

Legislative  
Assembly  
of Ontario



Assemblée  
législative  
de l'Ontario

---

**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

No. 51A

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

N° 51A

1<sup>st</sup> Session  
43<sup>rd</sup> Parliament  
Wednesday  
8 March 2023

1<sup>re</sup> session  
43<sup>e</sup> législature  
Mercredi  
8 mars 2023

---

Speaker: Honourable Ted Arnott  
Clerk: Todd Decker

Président : L'honorable Ted Arnott  
Greffier : Todd Decker

### **Hansard on the Internet**

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. The address is:

<https://www.ola.org/>

### **Index inquiries**

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7400.

### **Le Journal des débats sur Internet**

L'adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance est :

### **Renseignements sur l'index**

Adressez vos questions portant sur des numéros précédents du Journal des débats au personnel de l'index, qui vous fourniront des références aux pages dans l'index cumulatif, en composant le 416-325-7400.

---

House Publications and Language Services  
Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building  
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
Telephone 416-325-7400  
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service linguistique et des publications parlementaires  
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement  
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
Téléphone, 416-325-7400  
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

ISSN 1180-2987

# CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Wednesday 8 March 2023 / Mercredi 8 mars 2023

## ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

### **Building More Mines Act, 2023, Bill 71, Mr. Pirie / Loi de 2023 visant l'aménagement de davantage de mines, projet de loi 71, M. Pirie**

Ms. Sandy Shaw .....	2705
Mr. Will Bouma .....	2708
Ms. Jessica Bell .....	2708
Mr. Anthony Leardi .....	2708
Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong .....	2708
Mr. Mike Harris .....	2709
Mr. Mike Harris .....	2709
M. Stéphane Sarrazin .....	2709
M. Joel Harden .....	2712
Mme Dawn Gallagher Murphy .....	2712
MPP Lise Vaugeois .....	2712
Ms. Laura Smith .....	2712
Ms. Sandy Shaw .....	2713
Mr. Terence Kernaghan .....	2713
Second reading debate deemed adjourned .....	2714

## **MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉES ET DÉPUTÉS**

### **Dancing with the CCH Stars**

Mr. Nolan Quinn .....	2714
-----------------------	------

### **Women's services**

MPP Lise Vaugeois .....	2715
-------------------------	------

### **Construct skills training**

Mme Dawn Gallagher Murphy .....	2715
---------------------------------	------

### **Women's employment**

MPP Jamie West .....	2715
----------------------	------

### **Village Media**

Mr. Ross Romano .....	2716
-----------------------	------

### **International Women's Day**

MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam .....	2716
----------------------------	------

### **March break**

Mr. Mike Harris .....	2716
-----------------------	------

### **Hospice care**

Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady .....	2717
---------------------------	------

### **Skills training**

Mr. Anthony Leardi .....	2717
--------------------------	------

### **International Women's Day**

Ms. Lisa MacLeod .....	2717
------------------------	------

### **Report, Financial Accountability Officer**

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott) .....	2717
-------------------------------------	------

## **INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEUSES ET VISITEURS**

Mr. Will Bouma .....	2718
MPP Jill Andrew .....	2718
Mr. Trevor Jones .....	2718
Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens .....	2718
Hon. Michael A. Tibollo .....	2718
Ms. Sandy Shaw .....	2718
Ms. Lisa MacLeod .....	2718
MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam .....	2718
Hon. Stan Cho .....	2718
Ms. Jessica Bell .....	2718
Mr. Sam Oosterhoff .....	2718
Ms. Bhutla Karpoche .....	2718
Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos .....	2718
Mr. Tom Rakocevic .....	2718
Mr. Mike Harris .....	2718
Mr. John Vanthof .....	2718
Hon. Michael Parsa .....	2718
Ms. Laurie Scott .....	2718

### **Members' statements**

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott) .....	2718
-------------------------------------	------

### **Independent members**

Mme Lucille Collard .....	2719
---------------------------	------

### **Independent members**

Mme Lucille Collard .....	2719
---------------------------	------

## **QUESTION PERIOD / PÉRIODE DE QUESTIONS**

### **Health care**

Ms. Marit Stiles .....	2719
Hon. Sylvia Jones .....	2719

### **Women's employment**

Ms. Marit Stiles .....	2720
Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria .....	2720
Hon. Charmaine A. Williams .....	2720

### **Access to prescription contraceptives**

Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens .....	2721
Hon. Sylvia Jones .....	2721
Ms. Doly Begum .....	2721

### **Public transit**

Mr. Graham McGregor .....	2721
Hon. Caroline Mulroney .....	2722

<b>Health care</b>	
MPP Jill Andrew .....	2722
Hon. Michael A. Tibollo .....	2722
Mr. Jeff Burch .....	2722
Hon. Sylvia Jones.....	2723
<b>Court facilities</b>	
Mrs. Robin Martin.....	2723
Hon. Doug Downey .....	2723
<b>Women's issues</b>	
Miss Monique Taylor.....	2723
Hon. Merrilee Fullerton .....	2724
Ms. Bhutla Karpoche .....	2724
Hon. Paul Calandra .....	2724
<b>Amateur sport</b>	
Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon .....	2724
Hon. Neil Lumsden.....	2724
<b>Infrastructure funding</b>	
Mr. Aris Babikian .....	2725
Hon. Kinga Surma.....	2725
<b>Gender-based violence</b>	
MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam .....	2725
Hon. Charmaine A. Williams.....	2725
MPP Lise Vaugeois.....	2726
<b>Mining industry</b>	
Mr. Ross Romano .....	2726
Hon. Greg Rickford.....	2726
<b>Gender-based violence</b>	
Ms. Peggy Sattler .....	2727
Hon. Merrilee Fullerton .....	2727
Ms. Catherine Fife.....	2727
<b>Recycling</b>	
Ms. Laura Smith.....	2727
Hon. David Piccini.....	2728
<b>Women's employment</b>	
Mme France Gélinas .....	2728
Hon. Paul Calandra .....	2728
Mrs. Lisa Gretzky .....	2729
<b>Visitors / Visiteuses et visiteurs</b>	
Hon. Michael Parsa.....	2729
Mme Dawn Gallagher Murphy .....	2729
Hon. David Piccini.....	2729

## DEFERRED VOTES / VOTES DIFFÉRÉS

<b>Consumer protection</b>	
Motion negatived .....	2730
<b>Members' photograph</b>	
The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott) .....	2730

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEUSES ET VISITEURS

Mr. Logan Kanapathi .....	2730
---------------------------	------

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES / RAPPORTS DE COMITÉS

### Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs

Ms. Jennifer K. French.....	2730
Debate adjourned .....	2730

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES / DÉCLARATIONS MINISTÉRIELLES ET RÉPONSES

### International Women's Day

Hon. Charmaine A. Williams .....	2731
MPP Jill Andrew .....	2732
Mr. Mike Schreiner .....	2733
Ms. Mitzie Hunter .....	2733

## MOTIONS

### Committee sittings

Ms. Andrea Khanjin.....	2734
Motion agreed to .....	2734

## PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

### Mental health services

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche .....	2734
---------------------------	------

### Hospital services

Mr. Jeff Burch .....	2734
----------------------	------

### School facilities

Mr. Todd J. McCarthy.....	2734
---------------------------	------

### Health care

Mr. Ted Hsu .....	2735
-------------------	------

### Health care

Ms. Doly Begum .....	2735
----------------------	------

### Optometry services

Mr. Ted Hsu .....	2735
-------------------	------

### Climate change

Mr. Joel Harden.....	2736
----------------------	------

### Health care

Ms. Peggy Sattler .....	2736
-------------------------	------

### Road safety

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche .....	2736
---------------------------	------

### Climate change

Ms. Sandy Shaw .....	2736
----------------------	------

### Social assistance

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche .....	2737
---------------------------	------

## ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

### **Building More Mines Act, 2023, Bill 71, Mr. Pirie / Loi de 2023 visant l'aménagement de davantage de mines, projet de loi 71, M. Pirie**

Mr. Mike Harris .....	2737	Ms. Jennifer K. French.....	2750
Ms. Sandy Shaw.....	2740	Mr. Mike Harris.....	2753
Ms. Natalie Pierre .....	2740	Mr. Wayne Gates.....	2753
Mr. Jeff Burch.....	2740	Mr. Anthony Leardi.....	2753
Mme Dawn Gallagher Murphy .....	2741	MPP Jamie West .....	2754
Ms. Bhutla Karpoche .....	2741	Mr. Will Bouma .....	2754
Ms. Laura Smith.....	2741	Ms. Jess Dixon .....	2754
Mr. Chris Glover .....	2741	Mr. Wayne Gates.....	2756
Mr. Will Bouma .....	2744	Ms. Laura Smith.....	2756
Ms. Sandy Shaw.....	2744	MPP Lise Vaugeois.....	2756
Mrs. Daisy Wai .....	2745	Mr. Ric Bresee.....	2756
MPP Jamie West .....	2745	Ms. Catherine Fife.....	2757
Ms. Andrea Khanjin.....	2745	Mme Dawn Gallagher Murphy .....	2757
Mr. Mike Schreiner .....	2746	Mme France Gélinas .....	2757
Mr. Will Bouma .....	2746	Mr. Will Bouma .....	2758
MPP Jamie West .....	2746	Mr. Terence Kernaghan.....	2759
Mr. Will Bouma .....	2747	Ms. Laura Smith.....	2759
Mr. Deepak Anand.....	2747	Mr. Wayne Gates .....	2759
MPP Jamie West .....	2749	M. Stéphane Sarrazin .....	2759
Ms. Laura Smith.....	2749	Mr. Ric Bresee .....	2760
Ms. Catherine Fife.....	2749	MPP Jamie West .....	2761
Mr. Will Bouma .....	2750	Mr. Anthony Leardi.....	2761
Mr. Terence Kernaghan .....	2750	Mr. Terence Kernaghan.....	2762
		Mr. Brian Saunderson .....	2762
		Mme France Gélinas .....	2762
		Ms. Laura Smith.....	2762



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 8 March 2023

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 8 mars 2023

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Good morning. Let us pray.

*Prayers.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Next we'll have a moment of silence for inner thought and personal reflection.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BUILDING MORE MINES  
ACT, 2023

LOI DE 2023 VISANT L'AMÉNAGEMENT  
DE DAVANTAGE DE MINES

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 7, 2023, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 71, An Act to amend the Mining Act / Projet de loi 71, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les mines.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Further debate.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Good morning, Speaker. It is, as usual, always a pleasure to rise in this House to speak on behalf of the good people of Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas.

This morning, we're discussing a very important bill that will have implications, not necessarily directly for my riding, but for Ontario and for our environment and for our relations with Indigenous people. That's what I'm going to speak about this morning.

We know, and we've been hearing in this House, that Canada and Ontario's mining industry rightfully boasts about their role as industry leaders across the globe. We have, as we know, in Ontario a resource sector that has created some of the prosperity that we continue to enjoy in this province, as has been described. The Toronto Stock Exchange was founded on investments in extraction in our resource sector, so it's a very, very important industry. We understand that.

We also would like to acknowledge the way in which the sector, the mining industry, has worked and has striven to continuously improve the way in which they operate. We see a mining industry that has matured in a way where they recognize the importance of operating in a safe manner, operating in a way that's environmentally safe, a way that is safe for their employees, and a way that continues to be safe for the communities in which they operate. That is to be commended.

We see that this is an industry that is understanding the importance of looking at their tailings and making sure

that that's handled in a responsible way, their role in re-claiming land where they have operated. This is a responsible industry.

I would say that it's not just about protecting the environment and the employees and the families and the communities; mining is big business and we know that in this province. The work that the mining industry has done to improve their practice to be good corporate citizens, if you will, has huge implications on the financial implications, the financial risks, that are involved in this sector. The mining industry understands, and we see them understand, that good regulation and good policy is good business.

Before I came to this House, I worked in corporate social responsibility, and it was just understood that if you did not operate in a way that was corporately responsible, if you were not a good corporate citizen, it eventually would impact the bottom line, and so it was the right thing to do, but it was also a thing that was good to do for business.

Some of these regulations that are in place and these practices are about de-risking this industry: de-risking an industry when it comes to people and when it comes to the environment, but also de-risking the financial investments that are made by people across this province. When I say people that are investing their finances into this industry, I'm not just talking about shareholders, which is an important consideration because we need to talk about investor protection when it comes to this industry. We really need to understand how we protect the average retail investor that buys stock in these companies and is putting their good money at risk, their hard-earned dollars at risk. We also need to look at de-risking the financial implications for taxpayers, because so much money—public taxpayer dollars—is invested in this industry. It is a good investment if it's invested wisely.

The member from Timiskaming–Cochrane in his speech yesterday—which we all quite enjoyed—talked about the big piece of silver that is actually here in this building, and it is a source of pride for his community. It came from the Keeley mine in Cobalt. It's a source of pride for him; it should be a source of pride for all Ontario, because it's placed right there with all of the other evidence of our history, the proud history that we have in Ontario.

To begin this, I want to say that we all here in this House, including the industry, have a responsibility to make things better, not in any way to devolve what has already happened in this industry. I am going to talk about ways in which I think that this bill is ill-considered in a lot of aspects and that we need to work together to make sure

that a bill that has implications for such an important industry is a good bill, and this bill could use some improvement.

For the people that are listening, in a nutshell, when a company undertakes to explore a mine and open a mine, there are many, many steps that need to be taken, and these are all just reasonable expectations. We expect that a company will, as I've said before, make sure to protect the people that are working in the mine—whether it's to explore the mine, to open the mine, to work in the mine, they need to be protected. We expect that people who live in the community and the environment around them, that those things are taken into consideration, that environmental assessments and protections for post-mine operation are taken into consideration, because we have seen, unfortunately, examples in our history, whether it's the mining industry or whether it's other extractive industries, where we have poisoned our groundwater, we've seen examples where people have lived with air that was unsafe to breathe, contaminated soil. This is the unfortunate legacy of some of the industries that have operated in Ontario and around the world, and we want to avoid that. Industries know and they must do simply what is expected: operate a mine in a way that's reasonable and responsible, and so we have protections in place.

Let's talk about the miners and their families, because we've seen mining tragedies. People have lost their lives in the mining industry because it's a very dangerous, difficult job, and we want to make sure that miners are safe so that they return home to their families at the end of a day. Safety for workers is simply not negotiable. It's something that we should all expect, that we operate at the highest, highest priority.

**0910**

I would say that we've come a long way. We certainly have come a long way. I just would like to say we've heard stories about people who have had experience in the mining industry. I would just like to share that my partner worked at a mine, many years ago, and it was his goal—which he achieved—to get out of the mine by making the junior hockey team, which he did. He worked for the King Miners; that was the name of the hockey team. He describes an industry that was very, very dangerous at the time. This was many, many years ago. We've since heard and learned from people who work in the industry that that's changed quite significantly. Kudos to the industry, but there are still many, many cautionary tales when it comes to any industry that has such high stakes for people, for the environment and for financial investors.

I'm going to talk a little about the financial risk that we all—all of us—share in when it comes to the mining industry. It's a reasonable question to ask the government, through this bill, how the public taxpayer will be guarded against assuming the liability and the astronomical costs of site remediation or cleanup, not only when things go wrong, but just in the regular course of operating a mine. That's a reasonable question to ask: How are taxpayers being safeguarded and how is the average investor being safeguarded?

