regional products including Fromagerie St-Albert, L'Original Packing, Skotidakis goat farm, Mariposa Farm, Cakes On St-Philippe, Prima Cossa, Vert Fourchette, La Binerie Plantagenet, Beau's All Natural Brewing, Cassel Brewery, Domaine Perrault winery, Muirs Bakery, The Pickle Patch, Maple Ridge Farms, The Quirky Carrot, Glengarry Fine Cheese, Boulangerie Lanthier Bakery, Honey from the Glen and Fauxmagerie Zengarry.

Merci à tous ceux qui ont contribué à faire de cet évènement un grand succès. Nous avons démontré encore une fois que Glengarry–Prescott–Russell est reconnu comme un leader au sein de la province.

VOLUNTEERS

Mr. Bill Walker: I'm pleased to rise in the House today in recognition of five outstanding constituents from my riding of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound: John Baker of Lion's Head, Islay Livingston of Dundalk, Iowna Turner of Flesherton, Myrtle Timmins of Durham and Kris Dawson of Hepworth.

Mr. Baker was recently presented a Paul Harris award, the highest award from the Rotary Club for a non-member. Mr. Baker has for years entertained the crowds with his music at the pancake breakfasts and other events organized by the Rotary Club of Northern Bruce Peninsula. He also plays regularly at the Golden Dawn and Gateway Haven seniors' homes in Warton.

Ms. Livingston was named volunteer of the year by Grey Gables in Markdale for her many volunteer years in the nail salon, as well as helping organize social events and community outings for senior residents there.

Ms. Turner was presented with a special certificate of appreciation from Grey Gables for her more than 16 years of work and volunteer service at the lodge.

Ms. Timmins was named a lifetime member by the Zion Friendship Group, formerly named the Zion Women's Institute, after having served there since 1942.

Ms. Dawson, who is the local Independent Epicure consultant, was recently recognized in the local media for her donations to the 16 Owen Sound families who lost their homes to fire. Ms. Dawson first reached out to her friends and family asking for donations of \$10, which she then used to purchase Epicure What's for Dinner? packs for the fire victims. After that, with the assistance of the Epicure home office, she was able to mobilize help to restart the kitchens of the 16 households, which allowed the victims to cook great meals in their transition homes. The deliveries are made by the Owen Sound Salvation Army food bank.

Mr. Speaker, I invite the House to join me in thanking my constituents for making a difference in their community and wishing them all the best in the future.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Last week, I had the privilege to attend the climate workshop in London. The workshop was sponsored by the UN Environment Programme and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. The workshop brought together parliamentarians from around the world.

I had a chance to speak to MPs who are dealing with the impact of climate change on a daily basis in their homelands. The member of Parliament from Samoa set out the impacts of three years of drought that withered crops, only to have three years of cyclones in a row that

devastated the crops that survived the drought. The MP from Bangladesh outlined the massive disruption that faces that nation as one third of the low-lying country starts to go under water over the next few decades and 60 million people are forced to relocate. As he said to me, there are no climate deniers in Bangladesh.

MP after MP—from Ghana, to the Seychelles to the Cook Islands—talked about the need to relocate people inland. It is clear that the disruption we have seen from people fleeing Syria will pale in comparison to the migration that will come from climate disruption in the future.

Many nations are facing today what we in Canada will face tomorrow from climate change: disruption and dropping standards of living. It is time for substantial and ongoing action to cut Ontario's greenhouse pollution.

PORTUGUESE CULTURAL EVENTS

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I rise today to extend congratulations and best wishes to the Portuguese cultural organizations in my riding of Davenport that celebrated, and are celebrating, their cultural weeks.

In particular I would like to congratulate Casa das Beiras, which at the end of September organized a full week of activities to celebrate the regions of Beira Litoral, Beira Baixa and Beira Alta. A special thank you to the president, Bernardino Nascimento, and his board of volunteers for organizing such a fantastic week.

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Casa do Alentejo just wrapped up a full week of events highlighting the region of Alentejo. Thank you to president Carlos de Sousa, his board and volunteers for organizing such a great week.

Casa dos Açores just launched their cultural week activities yesterday to celebrate the nine islands that make up the Açores. Congratulations to president Suzanne Cunha, her board and volunteers for organizing what promises to be a fun-filled week of activities.

The regional cultural week celebrations organized by many of these cultural organizations have served to promote the richness of the history and traditions of the many regions of Portugal. They have served to educate the Portuguese Canadian youth on their origins, and they have served to educate other communities across Ontario about the Portuguese culture and, more importantly, about the many economic, political and social contributions that the Portuguese Canadian community has made and continues to make to our province.

As the MPP for Davenport and a proud member of the Portuguese community, I'm privileged to represent the great riding of Davenport, which has a number of very active and engaged Portuguese cultural groups.

I want to thank all these organizations for their commitments to preserving the Portuguese culture so that youth with Portuguese roots may understand and appreciate their heritage. Obrigado a todos.

CARBON MONOXIDE AWARENESS WEEK

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'm pleased to rise today to recognize the second annual Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week, which was created as part of my private member's bill, the Hawkins Gignac Act.

As people seal up their homes for winter, we want to remind them to check their chimneys and vents and to make sure they have a working carbon monoxide detector that hasn't expired. Detectors that were manufactured before 2008 should now be replaced. Carbon monoxide has no taste, no smell and no colour, so having a working detector is not just the law; it's the only way to know when carbon monoxide is in your home and the only way to protect your family.

I want to commend John Gignac, founder of the Hawkins-Gignac Foundation, and the Insurance Bureau of Canada for their dedication to raising awareness of the need for detectors and their generous efforts to provide them through fire departments to people in need.

I also want to commend all of the fire departments across Ontario who are taking steps this week to raise awareness of the dangers of carbon monoxide, such as the volunteer department in Neebing that added a kickoff to Carbon Monoxide Awareness Week activity as part of their Halloween open house; the Cobourg Fire Department, who were in Home Hardware last weekend to answer questions on installing detectors; and the Woodstock fire department and Woodstock and Ingersoll real estate board, who are hosting an awareness event this weekend.

Together, all of these people and organizations are saving lives. We want to recognize them for the difference that they are making on behalf of the people of Ontario. Thank you very much.

SALON THEATRE

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: It gives me great pleasure to convey to this chamber yet another example of Kingston's well-known excellence in the performing arts. I speak of a unique group of young actors known as the SALON Theatre, best known for their ever-changing, humorous, educational and interactive walking tour productions about our first Prime Minister, Sir John A. Macdonald.

I've watched a few SALON performances and I've been immensely impressed by their skill and enthusiasm in presenting our cultural heritage in creative and highly entertaining ways. In portraying Sir John A. and his contemporaries as flawed in some respects, they've engaged with students and adults in some compelling conversations; for example, on colonialism as experienced by indigenous peoples.

In September's walk, they featured a rousing speech by Louis Riel, en français et en chanson, from the gallows. So impassioned was the actor Anna Sudac's rendition of Riel and so moving was the troops' song

about the hanging that it was hard to not feel transported to Regina in 1885.

The SALON Theatre deserves praise and support for their intelligent and highly skilled approach to education, with their entertaining mix of original song, dance and drama. I invite you all to come to Kingston and the Islands to see it for yourself. Merci beaucoup. Meegwetch. Thank you.

MOVEMBER

Mr. Glenn Thibeault: I'm very honoured to rise today to talk about Movember. It's a global charity that is promoting men's health and of course is fighting men's diseases and cancers. I know, Mr. Speaker, I saw you rubbing the moustache right there. I think you sport a fine Movember there, sir.

I also want everyone to note that—don't be afraid—you'll see thousands of men, not only here in Ontario but across our great country and around the world, Mr. Speaker, that will be sporting the peach fuzz to start off, and then, as it grows, it will form into some fantastic moustaches to help raise money.

But let's look at the important things that Movember is doing. Last year, 21 countries—over 700 million participants—funded over 1,000 programs for research in prostate cancer, in testicular cancer, in poor mental health, in physical activity and in heart health, some of the things that Movember is doing. So while we may see some very poor taste in moustaches over the next little while, what we will see, though, is money being raised to support some great causes to really support men's health and fight the cancers that need to be fought and make sure that we advise all men to get checked, especially over 50, especially when it comes to prostate cancer.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

ESTATE ADMINISTRATION TAX ABOLITION ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 ABOLISSANT L'IMPÔT SUR L'ADMINISTRATION DES SUCCESSIONS

Mr. Brown moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 136, An Act to abolish the estate administration tax and provide for related matters / Projet de loi 136, Loi visant à abolir l'impôt sur l'administration des successions et traitant de questions connexes.

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. Patrick Brown: The bill abolishes the estate administration tax and caps the fee for filing an estate certificate with the court.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

MINING INDUSTRY

Hon. Michael Gravelle: It's a pleasure to stand in the House today to welcome the Ontario Mining Association for their annual Meet the Miners Day, which is happening tomorrow here at Queen's Park. This is the 37th year that representatives from the mining industry and government will gather here to better understand and appreciate the vital role of mining in Ontario's history and in our economy.

I don't think there's any argument that Ontario is fortunate to have an abundance of natural resources, including rich mineral deposits. Our government certainly understands this, and we also understand the importance of the mining sector to the province's economy, that particularly being the case in northern Ontario.

We have worked very hard to ensure that our mining sector remains strong and able to handle the challenges of a highly competitive and very dynamic global market. Some important facts: Ontario remains a top-10 mineral investment jurisdiction in the world. We lead Canada in spending on mineral exploration and we remain a destination of choice for mineral developers. We have 43 mines currently operating in the province of Ontario. We are a leading jurisdiction for both exploration and the production of minerals in Canada, and, as I said earlier, we are a major player across the world.

In 2014, we saw our value of mineral production reach a record \$11 billion, securing Ontario as Canada's lead province in mining and production. May I say that, even in the very uncertain global economic times that our province faces—the European debt crisis, the downturn in China, and certainly I think we need to acknowledge the depressed commodity prices—Ontario continues to be one of the most attractive destinations for mineral exploration in North America. So, Speaker, we are very optimistic about the future of mining in Ontario, as I know all members of this House are.

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Today, there are approximately 200 companies undertaking more than 300 mineral exploration projects here in the province. Nearly three dozen of those are at the advanced stage of that process. New mine construction includes KGHM's Victoria mine in Sudbury, Goldcorp's Cochenour gold mine expansion in Red Lake, New Gold's very exciting gold mine in Rainy River, and Rubicon's Phoenix Gold Project as well. In addition, there are a number of other mine expansion projects, such as Goldcorp's Hoyle Pond winze project in Timmins, that are actually under way. And we are very confident that several new mining operations will come into production over the next number of years. May I say, I include Noront's Eagle's Nest nickel mine in the Ring of Fire in that category.

Important facts, again, Speaker, that I think people need to know: Ontario has about 25% of the mining

sector jobs in the country. In 2014, the total number of direct jobs in mineral production was 26,000 in the province of Ontario, and some 50,000 jobs in related manufacturing and processing industries. May I say, the mineral sector is also the largest private sector employer of aboriginal peoples in Canada.

Our ministry is continuing our work on developing export markets for the mining supply and services sector, which is a huge economic driver in the province of Ontario. Over the last year, our ministry has led trade missions to a number of strategic destinations, including Chile, Sweden, India, Australia and Mexico, all with positive results. Since 2009, trade missions led by the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines have resulted in millions of dollars in sales of mining supply and services. Again, we are top of the grade in that regard.

We're also helping companies in northern Ontario's mining supply and services sector enter new markets and diversify their client base. They are learning and at the front end of advancing their innovative products and services across Canada and around the world. It's measures like these that promote long-term sustainability and global competitiveness in our province, and that, of course, is what is key to our success.

We also are doing very substantial work. Work is under way on the renewal of Ontario's Mineral Development Strategy—something we first brought out in 2006. We think a renewal, a revitalization, of that is absolutely crucial. Our new strategy, which is expected later this fall, will help our government ensure that Ontario remains a global leader in mining, so that our mineral sector continues to provide significant social and economic contributions for the people of Ontario.

We're also working very hard on modernizing the Mining Act to help Ontario remain at the forefront of mineral exploration and production. Our Mining Act modernization will encourage prospecting, staking and exploration, and the development of mineral resources in a way that affirms aboriginal and treaty rights, is respectful of private landowners and minimizes the impact on the environment. Our plan to modernize includes an online registration system for mining claims which will replace the current ground-staking process. An online claim registration system will make the staking of mining claims more efficient and significantly reduce the environmental impact of mineral exploration.

Our government also recognizes very well that the cost of electricity represents a significant challenge for mining operations. Large industrial users of electricity, including mining companies, certainly have become significantly more competitive with the support of the Northern Industrial Electricity Rate Program, which everyone in this Legislature knows so well. That NIER program is helping the largest electricity consumers reduce their energy costs by up to 25%. That, of course, is helping them to create and sustain jobs and maintain long-term global competitiveness. Certainly, many people who will be here tomorrow for our Meet the

Miners Day will be happy to tell you how important that program has been to the success of their companies.

What we're very excited about—and I'm very proud of and certainly proud of our government—is that our government has made support of this program permanent, with funding averages of about \$120 million annually. That was a hugely well received announcement. Again, I'm grateful to the Premier and to the Minister of Finance for making that program permanent. Under that program, since 2010, we have distributed more than \$484 million in rebates to qualifying participants.

It's such a huge part of our economic structure, Mr. Speaker, that we remain committed to investing in mining research through organizations such as the Centre for Excellence in Mining Innovation, or CEMI. These investments very much drive innovation and help ensure that Ontario remains a global leader in the mines and minerals sector.

There is no question that mining enriches our lives, from the salt on your table to rare earth metals for cellphones. Not everyone realizes how each and every day they are touched by the mining sector itself. It's a pillar of our provincial economy and it certainly provides social and economic benefits for all Ontarians.

Our government remains very committed to supporting mineral development in the province so that we can ensure that we continue to be that world leader for both exploration and mining investment. This does mean promoting mineral production and development in Ontario in a balanced manner. I use that expression frequently, Mr. Speaker, and I have from the moment that we introduced the modernized Mining Act. We need to do it in a balanced manner which very much includes protecting—I see my colleague across the floor is agreeing with me on this, how important it is to bring it forward in a balanced manner—protecting public health and safety, and minimizing the impact on the environment.

Meet the Miners Day is a day that helps us all to reflect on the role of the mines and mineral sector in our lives. So on behalf of the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines and the province of Ontario, I am really very pleased that we are going to be having this very special 37th annual Meet the Miners Day here at the Legislature. I do want to invite all of the members to a reception, which will be happening tomorrow evening, Tuesday evening, in rooms 228 and 230. It's always extremely well attended; it's a lively gathering. I know there will be opportunities throughout the day to meet with many of the industry leaders.

I think the key thing, Mr. Speaker, for all of us here at the Legislature, is that together we can recognize the valuable contributions of our friends, our colleagues and our neighbours in the mining sector. It's going to be a tremendous day.

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

Mr. Jim Wilson: I am pleased to rise in the House today on behalf of the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party caucus, our leader, Patrick Brown, and our mining

critic, Norm Miller, to recognize the tremendous work of the Ontario Mining Association and their annual Meet the Miners Day, which will be held here at Queen's Park tomorrow.

This will be the first Meet the Miners Day at Queen's Park for our leader, Patrick Brown. I'm proud to say that after becoming PC leader on May 9 of this year, one of the first things he did was to tour the Ring of Fire. We in the PC caucus hope to make the Ring of Fire mining project a reality, with mines coming into production and creating jobs in Ontario's northwest. Patrick certainly sees the opportunity for Ontario and the importance of moving this generational project forward.

Tomorrow, representatives from mining companies all across Ontario will be here in Toronto to bring their unique perspective to legislators.

It is truly amazing how much mining has contributed to Ontario. It has provided thousands of jobs, contributed billions of dollars to our provincial economy, and provided the identities for some of our most recognizable cities and communities.

Today, mining is getting safer, cleaner and more effective. New technologies continue to make Canada a world leader in mining. Here in Ontario, many former mines have been revisited and redeveloped for another generation.

All told, it is estimated that mining contributes \$10 billion per year to the Ontario economy and employs over a quarter of a million Ontarians in what is referred to as Ontario's mining cluster. Mining is also the largest sector employer of aboriginal workers.

When I was Minister of Northern Development and Mines, almost a decade and a half ago, the Fraser Institute Annual Survey of Mining Companies ranked Ontario the number one mining jurisdiction in the world. I don't mind pointing that out. Today, we sit at 23, so obviously I say to the minister, the Liberal government has a lot of work to do to get us back to number one. I wish you well with that because I wish we were number one again in mining. It would be great for the economy.

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At this time, I'd like to also highlight the work of the Ontario Mining Association, in particular the So You Think You Know Mining annual contest for high school students. It's a tremendous initiative that helps educate a new generation on the opportunities presented in the mining sector. Open to high school students across the province, these annual awards reward creative videos that tell the positive story of mining in Ontario. I look forward, Mr. Speaker, to the 2016 awards in June.

We in the PC caucus appreciate the value that mining provides. Whether it's through getting electricity rates under control or improving the process of approvals and permitting, we believe more can be done to champion our mining sector. Ontario has a rich history, and again, I look forward to—along with, I'm sure, all members of the Legislature—making Ontario the number one mining jurisdiction in the world again.

In closing, I look forward to the 37th annual mining day tomorrow, and meeting with the Ontario Mining Association.

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

Mr. Michael Mantha: First, I would like to take this opportunity to highlight that tomorrow is, again, Meet the Miners Day here at Queen's Park. It is a great opportunity to meet people in the industry and learn of their ongoing projects, and the importance and contributions of mining both in our country and in our great province.

Over the last few years, I've had the opportunity to tour many mines across Ontario, and I've brought the industry's concerns back here to the Legislature, to our caucus and to our leader. Mining plays such an important role in our economy. It fuels cities and drives employment. As many of you know, as MPP for Algoma-Manitoulin and also critic for northern development and mines for the NDP, so many of my constituents—of our constituents—across this province we represent, so many of our families I know and so many of the workers in our communities work in the mining industry and resource development. I look forward to meeting with many of you at your reception, and over the coming months and years as we work together. I encourage all of my colleagues here at the Legislature to welcome the many delegations that will be going through our offices, and also to come by and enjoy the evening.

While the mining industry makes enormous contributions in many sectors in our society, we often hear about the struggles they are facing. Year after year, we hear of your struggles of inadequate infrastructure, lack of framework and high energy costs, making it difficult to operate in this province. With the government's plan to sell off Hydro One, I have no doubt that the mining industry is concerned for what this will mean for the future investment, operations, processing and manufacturing opportunities.

After a lack of action on the Ring of Fire and countless other mining projects in our province, and a vague announcement of creating a development corporation, this Liberal government gave itself a deadline of 60 days to create that corporation, which was to include partners in industry and in First Nations. What the government produced in order to meet its self-imposed deadline was a board comprised of five government bureaucrats sitting at a table all by themselves. I really haven't seen anything else coming forward from this corporation.

On a more positive note, New Democrats are encouraged that the government is accepting the recommendations of the mining health and safety review. We, alongside the United Steelworkers and the group Mining Inquiry Needs Everyone's Support, have been front and centre in calling for major changes to how mines in Ontario are regulated and made safe. Changes that will improve safety in the mines are welcome. There have been 11 deaths since 2007; another seven last year. Last week, the death of Richard Pigeau at the Glencore Nickel Rim was a stark reminder that toughened rules that may prevent injuries and deaths in the future are badly needed and long, long overdue.

This government has failed to bring industry together. They have failed to bring First Nations together. The facts speak for themselves. Industry is unable to continue working under these conditions. Some have left, taking good jobs with them elsewhere. Other companies are fighting our own government in our court system.

When it comes to First Nations, the minister claims they reached a historic agreement with the chiefs of the Matawa tribal council that lays the groundwork for future discussions. Meanwhile, Matawa chiefs have publicly expressed concern that the provincial government is violating this agreement when it excludes them from the development corporation board and is not consulting them on mining permits in the Ring of Fire.

Despite these facts, the minister says his government is proud of the work they have accomplished so far. Northerners, First Nations and industry, Mr. Speaker, need less rhetoric from this government and more action to get shovels in the ground in the Ring of Fire and across the vast potential mining projects that we have in Ontario. Thousands of jobs for communities across the north depend on it.

I thank industry folks for coming to meet up with us. My colleagues and I look forward to meeting with you and your colleagues, supporting your projects and working together to create the much-needed jobs this province needs. I thank everyone for joining and coming out to meet the miners tomorrow.

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

PETITIONS

SAUBLE BEACH LAND CLAIM

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

"Whereas there are serious concerns with the government's policy involving third-parties named in land claim disputes in Ontario, namely the Sauble Beach land claim;

"Whereas the government of Ontario and the government of Canada have equally failed to include protection of the third-parties named in this land claim dispute, specifically they have abandoned any responsibility in honouring crown patent grants and in the case of Ontario, honouring the land registry system;

"Whereas there is no indication that any effort is being made to protect the interest of the public or third-parties named in the Sauble Beach land claim dispute;

"Whereas the current process concerning the dissemination of information to third-parties named in this land claim dispute is deeply flawed;

"Whereas there is no consultation with the third parties as to crown land planning and decision-making nor any engagement in a process that must be open as per the MNRF's publicly stated principles on land negotiations;

"Whereas third parties named in the land claim should be consulted and their concerns should be reflected in negotiations;

"We, the undersigned, petition the government of Ontario to do the following:

"To review its guiding principles for land claim negotiations and the respective roles of Canada and Ontario in settling claims in an effort to enhance protection of third-parties and all citizens affected by land disputes, to provide open communication and accountability to all pertinent stakeholders, and to provide appropriate financial support to ensure this matter is dealt with in a fair and timely manner."

I support this petition, will affix my name and send it with page Cameron.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Mr. Michael Mantha: I want to thank Mrs. Marlene Turner from Manitowadge, who always takes the time to present me with these petitions. It reads:

"Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Privatizing Hydro One: Another Wrong Choice.

"Whereas once you privatize hydro, there's no return; and

"We'll lose billions in reliable annual revenues for schools and hospitals; and

"We'll lose our biggest economic asset and control over our energy future; and

"We'll pay higher and higher hydro bills just like what's happened elsewhere;

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

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

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

ONTARIO RETIREMENT PENSION PLAN

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Liberal government has brought forward a payroll tax in the form of a mandatory Ontario Retirement Pension Plan (ORPP); and

"Whereas the Liberal government has not conducted nor released a cost-benefit analysis of this new payroll tax; and

"Whereas internal Ministry of Finance documents show that the Liberals are aware that the ORPP will increase the cost of doing business in Ontario and kill jobs in the province; and

"Whereas a McKinsey and Co. survey shows that more than four out of every five Canadians already have enough for their retirement; and

"Whereas the Canadian Federation of Independent Business has stated that a majority of its members would have to lay off workers; and

"Whereas the government's plan would force the cancellation of many existing retirement plans that have better employer contribution rates; and

"Whereas low-income earners will have their retirement savings clawed back under this scheme; and

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"Whereas Ontarians cannot afford another tax on top of their already skyrocketing hydro bills and ever-increasing cost of living;

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

"To abandon the idea of an Ontario pension tax."

I agree with this and I will send it down with page Gavin.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have these petitions that come from all over Ontario, and they read as follows:

"Whereas Ontario's growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

"Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

"Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients' access to quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;"

They "petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario's doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario's families deserve."

I support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask page Julia to bring it to the table.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I too have quite a few petitions coming in from across the province.

"Whereas Ontario's growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

"Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

"Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients' access to quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;

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

"The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario's doctors and work together

through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario's families deserve."

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

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Privatizing Hydro: Another Wrong Choice.

"Whereas once you privatize hydro, there's no return; and

"We'll lose billions in reliable annual revenues for schools and hospitals; and

"We'll lose our biggest economic asset and control over our energy future; and

"We'll pay higher and higher hydro bills just like what's happened elsewhere;

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

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

I sign this petition and give it to page Faith to deliver to the table.

EHLERS-DANLOS SYNDROME

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

"Whereas the Canada Health Act requires provinces to fund medically necessary treatment for Canadians; and

"Whereas a growing number of people in Ontario suffering from Ehlers-Danlos syndrome (EDS) have to seek out-of-country treatment at their own expense because doctors in Ontario don't have the knowledge or skills to understand EDS symptoms and perform the required delicate and complicated surgeries; and

"Whereas those EDS victims who can't afford the expensive treatment outside of Ontario are forced to suffer a deteriorating existence and risk irreversible tissue and nerve damage; and

"Whereas EDS victims suffer severe dislocations, chronic pain, blackouts, nausea, migraines, lost vision, tremors, bowel and bladder issues, heart problems, mobility issues, digestive disorders, severe fatigue and many others resulting in little or very poor quality of life; and

"Whereas despite Ontario Ministry of Health claims that there are doctors in Ontario who can perform surgeries on EDS patients, when surgery is recommended the Ontario referring physicians fail to identify any Ontario neurosurgeon willing or able to see and treat the patient;

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

"Require the Minister of Health to provide the names of Ontario neurosurgeons who can—and will—perform

surgeries on EDS patients with equivalent or identical skills to the EDS neurosurgeon specialists in the United States, and meet the Canada Health Act's requirement to afford equal access to medical treatment for patients, regardless of their ability to pay for out-of-country services."

I will send it with page Vanessa.

PRIX DE L'ESSENCE

M. Michael Mantha: J'ai une pétition à titre : Prix de l'essence.

« À l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario :

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

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

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

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

« Nous, soussignés, demandons à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario :

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

Je suis complètement d'accord avec cette pétition, et je la présente au page John pour l'apporter à la table des greffiers.

TAXATION

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

"Whereas Ontario taxpayers have already been burdened with a health tax of \$300 to \$900 per person that doesn't necessarily go into health care, a \$2-billion smart meter program that failed to conserve energy, and 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 agree with this and I will send it down with page Soham.

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition that was signed by Joseph and Ginette Hayward in Levack in my riding. It reads as follows:

“Whereas the Ontario government” has made PET scanning “a publicly insured health service....; and

“Whereas,” since 2009, “insured PET scans are performed in Ottawa, London, Toronto, Hamilton and Thunder Bay; and

“Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is a hub for health care in northeastern Ontario, with the Health Sciences North, its regional cancer program and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine;

“We ... petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to make PET scans available through Health Sciences North, thereby serving and providing equitable access to the citizens of northeastern Ontario.”

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask Marco to bring it to the Clerk.

WATER FLUORIDATION

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have a petition addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly. It is entitled Fluoridate All Ontario Drinking Water, and it reads as follows:

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

“Whereas scientific studies conducted during the past 70 years have consistently shown that the fluoridation of community” drinking water “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” value;

“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’m pleased to sign and support this petition, and to send it down with page Abby.

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SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I have got a few hundred names here.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario government provided new funding to developmental service agencies across the province. These funds were to increase services, remove people from waiting lists and stabilize the development service sector. Community Living Elgin is reducing or limiting direct services for people with developmental disabilities. We see no stabilization of their agency!

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

“We ask that the Minister of Community and Social Services investigate and stabilize Community Living Elgin.”

I agree with the petition, affix my signature on it and hand it over to Nicole.

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Mr. Michael Mantha: This petition is from members in Manitowadge and in Marathon.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas northern Ontario will suffer a huge loss of service as a result of government cuts to ServiceOntario counters;

“Whereas these cuts will have a negative impact on local businesses and local economies;

“Whereas northerners will now face challenges in accessing their birth certificates, health cards and licences;

“Whereas northern Ontario should not unfairly bear the brunt of decisions to slash operating budgets;

“Whereas regardless of address, all Ontarians should be treated equally by their government;

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

“Review the decision to cut access to ServiceOntario for northerners, and provide northern Ontarians equal access to these services.”

I wholeheartedly agree with the petition and present it to page Marco to bring it down to the Clerks’ table.

ONTARIO RETIREMENT PENSION PLAN

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

“Whereas the Ontario government’s proposed Ontario Retirement Pension Plan (ORPP) is a mandatory pension plan which would target small businesses and their employees; and

“Whereas there has been little to no discussion on what the costs would be, or who would pay them; and

“Whereas affected businesses would be hit with up to \$1,643 per employee, per year in new payroll taxes starting in 2017; and

“Whereas affected employees would have up to \$1,643 per year extra deducted from their paycheques, and it would take 40 years for them to see the full pension benefits; and

“Whereas the Canadian Federation of Independent Business predicts the unemployment rate in Ontario would rise by 0.5%, and there would be a reduction in wages over the longer term; and

“Whereas all of these costs would be shouldered exclusively by small businesses and their employees; and

“Whereas public sector and big business employees who already have a pension plan will not be asked to pay into the plan;

“We, the undersigned, do not support implementation of the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan and petition the government of Ontario to axe the pension tax.”

I fully support it, will affix my name and send it with Soham.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I move that, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 115, An Act to enact the Representation Act, 2015, repeal the Representation Act, 2005 and amend the Election Act, the Election Finances Act and the Legislative Assembly Act, when the bill is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment and at such time the bill shall be ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy; and

That the Standing Committee on Social Policy be authorized to meet on Monday, November 23, 2015, from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., and Tuesday, November 24, 2015, from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. for the purpose of public hearings on the bill; and

That the Clerk of the Committee, in consultation with the committee Chair, be authorized to arrange the following with regard to Bill 115:

—Notice of public hearings on the Ontario parliamentary channel, the Legislative Assembly’s website and Canada NewsWire; and

—That the deadline for requests to appear be 12 noon on Friday, November 13, 2015; and

—That witnesses be scheduled to appear before the committee on a first-come first-served basis; and

—That each witness will receive up to five minutes for their presentation followed by nine minutes for questions from committee members; and

—That the deadline for written submissions be 6 p.m. on Tuesday, November 24, 2015; and

That the deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the Clerk of the Committee shall be 10 a.m. on Wednesday, November 25, 2015; and

That the committee be authorized to meet on Thursday, November 26, 2015, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., in Toronto, for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of the bill;

On Thursday, November 26, 2015, at 2 p.m., those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto. At this time, the Chair shall allow one 20-minute waiting period, pursuant to standing order 129(a); and

That the committee shall report the bill to the House no later than Monday, November 30, 2015. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

That, upon receiving the report of the Standing Committee on Social Policy, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading, which order may be called that same day; and

That, when the order for third reading of the bill is called, two hours of debate shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, apportioned equally among the recognized parties. At the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

The votes on second and third reading may be deferred, pursuant to standing order 28(h); and

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Mr. Gravelle has moved government notice of motion number 43.

Further debate?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: This is very much an important piece of legislation to all of us here in the Legislature. I think what makes it most important is that it will ensure that Ontarians are represented fairly in this Legislature, and what could be more important than that?

If passed, the Electoral Boundaries Act would create 15 new ridings in southern Ontario. This adjustment would be aligning with the federal electoral boundaries

for southern Ontario that were put in place last year. We saw, in the most recent federal election, that they were indeed part of the new electoral reality. Increasing the number of ridings in these areas will ensure that this Legislature can better reflect the interests of those wonderfully diverse and very much flourishing regions of the province. So in that sense, those 15 extra ridings represent very much representation by population and how important it is. It's a core democratic principle. Certainly, that's the case.

We also need to ensure—and we feel very strongly about this, and I think there's agreement on all sides of the House—that there needs to be appropriate political representation in all parts of the province, and that obviously very much includes my part of the province: northern Ontario. Effective representation for northern Ontario would be maintained by retaining 11 seats in the north. This is something that all of us in the Legislature take seriously. Particularly those of us from the north may recall that, as redistribution took place the last couple of times, the number of seats was diminishing. We made a decision as the government to retain 11 seats, in the last piece of legislation, all across northern Ontario—again, something that's very, very important. That's why, again, us being able to retain the 11 seats in northern Ontario is very important.

I'm one of the members who has the great honour and privilege of representing a large northern riding: Thunder Bay–Superior North. I think that geographically it's only the fourth-largest riding in the province. Certainly as someone who is absolutely so grateful to have the opportunity to represent my constituents, I know, very much, what it's like to have a riding where you are frequently travelling 200 kilometres or 300 kilometres to go to an event and returning the same day for that reason. I'm very grateful that the Attorney General, who has put this legislation together, and our government continues to support maintaining these 11 ridings—unlike the federal boundaries, which means that there are only 10 federal ridings.

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With the exception of retaining these 11 seats in the north, which, again, I am very pleased that we are putting in this legislation, the boundaries here reflect very much those set out by the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission, which was done after extremely extensive consultations. I know it's the case that all parties in this Legislature have stated that they will be supporting this bill during second reading.

I will, actually, if I may, use some quotes that were offered to us in second reading by a number of the members. The member from London West stated: “New Democrats support the changes that are proposed in this bill. We are fully supportive of ensuring that people who live in northern Ontario continue to have a strong voice in the provincial Legislature.”

Also during second reading debate, the member for Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington stated: “We're in favour of the bill. We're in favour; that's what

it was all about. We've said very clearly that we're in favour of changing the riding boundaries. I haven't heard anybody opposed to it, and I'm sure I won't.”

Let me reference one other, if I may, Mr. Speaker. The member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton stated: “I think it's important to note that this is a good step forward and something that's necessary. The federal government moved on this, and naturally we needed to address this issue as well, so I'm happy to see the government doing this. This is not a controversial issue, so this is something, certainly, we support and will be supporting once it comes to the vote.”

What I'd like to submit is that, with all-party support for second reading, I think it is time that we move forward with Bill 115 and bring it before a committee. Certainly, we want to continue to move forward with some very important legislation here in the Ontario Legislature.

In June of 2014, the voters in the province sent a very clear message. They certainly made it clear they wanted our government to get on with the business of governing in their best interests. Certainly, in terms of this bill, there has been considerable debate on this bill and the ideas that have been brought forward in this bill. We have heard a wide range of viewpoints, opinions and perspectives, so I think it's fair to say that I believe it's time that we do end second reading and refer the bill to committee.

Clearly, committee is an important part of that process, Mr. Speaker. I think we all agree on that. This is where stakeholders will have the opportunity to present their views. We will be able to hear directly from the public, related to their thoughts on this particular legislation. May I say also, in committee, as the members of this House know well, they will have an opportunity to move amendments to the bill.

At the same time, I think that will allow us to move to substantive debate on other matters that are before the Legislature. There truly are a number of important pieces of legislation that have been already introduced which the government would very much like to debate in the House and move through the legislative process. I think, later this afternoon, we are going to be bringing forward the debate on Bill 122, the Mental Health Statute Law Amendment Act; I believe that will be our next order of business. Other pieces of legislation that we want to move forward with: Bill 109, the Employment and Labour Statute Law Amendment Act; Bill 132, the Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act; and Bill 135, the Energy Statute Law Amendment Act.

We really would like to spend some time to debate some of the other important pieces of legislation currently before the House, but the fact is, Mr. Speaker, we cannot do that until Bill 115, the legislation related to electoral boundaries, is dealt with. Again, I certainly sit here as a member who is very strongly supportive of this legislation and am very pleased that, again, it really does reflect the needs of this province, particularly from a northern Ontario perspective, considering the challenges that those of us who are fortunate enough to represent

northern ridings work with on a daily basis, and look forward to that.

I urge all members in this House to support this motion and help pass this bill as soon as possible.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Monte McNaughton: I should start off by saying, much to the minister's chagrin, probably, we will be speaking and debating the time allocation motion on Bill 115, the Electoral Boundaries Act.

I should also, as many members in the House should, pay tribute to our staff members, who do a lot of work in preparing for the members' remarks. In my office, my assistant Jena prepared and did a lot of research on some parliamentary traditions.

I'd like to read a document that was prepared by the parliamentary library, *The Opposition in a Parliamentary System*. It says this:

"Parliament, after all, is fundamentally about debate—'rhetoric' in the classical Greek sense—and the transacting of the people's business in public. It is also about the right to dissent in a civilized manner. Genuine political opposition is a necessary attribute of democracy, tolerance, and trust in the ability of citizens to resolve differences by peaceful means. The existence of an opposition, without which politics ceases and administration takes over, is indispensable to the functioning of parliamentary political systems. If these systems are perceived as not working well—as being 'seriously overloaded,' to quote a distinguished Canadian opposition leader, the Hon. Robert Stanfield—it may be the rights of political oppositions which are immediately and most visibly at stake, but ultimately the threat is to democratic rights and freedom generally. The following paper is an attempt to come to grips with the" changing and "challenging nature of the opposition's role in Parliament, specifically in the Canadian context." I'll go into more detail about this document pulled from the parliamentary library.

But Mr. Speaker, yet again, here we are debating another time allocation motion under the Liberal government. We keep seeing these time allocation motions in this House. The ministers are taking turns to stand and insist that there is a pressing need to cut off debate and move the legislation of the day forward with all urgency. The truth is, this is either a case of the government wanting to stifle debate in this House or it's a case of poor planning on the government's part.

Given that this government has been in power for well over a decade, there's no excuse to be introducing legislation like this without enough time for full debate. The bill we're talking about today, Bill 115, sets out to mirror the federal boundaries that were established in 2011. This didn't happen a few months ago; in fact, I think it happened about five years ago. If the Liberal government had a deadline in mind for when this legislation needed to be passed, they should have made it a priority and brought it forward in a timely way. That is the responsibility of government. Poor planning is not an

excuse to distort the legislative process by pushing through overdue bills with these time allocation motions.

I want to be clear, and I know the members on the opposite side understand this: The Ontario PC caucus supports this bill, because the people of this province deserve to be fairly represented. We're speaking in the strongest terms against the excessive use of time allocation motions for the same reason. This government loves to say how great it is to consult and have conversations with everyone about everything, right up until it's public debate in this House. Conversation behind closed doors does not make for an open and transparent government. The democratic process is about having unfettered debate in this very chamber, with every elected member of provincial Parliament having the opportunity to speak on behalf of the people who sent them here.

Bill 115 upholds the democratic principle of fair representation by reflecting the population shifts of the province of Ontario so that each elected member here represents an equal constituency as they work on behalf of the people of Ontario. That work should not be tempered by the allocation of debate time, which leads to only a token few members from each party weighing in on particular legislation—in this case, Bill 115.

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In this case, again, we are in favour of this bill. We have said very clearly that we are in favour of changing the riding boundaries to more or less mirror the changes made at the federal level. I don't think anyone is opposed to this, because it makes a lot of sense; it will make it easier for our constituents, who have to navigate three levels of government. But we do have further suggestions and recommendations that the government could contemplate and consider incorporating in these statutes that they are visiting and revising.

We don't often get perfect bills coming through this House. Debating bills, even ones that enjoy support from all parties here, is an invaluable part of the process, because it provides the opportunity to sharpen and polish a particular piece of legislation. When everyone has the opportunity to speak to a bill, we can get a better perspective on the bill and a better appreciation of its actual implications. There is valuable insight that comes from the debate we have here, but taking this "parent knows best" approach and not even bothering to hear what members in this House have to say is not conducive to good governance.

The work done in committee is, of course, critical as well, and it is unfortunately another casualty of this government's agenda. This government is prone to limiting the amount of time a bill will be in committee. We don't generally see more than a few days of hearings and clause-by-clause, and then the bill is back here for a couple of hours of debate at third reading.

When you remove scrutiny from this process, Mr. Speaker, you end up with shoddy legislation. When you end up with shoddy legislation, valuable time and resources are used up down the road, trying to go back to resolve the problems you have created.

This government is not demonstrating respect for our parliamentary system. The people of this province who elected opposition members still expect that their voices will be heard. They have every right to expect that, but this government seems ready to write them off. In this system, the majority Liberal government can bring forward and pass whatever legislation they please. They have made it abundantly clear that they don't need to consider amendments put forward by the official opposition or the third party. When they start cutting off debate left, right and centre, they are basically saying that they intend to govern as if they have absolute rule of this province.

Mr. Speaker, there is a form of government where political authority is monopolized by a person or political entity that utilizes various mechanisms to ensure that the entity's power remains strong. But that isn't democracy. Yet that is the impression this government is beginning to leave with the people who sent all of us here as MPPs. They give us time for a few token members to speak, and then they shut down debate. These time allocation motions are a way to facilitate this government's aversion to working with the other parties.

This government has become the most closed in the history of the province of Ontario. Even Dalton McGuinty, when he got elected with a bigger majority than we see today, didn't shut down debate like this Premier's government. There was some respect for the role of the opposition and the value of co-operation. The goal of this government to continue to talk about openness and transparency is truly amazing, when it is clear that avoiding openness and transparency is the Liberals' number one priority.

When it comes to passing legislation, they cut off debate. In question period, it is all about not answering questions, whether it is about why they paid millions of dollars to teachers' unions or what kind of twisted math they are using to get to the conclusion that selling off Hydro One makes any kind of sense for the hard-working taxpayers in the province of Ontario.

In a democracy, you can't just say whatever you want to get elected and throw it all out the door when you get into office. This Premier promised the people of this province openness and transparency. Mr. Speaker, it's what she owes them. Yet we see closed doors, police investigations, debates cut short, committees that are open to very limited public input and no financial statements to justify how millions in taxpayer dollars were spent.

Accountability is eroding under this Premier. The watchdogs of this province are ignored and have found that they can't trust this Liberal government. Our Financial Accountability Officer had a report leaked just last week and found that the government was not forthcoming with information he needed for his report. In fact, he said the government refused to show him its calculations and the financial effect of selling Hydro One.

Beyond that, our Auditor General has been subject to demeaning comments from a minister of this government. This government has also asked for more wiggle

room when it comes to what constitutes a partisan government advertisement. I could go on and on and on with examples.

I ask the members on the other side of this House: Are you okay with this? Are you fine with being associated with a government that operates this way? A recent article characterized this government by saying that some of their recent actions suggest that "the Liberals have lost any hint of rectitude when it comes to the handling of public money—though they did do their best to hide the transaction." I'll repeat that: "they did do their best to hide the transaction."

What part of this is in the best interests of the people of this province? It's actually extremely ironic that we're discussing a time allocation motion for a bill that we support because it is about fair representation. We want the electoral boundaries of this province to better reflect the principle that every vote is equal and every vote counts. When we have variances in population, riding by riding, of up to 100,000 people, the value of a single vote can change pretty dramatically.

The ability of a single vote to influence the result in a riding of 50,000 is much greater than a vote in a riding with 150,000 people. After election time, the time and resources of a member will be spread much more thinly in a riding with 150,000 people. Unfortunately, it's becoming apparent that if you voted for someone who isn't in this Premier's government, the likelihood that your elected representative will be able to speak on your behalf in the Legislature is greatly diminished as well.

I believe it was the Attorney General, if memory serves me correctly, who supported this bill with the comment that it is to address inadequacies in our representation. I would say that another inadequacy in representation would be the repeated use of these time allocation motions.

I would also like to say that if the government really and truly had convictions and was committed to improving representation, I think we would be discussing changes to third-party advertising and spending in elections. I would think that the government would be making that a real priority, given the uncomfortable questions they are having to answer these days about how many millions of dollars they were given by entities that got millions out of the public purse for unspecified expenses.

Bill 115 is essentially a copy-and-paste job of the federal legislation, with a few variances in northern Ontario. They want to think about doing something similar for third-party advertising. I thank the Attorney General for bringing it forward, but it is a small part of what needs to be done in the greater scheme of things.

Again, we support this bill because the people of this province deserve to be fairly represented. We're speaking in the strongest terms against these time allocation motions for the same reason. This is the second week in a row that I'm speaking to a time allocation motion, and I know a number of members are doing the same. I hope that the streak doesn't get extended. If this government

continues to escalate their usage of the motions, I'm not sure what the role of opposition at Queen's Park will be.

I have an amendment to add. I move that the motion be amended by striking out everything following the second paragraph up to and including, "Monday, November 30, 2015," and replacing it with the following:

"That the committee be authorized to meet on Wednesday, November 25, 2015, from 9 a.m. to 12 noon and from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. in Ottawa; and on Thursday, November 26, 2015, from 9 a.m. to 12 noon and from 1 p.m. until 6 p.m. in Thunder Bay, for the purpose of public hearings on the bill;

"That the Clerk of the Committee, in consultation with the committee Chair, be authorized to arrange the following with regard to Bill 115:

"Notice of public hearings on the Ontario parliamentary channel, the Legislative Assembly's website and Canada NewsWire; and

"That the deadline for requests to appear be 12 noon on Friday, November 13, 2015; and

"That following the deadline, the Clerk of the Committee provide the members of the committee with a list of requests to appear; and

"That a member from all three recognized parties prioritize and return the list by 6 p.m. on Friday, November 13, 2015; and

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"That the Clerk of the Committee schedule witnesses from these prioritized lists; and

"That each witness will receive up to 15 minutes for their presentation, followed by nine minutes for questions from committee members; and

"That the deadline for written submissions be 6 p.m. on Thursday, November 26, 2015; and

"That the deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the Clerk of the Committee shall be 12 noon on Friday, November 27, 2015; and

"That the committee be authorized to meet on Monday, November 30, 2015, at its regularly scheduled time for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of the bill.