This bill waters down the financial assurances that should be in place or have been in place when mines begin to operate. We know that many of the big mining companies have operated for many, many years in a way that, as I said, has proven to be responsible and continue to improve their practices. But with early exploration, particularly when it comes to the Ring of Fire, we have to be mindful of junior mining industries who may or may not have the financial resources, may not have the balance sheet to back-stop the costs, the environmental costs and the financial costs, that will result from their operations. We need to protect that. We need to make sure there's a level playing field, so that big industries that are prepared to operate at a high standard are not in competition with smaller operators that don't put in the same standard of care, if that's the case.

I think this is particularly important because, again, many of these mines will operate on public crown lands and who owns the responsibility of the cleanup and the cost? It's the taxpayer. It's the public.

A huge cautionary tale in this province would be the legacy of the oil and gas industry. People need to really understand the significance of the many, many oil and gas wells that have been abandoned in this province. If you go online and you search a map—just ask for a map of abandoned oil and gas wells—you will be shocked to find that there are 28,000 in the province and there's probably one in a community near you.

Most of these are in southwestern Ontario, I would say in Conservative-held ridings. It used to be many of these were in rural areas where there were not a lot of people living. But as we've had development and urban expansion, these abandoned oil and gas wells can be in communities, right in downtown communities. In my community, Waterdown—it's actually in Flamborough–Glanbrook riding—right in the downtown core, there's an oil and gas well. These pose a significant risk to life and property.

We saw that with the experience of Wheatley. In the riding of Chatham-Kent–Leamington, the town of Wheatley literally blew up. The downtown core blew up after many, many times of people saying that there was a problem here and there was no response from this government. The town was flattened, 20 people were injured and hospitalized, and no one is assuming the responsibility for the cleanup. The cleanup and the costs are not being assumed by this government, despite pleas from the municipality. Wheatley is a huge cautionary tale.

The Auditor General has identified that almost 4,400—in fact, the Ontario petroleum industry itself has identified that 4,400 of these abandoned oil and gas wells pose an immediate and significant risk to people and to property. This is the legacy of an industry that we want to avoid, because the cleanup that no one wants to assume, that will end up being on the public dime, is going to be in the billions and billions of dollars.

I actually proposed that this would be a good opportunity for this government to engage in good green infrastructure. If they're actually really very concerned about the environment and carbon capture that we hear, it needs



to be acknowledged that these abandoned oil and gas wells are leaking and they're a significant contributor of carbon gas emissions. This is a problem that this government does not want to acknowledge and is turning away from, but it's a problem that we could be headlong running into recklessly, based on this tale if we're not careful with a bill that needs to be improved.

We talk about industries that are too big to fail. Who would ever expect that the oil and gas industry would fail the people of the province of Ontario? But it has happened. People talk about this like it's an Alberta problem—it's not. It's a big problem in Ontario. We have an oil and gas industry that is older than that of Alberta and, because of that, we don't know where some of these mines are and what conditions the wells are in, and that is something that I charge this government with taking as your responsibility. As you move to the future, as you want to develop the Ring of Fire and build roads through the peat lands, look to the problem that we already have before us.

I also want to talk about the cautionary tale, which is how this government is treating their Indigenous relations. This is a government that, time and time again, has not stood up, has stepped away, failed to live up to their obligations under Treaty 9. I hear time and time again, "That's the federal responsibility." Does this government know, would be my question, do the members of this government know that the province of Ontario is a signatory to Treaty 9? You have a contractual treaty obligation to the Indigenous people in this community, and you're not living up to that. Where does that lead us? It leads us to conflict, which is not helpful for any industry.

I could just talk about the cautionary tales that the Conservatives should know very well. Ipperwash comes to mind. This Conservative government, Premier Mike Harris at the time, had a conflict with the Indigenous community in Ipperwash. It resulted in a death. Dudley George was shot by a sniper in Ipperwash, and it caused significant, significant bad will and a legacy of poisoned relations to this day. There was an inquiry, with recommendations that this government should take seriously.

We only have to look the Ipperwash, the Oka crisis and, currently, the Indigenous-led "land back" movement that's happening right now in Caledonia and other communities. We need to know that this "land back" movement is real and it's about self-determination—as it has been described by the community: "It's about self-determination for our peoples here that should include some access to the territories and resources in a more equitable fashion, and for us to have control over how that actually looks." If you read those words, this speaks directly to the bill that's before us. How are we ensuring that Indigenous communities have control over development that is in their territories? It certainly is not helpful for the Premier to say he's going to get on a bulldozer himself. That only exacerbates a difficult relationship.

I just have to say, it's really heartbreaking to sit on this side of the House and hear our MPP from Mushkegowuk—James Bay, to hear our MPP from Kiiwetinoong talk about the lack of resources in Indigenous communities that are

in Treaty 9, that are the obligation of this province, of this government.

We talked about clean drinking water that generations of young people and people have not had access to. We just heard about tragic fires. We heard about a 10-year-old girl who died in a house fire because there was no fire truck in her community. We heard about an entire family in the riding of Kiiwetinoong, including an eight-year-old boy, who died because they don't have access to the basic necessities of fire protection. That's a failure of this government. It doesn't bode well going forward when you're talking about developing in Indigenous communities.

**0920**

I'd just like to make sure that you understand that, in fact, this is a significant and current problem. I have a letter here that I would like to quote from. It was sent to the federal minister, but it has bearing on what we're doing here.

These chiefs wrote and said, "We voiced our deep concerns ... for the region we know as the Breathing Lands, in which there is a push to develop a massive mining complex in the Ring of Fire. These are the world's lungs, and rampant mining development could not only destroy this globally critical carbon sink, but release its huge store of carbon and escalate climate change further into catastrophe. Development here would be reckless if it occurs without full, robust investigation of all the potential consequences."

They go on to say, "We are from here and have always been here and have been the only peoples here, ever. Western ways have led us to a climate crisis, and too many Western 'solutions' to this crisis are being built on the further sacrifice of Indigenous peoples' territories, rights, and futures. We will not sit on the sidelines and watch this happen in the Breathing Lands. Any attempt by the crown to come back with less than the equality we ask for and deserve ... will be seen as nothing but an attempt to dress up a broken window with pretty drapes. And any such attempt will lead to our active enforcement of the moratorium issued last April." And they attached a copy of the moratorium.

These are strong words, and they signal conflict that this government is risking for this industry. It's signed by the chiefs of Attawapiskat, Eabametoong, Fort Albany First Nation, Kashechewan and Neskantaga First Nations. These are nations that are operating in the area in which you're trying to develop.

My question to this government is, are you listening? The motto of this place is "Audi alteram partem," which means "Hear the other side." We have significant experience, our MPP from Sudbury has significant experience in this industry. This is our job, to make government bills better, because not only is this good for investment—because good policy makes for good investment—it is what is expected of us. We are going to propose reasoned amendments to this bill in committee. Whether you take it into closed session or not—which has happened—I need everyone who is listening to know that we will be proposing amendments to improve this bill because that is our

job. Our job is to protect public tax dollars and investors, to protect our environment and to protect people in their communities, and that's what we're here to do.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Questions?

**Mr. Will Bouma:** I enjoy engaging on this legislation. I got to be here yesterday afternoon and hear debate on it also.

I'm intrigued. I just want to confirm with the member from Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas—because the member from Sudbury was pretty explicit that the principles of what we're trying to do in this legislation are excellent. He has a few concerns about the implementation, and he pledged that the opposition would be supporting this bill on second reading so that it could be looked at by committee. Listening to the member from Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas this morning, it sounds like the opposition has changed their mind and is not supporting this bill on second reading. I just want to confirm that they're still going to support the bill on second reading.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** “Audi alteram partem”—hear the other side. It doesn't sound like you were listening, because I said that we are going to be proposing amendments to this bill. This bill is at second reading; at committee, we are going to be proposing amendments, amendments that will improve this bill, amendments that will address the concerns of consultation with Indigenous First Nations, amendments that will ensure that the haphazard way in which you have gone forward with this bill doesn't have implications for the environment and doesn't have implications for the financial risk that's faced not only by investors but the people and taxpayers of the province of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** The member from University–Rosedale.