"On Monday, November 13, 2015, at 5 p.m., those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto. At this time, the Chair shall allow one 20-minute waiting period, pursuant to standing order 129(a); and

"That the committee shall report the bill to the House no later than Wednesday, December 2, 2015."

I'll send this to the Clerks' table with the page. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Mr. McNaughton has moved an amendment to the motion—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Dispense.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Dispense? Dispense.

Further debate? We're now debating the amendment to the motion. I recognize the member from Timmins—James Bay.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Imagine that: We're time-allocating a bill that is going to deal with a riding redistribution that doesn't take effect until two and a half years from now. What's the government in a hurry about in passing this bill through the House? Why is it having to do this by way of time allocation?

I'm sure if there was an opportunity for having public hearings around the province—and that's what this motion is trying to do. It's trying to allow some public hearings to happen outside of Toronto. Normally, the way that would be done is that, in the intersession, there would be some time allocated for hearings and then the subcommittee would decide with a motion in committee where it is they're going to travel to around the province to deal with this issue. Because there are issues with this particular bill that members want to speak to, but, more importantly, that the public wants to speak to in regard to which parts of which ridings should be changed, which community should be part of what riding etc.

There's a number of other issues that would need to be dealt with, and it would be in keeping for this bill to do some travelling. But how do you do that when a government brings forward a bill to do riding redistribution and then says, "We have to have time allocation because—darn—it's so important to pass this bill before the House rises before Christmas"—that the world is going to come to an end, even though the ridings are not going to be affected until the next election.

You've got two and a half years till the next election. Why is the government in such a rush to pass this bill? One can only conclude that it's because they're getting used to doing everything by time allocation motion. The member just previous spoke to that and said that, more and more, we see governments relying on the rules of time allocation, more so than ever before. What's now happening is that the government's not even in the mode of having a discussion with the opposition parties to say, "What bills do you support? Which ones would you be prepared to allow to happen at a natural sort of evolution of a couple of days of debate and then into committee for some public hearings? What bills do you have strong objections on?"—and allow those bills with strong objections to have a little bit more time in the House, to have some fuller debate and to allow some public hearings to happen. You can't even have those discussions because the government, quite frankly, is doing most of everything by time allocation.

I'll say what I've said here before, and that other members have repeated in this House. If the government thinks it's clever in bringing forward time allocation as some sort of grand strategy for moving their agenda forward, let me remind them of one fact: They won a majority government in the last election. They're going to win every vote in this House, so in the end, you're going to get your agenda. It's a question of how quickly you are going to get the agenda.

I will argue that, at this point, from what I can see on the order paper, the vast majority of what's on the order paper the opposition parties would have not have a problem giving to the government, in some sort of a quick method, to allow some public hearings, because the public may have some issues with some of these bills. But we, in no way, shape or form, as an opposition, would be party to filibustering those bills if we had some sort of an agreement with the government to say, "Okay, here are the one or two bills that we're more interested in and that we think the public needs to have more time to consider and some more time in committee. So let's make a deal to allow that to happen in exchange for those bills that have less opposition to move more quickly through the process."

Now, that's not to say there wouldn't be committee hearings. I will argue that a bill should always go to committee. It should always have an opportunity to give the public some debate. I think there are very few cases where you don't need to do that. For example, sending a bill to Committee of the Whole was not the exception in this place at one time; it was the norm. But even at that time there was an opportunity for public hearings. It just referred itself back to Committee of the Whole for amendments, rather than doing clause-by-clause in committee. But that's a whole other debate.

The point is this. If the government House leader and the Premier's office were to come to the conclusion that, "You know what? The opposition has a role in the House, as does the government," the government proposes legislation, and we in the opposition then look at that legislation, and we either support it or we oppose it, based on what the bill is. As I said, as we look at the order paper, which is pretty thin gruel, by the way—there's not a lot on this order paper, considering that this is a majority government—most of what's on the order paper could be supported by the opposition in exchange for some hearings on some of the bills.

On this particular bill, in regard to the issue of changing electoral boundaries to resemble the federal boundaries that we just went through in the last federal election, yeah, I think there is some debate that needs to be had, and I think the public would like to have their say. The member kind of touched on it in his comments: It is an opportunity to have a little bit of a discussion about our democracy and whether our democracy works and what, quite frankly, can be changed to make it better.

I'll just give you this one reality: A number of us here—actually, a number of those who happen to be around me today in the House—represent northern ridings. As a result of redistribution, the percentage of seats in this House for northern Ontario will go down, because the seats in the rest of the province are going up. We're going to be up to 122—

Mr. John Vanthof: We're adding 15.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: We're adding 15 seats, all of which are going to be in areas of growth in southern Ontario. I don't begrudge growth in southern Ontario. I agree that you have to allow more seats to better repre-

sent those people and those areas where the population is increasing. That is not my argument; that is just a reality. The problem we have in the north is that we in the north—and I will argue the same for rural Ontario—become less and less a percentage of this House. As a result, the make-up of the House is that the urban centres—I think specifically of Toronto and Ottawa, being the two biggest ones—end up becoming pretty predominant in the House.

Now, I'm not arguing for one second that Toronto shouldn't have more seats; obviously they have to. But there has got to be some way of balancing off those voices in northern Ontario and rural Ontario so that they feel they are having their voices heard and the percentage of seats in those particular areas is not diminished to the point where the number of seats becomes rather miniscule compared to what it used to be.

When I was first elected to this House, the House was 130 seats. Guess what? We had 15 members from northern Ontario in a 130-seat House. We're down to, what, 103?

M^{me} France Gélinas: One hundred and seven.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It's 107 now? Yeah, it has changed a couple of times. So 107, and we're down to 10 seats in northern Ontario. Aside from what that means for servicing ridings like Algoma-Manitoulin or Nickel Belt or Timmins-James Bay or Timiskaming-Cochrane or Kenora-Rainy River—my God, there's another big one—my point is that the issue, for the people of northern Ontario, is that the voice becomes lesser because there are fewer seats compared to the rest of the province.

Why wouldn't you allow this bill—this particular bill—to travel into northern Ontario? The member, in his amendment, somewhat touches on that by saying there should be some hearings in Thunder Bay.

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I want to point out the map of Ontario. If you take a look at the map of Ontario, when you flip it around, the scale has changed. Southern Ontario shows about that big on one side of the map, and then you flip it around and northern Ontario looks about the same. No, it doesn't work that way. The scale is different. It's a huge part of the province. My riding alone, Timmins-James Bay, is larger than France. Vive la patrie, I say. But my point is, if we go to Thunder Bay, there's a whole other part of Ontario—northern Ontario—that is not being heard. I understand what the member is trying to do and I'm not trying to take away from what the member tried to do with this amendment. But my point is, by the government time-allocating this bill in the way that they have, saying one day of hearings in—where, again?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Toronto.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Oh, Toronto again. Somehow, I'm surprised. Yet again, this bill is not going to travel. It's going to stay here in the Legislature. If someone sitting up in Peawanuck, Ontario, who is represented by Kenora-Rainy River, who's probably more easily serviced through Timmins-James Bay, or someone in Wahnapietae or somebody in—

Mr. Michael Mantha: Manitowadge.

Mr. Gilles Bisson:—Manitowadge or someone up in Kenora wants to come down and have something to say, it's a pretty big deal to get down here. It's not as if you can just, all of a sudden, jump on the subway and you're down here in five minutes in order to give your presentation and go back. If you're up in northwestern Ontario or northeastern Ontario, you have got to probably come down the day before, which means to say you're going to, at least, miss two days of work, in order to get a five-minute spot to speak to a bill of which, in that five minutes, someone is going to be asking you questions. It doesn't leave you a lot of time. I just say to the government across the way, you're not doing democracy any good by time-allocating a bill on riding redistribution.

A bill like this, properly put, I would argue, should have some ability to travel. How do you determine travel? I think it's a pretty simple thing. You advertise that the bill is in committee. Anybody interested and willing to present, just put your names towards. If you have got a bunch of names in Thunder Bay or Wahnapiatae or wherever it might be, then the bill travels to those areas. If there is nobody from those areas who is, in fact, saying they are prepared to present to committee, well then, you don't need to go there.

Here's what has happened, though. When I was first elected in 1990, bills used to travel for at least two weeks. There was hardly a bill that didn't go into committee in either the summer or winter intersession and travel around the province for two weeks. The committee would get together and they would say, "Okay, where are we going?" If there was a bill like this, I would argue that a bill like this probably would have got two weeks of hearings. It probably would have travelled to three, maybe four places in northern Ontario—maybe three, maybe four, depending on the committee membership and the demand—and the rest of the time travelled throughout the rest of Ontario, except for Toronto, because you would do your committee hearings here in Toronto when the House was sitting. Anybody who lived in and around Toronto and wanted to come and present came to the Legislature—as you well know, Mr. Speaker. You were elected to the same Parliament as I, whatever Parliament number that was—

Interjection: It was 35.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Okay. It is a good thing you know these things—the 35th Parliament. People would get a chance to come and present at the Legislature, while the House was in session. You would have multiple days where those bills were available here in the House, while the House was in session. Then, we'd go off and we would travel and hear from Ontarians when it came to what it is the bill had to do.

I'm sure this bill, because I know there are members who want to speak to this, needs some form of amendment. There are some legitimate issues that I think the public has with riding redistribution that should be heard. For example, it was the idea of Mike Harris to mirror the federal ridings. Mr. Speaker, unlike you, I voted against

that when it first came into the House, because I thought it was a bad idea. A member's job provincially is very different than a member's job federally. I look at my good friend, Madame Meilleur, who represents the riding of Vanier—

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Ottawa–Vanier.

Mr. Gilles Bisson:—who represents the riding of Ottawa–Vanier. She probably deals with more stuff in her constituency office than her federal counterpart does, because we're responsible for health care, we're responsible for education, we're responsible for transportation and we're responsible for municipalities. We're even responsible for some—about half of what's on First Nations is provincial as well. We tend to get a lot more work at the provincial level than the federal member does. I don't begrudge that, even though they're paid more than us, which is the irony of it all, but that's a whole other story. We signed up for the job, so we knew; I'm not going to begrudge that. But my point is that I never accepted our ridings should do the same as the federal government, because we represent different issues and more issues than our federal counterparts. So trying to run a constituency office in Ottawa–Vanier or Algoma–Manitoulin with three and a half staff with the money we have, given how much we have to do as far as the various issues we're responsible for, is a very different thing than my federal counterpart.

I'm lucky. I have two federal New Democrats in my riding: Carol Hughes, Algoma–Manitoulin–Kapusksing—talk about a really big riding; that's a big one—and Charlie Angus in Timmins–James Bay. We share offices, both in Kapuskasing and in Timmins, and I get to see, on a daily basis, based on the reports that I get from my constituency staff, and when I'm there, who does what. They get a lot of work. They get a lot of passports. They get a lot of immigration stuff. Surprisingly, a lot of immigration comes through those offices. They get some CPP stuff. They get some stuff on FedNor; they get some FedNor stuff.

Mr. Michael Mantha: Canada Revenue.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Canada Revenue—there's no question. They get a fairly large volume from that, but they're not as large and complex as some of the files that we deal with at the provincial level.

For example, I just came out of a ministry—

M^{me} France Gélinas: FRO.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: What's that?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Family Responsibility Office.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: The FRO.

I just came out of a briefing of the Ministry of Health in regard to the hospital in Attawapiskat. We've been dealing with a diesel spill in Attawapiskat since last December, and I'm going to say here publicly, and I've said it on the radio before: The government has done a good job in dealing with that spill in Attawapiskat. The minister has been pretty stellar.

But we've had to work our way through with WAHA, which is the Weeneebayko hospital, with the Attawapiskat First Nation and others—working our way through,

doing the cleanup of that spill. The amount of hours I've put in and my staff have put in, dealing with WAHA, dealing with the minister, dealing with the ministry, dealing with Attawapiskat—and we do it gladly; it's part of what we do—is quite a bit of work. My argument is, when you have ridings that are as big as the federal boundaries and we have essentially the same resources—actually, less resources than our federal cousins when it comes to supporting our constituency offices—I don't think it makes a lot of sense.

I would much rather have the system we had before, where we were 15 members in northern Ontario. Our ridings were much more manageable, and it allowed us, with the amount of staff that we had, which is essentially the same as it is now, to deal with our constituency issues. God, I'm dealing with a riding the size of France. Even the French government is bigger than me, I must say. So it doesn't make sense to have that.

Why not have an opportunity for people to go to Thunder Bay, as the member argues in his amendment to this motion, and allow people to have a say: Should our boundaries provincially be the same as the boundaries federally? I will argue no. I think they should be different. If you look at every other Legislature in Canada, the boundaries are smaller than the federal boundaries except for Ontario, and there's a reason for that: We're busier. We deal with more things. We're responsible for the day-to-day, everything from forest allocation—how many times in our constituencies do we deal with forestry companies that are having difficulty, especially the smaller ones, the independent family ones, to be able to deal with having access to the forest? They don't deal with that federally; we deal with that provincially. Dealing with health issues, education issues, the Family Responsibility Office—you name it. There are all kinds of it. If you had hearings, you'd have an opportunity to at least speak to those particular issues as a constituent in northern Ontario or a constituent anywhere else in the province.

The other thing that I think you need to take a look at is that it would allow us to deal with a couple of other really fundamental issues and something that I've long felt, and that is the issue of First Nations. Look around this House. Is there anybody who's a First Nations member in this House? No, not one, and I'm not blaming the government. I'm not blaming the opposition. It's just a fact of our electoral system. Our electoral system makes it that in fact there's very little in the way of representation of First Nations in this House. So I argue: Why don't we, in the hearings—if you had hearings across Ontario to look at representation and size of ridings, why couldn't we have a discussion about what we need to do with boundaries in order to encourage First Nations members to be elected to this Legislature? Who better to respond to First Nations issues than somebody from the First Nations community, somebody who has walked the walk and talked the talk, who gets what it's all about? But it's hard to do in this current electoral system.

If you look at the New Zealand model, which is quite interesting—mind you, they're a PR model—they've actually put into their structure through the constitution a mechanism by which First Nations communities are represented by way of their own membership in their federal Legislature. It's not a bad concept, and I think it's something that we need to look at.

Now, it's hard to do, and I'm the first to accept that it would take some pretty heavy lifting to be able to deal with this issue, but, God, we have to start the conversation somewhere. I listen to Premier Wynne saying she wants to have a conversation with Ontarians. How about a conversation with First Nations about how they're able to find a way to increase their representation in the—

Interjections.

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Mr. Gilles Bisson: Oh, here's the government saying, "Come on; come on."

What's wrong with a conversation on representation on the part of the First Nations? That's all I'm saying. I'm not saying it's your fault. I'm not saying it's anybody's fault. It's a problem that has existed in this province since Confederation. I'm saying, if we can't have a discussion about these types of issues, then I think it doesn't serve democracy well and it doesn't serve First Nations. You shouldn't, as government members, feel that you own this problem. You didn't invent this problem. It was there before you got there—I'm the first to admit it—but you have an opportunity to start the discussion. That's all I'm saying.

The Premier—and I agree with her—says we need to have a conversation with Ontarians on all kinds of issues. I agree with that. I think we should have that conversation, but you can't have a conversation when you time-allocate legislation, where you don't give the opposition the opportunity to come to committee within their own communities to talk about the issues that are important to them.

Tell me who in Peawanuck, who in Fort Severn, who in Big Trout Lake or who in Kashechewan is going to Toronto to speak to this issue. You're not going to find anybody.

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: How are you going to get there? An airline ticket out of Peawanuck to Timmins is about a thousand bucks. Then you have to get on a plane, and you have to fly down to Toronto.

My point is, what's wrong with us, when we have bills such as this, saying, let's have the opportunity to at least start having this discussion? You may not fix it through this bill; I'm the first to admit that some of these issues are outside the scope of this bill to a degree. But sometimes we utilize committees in order to start these discussions, so that we can try to figure out how to address this in such a way so that the legacy we leave our children is not the legacy that we inherited. That's all we're doing here: We're just passing on from one Parliament to another the same problems by not dealing with it.

So, when the member moves his amendment and says he wants the bill to travel, take it for what it is. There's a

genuine need in a democracy for the public to be heard. Governments and legislatures should never be afraid to hear what the public has to say, even when what they say may not be very nice towards the politician or the political party that's proposing the change of whatever it might be.

Most of you around here who have been lucky enough to be re-elected are here because you did some listening, right? I look at my friend the Minister of Northern Development and Mines across the way. I'm sure you've had people come to your constituency office mad as heck. What do you do? You hear what they have to say. You listen. That's what it's all about, and hopefully you take some action. Even if you don't take action and you try, they say, "Well, at least I was heard, and he tried." It should be the same with committee. It should be the concept of, the public has the right to say; the public has a right to participate in our democratic process.

A wonderful thing about the British parliamentary system—how did they get this system right? It's always a source of fascination for me, because, you have to remember, this system was built out of a monarchy that, at the time, had all of the power. You go back and look at some of the biggest tyrants or kings in the history of Britain, and they just did it on their own and didn't listen to anybody, until some people decided, "Ah, we want to give our Parliament some real teeth." They developed this parliamentary system that allows the public to have their say. One of the things that they invented is brilliant, when you think about it. They said, "We will travel our Parliaments around the country, so that people have a right to present to the legislators what it is that they're preoccupied with." It's pretty smart, when you think about it. How did that all happen? It happened because there was a recognition by parliamentarians some years ago that the public has to be part of a democracy. The public has to be part of a parliamentary system. The way that you do that is by way of committee.

Now, I will argue strongly that committee should not just be about having hearings in Toronto. Toronto is a wonderful city. I think we're probably one of the luckiest countries in the world because Toronto is probably one of the best cities in the world, as far as a place to live and as far as what the city has to offer, its diversity, and just overall as a city. But this is a large province, and this province is a great place as well. We need to listen to the people in other parts of the province who also want to have their say when it comes to legislation, such as amending legislation having to do with boundaries. So I say again, because I know a couple of members—I've probably gone on far longer than I should have, but I wanted to make the point that the parliamentary process should be that we actually do have travel on committee, and that we do, in fact, allow people to have their say outside of this place and into the communities of Ontario.

The last point I will make, and I'll repeat what I said at the very beginning: Why is the government time-allocating a bill that deals with boundaries and that is not going to take effect until two and a half years from now?

Why was the government in such a hurry? What's the point? What's the winning side of that one and what's the logic? If anybody can tell me why it was so important that you had to time-allocate this bill by the month of November, please tell me. I'm just a lowly guy from Timmins; I don't know a heck of a lot. I'm sure there's somebody in the Premier's office who's going to explain this to me. There are two and a half years to the next election. The government could have gone out on the road in the intersession, which would have been February or January sometime, heard some people, heard what they had to say, taken the good ideas, amended their legislation and then gone forward.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to hearing what the government has to say.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate on the amendment to the motion?

Mr. Bill Walker: It's a pleasure for me to speak today. I think one of the key tenets, and probably the last comment that I heard my colleague from the NDP say, is they've had lots of time. They could have taken it. They could have had a lot more consultation. That's what my colleague from—Monte, what's your riding again?

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Lambton–Kent–Middlesex.

Mr. Bill Walker: Lambton–Kent–Middlesex. I wanted to use my colleague Jeff Yurek's Elgin–Middlesex–London. I knew I was getting those two mixed up. But Monte McNaughton, the fine member, has brought that up. He's always wanting to ensure that the people of Ontario have a fair shake.

The member from Timmins: I already referenced you, but I will put Timmins back into my speaking remarks as well.

Interjection: Timmins–James Bay.

Mr. Bill Walker: Timmins–James Bay. The size of France, I believe—the size of his riding. So you need lots of opportunity to consult. You need Ontarians to have their say. That's the key with all of the legislation. That's what I try to do when I come here to represent the great people of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound: bring their voice to Queen's Park and vice versa—take information that impacts them back from here to the riding.

It's a pleasure to stand today and speak to Bill 115, the Electoral Boundaries Act. Maybe it would be a repetition in a way, but just so the people at home know, we're going to be adding 15 new ridings, increasing the size of the Legislature to 122 members from the current 107. Northern Ontario will continue to follow the boundaries set out in 2004.

It's important, I believe, to update the districts as the population grows to ensure that we have representative democracy, to allow for equal representation. It will continue, from my understanding, to mirror the federal electoral boundaries. I have only ever known, since I came here in 2011, to share the same riding with my counterpart Larry Miller, who I want to commend for being re-elected with a great majority again in this election to represent the people of Bruce–Grey–Owen

Sound in Ottawa. We've only ever shared those same boundaries, and I think it's a good thing, from that perspective, that the people of our riding are not confused. They know we both represent exactly the same geographic area, the exact same municipalities and the exact same people on every issue that we both take to our respective Parliaments.

Some people, of course, may be unhappy with being moved into a different district, and that may happen. In our case, Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound is not going to change, so that's not a challenge, but certainly in lots of other parts of the province, that will happen. If someone has been part of a riding for a lot of time, and they happen to get moved because of a change of a map or an electoral boundary, I can understand that and appreciate that. But I think, at the end of the day, we have to always be about fairness and equal representation and democracy.

I will say, and probably most people out there will agree that it certainly isn't generally something that the public is excited or fond about—seeing more representatives added to Queen's Park or to the federal Parliament—but at the end of the day, that is what democracy is. We need to be able to ensure we have the size of a constituent base that we actually can represent effectively. If we become out of touch or they become too large, then that's not a good thing. Certainly, if we have a disparity of size of the people we're representing, that's not necessarily fairness either. So I think it's good to ensure that we do that.

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I like most parts of Bill 115 and am in agreement with most of the changes proposed to the Election Finances Act and the Legislative Assembly Act, as well as the Representation Act. Namely, I support streamlining our electoral districts with our federal counterparts, as I've already talked about, as it will be less confusing and ensures that people really do understand.

I'm sure you, Mr. Speaker, in your esteemed career here, have gone to the door where people still think you're the federal member, or they think an issue that's provincial is federal, or vice versa. I think the more that we can do to make sure that those are as simple and as consistent as possible, the better off we are for the benefit of the electorate, so that they understand even more.

I support organizing by district so that each of us has about 100,000 constituents. Allowing constituents to get better service from their elected official is a fair approach. In Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, I currently serve about 106,000 residents. There's going to be a bit of a buffer on either side of that, but I think, generally, the intent of the expanded boundaries is to ensure that we all have relatively the same number of people. Certainly the size and geography is going to change. I have a relatively large riding compared to many in urban Ontario, certainly nothing like the member from Timmins–James Bay. But, at the end of day, I think what we want to do is make sure we have the same amount of people that we can represent.

My riding of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, as I said, will stay the same. It's fairly large. It stretches from the northern point at Tobermory, before you go off into northern Ontario on the Chi-Cheemaun ferry; the “big canoe,” as we call it. To the south is Dundalk. It contains parts of Bruce and Grey counties; the Saugeen number 29 reserve; the Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation; aboriginal reserve number 27; Fathom Five National Marine Park—again, a huge draw to the people and something that is well known across the world. It certainly has its own unique needs that we have to serve in that part of my riding.

It includes a lot of great communities. I'm not going to be able to name them all, but I do want to touch on a few of them: Owen Sound; Shallow Lake; Park Head; Hepworth—a big village of 400 people that I came from originally—Wiaraton, Lion's Head, Tobermory, Hanover, Neustadt, Williamsford, Durham, Chatsworth, Holstein, Mount Forest, Clavering, Sauble Beach, Allenford, Mar, Pike Bay, Hope Bay, Howdenvale—

Mr. Jeff Yurek: You sound like Johnny Cash.

Mr. Bill Walker: It's a song. I'm going to put that into a song with an auctioneer's twist one of these days—Meaford, Rocklyn, Markdale, Flesherton, Dundalk, Maxwell, Feversham, and Priceville.

Just to share with people so that they understand, it's very dynamic, as all of you here understand—but maybe the people at home listening or who may read this later. In my case, I serve a number of municipalities: Northern Bruce Peninsula, South Bruce Peninsula, Arran-Elderslie, the town of Hanover, the municipality of West Grey, the township of Georgian Bluffs, municipality of Grey Highlands, the township of Chatsworth, the municipality of Meaford, the city of Owen Sound, the township of Southgate, as I mentioned earlier, the Chippewas of Nawash and Cape Croker First Nation reserves, and Grey and Bruce counties. It's another level of government in the middle of all that as well.

It's a very interesting dynamic. I think one of the things that we all have to know is that we are out to represent all of the people in all of those cases. We, of course, bring in the provincial perspective to those people.

The Liberal government had the opportunity to consider changes to the first-past-the-post system, but felt that the 2007 referendum on this issue answered that question. They're heeding the response, as the minister said in her leadoff.

I like the fact that with Bill 115 we're talking about re-engaging voters and making efforts to boost voter participation in elections.

As I said before in the House, voter malaise and apathy is rising in Ontario. Consider the numbers as collected by Elections Ontario: Ontario used to enjoy a 65% turnout; by the 2003 election, a 57% turnout; in 2007, a 52% turnout; and in the 2011 election, a 48% turnout. It's going in the wrong direction, Mr. Speaker. The 2014 election saw a record high number of spoiled ballots: 31,399 Ontarians declined their votes in the last election, the highest rejection level since 1975.

Our election watchdog, Mr. Greg Essensa, recommended strengthening our election laws. Namely, he called on the government to cap third-party election advertising. He has been advocating for this change after seeing third-party advertising rise by 400% over the last seven years, from \$1.8 million in 2007 to \$8.6 million in 2014. Mr. Essensa said that Ontario needed new election advertising laws.

The government responded by promising “to beef it up.” I’m not really certain what that means, but I was hoping when I heard that that they meant they were truly going to be sincere and address it and make the changes to ensure that we’re all represented appropriately.

Interestingly, since the Premier made that promise, third-party advertising by the teachers’ unions and the millions in provincial payouts to the teachers’ unions have come under suspicion. Even the Toronto Star issued an editorial to say the same: “Premier Kathleen Wynne, take note: This is what comes from ignoring repeated calls over several years to tighten Ontario’s loose election rules. It’s the smell of scandal.”

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Speaker, on a point of order: The debate is about a closure motion, not about a number of other things. I would hope he’d come back to the subject.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. Actually, we are debating the amendment to a government motion to place time allocation on a bill, but I would accept the member’s recommendation that we all need to be reminded from time to time about what we are debating. We’re debating the time allocation of this particular bill.

I return to the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound.

Mr. Bill Walker: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure to bring it back to the amendment. Part of what I am trying to do is put some context about the amendment, because my colleague certainly brought up that we need more time to debate. What I am trying to paint the picture of is how complex a situation it is: When you use time allocation, we don’t have the time that’s required to truly understand, debate and then create legislation that is truly going to serve the people at the end of day.

I’ll continue. The Star said that the “pattern of government payouts and election spending” by unions “gives rise to a perception” that taxpayer money “may have been spent in an effort to tilt the outcome” of provincial elections. Clearly, this government needs to clear the air now. But I don’t see any meaningful change with regard to fixing and capping third-party advertising in Bill 115, nor anything in line with the recommendations from the election watchdog, Greg Essensa, or what we hear from the general electorate.

If we do time-allocate, Mr. Speaker, it doesn’t give us the proper time to really go back to the public and ensure that we hear what they are saying. After all, we have to always ensure that what we’re doing here is representing their interests and their wishes. As such, I think this is where the Attorney General has failed.

The Attorney General said in her leadoff debate on Bill 115 that she was fixing third-party advertising rules. She said, “Finally, we will tackle the issue of third-party advertising. Ontario currently has rules in place to ensure transparency and free speech in our election campaigns. Third-party advertising rules were introduced in Ontario for the first time in 2007. Currently, third parties that spend \$500 or more on election advertising are required to register with the Chief Electoral Officer. They must also report to the Chief Electoral Officer on election advertising expenses. If election advertising expenses are \$5,000 or more, these reports must be audited.”

She went on to say, “[We are] committed to strengthening the province’s rules around election-related third-party advertising.” In the end, however, she forgot to write it into the legislation, or just chose to trivialize it. Either way, it’s offensive. In fact, under her rules, speaking out and voicing concerns during election time will continue to cost millions, ensuring that just those with the deepest pockets have their voice heard; in my estimation, Mr. Speaker, unduly influencing the outcome and usurping fairness and democracy, which we all stand for.

We made it clear to this government that we expected meaningful changes. They had at least two bills from our side of the House to utilize, and thus ensure that free speech remains free in Ontario. Just last month, on October 8, I argued for these changes during debate on my private member’s bill. My proposal was that we cap third-party advertising at \$150,000 per election cycle or \$3,000 per riding, to reflect the federal rules and caps in other provinces, and reflect what a political candidate is currently able to spend. That is fair. Considering this, I’ve got to tell you that there’s nothing more discouraging than seeing this government skirt on oversight and accountability, and again limit debate. It is just unprecedented how much they do this.

We’re debating this as part of a time allocation motion. It’s more appropriately called a gag motion, which is even more insulting. There’s a serious pattern being established here by the Wynne Liberal government, and it’s one that demonstrates disregard for democracy, disregard for Parliament, disregard for parliamentary process, and disregard and disrespect for the people we serve.

It’s exactly what the Liberal government is doing with the Hydro file. Ontarians don’t want it, Ontario businesses don’t want it, Ontario municipalities don’t want it, public institutions don’t want it, but Kathleen Wynne and her party want it; and they are going to steamroll and quickly sell off our biggest asset, Hydro One, in a fire sale. Just last week the Financial Accountability Officer’s report put a stop to their spin and proved what we have been saying all along on the Ontario Hydro One fire sale: It’s a bad deal for Ontarians, it will put each one of us in a worse financial situation, and the fact that the Liberal government is ignoring—

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Northumberland–Quinte West, again on a point of order.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: The same point of order as before, Speaker. I'm sure you'll understand.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): You have to tell me what your point of order is.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: To keep him on track on the amendment to the motion before us.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I would ask the member to bring his comments back to the amendment to the motion.

Mr. Bill Walker: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I am trying my best to bring this back.

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When you time-allocate a bill as sensitive as something like this Electoral Boundaries Act, then I think you're stifling the reality of what we're here to do. We're here to serve the people of Ontario. We're here to ensure and respect and govern on the democratic principle our province and our country has been founded on. I'm trying to ensure that I am painting a picture for the people listening and who will read this to understand why we can't accept time allocation and why we need time, as the amendment suggests, to go across the province; to have proper time to consult and travel to various parts of our province so that people have their fair say to ensure that we're then able to hear them, to hear their voice and establish legislation and governance that is actually going to serve them in their best interests.

Mr. Speaker, just last week the Financial Accountability Officer suggested it's a bad deal. The fact that the Liberal government is ignoring the voice of the majority and steamrolling ahead in time allocation manner, taking debate off the table and trying to ram this through because it's their agenda, is just not acceptable. It proves this is anything but accountable and transparent government by this Liberal government. It begs the question, is the Liberal government governing for the benefit of the people of Ontario, or themselves? Will they do whatever it takes to remain in power, regardless of the cost or impact on the people we're elected to serve?

November 1 represented another unaffordable hydro increase for Ontarians as a result of the Liberal government's failed electricity policies. Do the members on that side of the House not care that average Ontario families will continue to struggle to pay their hydro bills? But back to Bill 115.

First they gutted the Auditor General's oversight of government advertising, shutting the door on accountability and transparency on a program that costs taxpayers millions and millions of dollars. Then they voted down our proposals, which were completely non-partisan, to cap third-party advertising and, again, reflect the recommendation of the Chief Electoral Officer for our province. I want to remind them that Bills 101 and 96 merely reflected what Ontario's Chief Electoral Officer, Greg Essensa, identified as one of his top priorities: making elections fairer by capping third-party advertising. Ontario is the only jurisdiction in Canada that regulates third parties but doesn't restrain their spending on political ads during elections. In fact, it's so out of

control here that third-party groups are outspending political parties.

How do you defend against politically motivated payouts to teachers' unions and the ensuing work-to-rule strike, the longest in the province's history? Here is how a grade 8 student and school president at Egremont public school sees it:

"We love our school and appreciate our teachers, but we hate work-to-rule.

"I believe it's time to let the students voice their dislike of the atmosphere that has been created by teachers and support staff while making their point with the work-to-rule action.

"For this reason I am organizing a student work-to-rule. I will be sending out a letter to students Monday encouraging them to participate in our action as well as handing out ribbons representing what we are standing for.

"Student work-to-rule will look like this ... no homework, no bus monitoring (after the bell rings at the end of the day), no lunch monitoring, no bringing home instruments to practice ... we as students will do our work within our job description as students and only within our designated working hours. Our lunches will be our own and when the bell rings to go home"—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I realize that the member is concerned about a number of issues with respect to his riding, and I certainly understand that. But I am compelled to ask him to bring these comments back to the motion before the House.

Mr. Bill Walker: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At the end of the day, the amendment is meant to allow us as representatives—the government—to go out to the public and hear their say fairly, to ensure that we understand the issues in all the corners of our great province and to ensure that we then bring that information back and debate it, and ensure that this legislation is in the best interests of Ontarians. The current governing party, the Liberals, by time-allocating motions, are trying to usurp that process. They're trying to take advantage. They're trying to steamroll their agenda that hasn't necessarily been given to them by the electorate.

At the end of the day, I want to see that this bill goes through. I want to ensure that the electoral boundaries are certainly representative and fair and democratic. At this point I'll end, so that my colleague from Elgin–Middlesex–London can have his say.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Speaker, I will start by saying that the amendment to the motion which was brought by the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex makes sense. He says there are two and half years left before we will need this piece of legislation. All we have to do is travel this bill. This is a very small ask. It is a bill that I think everybody should have an opportunity to be heard on.

I will speak on behalf of people in my riding, but I would much rather that people from here get an oppor-

tunity to listen to them directly. For the people of Nickel Belt to come down to Toronto—I'm sorry, Speaker—is tough. It is expensive; it takes a lot of time. So rather than getting everybody interested in participating in the democratic process, they feel shut out, they feel disrespected and they feel as if what they have to say doesn't matter; nobody wants to hear them because nobody is coming. The amendment corrects that. The amendment says, "Let's go around the province and see if people have something to say about this bill." There is no rush whatsoever as to getting it through; we have two and a half years. I'm not saying that we take two and a half years, but how about we take two and a half months and travel around? The outcome is going to be a more robust democracy, an opportunity for people to be heard. That doesn't mean they're going to get what they wish for, but at least it means that we give them an opportunity to be heard.

One of the people who wants to be heard is the chief of the Wahnapiatae First Nation, which I would love to say is in my riding, but it is not in my riding, because, for reasons unknown, they decided to put it in the Timiskaming-Cochrane riding. It makes no sense. Wahnapiatae First Nation is on the shore of Lake Wanapitei, which is within the city of Greater Sudbury's boundaries. Wahnapiatae First Nation is just a teeny-weeny, little First Nation. It's just one mile square. This is where Wahnapiatae First Nation is. Mind you, they have huge ancestral territories all the way around, but their First Nation itself is one mile square. They border Lake Wanapitei.

If you've ever been to Lake Wanapitei, it's just a beautiful, beautiful lake. Some of the southwest shore of the lake has natural beaches. Every year, new sands get pushed by the ice and by the flow of the water. We also have the sandbanks on the north shore of Lake Wanapitei, very close to Wahnapiatae First Nation. There is the North River that is full of fish. It is a very nice area.

The people who live on Lake Wanapitei are all part of my riding. They are part of the riding of Nickel Belt. I support them, and they support me, and we work together. When it comes to the Wahnapiatae First Nation, this one kilometre square, for reasons unknown, somebody decided that those people were going to be part of part of Timiskaming-Cochrane. To put that in perspective, Speaker, there's about 20 kilometres max between Wahnapiatae First Nation and my constituency office, and they go to Capreol, which is also in my riding, for their mail, for their groceries, for everything they need. They are part of the community of Capreol. But for voting purposes, at the federal level, they are part of Nickel Belt and they vote with Nickel Belt. At the provincial level, they are part of Timiskaming-Cochrane. On a good day, when the traffic is not too bad, when the construction is not too bad, when the weather is not too bad and the plowing has done what it is supposed to do, it will take you at least six or six and a half hours to go there and back. They could come to my constituency office in 15 minutes, or they could go to John's con-

stituency office, there and back, in six hours. That makes no sense. It has to be changed.

In the bill we have in front of us, they're not changing the boundaries for the northern ridings; they're only changing the boundaries for the southern ridings. I know that some changes were done in 2005, but, again, the situation has been going on for some time. The situation has been like this since 1996, Speaker. It will be 20 years pretty soon. There have been bills that have come through this House, and there have been changes to riding boundaries during that period of time, but Wahnapiatae was always forgotten.

Wahnapiatae First Nation, not that long ago—maybe 30 years ago—consisted of two people: Mr. and Madame Recollet, who stayed there. But now they have grown. They are a really, really nice, strong community. They have beautiful homes on the side of the lake. There are more and more people whose ancestry is with the Wahnapiatae First Nation who want to move back onto the First Nation. They have a top-notch environmental consultant. Most of the descendants of the Recollets have university degrees, a lot of them in the environment.

Anyways, it's a thriving First Nations community. There are more and more people living there, and still nobody wants to hear what they have to say. Nobody wants to listen to what I can only consider an error that was made, because somebody wrote someplace that the riding of Nickel Belt will end at that particular junction on the northern boundary of the city of Greater Sudbury. But the boundaries of the city, of course, do not include the First Nation. The First Nation stands on its own, so you have this boundary with that little one-kilometre square taken out, and somebody who has never set foot in northern Ontario decided that this little square was going to be part of Timiskaming-Cochrane.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Sounds like the process for Treaty 9.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Yes. And for the last 20 years, this is what we have had to live with.

I want to leave some time on the clock for my colleague—

Interjection: From Timiskaming-Cochrane.

M^{me} France Gélinas: —from Timiskaming-Cochrane, yes.

I want you to understand, Speaker, that there is value in travelling. There is value in hearing people out, because those little anomalies where it only affects a few people, those people still have a right to be heard, they still have a voice. But when you make it so, so difficult for them to be heard, they just give up, and this is bad for democracy.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Some conversation.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Yes, some conversation, my colleague from Timmins-James Bay is saying.

Give them an opportunity to be heard. That's all we want.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I would have appreciated hearing some interaction from the government on this amend-

ment—I think it's valid—brought forth from our side of the party here.

I was prepared to speak on the time allocation motion, which, unfortunately, is a number in a series of motions that this government has put forward. We've done time allocation motions on Bill 112, the Strengthening Consumer Protection and Electricity System Oversight Act; Bill 113, the Police Record Checks Reform Act; Bill 37, the Invasive Species Act—which, by the way, took over two years to pass; Bill 52, the Protection of Public Participation Act; and Bill 66, the Great Lakes Protection Act.

Essentially, when the government does these time allocation motions, it shuts down debate in the House, when there are numerous members in the opposition who are representing their electorate, who are elected to bring their thoughts and views to this party, no matter—I know the Minister of Northern Development and Mines brought forth that we all agree with this, so we should just move on. I think having these open debates actually brings up some ideas that maybe this government didn't hear, because basically, they just took the federal government's bill, copied and pasted it, rejigged the north and brought it forth as a bill. I've mentioned, in my debate on the bill previously, that they could have done some meaningful electoral reform at the time, either recall legislation or third-party advertising, which we think is in desperate need on this side of the House.

However, the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex brought forward an amendment to this motion. He brought forth this amendment because we know the government is going to use their majority and vote through this time allocation motion. Since they don't really want to have an open debate and talk with us, the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex brought forward an amendment saying that maybe we can compromise, that you're going to put through this time allocation motion but maybe we can take the committee out and tour Ontario and hear what people have to say from around the province. He has put out that he wants to have the committee go to Ottawa and Thunder Bay to help cover the north. I'm assuming Toronto is being used to cover the south; however, I know quite a few people in the London area who probably do not want to drive all the way through Toronto traffic to come downtown, if they find a parking spot and if they're able to get a time to actually speak in committee, because that time is going to be shortened. Not everybody from the public who wants to speak on this bill can speak. So, apparently, the Toronto area still isn't going to be covering southwestern Ontario. I'm sure that's part of the compromise as well.

We will be covering the Ottawa area, and Thunder Bay, I guess, is going to cover the entirety of northern Ontario. As the member from Timmins–James Bay has noted, that's not really covering the entire area as it should be.

If the government is going to use its majority and time-allocate everything that it wants to get through, even though, as the member from Nickel Belt did say, we still

have two years and six months until the next election—we have plenty of time to make the changes to the electoral boundaries; there's not a rush. We would have time to tour. I would think the government would at least listen to our amendment on our side of the House and let us have committee travel to Ottawa and Thunder Bay to hear the considerations of those that are being affected throughout this province.

As I said, my area of Elgin–Middlesex–London is being affected slightly. I'm losing a little bit of south London. I'm still retaining the Lambeth area and the newer development heading into southern London, which I'm quite proud to continue to represent, but my area of the White Oaks Mall area will be going to the member from London–Fanshawe. She will be getting those constituents into her riding. Maybe those people wanted to have a discussion about what that change means to them. Maybe they're happy with being included with the Lambeth area and the area between St. Thomas and London, the Glanworth area, definitely.

As I said, I'm speaking quickly on this amendment, and I hope the government listens. It's a compromise. It's kind of our olive branch out there. We realize you're going to use your majority and time-allocate basically every legislation because you don't believe in true debate in this House. At least they can listen to us and let committee go out and hear the people of Ontario before we go further.

I'm just quickly wrapping up for the party. I appreciate that we were actually given this time to debate. As I said, I was going to focus on the time allocation motion but I thought that with this amendment coming forward, we have an opportunity. There are a few cabinet ministers here who can talk about this at the cabinet meeting or a pre-meeting they may have. I know the backbenchers are silenced; they don't have a voice in this government. The backbenchers sit there quietly and don't say anything. However, I hope the government listens to what we have to say.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. John Vanthof: It's always an honour to speak on behalf of the people who live in the riding of Timiskaming–Cochrane, which right now includes the residents of the Wahnapiatae First Nation. I'd like to follow my colleague from Nickel Belt. The Wahnapiatae First Nation is in a unique position: It's a beautiful, beautiful spot, but, quite frankly, it shouldn't be in my riding because it's almost impossible for those people to be serviced from my riding. I can distinctly remember the first time I visited the Wahnapiatae First Nation and was shocked at how far I had to drive around in another riding to actually get there.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Two ridings: You have to go through Nickel Belt and Sudbury—

Mr. John Vanthof: Yes, you have to go through two ridings. Worse: The people who live in the Wahnapiatae First Nation have to drive through two ridings to get to my closest constituency office. That doesn't make sense.

So the member from Nickel Belt and myself and Chief Ted Roque, the Chief of the Wahnapiatae First Nation, who has lobbied long and hard for this change—the first time I talked to Chief Roque, that was the first thing on his agenda, because he felt that his people would be better serviced if they were actually serviced by the geographical riding they were in.

That's the most important thing I would like to get across today: We need an amendment. This will be our last chance to say this before the hearings, which are going to be very short. Even with the amendment proposed by the Tories—if it passes—they're still going to be very short. This is a case, in the Wahnapiatae First Nation, where the residents agree and both MPPs agree. Actually, the riding boundary change would simply, in this case, match the federal riding boundary. That's an issue I hope the government is listening to, that we are really trying to actually make government responsive to the Wahnapiatae First Nation. It's not an earth-shattering issue for most of the province, but for the Wahnapiatae First Nation it would make a big difference.

1520

Regarding time allocation, the way it's supposed to work for those people—the way I used to understand government is, people who were elected would have the ability to speak for a certain time, and when no further members of the House wanted to speak, the debate would die a natural death, as happened on Thursday afternoon with Bill 85. Everyone had spoken, the bill collapsed, and we voted on it this morning—a fairly innocuous procedure. What was funny was, after Bill 85 collapsed—I'm the whip for the party—I was in the whip's office, and the first thing we got was a notice of time allocation for this bill. So although the process can work, this government chooses not to follow the process, which is really odd, specifically with a bill where you're talking about electoral boundaries across the province.

This time allocation motion, coupled with the Conservative amendment, gives a couple of more meeting dates. But let's look at what the government proposed: one afternoon in Toronto to discuss all the riding boundaries and all the electoral concerns from people across the province. Really? I think Chief Ted Roque is committed enough that we could try to get him on that agenda, but for a lot of people it's impractical—no, the word is “impossible”—to actually participate in this process. It doesn't have to be done tomorrow. It's not like a health issue. No one is going to die if we don't get this law in before December. We're talking about our democratic process, which is something very important, and we're talking about issues that are going across the province.