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** Thank you to the member for her presentation. My question concerns First Nations consultation and accommodation. What is appropriate First Nations consultation and accommodation with mining projects such as these?

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Thank you for the question. It's an important question, because, as I said, no one in this province wants to see conflict. We do not want to see roadblocks. We don't want to see moratoriums. We don't want to see injunctions. That is not good for the prosperous future that we all expect in this province. So skipping the obligation of free, prior and informed consent, rushing past that—you're only going to have to be drawn back. You'll only have to circle back and do it again. So free, prior and informed consent is not just an option; it's required from us as signatories to Treaty 9, it's required under UNDRIP and it's required by the federal legislation. So if you don't do it now, in a short-sighted way, the costs to redo it, to do it right in the first place will be astronomical.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** The member from Essex.

**Mr. Anthony Leardi:** My question relates to the delay which has been reported in opening mines in the province

of Ontario. According to the Ontario Mining Association, they have said quite clearly that it takes on average 10 to 15 years to open a mine in Ontario, and they've also said quite clearly that part of this delay—at least part—is due to the inordinate amount of time that it takes for getting permits, and that is the main thrust of this legislation—to speed that process up.

So my question to the member is, does the member agree with the Ontario Mining Association that it takes too long? Does the member disagree, or something else?

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** I would say to the member, how long should it take to open up a mine? I mean, that's the question. You say 15 years is too long. It sounds like a long time. But are you talking about opening it up, or are you talking about developing it? It's not clear what you're talking about. In fact, in the bill, you do nothing; there's nothing here in the bill that will speed up the permitting process. You've only changed it so that the minister has direct approval.

But what you are failing to acknowledge is that a chunk of that time is about acquiring the financial resources that are needed to open up a mine. It costs a lot of money, and mining companies need not just their money; they need other people's money—taxpayers and investors. What you've done now, instead of ensuring protection for investors, you've watered down the financial assurances that are required as part of just opening up and closure plans. So that is not helpful to this industry. It's not helpful to attract investors in this industry.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Will Bouma):** Questions and responses?

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** It's a very important bill that's coming forward, because it's going to be a very economic, important piece to the north and rural areas. And we've been hearing overall that the mining industry, of course, wants to develop and manufacture products, and the mining industry wants to be part of the economic opportunities that have been presented.

But there are questions and concerns around some of the pieces in this legislation, and one of those examples is that the legislation is taking away decisions from directors of the mines and giving them to the minister. That is something that's crucial to making sure that people have trust and faith in that process.

Can you talk a little bit about why the concerns are going from the director of mines' responsibilities and putting them in the hands of the minister?

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Thank you very much for the question. I would say that speaks directly to the issue of confidence, that in order to have the moral authority to operate in a community, people and investors have to be assured that they've taken the political decision-making out of this, that this decision-making has to rely on technical experts, industry experts. Taking these significant decisions and just putting them into the minister's office doesn't help this industry.

**0930**

What this industry needs to do is to have certainty, to have clear and transparent processes. I keep talking about

investors. Investors are not going to put their money into an industry where they are just rolling the dice that the minister of the day is favourable to what they're trying to do, because governments change, thank God, and ministers change—looking forward to it—and this is not helpful for the stability of the industry.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Will Bouma):** Questions and responses?

**Mr. Mike Harris:** When we talk about sustainability, transparency and certainty, as the member opposite has highlighted, how are our investors, how are businesses and how are, in some cases, folks from other jurisdictions supposed to come here and confidently invest when it's taking 15-plus years to open some of these mines?

We need these minerals now. We need good jobs in Ontario. Why does the opposition continue to stand in the way of that?

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** To the contrary, we're not standing in the way of it; in fact, we are not at all. You are not identifying all of the core problems when it comes to opening up a mine. Financial investment is one of the key barriers. I don't know if you're saying we do not have a robust mining industry in Ontario. We already do; it already exists. We're global leaders and proud of that.

People are investing in our community. They are investing in this industry because they know that there are good regulations, that there are good protections, that they're operating in an environment that is robust and that has the kind of protections that attract investments, attract employees and skilled workers, and attract the kinds of things that we want in this province. It already exists. So it's hard to understand why you are watering this down.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Will Bouma):** Time for one more quick question.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Mike Harris:** We're a little sleepy still this morning, I guess.

Let's look back, then. I'm from North Bay. Other members may suggest it's not north enough, but I still call it northern Ontario. North Bay had a vibrant secondary mining sector. It provided a lot of machinery and materials that were used. Under the previous government, we lost hundreds, if not thousands, of mining jobs out of North Bay, which had quite an impact on the community itself.

To say that there is investment—that investment has come because of a Progressive Conservative government that has started to make changes, has started to make smart, pragmatic changes to regulation. I hope—and I'd love to hear—will the member support this bill when it comes up for the vote at second reading?

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** We've said we are supporting this bill at second reading to get it to committee so that we can do our job. Our job is to help you make your bills better. This bill has been ill-considered. You've rushed it through; it's flawed.

The intention is there, the intention that we all share, which is to support and improve the mining industry for the prosperity of Ontarians, but you need help with this bill to make sure that's what happens.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Will Bouma):** Further debate?

**Mr. Stéphane Sarrazin:** Je suis fier de me lever ici en Chambre pour démontrer mon support au projet de loi 71, la Loi de 2023 visant l'aménagement de davantage de mines.

J'aimerais débiter par féliciter le ministre des Mines, le ministre du Développement du Nord et leurs équipes pour l'excellent travail, non seulement envers ce projet de loi mais dans plusieurs autres dossiers.

Si le projet de loi 71, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les mines—Building More Mines Act, 2023—est adopté, les changements permettront aux sociétés minières d'économiser du temps et de l'argent. L'amélioration de la Loi sur les mines créera des conditions permettant aux entreprises de construire davantage de mines tout en respectant les normes environnementales et l'obligation de consultation.

Ces mises à jour garantiront également que nous aurons les minéraux essentiels et nécessaires pour construire la chaîne d'approvisionnement des véhicules électriques et autres produits ici même en Ontario. L'Ontario possède certains des gisements les plus riches en minéraux au monde, notamment dans la région du Cercle de feu, qui abritent des minéraux essentiels utilisés dans la fabrication de véhicules électriques, de téléphones intelligents, de produits pharmaceutiques et plusieurs, plusieurs, plusieurs autres technologies.

Notre gouvernement comprend qu'il faut faire en sorte que ce soit plus facile pour les entreprises de faire affaire dans notre province.

L'Ontario a tellement à offrir. Je dois dire que je suis tellement fier de voir notre province prospérer et surtout fier de faire partie de cette équipe, sous le leadership de notre premier ministre Ford. Il faut mentionner que nous avons un ministre des Mines qui est un champion dans ce secteur, avec une multitude d'expériences dans le domaine. Je crois que nous sommes choyés à cet effet.

Vous savez, monsieur le Président, nous avons plein de champions dans notre équipe. J'en profite pour mentionner que nous avons une équipe incroyable. Tous mes collègues députés ont le même but, qui est celui d'améliorer le sort des résidents de l'Ontario. Grâce à eux, l'Ontario est vraiment sur la voie de la prospérité.

Notre gouvernement améliore la Loi sur les mines afin de créer les conditions permettant aux entreprises de construire plus de mines de manière efficace et d'aider à renforcer les chaînes d'approvisionnement en minéraux essentiels fabriqués en Ontario pour les minéraux essentiels et les véhicules électriques. Ces changements rendraient l'Ontario plus compétitif, attireraient de nouveaux investissements dans la province et ouvriraient la voie pour que l'Ontario devienne la première juridiction au monde, leader dans l'investissement et le développement miniers.