An issue that I think this government should take heed of—although I've heard the Premier say several times that we are one Ontario, we are not: There is a huge divide between rural and northern Ontario and urban Ontario, specifically the GTA. Instead of taking our differences and making us stronger—because there's nothing wrong with having differences. That's what could make our culture, our province, very strong. We

have to acknowledge those differences. An example of how a government talks about, “We are one Ontario,” but actually in its actions takes a totally different take—because we're talking about changing the electoral process across the province, yet one afternoon in Toronto, folks, should be enough for everyone in rural Ontario to express their concerns, which is what is obviously a rural-urban divide.

People in rural Ontario and northern Ontario are concerned. They don't begrudge having more seats in the urban part of the province because there are more people. The urban part is growing. No one in rural Ontario begrudges that, but rural Ontario wants to know that they will be represented in this new system where their proportion is less. We in rural and northern Ontario are really nervous about that because, specifically, of an example like this: “We're going to change the boundaries. We'll keep the same seats in northern Ontario, and everything's going to be fine, but we're going to have one afternoon of meetings in Toronto,” the centre of the universe for Ontario.

Why do you think people in rural Ontario are nervous? If they had seen, “We're going to hold hearings where there's enough interest,” as my colleague from Timmins—James Bay suggested, and if they advertised, “The committee is about to sit on this bill, and if a lot of people express interest from Wahnapiatae or from Peawanuck or from”—and they would work something out so that these people could actually express their concerns, and perhaps the government could make better legislation because they had input from the public. But that's not what this government has chosen to do. It has chosen to fast-track legislation which doesn't need to be fast-tracked. It's chosen to time-allocate, to stop people from talking about legislation that isn't time sensitive but that is regionally sensitive. It's very sensitive, and the government has chosen—it isn't by happenstance, this isn't by accident—to ignore northern Ontario. It has chosen to ignore rural Ontario. There is a huge rural-urban divide. It's created by this government and perpetuated by this government, and it needs to stop. That is why this time allocation motion is absolutely disastrous for the province.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate? Further debate?

Earlier this afternoon, Mr. Gravelle moved government notice of motion number 43. Mr. McNaughton then moved that the motion be amended as follows:

“That the motion be amended by striking out everything following the second paragraph up to and including ‘Monday, November 30’”—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Dispense.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Dispense? Dispense.

We are now dealing with Mr. McNaughton's amendment to the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

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

All those opposed will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the nays would have it.
Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.
Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I wish to inform the House that I have received a request for a deferral of the vote on this amendment by the chief government whip of the official opposition. We will have this vote deferred until tomorrow during the time of deferred votes, after question period.

Vote deferred.

MENTAL HEALTH STATUTE LAW
AMENDMENT ACT, 2015
LOI DE 2015 MODIFIANT DES LOIS
RELATIVES À LA SANTÉ MENTALE

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

Bill 122, An Act to amend the Mental Health Act and the Health Care Consent Act, 1996 / Projet de loi 122, Loi visant à modifier la Loi sur la santé mentale et la Loi de 1996 sur le consentement aux soins de santé.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate on Bill 122.

Mr. Yvan Baker: I very much look forward to speaking to this bill. I will be sharing my time with the member for Davenport, the member for York South-Weston and the President of the Treasury Board.

When I think about my responsibility as a member and our responsibility as a government, I often think about how we help those who are less fortunate in our communities and in our society in Ontario. I also think a lot about how we support those who need our help the most. I think one of the groups of folks who do need our help, and who I think the government has done a lot of work with to help, is those folks who are struggling with mental health challenges. So one of the things that I am pleased to do today is to speak to this bill.

When I think about those who are caring for people with special needs and with mental health challenges, I often think of the people who serve my community in Etobicoke Centre. Specifically, I think about those at the Etobicoke Children's Centre and the Silver Creek pre-school, who care for children with special needs. I just want to take this opportunity to thank them for their relentless work and their commitment to our community.

In fact, I was at a fundraiser last week for the Etobicoke Children's Centre and had the privilege of joining many members of the community, of all ages and all backgrounds, in their work and their fundraising efforts to support the Etobicoke Children's Centre, an organization that our government supports, along with the Silver Creek pre-school, both of which are making a fantastic difference in our community.

1530

Today, in speaking to this bill, this is really about making sure that we continue to provide support for those with mental health challenges, but also that we do

something else that's very important for all members and for our government, which is to make sure we're defending and upholding the rights of Ontarians. Some of the most fundamental rights are enshrined in our charter of rights, and that's what this bill is all about. In this bill, the government is taking action to comply with the decision of the Ontario Court of Appeal, which declared that part of the Mental Health Act is in breach of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The Court of Appeal gave the government until December 23 of this year to make amendments to the Mental Health Act that comply with the court's decision. Specifically, Speaker, the court struck down the provision of the act that allows a person to be detained in a psychiatric facility for longer than six months. This was because the Mental Health Act did not provide for a regular review of the conditions of the patient's continued detention to ensure it would be the least restrictive within the circumstances that required that detention.

Bill 122 is designed to address the concerns that the court expressed. The amendments would enhance the ability of the Consent and Capacity Board to make certain orders in relation to patients who have been in a psychiatric facility as involuntary patients for longer than six months. A factor that the board would have to take into account would be, of course, that any limitation on a patient's liberty be the least restrictive commensurate with the circumstances requiring the patient's involuntary detention. The board would make a decision based on the evidence before it. Basically, what I'm saying here is that this bill would allow us to make sure, and allow the board to make sure, that they would find the appropriate level of care for those folks who are facing these circumstances.

The amendments would make it possible to detain a patient on a new form, a certificate of continuation, after the expiry of the patient's third certificate of renewal; that is, after six months and two weeks. A certificate of continuation will allow a patient who has been detained in a psychiatric hospital longer than six months to be detained for an additional three-month period, similar to the current certificates under the Mental Health Act. Subsequent certificates of continuation would allow a patient to be detained for further three-month periods if the patient continued to meet the test for being involuntarily detained under the act. To ensure that long-term involuntary patients are not detained in a manner greater than is necessary to meet the important objectives of the Mental Health Act—that is, ensuring community safety and helping patients get the treatment they need—the Consent and Capacity Board would also be given the power to make a limited range of additional orders, in specific circumstances, when it reviews a long-term involuntary patient's certificate of continuation. These would be things such as transferring a patient to another psychiatric facility if the patient does not object; placing a patient on leave of absence on the advice of a physician; directing the officer in charge to provide different security levels or different privileges within or outside the psychiatric facility, etc.

Basically, Speaker, what we're doing here today is making sure that we continue to provide the appropriate level of care to people with these mental health conditions, but also making sure that we're abiding by the court's ruling and respecting our charter of rights, which is fundamental to why we're here in this Legislature.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Davenport.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to speak and to lend my support to Bill 122, An Act to amend the Mental Health Act and the Health Care Consent Act, 1996.

The protection and safety of all Ontarians is the number one priority of this government, and this is why the proposed amendments to the Mental Health Act, if passed, would help ensure that patients who are detained in a psychiatric facility for longer than six months have their liberty interests protected while at the same time ensuring that health care providers can continue to provide excellent care to these patients.

We are taking this action to comply with the decision of the Ontario Court of Appeal, which declared that part of the Mental Health Act is in breach of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Bill 122 is intended to address the court's concerns. The amendments would enhance the ability of the Consent and Capacity Board to make certain orders in relation to patients who have been in a psychiatric facility as involuntary patients for longer than six months.

There is no question that mental health and addictions is a very significant and complex issue that cuts across multiple areas of society and touches the lives of many people. It is this government's belief that every Ontarian should enjoy good mental health and well-being throughout their lives, and that all Ontarians with mental health or addictions can recover and participate in welcoming, supportive communities.

You know, Mr. Speaker, before being elected to this House I worked for many years in the pharmaceutical industry. One of the therapeutic areas that I worked in was mental health. During the time that I worked in Europe, I had the privilege to work with many thought leaders in the area of psychiatry and mental health, and all of them agreed on the importance of the destigmatization of mental health issues and on the early diagnosis of mental health illness and challenges. We know that one in five Ontarians will experience a mental health illness in their lifetime. That's why our government created the comprehensive mental health and addictions strategy: to support Ontarians from childhood to old age with mental health and addiction issues, to provide the early detection of mental health issues and provide the appropriate course of action.

Since 2003, funding for mental health and addiction services has increased by over \$506 million, to a total of \$1 billion. Our government's plan is to increase funding by \$220 million over three years as we renew our commitment to our mental health and addictions strategy. In November of last year, our government announced

phase 2 of our expansion of Ontario's mental health and addictions strategy, which will address better access, quality and value by focusing on five strategic goals that will help our system. It is aligned with our government's Poverty Reduction Strategy. This phase, phase 2, will provide \$138 million over the next three years to community agencies. This is great news for organizations such as Madison Community Services in my riding of Davenport, which promotes the independence, health, recovery and community integration of people with mental health or addiction challenges. Madison Community Services does this great work through advocacy, education, and the provision of a broad range of community-based and housing support services.

Mr. Speaker, when I met with the many mental health and illness thought leaders while working in Europe, one of the important things they would often raise is the reintegration of these patients with mental health and addiction issues back into their communities and back to contributing to society. So I'm pleased that our government also sees this as an important issue and that it will be investing \$16 million over the next three years and work with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing to create 1,000 new supportive housing units. Our plan will improve access to services, reduce wait times, and fill the gaps in our system.

So many Ontarians have been touched by mental health and addiction challenges in some way. Having worked in this therapeutic area for a number of years and having worked with top psychiatrists all across Europe, I am proud of the work our government is doing to improve the quality of life for people experiencing mental health and addictions, proud of the changes being made by this bill to ensure that our patients are getting the right care at the right time at the right place, and I'm proud to have stood up in this House today to support this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for York South–Weston.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am very pleased to add my voice to the debate on Bill 122. I think that this bill brings the proper balance between patients' rights and the public interest, trying to ensure access to treatment when the patients need it. The measures would be commensurate to the situation that these patients are in, giving at the same time more tools to the Consent and Capacity Board.

As you have heard already, Mr. Speaker, we are taking action to comply with the decision of the Ontario Court of Appeal, which declared that part of the Mental Health Act is in breach of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The Court of Appeal gave us until December 23 of this year to make amendments to the Mental Health Act that complied with the court's decision. More specifically, the court struck down the provision of the act that allows a person to be detained in a psychiatric facility for longer than six months. This was because the Mental Health Act did not provide for a regular review of the conditions of a patient's detention to ensure that it

would be the least restrictive within the circumstances that required this detention. The amendments would make it possible to detain a patient under a new form called a certificate of continuation after the expiry of the patient's third certificate of renewal; that is, after six months and two weeks. A certificate of continuation would allow a patient who has been detained in a psychiatric hospital for longer than six months to be detained for an additional three-month period, similar to the current certificates under the Mental Health Act.

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To ensure that long-term involuntary patients are not detained in a manner that is greater than necessary—because this is really the intent—to meet the important objectives of the Mental Health Act, the Consent and Capacity Board would be given the power to make a limited range of additional orders, in specific circumstances, when it reviews a long-term involuntary patient's certificate of continuation. These orders would be, for example:

- transferring a patient to another psychiatric facility if the patient does not object;
- placing a patient on a leave of absence on the advice of a physician;
- directing the officer in charge to provide different security levels or different privileges within or outside the psychiatric facility;
- directing the officer in charge to provide supervised or unsupervised access to the community; and
- directing the officer in charge to provide vocational, interpretation and/or rehabilitative services.

Similar to the current regime in the Mental Health Act, the long-term involuntary patient would be entitled to request a review of his or her involuntary status after each certificate of continuation is issued. There would be a mandatory review of the patient's involuntary status when the first certificate of continuation is issued at six months and two weeks, and every year thereafter. The long-term involuntary patient would also be able to apply for an additional order at any time they seek a review of the renewal of their certification, where they have not applied in the last 12 months or where the Consent and Capacity Board is satisfied that there has been a material change in circumstances.

As we've heard, so many Ontarians have been touched by mental health and addictions in some way. As a government, we are committed to supporting the most appropriate care for people who are experiencing mental health and addiction challenges, and we need to comply with the decision of the Ontario Court of Appeal within a limited time.

So I would urge all members to support the proposed amendments because they aim at improving the lives of the most vulnerable Ontarians, the ones who need our help the most. This would allow them to have more flexibility. It would really balance, as I said at the beginning, the patient's rights with the public interest, so I hope that everyone in this House will be supporting these amendments.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions or comments?

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I'm happy to add comments to the government's debate on Bill 122 with regard to changing the Mental Health Act. Our concern on this side of the House, as I mentioned earlier in my debate—and it's something that we need to discuss further when this bill reaches committee level—is the fact that they're making changes to the Consent and Capacity Board, the members who actually make up the committee. There have been concerns from a group of psychiatrists that I've been corresponding with. The fact is that the change to the Consent and Capacity Board has nothing to do with the court case and why changes had to be made to this bill. It's unfortunate that the government has snuck this change into this bill when there are other substantive issues with the Mental Health Act that probably could be addressed.

Perhaps it would have been the opportunity to bring that change which they want to bring forward in an all-encompassing change to this bill. It's been close to 15 years since the Mental Health Act has been modified or changed to fit the needs of Ontarians today. We would think that it would be positive if the government could bring forth a bill that does encompass the changes to the Mental Health Act to ensure that it's up to date. At that time, it would have been the appropriate time to bring the changes to the Consent and Capacity Board that they're proposing today.

I've also been in contact with a group of psychiatrists who said the hospital psychiatrists weren't even consulted on the changes to this legislation. It's unfortunate. The government had a year to make the necessary changes to this bill, and unfortunately, it's being rushed near the end. Maybe something held them up somewhere along the line; however, they had eight or nine months before they proposed this bill to actually sit down and consult with hospital psychiatrists who deal with the treatment of patients with mental illness day in and day out. Unfortunately, that didn't occur. Hopefully, during committee we'll have the time to meet with those people.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have only two minutes to go through something that needs to change in the bill. Bill 122 basically copied and pasted more or less what's happening within the court system, in the forensic system, where people with mental health are dealt with within the court and then the courts will order treatments for them. They will follow through and they will get that treatment.

To do the copy and paste into the health care system looked like an easy way to comply with what the court had to say, but on the ground, this is not going to work, because on the ground there aren't the resources within the institutional mental health system, or any part of the mental health system for that matter, to be able to comply with what the courts impose. In this instance, it will be what the Consent and Capacity Board will impose.

We have such a unit in Sudbury. Some of the people who have been held there have been held there for 50

years. That's a long time. The people there are the best psychiatric nurses I have ever met. They deal with people who are very sick; they are severely mentally sick. On a good day, they are just really sick; the rest of the time, they are really, really sick. They need the support of those highly skilled nurses to be able to cope with their disease. That the Consent and Capacity Board would be able to say to somebody who is not able to go outside unsupervised without two nurses, "From now on you will be allowed"—it's to ask the health care system to do something that there aren't the resources to do. The people there do the best they can with the resources we give them. Without a huge influx of money, this will look good on paper and will fail our community.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. John Fraser: It's a pleasure to respond to the member from Etobicoke Centre, the member from Davenport and the member from York South–Weston. Getting back to Bill 122, it is a bill that is specific to a court's ruling which is coming due this December. I concur with my colleagues across the way that there is a lot more work we can do in mental health. There always will be. We are working with limited resources.

But what we need to remember is that what this bill does is create fairness and some transparency for those people who are involuntarily committed, to ensure that their rights and that the conditions of their involuntary commitment are commensurate with their current circumstances.

We know that things have changed over 20 years or 23 years since the Mental Health Act has been opened. There are differences in treatment, differences in identifying different mental illnesses. Those things have changed, so it's important that we address this very specific circumstance that exists inside the Mental Health Act. I think that the minister has done a good job in addressing that.

Let's not make this bigger than it actually is. This is about fairness and transparency and ensuring that people who are involuntarily committed have access to fairness and justice and transparency.

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The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's my pleasure to rise in debate on Bill 122, the Mental Health Statute Law Amendment Act. As my colleague from Ottawa South previously noted, this bill is to bring our Legislature and our province into accordance and compliance with the Ontario Court of Appeal.

I'm specifically in support of this legislation because it is rights-based. I think it's important that we provide counselling and advice to those patients across this province on their rights, particularly as they pertain to mental health and addictions.

I must say that I have been fortunate over the past decade, for the last nine years, to have sat with a woman who has been one of the biggest advocates and cham-

pions of mental health and addictions awareness in this province, and that's Christine Elliott, the former member from Whitby–Oshawa. Christine, from the moment she arrived here in this assembly, took up the fight for those who not only were disadvantaged but who were vulnerable, and she wanted to be their voice. I was proud to walk into this Legislature with her in April 2006 and to be her seatmate for almost four terms in the Legislature.

For me, I see this piece of legislation as carrying on a lot of the work that she has advocated for, not only in the assembly as a private member, but as our health critic previously for two mandates and, in addition, as someone who fought for and was very successful in getting a Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions in this province.

I appreciate the assembly indulging for me for the past two minutes to talk about Ms. Elliott and her contributions to this Legislature. If there were more Christine Elliotts in this assembly, I dare say, we'd be a great province—which we already are—but we'd be even better.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): One of the government members can now respond. I see the member for Davenport.

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I want to start off by thanking the MPPs for Etobicoke Centre, York South–Weston, Elgin–Middlesex–London, Nickel Belt, Ottawa South and Nepean–Carleton for speaking this afternoon so passionately about this bill and so passionately about mental health.

I think it's important that we talk about mental health the way we did here this afternoon, to recognize that it is important that we treat those with mental health and addiction challenges. That's why the proposed amendments that we are making to the Mental Health Act—which, if passed, would help ensure that patients who are detained in a psychiatric facility longer than six months have their liberty interests protected while at the same time ensuring that the health care providers can continue to provide excellent health care to these patients. We heard about the importance of providing the patients with the right care at the right time in the right place. This bill speaks to that.

There is no question, as we heard here this afternoon, that mental health and addictions is a very significant and complex issue that cuts across multiple areas of society and touches the lives of many people.

It is this government's belief that every Ontarian should enjoy good mental health and well-being throughout their lives and that all Ontarians with mental health or addictions can recover and participate in welcoming, supportive communities. The government's mental health and addictions strategy is our plan to support mental health and addictions throughout life.

I'd like to thank, once again, everyone who had the opportunity to speak on this bill this afternoon, and look forward to having their support as we move forward with third reading on this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Toby Barrett: I certainly appreciate the opportunity to address Bill 122. As we know, it proposes amendments to the Mental Health Act and to the Health Care Consent Act, and is required by a judge's decision last December. But the court-ordered deadline is this December—that's next month, Speaker—and I think we're a little late in the game. I see this timeline as a bit of a problem, in my view; so much for any semblance of any citizen participation or consultation. I just heard about this a few weeks ago. In fact, this Legislature wasn't informed about this until September 23 of this fall, and here we have a deadline of December 23.

I also get the impression that this legislation has been dropped on us as a *fait accompli*. The judge has decided, obviously, a year ago; the government has decided—no one in this chamber is a psychiatrist. The Minister of Health is not a psychiatrist. I haven't received any phone calls about this or emails alerting me to this required change, certainly not from the general public and not from the media. I assume this government sent out news releases about this legislation. I really can't find anything in the media about this. Maybe they didn't send out news releases.

As far as my riding—it's 100,000 or 110,000 people—we do not have a resident psychiatrist. We may have a private practice; I'm not sure. It's certainly not for a lack of trying over the last 30 years. I also worked in this field for a number of years before being elected.

We know the trend that really goes back to the 1950s in the United States: the deinstitutionalization of psychiatric facilities in favour of a community-based approach. But we still have 80 psychiatric facilities in the province of Ontario. Again, I question the deinstitutionalization.

When government is not on top of these issues, when we find out just a few weeks ago something they knew last December with this court order, it's obviously been a low priority for most of the past year. I know that there has been other pressing business in this Legislature. We spent I'm not sure how many hours debating save the whales. That was important for some people. I feel this is very important.

If government is not going to communicate with the public about an issue as important as this with respect to people who are involuntarily detained in a psychiatric institution—with not a lot of avenues to communicate, if it's possible for them to physically communicate alone—it just begs the question: Where does this government lie as far as this priority? When government does not communicate, other entities fill the void.

This is an issue of psychiatric detention and human rights. As elected representatives, we have to be cognizant of where the general public is on this. We should be, at any rate. What are public attitudes or public knowledge of this issue, or a lack thereof? This has been the case for many years, probably as far back as we have had psychiatric institutions, or asylums as they were known, certainly going back to these late 1830s in the United States.

Many will know that this Ontario Legislature, this building, was built on the site of what was probably

referred to at the time as an insane asylum. Sometimes, given the antics in this House, the opinion has been ventured more than once that this is quite an appropriate location for us to carry on our business.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I'm not sure that's a parliamentary remark. I'll let it go in this circumstance. I'll let it go.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Call me crazy, but this was built on the site of an insane asylum. That's not a politically correct term these days.

Anyway, our job is to represent the public; our job is to represent public opinion. Where do people get their information on this? I don't think there have been any news releases. Some people watch this channel as we scramble to put words together and speak.

Two authors come to mind who have had a big influence on public opinion. The first author was Nellie Bly, going back to when this structure was built in the late 1800s. The other person, an author, is Ken Kesey. Given their influence on public opinion on government policy with respect to human rights and psychiatric institutionalization, I feel it's incumbent on government to also communicate.

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Nellie Bly wrote a piece that became a book. She wrote it in 1887, and it was titled *Ten Days in a Mad-House*. It chronicled her undercover journey through Blackwell's Island in New York City. What she did, as a journalist, was feign insanity, and she was committed, and found out that sometimes it's harder to get out than it is to get in. That's what we're talking about today, 100 years later. That had a big influence at the time. She discovered, when she was institutionalized, that the more sanely she spoke, the more insane she was thought to be.

Nellie Bly will become, in the public's consciousness, ever-increasingly, in coming days—a film has been made about her work back in 1887. The film's coming out November 11. It's a film set in—let me think. Well, Blackwell's Island is in New York City. It will give us, certainly, a window on what occurred then and what has changed since then. Obviously, in the last 100 years, this Legislature hasn't brought in these kinds of amendments. I just wonder what's been going on in the last 100 years.

Ken Kesey: I think some will recognize that name. He wrote a book in 1962; the title was *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. This was made into a film in 1975. I feel that people don't know what goes on in our psychiatric institutions. My worry is that they may think that they know. Many of us, of a certain age, will certainly remember that Jack Nicholson film that was made from the Ken Kesey book. People will have another image of our psychiatric institutions once they see the film that's going to come out in 10 days, the story of Nellie Bly.

So here we are debating Ontario's Mental Health Act. We know that a person can be detained involuntarily in a psychiatric facility—as was the case back in the 1830s—in this case, for an initial two-week period, an additional month on first renewal of the involuntary admission and an additional two months on a second renewal and an

additional three months, and it goes on. Nellie Bly was only incarcerated for 10 days. She was able to get out again in 10 days, thanks to a lawyer.

Under the current Mental Health Act, unamended, a patient is entitled to a review of their involuntary status after the certificate of admission, the first one, and after each certificate of renewal is issued. After an involuntary patient has been in the hospital for more than six and a half months, and every year thereafter, there is a mandatory review of the involuntary status of the particular patient. This is held before what's referred to as the CCB, the Consent and Capacity Board. There are some amendments being made to this board, and I don't know whether—the judge didn't call for that. I don't know whether that's necessary or not, but we do know the purpose of the bill is to come into compliance with an Ontario Court of Appeal decision.

Currently, the Mental Health Act allows for repeated renewals of a patient's involuntary status. There appears to be no mechanism for civilly detained patients. These aren't ones like Jack Nicholson in the film, who was transferred from a correctional facility. In fact, he volunteered—he was up on gambling charges and, I'm not sure, assault—to go to the mental institution rather than a correctional institution. In the end, it cost him his life, if you remember the end of the film. But there's no mechanism here for civilly detained patients to challenge the conditions of their treatment.

In order to provide a bit of background, involuntary patients are detained in psychiatric facilities because they have a mental illness or there's a risk of harming themselves or harming other people; there are other criteria for involuntary committal. The long-term patients are those who have been detained for more than six months. The majority of the people who are detained longer than six months, by and large, suffer a number of ailments: mood disorders, depression, bipolar, manic depression, or psychotic disorders like schizophrenia or psychogeriatric disorders, and it comprises something like 330 long-term and voluntary psychiatric patients. That's held over our heads if we don't pass this. There's the spectre of 330 patients arriving on the street, and many would be suicidal. That puts pressure on us. I think that puts pressure on this government. Perhaps it puts pressure on that judge who set a one-year deadline, knowing this government doesn't do anything in a hurry.

According to today's Mental Health Act, a physician may examine a person and determine whether or not they meet the criteria for an application for an assessment. An assessment is effective for seven days. This is the form I we've heard about during debate. That's the form that gives any person the authority to take a person to a psychiatric facility. Again, the person, as attending physician at the facility—it can't be the same doctor, of course, who issued the form 1. They must examine a person within 72 hours, and then they can release them or admit them, either as voluntary or involuntary.

Going back to that film with Jack Nicholson, I assume the main characters were all there involuntarily. Half of

those characters were there voluntarily. They just became subject to the psychological influence of the head nurse and of the institution itself.

We've got a bill that's here to comply with a court order that indicated there was a breach of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It's regrettable that the Court of Appeal ruled in December of last year that the deadline is December 23. We really don't have much time on this one, Speaker. The court struck down the provision that a person is detained in a psychiatric facility for longer than six months. This was because the Mental Health Act did not provide for a regular review of the conditions of the patient's continued detention. Again, this was mentioned: The purpose of this legislation is to ensure that it would be the least restrictive within the circumstances that required the detention in the first place.

So since December of last year, this government knew we had to do something. They knew we had to bring changes to this act because the court ordered them to do so. We've really just begun debate on this piece of legislation.

There are other amendments people have asked for with this legislation. Think of the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions. That was five years ago, something like August 2010. They asked for something like this, as I recall, five years ago. Here we are, we've got to go through second reading—this is Inside Baseball—committee, third reading and royal assent. All have to be done by December 22, because on December 23, we are told, the door swings open and 330 or so severely mentally ill people get out.

The Legislature sits another four weeks. We don't sit next week. That's remembrance week. The calendar indicates that we rise on December 10. I see this as a really bad example—this is very poor planning.

I think of the field in front of my house. We combine soybeans at the end of September, and within days—and this is called planning—we put in winter wheat, because you grow winter wheat, and it continues to grow through most of the winter.

You have to plan ahead. In farming, industry, business and everyday life, you plan ahead. When you were told by a judge to bring in this legislation last December and you didn't let anybody know about it until September of this year, I consider that poor planning. We're not just dealing with grains of wheat or with soybeans; we're dealing with people detained in psychiatric institutions involuntarily, people who have trouble speaking for themselves.

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The Select Committee on Mental Health: We should have been working on that for the past five years. I think that's really quite regrettable. I just regret the fact that many of us didn't know about this sooner to maybe push the envelope a bit. I don't want to go through a lot of what has been said already in debate. Much of the debate seems to be essentially reading out parts of the legislation.

When people are released—I think of, in my community, many people that I speak with who have

schizophrenia. This is a good thing: They come in under the umbrella of our local Canadian Mental Health Association. Many of these people can't live on their own. We also have outpatient counselling, which was referred to adult mental health services. My wife was a psychiatric social worker for a number of years with that agency. It is now merged with addiction services. Unfortunately they're probably going to go out on strike. They're looking for a 5% raise over the next two years.

This kind of legislation does have an impact on all of us. It's not something people phone us about, as I indicated. But we do have the Mental Health Act. It's based on consent and substitute decision-making. The ticket in is a form 1. I am heartened, from a human rights perspective, that we have legislation that will provide people with more options for that ticket out, if it is justified.

People have the right to retain a lawyer, to instruct a lawyer, and they have access to a telephone. People have access to a rights adviser to, again, let them know about any change in their legal status. They do have the right to challenge the doctors' decision. As I say, access to a lawyer and legal aid—but as an involuntary patient, that means you're not free to leave the hospital without permission. The Mental Health Act lays that out, the two reasons: where the person is a danger to themselves and other persons, or may unintentionally injure themselves; and secondly, where the person's condition is deteriorating and they do require hospitalization.

It's very difficult to explain this to the general public. They get to watch films like *Cuckoo's Nest*. They'll have an opportunity in 10 days to watch a new film, *10 Days in a Madhouse*. I just like to wrap up, and I quote from a children's poem:

One flew east, one flew west,
One flew over the cuckoo's nest.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments? The member for Welland.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Thank you, Speaker. Thanks to the member from Haldimand–Norfolk for some of his insights into this bill.

The member from Nickel Belt, just before she spoke on the last round of two minutes, talked about how she didn't think the government was actually going to be able to accomplish what they need to do with this bill. Although it's a good thing to give more authority to the Consent and Capacity Board, the Liberal government is not giving them the funding to go along with that. They're expanding their scope to add four or five more things that I'll talk about more when I actually have my 20 minutes, but at the end of the day, when the courts order something, the funding goes with it. With the Consent and Capacity Board, even though they're giving them more authority, even to order treatment for people who are incarcerated, they're not giving them the funding to go along with it.

In 2013-14, they were allocated \$4.8 million, but they actually spent \$6.4 million—a significant amount more—

and the actuals showed \$6.2 million. This year, in 2015-16, the government is once again allocating just the same amount of money. So even though the government is expanding the mandate for this board and its authority, how does the government actually expect the CCB to carry out this expanded authority if they're not going to give them any funds to go along with it? So that, just to start, is problematic.

With respect to this recommendation and only having nine months, well, in fact, one of the recommendations that came out of the select committee five years ago was to make sure that there were these treatments available to patients who were incarcerated in the psychiatric system.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I, too, listened carefully to the member from Haldimand–Norfolk, and I was particularly impressed with his sense of a historical overview. The movie *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* changed a lot of attitudes about mental health. We can thank Hollywood for not too many things, but that's one I think we can thank them for. I was pleased to hear that reference.

Some of us who have been involved in mental health boards and mental health education committees locally for years have, I think it would be fair to say, always felt that governments of all levels have been moving far too slowly with respect to recognizing the stigma attached generically to mental health issues and, more pointedly, the folk who are nameless and faceless and in an involuntary kind of setting. Government has a responsibility to move to protect people from themselves, and if they're a risk to others.

I have a nephew—I should say had a nephew—who was schizophrenic. He didn't get the services he wanted and committed suicide out in BC. It was very tragic. A number of us came together from that experience and formed a group in Hamilton some 20 years ago, which is still functioning, called the Friends of Schizophrenics. So a big part of this is education.

Government moves slowly, too slowly at times, but at the same time, it moves slowly for a reason. Particularly on something as delicate as this, you want to get it right, because if you get it wrong, then you're creating more problems than you started out with. I offer that up for what it's worth.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'd like to commend the member from Haldimand–Norfolk. He took us back on a little bit of a journey there. I certainly remember—I can hardly remember, but I did just see it was on again recently—*One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. It was just on maybe two weeks ago. I didn't bother watching it because I knew how it turned out. I couldn't remember all of the details.

I also liked his comments about what we've been faced with with the deinstitutionalization of psychiatric patients over the last number of years, and how it's made

such a difference in what our police have to respond to, and our hospitals and other institutions.

Nellie Bly: That's another interesting—I remember that from when I was very young. There was some song about Nellie Bly. I'm going to have to go look the words up when I'm done.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Sing it, sing it.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Yes, we'll get Yak to sing it.

Anyway, this is an important subject. The disease burden—I'm just reading some stats on it—of mental illness and addiction is one and a half times higher than all the cancers put together, and more than seven times that of infectious diseases in Ontario alone. The economic burden of mental illness in Canada is estimated to cost \$51 billion a year, so in all of Canada, a billion dollars a week. That's an amazing statistic, and it's amazing what that's costing our economy.

Our caucus recognizes the devastating effects of mental illness and the stigma that is attached to those thousands of Ontarians who are affected by that. Mental health is just as important as physical health, and we need to treat it that way.

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Just last week, the Health Quality Ontario annual report highlighted the unfortunate reality that hospital readmission rates for patients with mental illness or addiction have not improved in the last five years, and suicide rates have not, in fact, improved in a decade. We need to do better, and we must do better.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Ms. Catherine Fife: I listened intently to the comments of the member from Haldimand–Norfolk. I think that he went to the heart of the matter. As you know, there is an immense amount of stigma attached to mental health. He did call upon the government to use this opportunity to open the Mental Health Act to actually act. It's a burning issue in all of our ridings, and I think that we, as MPPs, have a responsibility to bring those voices here to this place.

He touched on the issue of incarceration, and of course he used the movie *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* as a means to actually tell the story. I recall watching that movie, and it still has significant impact. I think that's the power of art and the power of movies. But what also became very clear in that story was the power imbalance between the patient and the institution.

I think that Bill 122 aims to try to address that power imbalance, because those who are actually on the other side of the door—usually a locked door, Mr. Speaker—usually have no power. They have no voice, they have no one to advocate for them and they are vulnerable. They are made vulnerable by their mental illness and by the sickness, whatever it may be, that affects them, but there are few people in society who actually have strong advocates.

We have an opportunity today to actually accelerate this discussion—I think this was the message of the member from Haldimand–Norfolk—because that is

needed in the province of Ontario. We have a lot of evidence to prove that there have been missed opportunities to address the issue of mental illness and mental well-being in the province of Ontario, and it's not enough just to stand up in the House and say we can do more. We actually can do more. We have the opportunity to do so. That's the privilege we hold as members of provincial Parliament.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes our questions and comments for this round, and I return to the member for Haldimand–Norfolk for his reply.

Mr. Toby Barrett: I do thank members for their feedback. I used the examples of Nellie Bly and Ken Kesey. As was indicated, they had an impact on society at the time. Back in the late 1880s, when Nellie Bly's report came out and later became a book, it was a bit of a scandal and she was back in there within a few weeks with a panel. In the short run, it cleaned up the place. Some people disappeared, and the psychiatrist apologized for diagnosing her as delusional and a hopeless case. She was a good actor, obviously.

The New York City of the day allocated a tremendous amount of money to that institution as a result of—I guess it must have been—a real bombshell at the time. We'll get to see this story in 10 days—anybody who wants to buy a theatre ticket. You can see the trailer for the film on the Internet. It looks like it's exaggerated quite a bit—the cold showers and things like that—but that stuff used to go on in psychiatric institutions as well. I guess they had not invented lobotomy at that time.

The same with Ken Kesey and the film *Cuckoo's Nest*: I think many of us remember Nurse Ratched, “Big Nurse.” She was “remorseless.” She was described as “a social dominatrix, a steely ... controller of her environment.” When you're in a situation like that, even the voluntary clients, or patients, didn't know how to break free until Jack Nicholson did his thing and somebody got fired and some of them were able to sign themselves out.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's such a pleasure for me to actually be part of this debate today. For me, personally, this is probably one of the most important debates I've been part of in this House. It has been a long-standing issue, ever since I was first elected as a trustee in 2003. One of the first people who approached me was a mother of a young daughter who was struggling desperately with mental health issues. She was frustrated with the school system, Mr. Speaker.

Now remember, this is 12 or 13 years ago. The system was not responsive to those needs. There was a level of compassion and there was a level of empathy, but there certainly was never an understanding of the pain the entire family and, indeed, the community would experience when those issues were not addressed with some level of dignity and with some level of compassion. I followed that mother's journey through seven years before her daughter took her life. There were actually no

words to describe it, except that mother turned into one of the strongest advocates I've ever met, and that is how she dealt with her grief. Every time we have the opportunity in this House to address the issue of mental illness, I believe we have a moral responsibility to bring the truth to bear.

When I was president of the Ontario Public School Boards Association, I had the opportunity to chair the mental health coalition for the province. That brought teacher unions, public health, legal counsel and emergency personnel to the table to say, "How can we be part of the solution on mental health?" I think speaking truth gives youth great power. Youth were represented at that table through the Student Trustees' Association, and they gave us a lesson that we will never forget. They said, "You must listen to us. If you don't listen to us, you will lose us." They were speaking on behalf of every student across the province of Ontario, and it was very powerful to have them at that table.

The lesson that I learned was that it was such a unique perspective on mental health issues, and addiction was a huge component of that. To listen to the need to self-medicate with drugs was powerful, because it was that missing component, I think, back in 2008-09, where we didn't have a full understanding of why youth were self-medicating. We didn't have a full understanding of the issue of youth mental health issues. I think that this bill, by opening up the Mental Health Act—I think this is an opportunity we're missing.

I do acknowledge that we are here and we are debating this issue essentially because of a court order. In 2014, a ruling of the Court of Appeal found that some provisions relating to the long-term involuntary detention of mental health patients were inconsistent to the Charter, which related to involuntary patients being committed, with the result that committals of indefinite length are possible. While the Consent and Capacity Board is authorized to confirm or rescind the detention order and can transfer the patient to a different psychiatric facility, the Consent and Capacity Board does not currently have the authority to change the conditions of detention or the manner of treatment of long-term patients.

Why I pulled this out of the act is that we in this House are elected to represent the comprehensive needs of our entire communities, but we have, I think, a significant duty and responsibility to represent those who have no voice, who live on the margins, who have no advocates. In this instance, there are 338 individuals who have been caught in this legislative gap, if you will. We have a responsibility to make sure that they are going to be dealt with in a humane way, with integrity and with dignity, that also finds the balance in protecting the public good. There are obviously some who have some serious concerns about those individuals coming out of institutions, not having due process and due diligence not being followed through, if you will.

The fact that the courts have had to order this Legislature to deal with this, and that it has been on the order book now for now over a year, provides an opportunity

for us to speak openly, and I think honestly, about the issue of mental health in the province of Ontario.

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These are not new issues. They are not new to the more experienced—I mean, I've only been here for three years, but who's counting. This has been a long-standing issue. We now have a fuller understanding of the economic impact of not addressing the issue of mental health in our province. We have a broader and comprehensive understanding of not addressing mental health issues and the impact that they have on our health care system. And for the first time in a long time we have a very clear picture of the cost—the fiscal cost—of not addressing the issue on our justice system.

I was very proud of our local paper, the Waterloo Region Record, which recently did an exposé, if you will, because there are inconsistencies across the province in how each community addresses mental health issues. A lot of that has to do with resources and with local leadership, but the provincial framework that was put in place back in 2010—it was an initial investment of \$246 million. There was such hope when that money was released. It was a three-year pilot project rolled out to school boards so that mental health leads could take those school boards, pull them along—understanding, of course, that not every school board was in the same place. I think that the understanding at the time was that school boards in the north were dealing with very different issues, and we know that through the relocation of First Nation students from on-reserve to off-reserve to major municipal centres, that transition proved to be quite deadly. The transition teams around mental health and support were not there to help those students with the resiliency, and there was a cost. There was a human cost, and there was obviously an economic cost. I would argue, though, that the human cost is higher.

In the Waterloo region, though, this exposé—this just came out, actually, October 23. It says, "Mental Health Crisis in Waterloo Region: 'Let's Get At This As A Community.'" It's an acknowledgement that—and this has been a long time coming—one's mental health in that family affects this family and their mental health; it impacts the workplace; it impacts the community as a whole. And so to finally have a clear picture, that 54 Waterloo region residents died by suicide last year, was a huge wake-up call to people, because you think of the lost potential. You think of the youth that are encapsulated in this 54 and how they took their own life, and that potential will never be realized.

That's a hard thing to measure, but it's an important thing to think about when you're trying to reallocate resources, when you're making the case for resources around early intervention and prevention—because that's where the smart investment is, and that's where the compassionate investment is, as well. I commend our chief of police, Bryan Larkin, who's in his first year in Waterloo region. He said that we're going to have to get to this issue, because his police officers are spending a huge amount of time as they approach calls from,

usually, centre downtown. He says that from 2011 to 2013, Waterloo region police responded to 4,516 calls about a mentally ill person and 3,520 calls about an attempted suicide, not a suicide death. On the whole, each one of those calls takes up to three hours. I would hazard a guess that those calls are basically just about crisis management and don't get to the heart of the very issue.

This entire debate, though, leads me to this excellent report: the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions. This was an all-party committee: The Chair was Kevin Flynn; Bas Balkissoon was there; France Gélinas; Helena Jaczek; Christine Elliott, who's no longer here; Liz Sandals; Jeff Leal; Sylvia Jones; and Maria Van Bommel. They travelled across the province. They heard from 333 people. I can't imagine the work that went into this, Mr. Speaker, and it is five years old—I will point that out.

They say in their original report: “We began our investigation of mental health and addictions care in Ontario more than 18 months ago, when the select committee was created in February 2009.”

We are calling for and are “convinced that a radical transformation of mental health and addictions care is necessary if Ontarians are to get the care they need and deserve.

“From the parents sleeping by their front door to prevent their son from slipping out to buy drugs, to the daughter who dealt with more than 20 health care providers and social service agencies on her mother's behalf, to the husband who was in the room when his wife committed suicide, we have listened to your stories. These were extremely difficult moments for families to share with the select committee.

“There were uplifting moments as well”—which shows the power of intervention, which shows the power of resources being invested. “But it is fair to say that these positive stories” obviously “were in the minority. In general, Ontarians wait too long for treatment. Youth are caught in the gap between programs for children and adults, repeating their case histories to a series of unconnected service providers. First Nations people struggle with above-average rates of mental illness, addictions, and youth suicide owing in part to a history of poverty and the consequences of residential schooling. Francophones are misdiagnosed because they are not treated in their first language. Linguistic and cultural barriers may also affect newcomers and refugees. Seniors unnecessarily languish with depression, often undiagnosed, while society as a whole must face what has been called the coming tsunami of Alzheimer disease.”

So here we have this report. We have evidence that there is a desperate need for action, and yet there seems to be—this court order came in over a year ago to deal with some of the most vulnerable people in the province of Ontario, who are institutionalized involuntarily and have no recourse whatsoever. They are voiceless. They are almost non-citizens in the province of Ontario. If we were to look at this instance in any other jurisdiction

across the world, we would be writing Amnesty International to fight for their rights, Mr. Speaker. They have no voice; they have no recourse. You can't argue; the courts already found this to be true.

It is about priorities in the province of Ontario. It's about being clear and honest about where this province wants to go with the mental health system, particularly those people who are incarcerated. This report, as it relates to those people who are incarcerated—and the evidence is pretty overwhelming that more and more of those with mental health issues, across the entire spectrum, from eating disorders to psychotic episodes, find themselves in our jails and our institutions. Those institutions are becoming more and more crowded, those conditions are becoming more and more unhealthy, and those institutions are therefore compounding the mental health issues in our community.

It's hard not to think of the select committee's recommendations from five years ago, in that—this is recommendation 19, just for the record: “The Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services should direct police forces across the province to provide training for officers who may encounter people suffering from mental illnesses and addictions.”

Mr. Speaker, we most recently heard of—actually, there are so many examples, but for the province of Ontario and the city of Toronto, the story of Sammy Yatim and the videotape that just came out last Monday. To their credit, every media news outlet gave us fair warning before we saw that. As the mother of a teenager, it was incredibly hard to watch. I can't even imagine the pain that the mother would have to experience to watch her son in that condition, which was drug-induced, compounded by mental health issues that were long-standing, and yet one of the recommendations here asks correctional services and police forces to actually have training. That's a reasonable and rational request by all members of every party in the province of Ontario, asking for the skills to be transferred, that knowledge transfer around dealing with mental health issues in extreme cases be part of the mandate of every police officer.

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This transfers over to the education system as well, because when I was part of the coalition for mental health—there is obviously a need and a desire for knowledge from teachers across the province to deal with how behaviour issues will be manifested in mental health issues and how best to diagnose, because you need a solid diagnosis. You need a clear assessment of a child's learning disabilities and mental health issues before you can actually be true to that child and be true to that student and make sure they reach their potential. You need that assessment and, therefore, you need that training. This is not new information, Mr. Speaker.

One other issue based on the select committee as it relates to Bill 122, the Mental Health Statute Law Amendment Act, is recommendation 20. The committee asked that a “core basket of mental health and addictions

services should be available to the incarcerated population, and discharge plans for individuals with a mental illness or addiction should be expanded to include the services of a system navigator and appropriate community services.” So these are folks who are incarcerated, who are dealing with mental health issues, and they have no advocate on their side, as has already been determined by the court system as it relates to the Consent and Capacity Board.

For me, one of the first things I did was tour a women’s federal prison and I spoke to the staff who are part of the jail system where Ashley Smith actually took her own life. If there was ever an example of the justice system gone wrong as it relates to mental health issues, we should always remember Ashley Smith in every debate that we have on mental health as it relates to incarceration, because that’s a young woman whom the system failed. It failed, and it’s hard not to imagine that of the 338 individuals whom this piece of legislation will directly affect as it relates to their rights, as it relates to the charter, there isn’t an Ashley Smith in that mix. The stats probably would be very supportive of that.

So here we are. We have this opportunity to move this legislation very quickly. I see no reason actually for us to delay it. The court has ordered the changes, and yet this debate still continues on.