L'exploitation minière est un contributeur clé à l'économie ontarienne ainsi qu'un moteur de développement économique pour plusieurs régions. Bien que le nombre fluctue en fonction des variations des prix

des matières premières, l'exploitation minière en Ontario génère des revenus d'environ 10 milliards de dollars par an.

En 2021, le secteur minier de l'Ontario a produit pour 11,1 milliards de dollars de minéraux, ce qui représentait 20 % de la valeur de la production totale du Canada. En 2021, l'exploitation minière en Ontario a directement contribué un total annuel estimé de 8 milliards de dollars au produit intérieur brut, le PIB; 2,9 milliards de dollars en salaires; et environ 75 000 emplois directs et indirects dans la province. Environ 70 % des contributions au PIB des sociétés minières de l'Ontario restent en Ontario.

Les sociétés minières de tout l'Ontario jouent un rôle important dans les communautés locales où elles opèrent et contribuent au bien-être économique et social en donnant la priorité à l'embauche et à l'approvisionnement locaux, en soutenant les initiatives de santé et d'éducation et en s'engageant et en s'associant avec les communautés des Premières Nations.

En 2021, l'emploi direct dans le secteur minier en Ontario totalisait environ 29 000, avec plus de 3,7 milliards de dollars versés en indemnisation totale aux travailleurs. Le salaire hebdomadaire moyen en Ontario pour les emplois miniers directs est supérieur de plus de 60 % au salaire industriel moyen de la province. Les travailleurs miniers gagnent en moyenne près de 2 000 \$ par semaine. Ce sont de très bons revenus ici en Ontario, monsieur le Président.

Et 44 % des fournitures, des matériaux et des services sont achetés localement auprès d'entreprises ontariennes. Ça, c'est important. L'industrie minière a versé un total de 373 millions de dollars en impôts aux trois paliers de gouvernement en 2019. Évidemment, ce sont les statistiques que j'ai pu recueillir de 2019. Je ne les sais pas en 2020, mais sûrement que c'était aussi impressionnant.

**0940**

Le secteur minier de l'Ontario compte l'une des plus fortes proportions de travailleurs des Premières Nations de toutes les industries de la province, à 11 %, soit près du double du pourcentage de la population canadienne qui s'identifie comme peuple de Première Nation selon les données du recensement de 2016.

En 2020, il y avait 142 accords actifs en place entre les communautés des Premières Nations et les sociétés minières de l'Ontario. C'est important de le souligner : 142 accords en place entre les sociétés et les peuples des Premières Nations ici en Ontario, et ce sont des relations mutuellement bénéfiques.

L'impact de l'exploitation minière va au-delà de l'extraction et du traitement des minéraux. L'exploitation minière est liée à de nombreuses autres industries et secteurs de l'économie, y compris le transport, la construction, la fabrication d'équipement, la gestion de l'environnement, les services géologiques, l'éducation et la recherche, entre autres.

L'industrie donne un coup de pouce majeur à notre secteur financier: la Bourse de Toronto, le TSX, est la principale bourse minière mondiale, répertoriant le plus grand nombre de sociétés minières publiques dans le monde.

D'après un rapport de recherche économique de 2022 produit par l'Ontario Mining Association en partenariat avec, à l'époque, le ministère du Développement du Nord, des Mines, des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts de l'Ontario, le secteur minier de l'Ontario prévoit que la contribution au PIB de l'industrie minière augmentera de 25 % entre 2020 et 2025, par rapport à une contribution directe totale estimée à 7,5 milliards de dollars en 2019 et 9,3 milliards de dollars prévus d'ici 2025. La valeur des minéraux produits par les principales mines de l'Ontario devrait également augmenter de 33 %, et le nombre d'emplois équivalents temps plein soutenus directement ou indirectement et induits par l'exploitation minière augmentera de près de 7 %.

Il y a actuellement 37 exploitations minières actives dans la province, qui couvrent un ensemble diversifié de métaux et de minéraux, y compris des métaux précieux et de base et des minéraux non métalliques. Dix de ces mines produisent des minéraux essentiels, notamment—on les a nommés à plusieurs reprises dans les derniers jours—le cobalt, le cuivre, l'indium, le nickel, des éléments du groupe de platine, le sélénium, le tellurium et le zinc. Il existe actuellement 16 projets miniers critiques importants en Ontario.

L'exploitation minière profite à toutes les régions de la province, offrant un large éventail de possibilités d'emploi et de partenariat. L'industrie minière de l'Ontario crée un environnement équitable, diversifié et inclusif pour les groupes historiquement sous-représentés. Des statistiques de 2016 : 13 % de la main-d'oeuvre étaient des femmes, 9 % appartenaient à des identités des personnes des Premières Nations et 6 % appartenaient à des minorités visibles. Près de 70 % des membres de l'Ontario Mining Association ont déclaré avoir des objectifs en matière de diversité et d'équité entre les sexes en ce qui concerne les postes d'autorité.

Il y a plus de 1 400 entreprises d'approvisionnement et de services miniers en Ontario. Et ça, c'est important de mentionner : indirectement, on a 1 400 entreprises, au minimum, qui contribuent à l'économie du secteur minier. En tant que producteurs de minéraux et de métaux qui sont des éléments clés dans la transition vers une énergie propre, les sociétés minières de toute la province adhèrent également aux normes environnementales les plus élevées en matière de conservation d'énergie, de réduction des émissions de carbone et d'adoption de technologies propres.

Plus des trois quarts des sociétés minières de l'Ontario participent à des programmes de tarification du carbone qui visent à réduire les émissions de GES et à stimuler l'innovation, et 82 % des grandes sociétés minières de l'Ontario ont établi des objectifs de réduction des émissions de carbone et 64 % ont des objectifs de gestion de l'énergie. Les sociétés minières ontariennes ont adopté des technologies propres à un taux de près de 14 % supérieur à la moyenne de l'industrie.

En 2021, 878 millions de dollars ont été investis dans l'exploration minière en Ontario. Notre gouvernement croit que nous pouvons faire mieux. Notre gouvernement

est toujours en quête d'opportunités de développement économique et de créer de bons emplois pour les Ontariens. Notre gouvernement met les Ontariens en priorité.

Monsieur le Président, je dois vous dire que je suis fier de faire partie de cette équipe dirigée par le premier ministre Ford, mes collègues ministres et députés. C'est incroyable, les choses qui se font ici pour le peuple ontarien. Grâce à notre gouvernement, l'Ontario est en voie de devenir un leader mondial dans beaucoup de secteurs.

J'aimerais vous raconter une petite expérience que j'ai vécue en tant que député et adjoint parlementaire du ministre de l'Énergie. J'ai eu la chance de participer à quelques conférences ici au Canada, aux États-Unis et ailleurs dans le monde. À certaines de ces conférences, j'étais un des seuls représentants du gouvernement de l'Ontario.

Monsieur le Président, vous devriez voir l'intérêt des gens à vouloir communiquer avec moi quand ils voient ma petite étiquette, ici même, qui mentionne que je suis un représentant de l'Ontario, spécialement avec la mention « adjoint du ministre de l'Énergie de l'Ontario ». Beaucoup de représentants de plusieurs pays ont les yeux rivés sur notre province—pas juste dans le domaine de l'énergie, mais dans plusieurs autres domaines, et celui des mines n'en est pas une exception.

Je dois dire que ça n'a pas été toujours le cas. À l'époque où le Parti libéral était au pouvoir, pendant les 15 années précédant la venue de notre gouvernement—avant 2018—la province était un exemple de quoi ne pas faire en matière d'énergie et probablement dans d'autres secteurs aussi. Mais grâce à plusieurs stratégies comme celle-ci aujourd'hui, le projet de loi 71, notre gouvernement fait en sorte que notre province continue à progresser pour devenir un leader mondial dans plusieurs secteurs.

Est-ce que j'ai mentionné que je suis fier de faire partie de cette équipe? Je pense que je l'ai mentionné à quelques reprises. Nous travaillons fort. Notre gouvernement a publié l'année dernière sa stratégie sur les minéraux critiques, un plan quinquennal qui comprend la résolution des problèmes de réglementation pour que les mines soient construites plus efficacement.

Ce projet de loi visant à modifier la Loi sur les mines, si adopté, attirera davantage d'investissements dans le secteur minier de la province, tout en renforçant les chaînes d'approvisionnement en minéraux essentiels de la province pour les batteries et les véhicules électriques. Ce projet de loi pourrait faire avancer les projets miniers critiques en :

- permettant aux entreprises d'obtenir plus facilement un permis pour récupérer les minéraux des résidus miniers et des déchets;

- améliorant la planification de la fermeture en ayant plus de professionnels qualifiés disponibles pour certifier les plans;

- permettant aussi une plus grande flexibilité dans les techniques utilisées pour réhabiliter les mines une fois qu'elles sont fermées; et

- créant aussi plus d'options pour les entreprises de payer une assurance financière.

Comme mentionné par le ministre des Mines, ça ne devrait pas prendre 15 années pour ouvrir une mine. Ce processus prend trop de temps et coûte trop cher, ce qui entraîne des retards dans les projets et des opportunités perdues pour le secteur ontarien de l'exploration minière et de l'exploitation minière.

Nous devons construire. La région du Cercle de feu a un potentiel multigénérationnel pour la production de minéraux essentiels, notamment la chromite, le nickel, le cuivre et le platine nécessaires à la fabrication d'acier propre et de véhicules électriques.

Les modifications à la Loi sur les mines augmenteraient la certitude de la planification des activités et généreraient des investissements dans le nord de l'Ontario afin d'offrir d'importantes possibilités de développement économique aux collectivités du Nord et aux peuples des Premières Nations.

#### 0950

En ce Mois de la Francophonie, je m'en voudrais de ne pas faire une parenthèse. C'est un peu, aussi, pourquoi j'ai fait mon discours en français aujourd'hui, pendant le Mois de la Francophonie. Ça aurait été intéressant de voir les statistiques à savoir combien de francophones ont contribué au secteur minier au fil des années.

Les villes comme Sudbury, Timmins, Kirkland Lake, Elliot Lake, North Bay sont toutes des villes où l'on retrouve une concentration de francophones. Beaucoup de ces gens ont des ancêtres québécois qui sont venus ici en Ontario pour travailler dans les mines.

J'ai moi-même de la famille qui travaille ou qui a travaillé dans les mines, monsieur le Président. J'aimerais profiter de l'occasion pour les remercier pour leurs contributions dans ce secteur.

En conclusion, je suis fier de pouvoir prendre la parole ici en Chambre pour le débat sur ce projet de loi, et je remercie mes collègues du ministère des Mines—il y en a un drette ici devant moi, l'adjoint parlementaire—pour leur travail exceptionnel.

Monsieur le Président, je suis certain que les membres de l'opposition voteront en faveur de ce projet de loi. Plusieurs d'entre eux représentent des circonscriptions du nord de l'Ontario, qui sont les régions où l'on retrouve le plus de mines et d'entreprises qui bénéficient du secteur.

Mes collègues du parti de l'opposition auront sûrement de la difficulté à s'opposer à ce projet de loi. Monsieur le Président, laissez-moi vous dire, ça ne doit pas être facile de travailler en tant que membre de l'opposition. Notre gouvernement présente tellement de bons projets de loi pour améliorer le sort de notre province et aider les Ontariens à obtenir de meilleurs emplois. Ça doit tellement être difficile de voter contre toutes ces initiatives de notre gouvernement.

J'aimerais terminer en disant que moi-même, dans ma circonscription de Glengarry—Prescott—Russell—nous sommes un peu loin des régions d'exploration des mines, mais nous avons quand même une fonderie, Ivaco Rolling Mills, qui fait la fonte de métal et utilise aussi certains

minéraux dans leur processus. C'est une des entreprises qui est là depuis 30 ans, puis même aujourd'hui, elles bénéficient des mines, car le métal est un des, comme on dirait, « by-products » ou sous-produits du titane qui est exploré dans des régions au Québec.

Je sais que beaucoup de gens veulent voir ces compagnies qui prospèrent depuis 30 ans rester ici, puis c'est une belle opportunité de pouvoir opérer des mines en Ontario pour pouvoir avoir ces produits-là près de nous pour pouvoir continuer de façon plus facile d'avoir le transport et d'avoir accès. Je remercie encore notre ministre des Mines pour cet excellent projet de loi, puis je le supporte à 100 %.

**Le Président suppléant (M. Will Bouma):** Merci. Questions?

**M. Joel Harden:** C'est agréable d'avoir des nouvelles de mon ami de Glengarry–Prescott–Russell ce matin. Il représente ma ville natale de Vankleek Hill, et nous avons des amis en commun. C'est pourquoi nous savons tous les deux à quel point il est important de bien consulter les gens sur des projets importants, des projets avec des impacts environnementaux comme Colacem, un projet de cimenterie de L'Original.

Est-ce qu'il y a une réponse de mon ami? Parce que c'est un sujet délicat pour L'Original. Est-ce qu'on a des leçons aujourd'hui, avec Colacem, pour ce projet de loi ici?

**M. Stéphane Sarrazin:** Écoutez, comme mon collègue de l'opposition le mentionne, il a de la famille à Vankleek Hill, puis s'il y a un endroit où il y a beaucoup de gens qui ont bénéficié d'avoir de bons salaires dans le secteur du métal puis qui travaillent justement à l'usine, la fonderie à L'Original, c'est bien les gens de Vankleek Hill.

J'ai travaillé moi-même, quand j'étais plus jeune, en tant qu'électricien—c'était un de mes premiers métiers—justement à la fonderie de L'Original. Je peux vous dire qu'il y avait plein de gens de la région. On avait, à un moment donné, 800 employés, puis c'est un secteur très important. Puis je pense que pour cette raison-là, au fil des années, on a vu beaucoup de choses qui se sont améliorées. Je l'avoue, je travaillais là voilà 30 ans. Les impacts côté pollution étaient moins surveillés, mais aujourd'hui, grâce à tous les gouvernements, on tient ça de près, puis on fait sûr que les—

**Le Président suppléant (M. Will Bouma):** Merci. Merci.

Questions?

**M<sup>me</sup> Dawn Gallagher Murphy:** Je voudrais remercier le député de Glengarry–Prescott–Russell. Merci de votre discours. La sécurisation de la chaîne d'approvisionnement nécessite que l'Ontario puisse être compétitif face aux autres juridictions. Ma question pour le député : qu'est-ce que cette loi va faire pour assurer que notre province est la première juridiction d'exploitation minière à l'échelle mondiale?

**M. Stéphane Sarrazin:** Merci à ma collègue pour cette question. Écoute, quand on parle de—je cherche le terme, excusez-moi, en anglais—mais « securing the supply chain », la chaîne d'approvisionnement, c'est plus

important que jamais. Suite à COVID, on a vu que les pays doivent subvenir à leurs besoins plus que jamais, et je pense que de développer ici le secteur minier en Ontario est un exemple de comment nous pouvons bénéficier en sauvant sur le transport, en ayant la main-d'oeuvre.

Puis je crois que c'est une excellente opportunité pour nous de pouvoir créer des jobs, des emplois payants dans les différents métiers. Moi-même, monsieur le Président, je suis électricien de métier. Même si je suis devenu politicien au fil des années, ça reste que ce sont des sujets qui me tiennent à coeur. Je vois plein de gens alentour de moi qui gagnent leurs vies à faire des métiers qu'ils aiment—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Will Bouma):** Thank you. Questions?