For my part, I’m happy, though, to have the opportunity to raise the issue of mental health issues in the province of Ontario and draw attention to the fact that when you have individuals who are court-ordered as it relates to their direction as a patient and as a prisoner, those court orders have funds attached to them as it relates to when the consent and the capacity division makes a decision as it relates to patient care—there is no funding or resources attached to that. That’s a huge issue going forward, and it needs to be addressed through amendments to this piece of legislation and, at some point, before it gets too late, this government, which has a majority, which by all accounts supports the recommendations by the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions, which in the second session of the 39th Parliament endorsed this—this was a unanimous endorsement. To date, though, we have only endorsed half of one of the recommendations as it relates to pain medication. We can do more. That’s part of this debate, and I look forward to doing more.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. John Fraser: It’s a pleasure to respond to the member from Kitchener–Waterloo. I agree with her on a lot. I agree with her on the fact that there is a lot more that we can do for mental health. I agree with her when she says that our responsibility is to be a voice for those people who don’t have a voice. And that’s what this bill specifically does. That very small subset of people who are involuntarily committed because of their illnesses need to have proper justice. They need to have proper recourse. There needs to be transparency. The conditions of their involuntary detainment have to be commensurate with their existing conditions.

We’re addressing something very specific. We’re ensuring that there’s fairness and transparency there. We introduced the bill in September. I think we’ve had about a month where members could study it, take a look at it. I haven’t heard a lot of amendments or suggestions to amendments about that bill, with the exception that you’re the only one that I’ve heard. In every other piece of debate, I haven’t heard those suggestions.

I think there’s an opportunity for us to get this done by December. I don’t think it’s that onerous. I don’t think it’s subverting the legislative process. We’re dealing with something that’s very specific.

I would like to add one thing to what the member from Kitchener–Waterloo said, with her connection to education and supporting children’s mental health: There are a lot of great community-based solutions out there. It’s not just us here at Queen’s Park or the Ministry of Health or the Ministry of Children and Youth Services. There are great opportunities to partner in communities, as we’ve done in Ottawa with the school board, the city of Ottawa public health and the federal government, in some circumstances, to provide addictions counselling and treatment in schools, and some suicide prevention as well.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Toby Barrett: I’d like to follow up on the comments from the member from Kitchener–Waterloo. It’s a comprehensive overview on the area that she represents as well. But we’re trying to strike a balance, not only human rights, but also the need for hospitalization in so many cases where someone’s condition is deteriorating or they’re a danger to themselves, or the threat of committing suicide when unsupervised.

For 20 years, I worked for the Addiction Research Foundation. We had a clinical institute over at 33 Russell Street, now closed. We finally merged with what became the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, which provides involuntary detention and also detention for referrals through the criminal justice system. They’re subject to the Public Hospitals Act; they’re subject, obviously, to the Mental Health Act and the Health Care Consent Act for reasons that we have been discussing during this debate.

In addition, because I used to work with part of that organization, they have a client relations office, as many hospitals do. They have an empowerment council. There was a lot of talk about this when I worked there; maybe 25 years ago we talked about this. They have a psychiatric patient advocate office—it’s a program under the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care—and they have rights advisers.

So beyond the legislation, there are these other structures in place. We have learned over the last 150 years in this field; however, a judge has indicated there is more work to be done.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Ms. Cindy Forster: I want to thank the member from Kitchener–Waterloo for a lot of insight, not only into the

bill but into each of our communities where people struggle every day with mental health issues, with substance abuse issues.

Now, the member from Ottawa South talked about the need to be partnering and that there are good partnerships and things in our communities. But, in fact, there's a whole mishmash of services that are available across the province.

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Unfortunately, and I know this from my own community, a lot of people aren't even aware of some of those services that are available or, if they are aware of them, the wait-lists to get into them. You could have a child, for example, with a threat of suicide, who will get to Pathstone for an initial assessment, but they will never get back for treatment for six, eight or 10 weeks. Parents are taking their kids from Niagara to Hamilton, to McMaster, because they hope that their child will be able to see a child psychiatrist there at the hospital and perhaps be admitted to one of the 10 beds that are available in the south end of Niagara, for their child who is cutting themselves, threatening suicide or attempting to hang themselves.

I know Teresa Armstrong, the member from London–Fanshawe, brought forward Bill 95 a few months ago, which would see a committee of sorts, a panel set up with experts from the mental health field, all coming together and making sure that these 350 or 400 agencies for adults, and another 300 or 400 for children, all come under one umbrella, so that we make sure that the resources are equitably distributed where the greatest need is.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I'm happy to participate in this important debate today. I know we're talking about a very specific and narrow amendment to the Mental Health Act, but a number of MPPs have discussed today the importance of children's and youth mental health. As the Minister for Children and Youth Services, I just want to talk a little bit about that, because we want our children and youth in the province to have all the support they need, and their families to have all the support they need when it comes to their mental health.

We know that 750,000 more kids and their families are benefiting from quicker, easier access. There is more work to do, but more investments began to roll out in 2011, increasing to \$93 million a year, part of the greater than \$444 million a year we invest in children's and youth mental health.

I know it's not just about investing the money. As members opposite say, it's about coordinating the service. So what my ministry is in the process of doing is that we have named lead agencies for children and mental health across the province—33 in total, I believe. It's not to replace existing service providers; it's to coordinate services, so families can navigate better, so they can get the information they need, they can get the assessments they need. It's also for those lead agencies to work with other partners, such as school boards, hospitals

and community groups, to make sure that we're doing the very best we can for children and youth in this province.

We've helped hire 770 new mental health workers in Ontario for young people, and our Tele-Mental Health Service has provided over 4,800 psychiatric consults to children and youth in our rural and remote areas. That's something I hear a lot, Speaker: Sometimes access is better in the urban areas, but we need to do more, and we are doing more to help children and youth throughout the province.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes our time for questions and comments for this round. I return to the member for Kitchener–Waterloo for her reply.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I'd like to thank the members from Ottawa South, Haldimand–Norfolk and Welland and the Minister of Children and Youth Services for their comments. It's true: This is a specific and narrow amendment to the Mental Health Act, but it is also an opportunity for us to challenge ourselves to be better.

I would agree, though, with the member from Ottawa South that there are community resources out there. The minister referenced this. Kids Help Phone is one of those resources. One of the first things I did when I was chair of the mental health coalition was to write a letter of support for additional ministry funding, because the Kids Help Phone line is available across the entire province. No matter where you are, in the northernmost remote community, it's a free line, and it's a proven, researched, evidence-based resource for children and youth. It proved to be very successful. Those are the kinds of programs, Mr. Speaker, that we continue to need to be supportive.

I also think that we do need to address the stigma attached to mental health. To that end, when my daughter was younger, eight or nine years old, she had early onset anxiety. We went to Mosaic family counselling and there was this amazing program called Setting Free the Butterflies. As soon as she walked into that room, with those other young children, and she saw that she wasn't the only one that had this anxiety, it was like the weight of the world fell off her shoulder. So the smart money and the compassionate investment is on early intervention and the prevention and the focus on what mental well-being is. The school systems are definitely a part of that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate? The Deputy Premier and President of the Treasury Board.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you, Speaker—and the minister responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy, which is something I'm going to be focusing on here a bit. I will be sharing my time with the Minister of Community and Social Services, the member for Scarborough–Rouge River, and the Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

Speaker, I think we heard in this debate that all of us, every one of us in this House, is very committed to and passionate about the issue of mental health. I think that no party or individual has a monopoly on compassion.

We all have experienced mental illness, whether it's ourselves, our families, our circle of friends, or, indeed, our constituents. I think we have all had people come to our constituency offices and share their stories of trying to navigate our mental health system, with advice on how to make the system work better. I think all of us have listened very carefully to those people. We have acted on that advice that we have heard, and our mental health and addictions strategy demonstrates our commitment to continuing to improve the services available to people.

One of the things where we've made the greatest improvement when it comes to mental illness in this country in the past decade is the stigma-busting part. I don't think a decade ago many people would have stood up in a place like this and talked about their personal experience with mental illness, but we've heard that today. Certainly, I have had within my family, definitely, encounters with mental illness. I'm pleased to say that people did get the care that they needed, and they are off again on that productive life where they can contribute, where they have the ability to contribute to the community and participate in the community.

Whether it's somebody like Michael Wilson standing up after his son committed suicide to talk about the importance of at least beginning the conversation—I heard Clara Hughes interviewed on CBC Radio this weekend with Shelagh Rogers. She talked about her experience with depression and mental illness. Those conversations have taken us a long way to recognizing that there is no family that is not touched by mental illness of some regard.

What I did want to bring to this conversation is how our Poverty Reduction Strategy is actually addressing mental illness. Particularly I wanted to talk about our commitment that I announced last week, our commitment to end chronic homelessness over the next decade. We know we can do that in this province, Speaker, because across the province, we've seen municipalities partnering with community organizations and other partners, and actually, one by one, getting people housed, using primarily the Housing First philosophy, which really states that if you are homeless, it's pretty hard to deal with the issues that you're dealing with, whether it's addiction, mental health or whatever the issue is, when you are not in a stable housing situation.

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So the Housing First philosophy has proven to be extraordinarily successful at getting people housed, first, and the supports they need to stay housed. We're seeing remarkable success.

I thought I would share one story from my community. A gentleman, Fred, had been homeless for 15 years. He had significant mental health and addiction challenges. For 15 years, he slept under bridges, in tents, in shelters sometimes. In the year prior to getting housed through London CArES Housing First organization, he had been to the emergency department of the hospital, often by ambulance, 250 times; for two out of every three days, he was in the ER. He had over 400 encounters with

the police; more than one a day, on average. In the year following his housing, he had no encounters with the police and had two visits to the emergency department. So, obviously, his quality of life was far greater, but the community was better off too, because those other resources—whether it was the ER, the police or the justice system—could be used in a way that we expect those resources to be used.

We do know that with the right supports, a lot of people struggling with mental illness and addictions can get the treatment they need, can get stabilized, and can become contributing members of our community, which is, of course, what they want and what we all want as well. This particular bill does not deal with that, but I think we're all giving ourselves licence to talk about some of the successes that we're having and some of the challenges that still remain.

Speaker, on that note, I will pass it over to my colleague the Minister of Community and Social Services.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I recognize the Minister of Community and Social Services.

Hon. Helena Jaczek: I'm very pleased to join in the debate this afternoon on this very important bill that I think really shows that we need to balance, in the Mental Health Act, aspects of community safety with the appropriate access to treatment for individuals suffering from a mental health issue.

These amendments go a long way. Not only are they aligning with the charter as, in fact, the Court of Appeal has required that they do, but there are a number of efficiency measures in relation to the powers of the Consent and Capacity Board so that, in fact, that board will be able to make a limited range of additional orders in specific circumstances when it reviews a long-term, involuntary patient's certificate of continuation. It will allow that other physicians—not just psychiatrists—and also nurse practitioners will be able to sit on the Consent and Capacity Board panels for less complex hearings. This will free up existing psychiatrist capacity for the more complex hearings anticipated by the amendments.

As was mentioned here today by a member of the former Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions, I think that we continue to see the work that we did on that select committee influence government policy. The President of the Treasury Board, the Deputy Premier, made reference to the fact that our 10-year mental health and addictions strategy has addressed what we heard in the over 300 hearings that our committee held—because we need to recognize that one in five Ontarians will experience a mental illness in their lifetime.

Our strategy: The first three years did specifically address children with mental health issues, those suffering with addictions. But as we move forward into phase 2 of the comprehensive mental health strategy, we are looking at more community supports. In fact, our government has, overall, doubled the funding for mental health and addictions services in Ontario, so that it is now at a total of over \$1 billion. In phase 2 of the comprehensive addiction strategy, some \$138 million over three

years will be going to community agencies to address better access, quality and value, so that, again, people have these supports if they move out of an institution and into the community.

As the Minister of Community and Social Services, I do have the mandate to support and provide services to individuals with a dual diagnosis. I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, you know that these are individuals with a developmental disability who also suffer from mental health issues. Specifically, I need and continue to work with my colleagues to support these individuals. We have many great agencies doing wonderful work in the community and we need to make sure these sorts of supports and services are more generally available to individuals suffering with a dual diagnosis, specifically.

I urge all members to support Bill 122. It provides a step forward in terms of the care of those with mental health issues in Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I'm pleased to recognize the member for Scarborough–Rouge River.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Mr. Speaker, I want to say how honoured I am to say a few words on this particular bill, but especially to follow the last two speakers. I originally served on a committee on poverty reduction with the President of the Treasury Board, and I also served on the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions with my colleague the Minister of Community and Social Services, but on top of that, I had the privilege to serve on the Select Committee on Developmental Disabilities. I have to say to you, Mr. Speaker, that those were three committees that I served on where I gained a lot of knowledge of this particular issue.

If I could say, this bill in front of us is responding to the Ontario Court of Appeal decision for those who are involuntarily detained for more than six months in one of our institutions. To understand why this bill is here and why it's progressive, one probably has to go back about 40 or 50 or 60 years. I was astonished, when I served on the Select Committee on Mental Health. We had the opportunity to tour some of the institutions in Ontario at the time. Many decades ago, families used to actually commit their children to these institutions, never to return home. It was a permanent committal to these types of institutions because, back then, society did not know how to deal with mental health. They did not know how to deal with some of the issues surrounding behaviour. We have come a long way, as you can see. The courts have decided that if somebody is going to be committed to one of these places, you must have a regular review of that process—that that person is not capable of moving back into society and living a life like everyone else.

The important thing here is that we have learned, over the last couple of decades, that there are varying forms of mental health issues. As we heard from the other speakers, one in five will suffer some form of mental health issue—depression, stress, behavioural patterns, etc.—as we go forward.

This particular bill is in front of us because it was ordered by the court. It's very technical in nature, if you

read it, but it provides the board that is in the Mental Health Act, the Consent and Capacity Board, more opportunities to review someone who is involuntarily committed to an institution of psychiatric care or some other mental health care—that there is constant review, and the family or the individual or even the practitioners who are dealing with this particular person's problem would have an opportunity to review their state and whether they belong in the right institution. The board will also have the opportunity to deal with transferring them to an institution of higher care or lower care, all at the same time.

1710

Mr. Speaker, I would say that if you look at how we treated those with mental health and addictions four or five decades ago, what we're doing today is very progressive. I would say that our own government has come a long way in the last 10 years to make sure we are addressing the issues of mental health and addiction. In fact, the first phase of this government's plan was to address children, especially in early identification of behavioural problems that would lead to serious mental health issues in the future. Mr. Speaker, I would say to you, based on the knowledge gained serving on these committees, that I'm proud to support this bill, because it's one step better in the system, and I urge everyone to support it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I recognize the Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm certainly very pleased to have an opportunity to say a few words, as well, about an issue that I think means a great deal to all of us. I think it is reflective of the discussion that is going on in the Legislature today among all the parties that this is indeed an issue that to some real degree brings us all together with the understanding of how important it is that we find not just the right tone, but the right decisions that we're making. Certainly, the increased resources we are putting into the mental health system are really important.

I'm glad to have a chance to speak about it, perhaps a little bit from the perspective of being a member from northern Ontario, where some of the challenges of providing those resources are somewhat more demanding. I know that is certainly well understood by many members of this Legislature. I also appreciate the comments made by my colleagues the President of the Treasury Board, the Minister of Community and Social Services and the member for Scarborough–Rouge River. I think the member for Scarborough–Rouge River is so right in saying that we are very much a different society now than we were 25 or 30 years ago, as well we should be.

I am very proud of the work the select committee did. Again, I think that was a great example of all three parties in this Legislature working together with common cause and a real goal. I'm very proud of the comprehensive strategy that we're bringing forward here, particularly as we move into phase 2. I think that's going to be crucial.

I'm also actually very excited—and I don't mean this in a partisan way at all—but we now have had a federal election, and my federal colleague from Thunder Bay–Superior North, MP-elect—I guess she hasn't been sworn in—is Patty Hajdu, H-A-J-D-U. She was a wonderful candidate. She's been elected. She was the former executive director of Shelter House Thunder Bay, somebody who is focused very much on many of the issues that we're actually discussing today. I'm very excited about working with her on these kinds of issues.

From a northern Ontario perspective, we are grateful for the resources that are being added to the strategy, but there's no question that there are larger issues that can very much relate to the geographic realities of being from northern Ontario. I live in the city of Thunder Bay, but I represent a much larger riding that includes 11 First Nations and many communities outside. Sometimes being able to provide those resources—I mean, I'm proud of the rather extraordinary work that's done by organizations like the Children's Centre and many other organizations in northwestern Ontario. I think we need to continue to understand that putting those resources in place is so crucial and important.

The debate today is about an amendment—a very specific amendment—to the Mental Health Act, and it's an important discussion. But again, I think that having the opportunity to at least stand here and express my support for the strategy that's been put in place, eagerness to continue to work with the federal government on continuing to see more resources being put in place, and also to have a chance to speak about some of the challenges we have in northern Ontario is important to me and to my constituents.

I will tell you that I have frequent discussions, actually as recently as yesterday, with one of the senior medical officials in Thunder Bay—a psychiatrist, in fact—who talked about the need to continue to try and find more resources for those particular kinds of positions that are more difficult to fill in northern Ontario, and how important they are.

Ultimately, what it comes down to, is, I believe, again, the statistic is—and I think it's an accurate one—that over the course of time, one in five people will be dealing with a mental health issue. It's incredibly important that we find a way to not just find the resources to help them so we can work toward prevention, so we can work toward some of the solutions, but also to have the compassion and the kindness that we really need, I think, in order for all of us to be able to work together in a more caring fashion. Ultimately, I think that should be a goal for all of us in life. Certainly one of my goals as I age is to become a kinder human being simply because I think that the benefits are not just mine but there are many others as well. Regardless, I certainly am pleased to have had a chance to say a few words related to this important piece of legislation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Bill Walker: It's a pleasure to rise today and add a few more minutes of comment to this. I did speak last

week, and it has been great to hear the conversation today from all three parties in this House. Certainly as an Ontario PC, I and my caucus colleagues recognize the devastating effects mental illness and the attached stigma have on the lives of thousands of Ontarians.

To us, it's about inclusion, about challenging people's attitudes to mental health. As we've heard a lot about here today, stigma is one of those things that for many years kept this in the backrooms, kept it in the dark, and it's great to see that people are willing to step out and actually acknowledge and be there to support. One of the things that I certainly talked about a fair bit last week in my discussion was a plea to everyone out there, that everyone can be involved. To the person who's struggling and challenged, for them to feel comfortable to step out and ask for help: that's one of the biggest things I think we can do. As a friend, a family member or just a colleague, maybe even a stranger, if someone actually extends that hand, to be prepared to say, "We're here to help. We'll do what we can"—just an ear to listen to those people who are struggling and challenged.

Mental health, in my mind, is just as important as physical health, but for many years we have always looked at the physical because you can see it, you can feel it and you can understand it. Mental health is much more challenging to diagnose, to really understand and to even perceive if someone is struggling with that. So I think it's important that we need to treat it as importantly and definitely move forward. It affects Ontarians of every age and demographic, and yet services, in my mind, remain inadequate. It's good to see legislation coming forward so that we can do that, and definitely to be there for our most vulnerable.

In my own backyard, Wes for Youth is a program started by Yolanda and Jamie Cameron which I have talked about here many, many times. It's an honour and a legacy to their son who had committed suicide. Wes for Youth Online—it's open to the world, really, to be able to be a resource. Certainly, Keystone Child, Youth and Family Services—Phil Dodd is the executive director—the Canadian Mental Health Association, and Victim Services are all agencies in my own backyard of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound that provide those very critical services. I applaud anyone who will step up and support this. We need to do more and do the right thing.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Paul Miller: I just wanted to look at a bit of the history of this situation. I mean, 30, 40 years ago we knew the horror stories that used to go on in these types of hospitals, and it wasn't necessarily the staff's fault or the doctors' fault. It was the lack of funding. I still have people who come into my constituency office who are having problems with this situation and the funding is not there. You can increase the ability for people to look into these situations by a governing body, but if you cut the funding at the same time, it's counterproductive.

Mental illness has always required extra financing throughout the decades, and it always falls short. It's one

of the last social services that gets the funding required. Now, with the state of things in the world and our country and the increased stress in the world and more people facing financial difficulties, it becomes a bigger problem—a bigger problem that requires bigger funding. Hopefully, with the new federal government that's in place, they may consider some transfer payments to help the health system in Ontario as well as many other things—housing and things like that, which also has an impact on mental health, as the deputy leader put out. She said that she had a guy who was taking up police resources in his community because of his illness, plus the hospitalization and things like that. Those are the types of situations that have to be addressed to alleviate some of our special-needs people from being counter-productive to the system, not through fault of their own, but for lack of attention. I'm hoping that as they look at this new jurisdiction level, they also would look at increasing funding for this thing that's been an ongoing problem for decades.

1720

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Arthur Potts: I also am delighted to have an opportunity to say a few words on this particular bill. I was listening very intently to the member from Kitchener–Waterloo as she was speaking. It was delightful to see the fact that there is such widespread agreement for this bill as it's moving forward through the House.

I made a little heckle—a joke—at the time about let's time-allocate it, and I couldn't help but notice that the member for Elgin–Middlesex–London kind of threw his hands up in the air and shook his head.

If this isn't one of those bills where we have to expect and would like to see debate collapse quickly, I'm not sure what is. It's so clear that on our side of the House, the conversation from the President of the Treasury Board and others—the member from Scarborough–Rouge River—wasn't to the bill itself because we're quite confident, on this side of the House, that we've got the terms and conditions of this bill correct and that it needs to move forward on a very tight time frame in order to get it in place for the December 22 drop-dead date, if I can call it that.

This is one of those kinds of bills where I would love to see the various whips of the parties get together and agree so that we can move forward. Alternatively, as much as it is tremendous to hear about the personal stories that we all can bring to a debate on issues of this type, it would be really useful if the members on the other side, if they had concerns with specific provisions and other ways that they thought maybe the Consent and Capacity Board should be able to review a person who has been detained in a long-term facility post-six months, or other ideas or amendments that they wanted to suggest—that we could have a debate specifically about those.

In my own family—and I know that other members have talked about this—we've had issues. I had a nephew

who ultimately committed suicide because he was suffering from demons that he couldn't get his hand on. And although he wouldn't have fallen into the particular characters of this legislation because he wasn't being detained for six months, it was one of those situations that within a hospital, he had an opportunity to leave, and they granted it to him probably prematurely.