**MPP Lise Vaugeois:** We know we don't want the men and women who work in mines to wind up living in mining camps long-term. We want them to be building communities in neighbouring municipalities or creating new communities, but in order for people to have confidence that they can build their lives in these communities that are very close to where the mines are, and raise families there, they also need to be confident that the remediation that follows has already been planned and financed, that those financial guarantees are there. Otherwise, you're looking at very precarious—you don't know whether you can really trust those places as places to live for the long term.

That's my concern, and I wonder if you can speak to that.

**Mr. Stéphane Sarrazin:** I have a few people I know who work in the mining industry. Let me tell you, I don't reach out to them often, but when I talk to them, they say that working in a mine and being part of the staff working in a mine seems like a family thing. These companies are, more than ever, investing in their people and they're creating nice opportunities to gather all their people and do some leisure activities. I've learned it from people working there at the mines.

I think for that reason that the companies are, more than ever, oriented on their people, and I don't see that as becoming a problem in the near future.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** The member from Thornhill.

**Ms. Laura Smith:** I want to thank the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell for his statement. We're engaging with communities, Indigenous and Indigenous organizations, and my question to the member is further to that. I'm asking him how this will affect the communities that are relying upon this industry and the consultation that has been involved with the Indigenous communities.

1000

**Mr. Stéphane Sarrazin:** I think with this bill there is a big misunderstanding from the opposition about regulations. This bill doesn't change regulations and consultations. We've seen, in the province, more than ever, projects that are partnered with First Nations, and I think our government has the will to keep working with First Nations and consult with the public on different projects

in the near future. And I think we need their partnership in order to be successful in this province.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** The member from Hamilton.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** West–Ancaster–Dundas. It's a problem, honestly. People are saying my riding name so wrong so often that I almost said it wrong myself the other day.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** The member from Hamilton West–Ancaster–Dundas.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Merci au député de Glengarry–Prescott–Russell. J'ai apprécié votre discours ce matin. Si je ne me trompe pas, je n'ai pas entendu l'environnement être mentionné. La protection de l'environnement—je n'ai pas entendu ça être mentionné. Et ce n'est pas seulement l'environnement; c'est les gens qui travaillent dans le secteur minier.

Est-ce que vous pouvez nous rassurer que projet de loi va protéger les travailleurs? Et finalement, est-ce qu'il y a des assurances que les gens qui vont investir seront protégés s'il y a une faillite dans ce secteur?

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Quick response?

**M. Stéphane Sarrazin:** Je crois, quand ça vient à la sécurité des employés, que ce soit dans n'importe quel secteur, que nous avons différents ministères qui font sûr de suivre ça de près, parce qu'on sait tous que la sécurité des Ontariens est une des choses qui nous tient le plus à coeur.

En tant qu'ancien maire et ancien président de comté, je peux vous dire que je peux constater que la plupart des politiciens ont la santé des gens à coeur, puis c'est ça qui est la priorité. Quand ça en vient à l'environnement, bien, je peux vous dire qu'aujourd'hui, avant qu'un projet ne se concrétise, il y a tellement d'études qui sont mises en place pour démontrer l'impact environnemental que je ne crois pas que ça va être un problème pour nous. Je pense qu'on doit continuer. On ne change pas la réglementation; on fait juste faire en sorte que c'est plus facile de bâtir des mines en Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Further debate?

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** It gives me great pleasure to rise as the official opposition critic for economic development, job creation and trade to add my thoughts about Bill 71, the Building More Mines Act.

As I start my comments, I think it's important that members on the other side, on the government benches, recognize that this is a bill that the official opposition will be supporting at second reading, but we do very much rely on this government to travel the bill, to travel the bill properly and to listen to as many stakeholders as wish to appear at committee to make sure that this is a strong bill, a robust bill and one that has been built with public consultation. Because when we see many pieces of legislation that are brought forward in this chamber, much is left lacking, and that is perhaps intentional on the part of this government, to omit things which are very glaring in their absence.

I'd like to also start by saying this government's track record on relationships and partnerships with Indigenous peoples is abysmal. As well, their record on enhancing and maintaining environmental protections is similarly abysmal. In 2018, when this government first assumed power, in their throne speech, they started it without an Indigenous land recognition—a horrible omission. And then, one of their first acts was to cancel the Indigenous curriculum-writing sessions while people were already in attendance. They were either already on their way or they had arrived and they were told to go home. Now, as well, we've heard and seen an ideological obsession to not declare September 30 a provincial holiday to recognize truth and reconciliation, which is truly bizarre.

But as I move my comments towards mining, mining is an excellent industry here in the province of Ontario. It's a great and strong industry. It provides good-paying jobs, those union jobs with benefits, with a pension. I know members across the aisle are probably going to plug their ears and shriek, but it actually provides paid sick days. Imagine that. I know they're very upset about that concept, but that is something that is provided with more union membership.

Mining also has a history in the province and it has moved away from that history. I believe our House leader, the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane, mentioned how, in the past, there were not closure plans, there was not the same sort of responsibility that has now been placed and that the mining industry has welcomed and is something that they've worked very hard to make sure that they are good corporate partners, good global citizens. They've brought up the industry. They've made sure that they are not only looking after the now but they're looking after the eventualities of their industry within the province, which is excellent.

This is a huge financial risk, not only for the industry itself but also for the province, and we want to make sure that it's one where we look after our environment for generations to come.

I'd like to also turn to what is known as “a dish with one spoon” teachings. I'd like to thank Dan and Mary Lou Smoke, some wonderful people from my riding, who have taught me about what that concept actually means and what that teaching means. Frequently, it is a covenant that was engaged in between Indigenous peoples to indicate a shared responsibility, an agreement. Sometimes you might refer to it as a truce as it were so that they can share within the wealth in Mother Earth.

When we take a look—it's called “a dish with one spoon”—the dish refers to the land, and it's meant to be shared peacefully; it's meant to be shared equally; it's meant to be shared among all people for their benefit, and the spoon is what refers to the individuals living on that land. But what it actually means at the heart of it, as Dan and Mary Lou have indicated to me, is that there is enough when we share with one another. There is enough when we take good care of the earth.

“A dish with one spoon” also has resonance with extracted economies: that we don't pillage the earth; we don't take too much from the earth—and if we do take

from the earth, we make sure we take in moderation and we make sure we do not destroy what's left for future generations to come.

This has resonance in many other places in the world and many other disciplines. For instance, in Tao Te Ching there is a writing that says “the person who knows when enough is enough will always have enough.” When we share with one another, when we don't hurt the earth too much, we will have a good environment for generations to come.

I also think of the words of Bishop Terry Dance. We live in a world right now where there's this singular focus on what he calls “unbridled acquisitiveness.” There is this rampant greed where people are more interested in what they themselves can obtain and what they can take than there is about how we should look after one another, and that's something I believe we have to be very cognizant of and very careful of. If we look after one another, we all win. If we look after the environment for generations to come, those generations will also win. We need to take the selfishness out of many of these equations.

#### 1010

As I look at this legislation itself, there are some deep concerns, one of which would be that, in Bill 71, it replaces the “director of mine rehabilitation” anywhere in the Mining Act with “minister.” We know from this government that their track record on environmental protections is abysmal. They've ripped out those charging stations that were already paid for—it was a bad business. Not only were they paying to destroy something, but they were paying to destroy something they had already paid for. So if they could have taken money and thrown it in the toilet, it seems this Conservative government would have done so in their ideological battle against environmental protections.

But we've also seen Bill 23, which is the commodification of the greenbelt for a few very well-connected backroom insiders, under the disguise and the weak cloak of calling this a bill for affordable housing. So when we see this consequential change of the “director of mine rehabilitation” being replaced with “minister,” it doesn't exactly inspire trust on behalf of the official opposition, or really anyone in the province, because nobody believes this government on their track record of environmental protections.

Also, we see that there is the elimination of the reference to the director of mine rehabilitation altogether—the person who's going to be looking after this in the future. And why is that eliminated? You know, MiningWatch Canada's Jamie Kneen has said, “Undoing safeguards and making the process more streamlined and less accountable is really just, I think, a recipe for disaster.”