So let's move this bill forward as quickly as possible into committee, and let's get the deadline done.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: It's a pleasure to stand and speak to this bill and speak to the comments of the members opposite.

I don't think anybody argues the necessity of some changes to this bill. The biggest point of this thing is why are we waiting until now to do this? It was a year ago that the court ordered this to be changed. So here we are; it's the first week of November. Next week, we have a break in the Legislature for Remembrance Day. It doesn't leave us a lot of time to get this bill through the House and done before, possibly, there could be many people turned out on the street and released from institutions, and maybe they shouldn't be out on the street.

It's interesting that this has happened the way it has happened, the timing of this bill. I sometimes wonder if the government is spending so much time addressing their scandals that they haven't had time enough to do stuff like this. I think that maybe that's the problem here. They have had to manage all these scandals—they've had a number this year—and they haven't had time to address important bills such as this, and that's really too bad; it really is. Because we're talking about people who—I have known a number of people who have committed suicide—have issues that need to be addressed. This is very important. Through no fault of their own they have had these issues—had some mental problems—and yet, the government has taken all this time to do it.

I would suggest that the next time something important like this comes along, they take a harder look at things and maybe assign somebody to do this for them, because this really is silly, that it's taken a year.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): One of the government members has two minutes to respond.

I'm pleased to recognize the Deputy Premier, President of the Treasury Board and minister responsible for the poverty reduction strategy.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I do want to thank the Minister of Community and Social Services, the member from Scarborough–Rouge River, the Minister of Northern Development and Mines, and the members from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, Beaches–East York and Perth–Wellington for commenting in this round.

Speaker, I was all set to say how great it was that we actually all were agreeing, until, unfortunately, we were scolded a little bit for not moving forward more quickly on this.

I think if the worst criticism somebody can have on a piece of legislation is that we should have done it sooner, then I think we do have everyone agreeing that this is something we do need to move forward with. I, for one, look forward to getting this piece of legislation passed so that we can move on and deal with other issues that will be before this House.

I do appreciate people who have participated in the debate and who have shared, I think, some personal stories about their experience with mental illness. I do think we are all united in our determination to do more.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Jack MacLaren: I am here today to speak in support of Bill 122, An Act to amend the Mental Health Act and the Health Care Consent Act, 1996.

Every day, we here at Queen's Park wake up, perhaps have a cup of coffee, maybe a bit of breakfast. Some may head to the gym or even out for a jog. Others may delve into the newspaper or respond to emails while they wait for their day to begin. We congregate here every morning and stand before our supporters and protesters, strong and seemingly undaunted.

Now imagine, if you will, not being capable of doing this. Imagine waking up in the morning and being immediately apprehensive about just getting out of bed. Imagine having every possible scenario of what could go wrong in your day enter your mind in a flood of overwhelming and crippling emotion. Are terrorists going to storm the Legislature? Will we be bombed? Will there be another fire like there was in 1909? What about the commute over to the office? What if I get mugged on the subway?

Then you begin to think of what could happen if you continued to stay in bed. Would the apartment catch fire? Could I be robbed? Are terrorists going to come to my dwelling? Will I be able to pay the rent this month if I don't go to work? Will I lose my job if I don't go to work?

When and if you finally do get the courage to go outside, you begin to wonder: Is everyone looking at me? I don't think that ticket booth person likes me. Which door should I go in? If I go in the west entrance, everyone could see me from their windows. The east entrance means a very long walk, with people staring at me inside, while I go to the west tower elevator. Should I take the elevator? What if it malfunctions and I get stuck in it?

These thoughts seem completely irrational and unbelievable to some, but for someone with a mild anxiety disorder, this is just a regular day. The feelings felt in this example are real and were given to me by a constituent of mine who suffers from a very mild form of anxiety. I cannot imagine starting every day like this, much less having it last all day, every day, for a lifetime.

Anxiety isn't always something that is programmed into your brain when you are born. It can be brought on by media and world events, personal encounters, or even traumatic brain injuries. As a result of an aneurysm, a person from my riding suffers tremendously. Not only

does she have physical pain and noticeable cognitive and physical impairments from her trauma but she also has anxiety. She spends most of her days protected behind the four walls of her home. Going into public makes her feel naked and vulnerable. She excitedly makes plans to meet with family members months in advance, and when the times comes to follow through with these plans, the excitement subsides and the debilitating fears consume her. Although they only live 30 minutes apart, she has not seen one of her sisters in over a year. She does not go shopping, attend family functions or visit with her daughter anymore like she used to. This woman was considered the lively, outgoing sibling in her family and now she has become a hermit who is limited by a hidden illness.

1730

The symptoms of anxiety and those of depression can sometimes be confused. When you suffer from anxiety, you feel that you struggle to do the things that most people do with relative ease every day. With depression, you may no longer be interested in participating in the things you were once capable of and enjoyed doing.

When a person with depression reveals their illness, the question they dread hearing most is, "What are you depressed about?" This is where education of mental illness is so important. A person who suffers from clinical depression rarely, if ever, has a say in what they are depressed about. Depression is very different from normal sadness in that it totally consumes your day-to-day life. It interferes with your ability to work, study, eat, sleep and have fun. The feelings of helplessness, hopelessness and worthlessness are intense and unrelenting, with little, if any, relief. Some have compared depression to being in an overwhelming rut that is so deep, you feel you will never escape. The walls are tall, slick and closing in on you. Sadness is not always a symptom of depression. For some men in particular, anger, aggression and restlessness are common signs of depression. Some begin to engage in unusual or reckless behaviour, which may include excessive alcohol or drug abuse.

A mental illness we recently hear about a lot, especially since the war in Afghanistan, is post-traumatic stress disorder or PTSD. Soldiers, police officers, firefighters and paramedics are who we generally think of when we think of persons who experience this kind of mental illness due to the dramatic things they have witnessed in their lifetime. But, really, any traumatic event can cause you to suffer from PTSD, as everyone copes differently with stress and traumatic events.

Again, I will use examples from my own riding. A young man from one of our area school boards is a custodian on the night shift at a downtown Ottawa school. He stepped outside one spring evening to relax while on break from his shift. Moments later, he was attacked from behind, knocked to the ground, assaulted, had his wallet and cellphone stolen and his glasses broken.

This gentleman was from a small town on the west side of Ottawa. Just being downtown working was a

fairly new experience for him, much less being assaulted and robbed while he was at work. After all, training to be a custodian in a school system doesn't exactly prepare you for the effects of being mugged. To go back to that school and surround himself with the same atmosphere and the possibility of it happening again was quite terrifying to him. He did return to work, but only for a few days.

With the encouragement of his friend and a co-worker, he approached his supervisor about the fear he felt with coming back to this location. After being evaluated by a board doctor and being diagnosed with PTSD, and treated for a few weeks, the young man was sent to work at a different location while he continued to receive treatment. Thankfully for him, this option was available and he could continue to work. Luckily for this man, he noticed he had an issue, was diagnosed and treated.

Too often, this is not the case for individuals who suffer from PTSD. Being attacked by a burglar or having been surrounded by a hail of gunfire are not always necessary to suffer from PTSD. This rang true for one of my constituency assistants one January evening in 2002, when her car was hit head-on by a sport utility vehicle while travelling home from work. Her lower leg was shattered and severed. Every bone in her face was broken and both jawbones fractured several times. One of those bones from her jaw protruded from her left cheek. She hung upside down, strapped to the seat for over an hour before she was put into an ambulance, fully conscious, and rushed to the Ottawa Civic Hospital.

While on the way to the hospital, her blood pressure dropped twice to the point that the paramedics thought they would lose her. Once at the hospital, she was in shock and had her superficial wounds stitched up and was then placed in a medically induced coma for the next week, while she underwent extensive surgeries. Her parents stated that, after the accident, she knew what happened and even named the type of vehicle that had collided with her. Once she was allowed to awake from the coma, she knew nothing of the events that had taken place to put her in the hospital.

Doctors say that her brain blocked the trauma and, some day, she may recall the accident—though to her dismay, she still has not to this day. After her accident, she had bad dreams and several flashbacks pertaining to the accident. The sound of glass breaking, of being swept off the floor, would make her heart race and cause her to nearly break into tears. She was diagnosed with PTSD. She was diagnosed early, treated and, now, has minimal effects from PTSD, though she does still suffer from a mild traumatic brain injury.

One of the most frighteningly named disorders under the mental illness umbrella is dissociative identity disorder, or multiple personality disorder. I was once told a story about a young person who, while they were in high school, battled depression and suicide. Guidance counsellors, psychiatrists and psychiatric hospital stays didn't seem to help the child, so she sort of fell by the wayside. She continued on, struggling her way into and through

adulthood. She told stories to her friends of having brain tumours and a child no one had ever met. She would show up with bumps and bruises and slashes on her arms and legs. There were stories of abuse and groups of men attacking her and kidnapping her.

She had friends on Facebook whom no one else knew, but would request friendships with a few of her friends and have Facebook friendships with them. Eventually, one of these mysterious people began to threaten the friends of the woman. Soon, the woman thankfully confided in her friend and told her that she had been diagnosed with multiple personality disorder. The friend was relieved and now understood that all the lies were not really lies. They were merely her illness acting out. The multiple Facebook accounts of random friends that were befriending and taunting her friends were actually accounts that the different personalities had set up. Unfortunately for this person, she will struggle for the rest of her life because there is no cure for this disorder.

1740

Mental illness affects more people in Canada than any other type of health problem. People suffer in so many different ways, from extreme and permanent mental illness to intermittent to recurring illness, to occasional or even one-time troubles.

Mental illness can include everything from severely criminally-inclined schizophrenia to postpartum depression for new mothers, to lack-of-self-esteem-driven depression in maturing teenagers, to chronic, lifelong recurring depression, to one-time, event-driven depression such as physical trauma, job loss, divorce or death in the family.

Depression in developing teenagers as they struggle with growing from a child to an adult can be traumatic and, for some, unbearable, with the tragic ending of suicide, which is devastating for families and communities. It is so terrible to see young lives lost; and for those who live with depression, so terrible to see the anguish, the suffering and the sadness; so terrible to see the complete lack of joy and accomplishment.

Depression can drive people to live on the streets and become street people, caught up in the vicious cycle of prostitution, drug and alcohol abuse, and crime. These are often young people from middle-class families, but they are trying to cope with mental illness and they are not doing well.

The Ottawa police chief said at a public meeting in Ottawa that 60% of policemen's time on the streets is spent with mentally ill people. He said that we need more people properly trained in mental illness to work with mentally ill people on the street; that it would be better care; that policemen are not specifically trained in mental illness and therefore are not necessarily the best people to be on the streets with mentally ill people.

Schizophrenia is a devastating disease. I know two sisters who are well educated and respected as experts in their field of work. They started and operated a successful not-for-profit business that was much used by many families, and they were successful at fundraising to

keep the business going. The business was growing. Then they were both struck with schizophrenia. They imagined that their homes were being broken into, that there were spies, that there were people trying to hurt them or even kill them. Their lives were destroyed, and it was all in their heads.

There can be a seasonal depression from the short, dark days of winter. It is documented that in northern countries like Canada, there is more depression in winter than in summer because of our shorter winter days. Christmastime can be a depressing time for some people, especially people who are alone, people who are divorced or had a spouse die or a parent or family member die, or are just alone at a time when everyone else seems to be happy and celebrating the festive season.

Job loss and poverty can cause great anxiety and unhappiness, resulting in broken families and mental illness.

Mental health can be a fragile thing, and sometimes needs special attention to preserve and protect it. Mental illness affects many times more people than physical illness. Mental illness is a huge cost to employers because of the high cost of absenteeism on sick days. The total financial cost of mental health care in Ontario is about \$15 billion per year. The biggest cost of all is the cost of sadness and anguish to mentally ill people and their families.

Living with mental illness is a courageous battle, as only the sufferers and possibly their families know the true agony they are in. So we must do better. We must do more. As a caring society, we have a moral obligation to help those who cannot help themselves.

Mr. Speaker, our party supports this bill strongly.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Ms. Catherine Fife: I think the theme here is that those personal stories resonate across all the ridings, and they anchor the need for us to actually move forward with progressive legislation.

Now, it's true, though, that this piece, Bill 122, the Mental Health Statute Law Amendment Act, 2015, is quite narrow and demands a specific—of course, we are debating it because the court has ordered us to do so, but the general theme is that we are recognizing the need to balance public safety concerns with the need to properly protect the rights of patients.

This case, though, was brought forward by the appellant, a mental health patient who was initially sentenced to a 45-month criminal sentence for sexual assault against a child, which was completed back in 1996, and has subsequently been involuntarily committed to a maximum security mental health institution since then, for the last 19 years—19 years, Mr. Speaker. Now, the appellant also, in this instance—and this was the motivator for this court case—is deaf and has only had limited and sporadic access to interpreters throughout his 19-year confinement, inhibiting treatment. What has actually happened is that the Consent and Capacity Board has reviewed the appellant's involuntary detention on a yearly basis, and they have concluded that he does not

belong in a maximum security facility. But the reason why this legislation is on the floor of this Legislature today is because the Consent and Capacity Board has no powers to do the right thing for this particular individual.

Now, this individual obviously has other diagnoses, multiple diagnoses. The member actually referenced the complexity of cases such as this, but we have a duty in this House to ensure that the legislation and the law are working for all Ontarians, regardless of how they came to be in these circumstances. The broader issue of mental health in the province of Ontario—the act is open; we should take the opportunity to address the long-standing systemic issues that pertain to mental health in the province of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: It is truly a pleasure to rise today and speak to Bill 122, the Mental Health Act. I've been thinking about it as I've been listening to the many comments here today. In particular, the MPP for Carleton–Mississippi Mills, I want to thank you for your heartfelt comments. One thing that comes to me is that every one of the members in this Legislature has experienced constituents who have had difficulties with mental health issues. There's nothing that's more despairing than when you're trying to help and you're sometimes challenged to find solutions.

In my riding of Kingston and the Islands, I had a mental health town hall that was absolutely packed. At that time, in the spring, in April of this year, I decided to create a task force or an advocacy group to look at the various, different aspects of mental health care in my community. We have many program providers that are extremely good at what they do, but as has been stated, sometimes we don't always collaborate the best we can with each other, or we're not aware of a particular program that a service provider has in our riding.

The amendments would, if passed, ensure that the Mental Health Act would align with the charter and, at the same time, enhance the rights of involuntary long-term patients who have been committed to psychiatric facilities. I think this is extremely important. Every Ontarian should enjoy good and the best possible mental health and well-being throughout their lives, and Ontarians with mental health or addictions can recover and participate in welcoming supportive communities.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'd like to commend the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills on the remarks he made. He went through a number of different life-changing events that people can experience and then learn to live with, if they're fortunate enough to get the right care, the right treatment and the right medication. But there are many people, as a number of people have said here today, who do fall through the cracks and are unable to receive that treatment.

1750

Earlier today, when I was listening to the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills and others speaking, it

reminded me—I didn't read it closely enough, but I had an email from my office earlier this afternoon, when we were going to debate this, and it talked about how more funding is going to be provided by the local LHIN in Sarnia–Lambton, and a lot of it is going to be directed toward handling mental health cases. I think it's going to be leading-edge funding in our riding that they're going to take a look at. Hopefully, it will be able to help other people in other parts of the province as we administer this.

As we said earlier, our caucus fully supports this. We question why it has taken this long to get here, but we are here now.

Last week's Health Quality Ontario annual report highlighted the unfortunate reality that hospital re-admission rates for patients with mental illness or addictions have not improved in five years and suicide rates have not improved in a decade. We need to do better for our most vulnerable people.

We need to work, also, to combat the stigma, which a number of speakers have dwelled upon, that's associated with mental health and start talking about how we can provide greater access to the treatment that each and every one of our fellow citizens deserves.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Ms. Cindy Forster: I know that this bill is in place to try to balance public safety concerns versus charter rights and the court order for individuals who are currently being detained—I think 338 of them across the province.

I haven't heard anyone speak about the violence that occurs on psychiatric units in our hospitals across the province. I don't know if any of you had an opportunity to watch the program this week—I think it was on Saturday evening, on Marketplace. It talked about the number of nurses, RNs and RPNs, who are being assaulted in our hospitals—severely assaulted in some cases, with broken jaws. I hazard a guess that many of these assaults are happening on psychiatric units.

Being a nurse and representing nurses for over 40 years—it is common for staff to be assaulted on psychiatric units. There's an imbalance there, as well—making sure, when we're looking after patients with mental health issues, that there are enough staff in place on units all the time; not just during those working hours, but during lunch breaks and coffee breaks, to make sure that nurses and psychiatric workers in our hospitals are safe and that they can go home at the end of the day to their families without being injured—in some cases,

dead. I know that there were 760 cases in Ontario alone over a six-year period and only three charges laid by the Ministry of Labour, so something more certainly needs to be done on that aspect, as well.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Carleton–Mississippi Mills has two minutes to reply.

Mr. Jack MacLaren: I would like to thank the members from Kitchener–Waterloo, Kingston and the Islands, Sarnia–Lambton and Welland for their comments. It's wonderful to be part of a debate where we are all in agreement.

The member from Kingston and the Islands having a town hall meeting—I think that's wonderful. It's a great idea, something we should probably all copy and do. I'm sure we could all fill the town hall, because I'm sure every community has almost exactly the same problem.

I had the privilege of sitting on a select committee here, about a year and a half ago, for the developmentally disabled, which was a learning experience, a very poignant time. The reason I got on to that is because parents of autistic children came into my office and told me what it was like in their homes, and they told me how little we do to help them with developmentally disabled intellectual problems.

During our travels, we heard many people speak to the committee, and they talked about dual diagnosis, which is having autism or fetal alcohol syndrome or one of these other troubles, plus mental illness, which would be a consequence of having these other terrible afflictions. Those would be very complicated things to deal with because they already have a huge problem with their other ailments.

Mental illness is one of those things which have been very much neglected in almost every respect: work-wise, attention-wise, funding-wise. Certainly, that committee, which I was very proud to be part of—the first page said that all the care that is needed should be mandated. Imagine if you ever had a broken leg or a heart attack and you went to the hospital and they said, “We ran out of broken-leg money. Go home and good luck,” which is what we do for developmentally disabled and, very often, for mentally ill people.

Thank you very much, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 o'clock.

The House adjourned at 1756.

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Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Brown, Patrick (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade / Ministre des Affaires civiques, de l'Immigration et du Commerce international
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cookville	Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Long-Term Care and Wellness) / Ministre associée de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée (Soins de longue durée et Promotion du mieux-être) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure / Ministre du Développement économique, de l'Emploi et de l'Infrastructure
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Associate Minister of Finance (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan) / Ministre associée des Finances (Régime de retraite de la province de l'Ontario) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
McDonnell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGarry, Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	
McMahon, Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Milczyn, Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Miller, Norm (PC) Miller, Paul (NDP)	Parry Sound–Muskoka Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Munro, Julia (PC) Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	York–Simcoe Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change / Ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique
Naidoo-Harris, Indira (LIB) Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Halton Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP) Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Essex Chatham-Kent–Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Orazietti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Pettapiece, Randy (PC) Potts, Arthur (LIB) Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB) Rinaldi, Lou (LIB) Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB) Sattler, Peggy (NDP) Scott, Laurie (PC)	Perth–Wellington Beaches–East York Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord Northumberland–Quinte West Guelph London West / London-Ouest Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle Minister Responsible for Seniors Affairs Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Leader, Recognized Party / Chef adjoint du gouvernement
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP) Smith, Todd (PC) Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB) Tabuns, Peter (NDP) Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB) Taylor, Monique (NDP) Thibeault, Glenn (LIB) Thompson, Lisa M. (PC) Vanthof, John (NDP) Vernile, Daiene (LIB) Walker, Bill (PC) Wilson, Jim (PC)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton Prince Edward–Hastings Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud Toronto–Danforth Mississauga–Erindale Hamilton Mountain Sudbury Huron–Bruce Timiskaming–Cochrane Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound Simcoe–Grey	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Wong, Soo (LIB) Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC) Yurek, Jeff (PC) Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB) Vacant	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke Elgin–Middlesex–London Willowdale Whitby–Oshawa	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Présidente: Cheri DiNovo
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Monique Taylor
Bas Balkissoon, Chris Ballard
Grant Crack, Cheri DiNovo
Han Dong, Michael Harris
Sophie Kiwala, Todd Smith
Monique Taylor
Committee Clerk / Greffier / Greffière: Christopher Tyrell

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Présidente: Soo Wong
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Peter Z. Milczyn
Laura Albanese, Yvan Baker
Toby Barrett, Victor Fedeli
Catherine Fife, Ann Hoggarth
Peter Z. Milczyn, Daiene Vernile
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: Grant Crack
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Joe Dickson
Mike Colle, Grant Crack
Joe Dickson, Lisa Gretzky
Ann Hoggarth, Sophie Kiwala
Jim McDonnell, Eleanor McMahon
Lisa M. Thompson
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: John Fraser
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Cristina Martins
Robert Bailey, Vic Dhillon
John Fraser, Wayne Gates
Marie-France Lalonde, Harinder Malhi
Cristina Martins, Randy Pettapiece
Lou Rinaldi
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
la justice**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Bob Delaney
Randy Hillier, Michael Mantha
Cristina Martins, Indira Naidoo-Harris
Arthur Potts, Shafiq Qadri
Laurie Scott
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Monte McNaughton
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jack MacLaren
Granville Anderson, Bas Balkissoon
Chris Ballard, Steve Clark
Jack MacLaren, Michael Mantha
Eleanor McMahon, Monte McNaughton
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Han Dong, John Fraser
Ernie Hardeman, Percy Hatfield
Lisa MacLeod, Harinder Malhi
Julia Munro, Arthur Potts
Lou Rinaldi
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Présidente: Indira Naidoo-Harris
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Kathryn McGarry
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Jennifer K. French
Monte Kwinter, Amrit Mangat
Kathryn McGarry, Indira Naidoo-Harris
Daiene Vernile, Bill Walker
Jeff Yurek
Committee Clerk / Greffier / Greffière: Christopher Tyrell

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jagmeet Singh
Granville Anderson, Vic Dhillon
Amrit Mangat, Gila Martow
Kathryn McGarry, Norm Miller
Jagmeet Singh, Peter Tabuns
Glenn Thibeault
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment /
Comité spécial de la violence et du harcèlement à caractère
sexuel**

Chair / Présidente: Daiene Vernile
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Laurie Scott
Han Dong, Sylvia Jones
Marie-France Lalonde, Harinder Malhi
Kathryn McGarry, Eleanor McMahon
Taras Natyshak, Peggy Sattler
Laurie Scott, Daiene Vernile
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

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