Kate Kempton, an Indigenous rights lawyer, has said, “Ford is proposing to strip the closure plan approval process and First Nations engagement in it to a bare minimum, which was—it's basically taking of the last thread of protection that we have.”

Kneen goes on to say, “This (Pirie's reassurances of continued environmental safety and Indigenous consultations) is coming from a government that has shown no

consistent respect for either of those things, so it's really hard to take that seriously.”

In this bill, as well, the rehabilitation will be changed to a different use or condition that the minister determines. Again, I'm not so sure that we can trust the minister. And the minister becomes the locus of control, as they will look at the land and they will deem it suitable for future use or a site determined by the minister.

Now, I also want to make sure that we add in the record that the mining industry has really raised the standard. They have made sure that they have financial security, they have closure plans. This government is really tinkering with these closure plans, which is very concerning. They also are very curiously, where there is a closure plan, weakening that in a very strange way. This bill allows the applicant, who may not meet all the existing criteria for a mine closure plan, to nonetheless submit a claim. Is this a workaround? That's a good question that we have.

Further, the bill sets out that the minister shall file a closure plan within 45 days of it being submitted or return the applicant for resubmission if it misses one of their parameters as set out in the act. Why is there this contradiction? We're not sure. This needs to be answered by this government.

I also want to highlight what we heard as we travelled with the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, which was the concept of tailings. MIRARCO, who submitted a presentation for the committee, also said they have the Centre for Mine Waste Biotechnology, the first of its kind in Canada, which will take a look after those tailing ponds, which grow exponentially year after year after year and the dams are just made higher and higher. We know and we've heard from the member from Sudbury about the crisis that happened in Brazil, where hundreds of people died. But this company has a great way to extract some of the things that are being left there as waste.

I just want to point out some of the statistics that they shared with us at committee. They felt that there's between \$8 billion to \$10 billion of nickel contained in the Sudbury mine—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Thank you to the member from London North Centre. The time for debate has come to an end.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### DANCING WITH THE CCH STARS

**Mr. Nolan Quinn:** I'd like to recognize our Cornwall Community Hospital Foundation for their inaugural Dancing with the CCH Stars event held on Saturday at Cornwall's Aultsville Theatre. This fundraiser celebrated the exceptional care, tenacity, compassion and hard work of our local health care professionals who treat patients across SDG, Akwesasne and Cornwall.



Dozens of local businesses sponsored the event. Thank you to the many community-minded businesses that always step up. Success is not possible without the support of the business community.

The event sold out in less than two days, and guests were treated to high-quality entertainment.

Cornwall Community Hospital Foundation will purchase \$50,000 worth of medical equipment for a special project chosen by the winning team.

I'd like to acknowledge the six teams of dancers who spent the last five months training with two local dance schools, Powell School of Dance and Studio C Dance School—talk about dedication:

- Dr. Akram Arab and Meghan Cafferky;
- Dr. Celine Lemire and Anthony Powell;
- Dr. Renee Givari and her husband, Tim;
- RNs Joy Cella and Amie McCosham, RPN Kathleen Jack and Dr. Leslie Stephens;
- Josée Amyot, RN, and Rhiannon St. Pierre; as well as

—Andrew Bissonnette and Robin Barillaro, both RNs at the hospital and at the college.

Congratulations to Dr. Akram Arab and his dance partner, Meghan Cafferky, who won the competition, with \$50,000 going towards medical upgrades supporting critically ill patients at CCH's ICU.

Huge congratulations to the Cornwall Community Hospital Foundation executive director, Amy Gillespie, and development coordinator, Kelsey Lindsay, on raising over \$125,000.

### WOMEN'S SERVICES

**MPP Lise Vaugois:** When I was a young woman in the 1970s, there were no women's shelters and there were no rape crisis centres, but because of the growing second wave of the women's movement, women were gathering together and creating safe spaces from the ground up. But if you read the newspapers of the time, you would have seen these community builders—these feminists—described as half-crazed man-haters out to destroy the world as we knew it.

Well, we did want to change the world as we knew it because domestic violence was commonplace, though never spoken of at the time, and victims of sexual assault had no supports and were blamed for the behaviour of their attackers.

Thank goodness those activist women persisted, and others have come along since to keep these safe places going in spite of perpetual underfunding, because today we are still struggling with violence against women and gender-nonconforming folks, femicides and rapes that are still routinely blamed on the victims. And if those victims are racialized, especially those who are Indigenous or Black, then they will be doubly blamed—particularly in our court systems—because being racialized is often reason enough to be beaten down and cast aside.

We call these things sexism and racism and say that we want to celebrate diversity, but talking about diversity

doesn't acknowledge the root of the problem. Sexism and racism aren't here because people look or act a bit differently from ourselves. They are tools to take what would not otherwise be freely given. They are here because of beliefs in entitlement—beliefs that some people have the right to dominate others, that some have the right to punish those who deviate from gender-based norms or the right to punish those who don't go along with what someone has decided they should be doing.

I'm thinking at this particular moment, actually, of the Indigenous communities that are being told, "We know best," even if it takes being run over by a bulldozer to get their agreement.

I want to turn now towards those people and organizations in northwestern Ontario who put themselves on the line every day to provide safe spaces and name the residential shelters of northwestern Ontario. These are Beendigen and Faye Peterson House in Thunder Bay, First Step Women's Shelter in Sioux Lookout, the Geraldton women's shelter in Greenstone, Hoshizaki House in Dryden, Marjorie House in Marathon, New Starts in Red—

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Thank you. I want to thank the member for her presentation.

The next member's statement.

### CONSTRUCT SKILLS TRAINING

**Mme Dawn Gallagher Murphy:** Last December, I had the privilege of attending the second-year anniversary event for Construct, a social enterprise by Blue Door. It was held at their brand new training space in my riding located in Aurora. Construct is a proven solution to end homelessness. It provides individuals at risk or who have experienced homelessness with in-class training and hands-on experience in the construction industry.

**1020**

Both youth and adults are given the opportunity to improve their lives by gaining financial stability and affordable housing through a well-paying career. Construct is working to turn insecurity into permanent change by connecting participants with apprenticeships and opportunities with contractors and unions. Since Construct's launch in 2020, which was made possible by our government's support through a grant of over \$1.3 million, they have seen over 200 trainees go through the program, which has helped participants find over 120 well-paying construction jobs.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to thank our government for providing the funding. The positive impacts on people's lives resonate throughout my community.

### WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT

**MPP Jamie West:** Today is International Women's Day. Today, we remember that International Women's Day was inspired by working women.

Today, we remember that, in 1908, 15,000 women marched through the streets of New York to protest unfair working conditions.

Today, we remember that, in 1911, the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire killed 146 workers in 20 minutes. Today, we remember that most of the workers were Italian or Jewish immigrants aged 14 to 23. Today, we remember that these workers were trapped behind locked doors, trapped out of reach of firefighter ladders. Today, we remember these workers died from the fire, these workers die from smoke inhalation, and today we remember that 62 of these workers died by leaping from factory windows to the pavement below. These workers died because the doors were locked to prevent worker theft. These workers died because the doors were locked to prevent union organizers from entering. The 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire killed 146 garment workers in 20 minutes, and from those ashes International Women's Day was reborn.

Speaker, we are legislators. If we want to truly celebrate International Women's Day, let us honour the workers who died. Let's write labour laws that make it easier to join a union. Let's write labour laws that demand better working conditions, demand better wages and demand better safety.

We are legislators. Let's truly celebrate International Women's Day and make life better for Ontario's workers.

#### VILLAGE MEDIA

**Mr. Ross Romano:** Earlier this month, I was able to make a Northern Ontario Heritage Fund announcement in the digital tech sector in beautiful Sault Ste. Marie. Village Media was a recipient of two separate grants, totalling nearly \$130,000, that were used to upgrade their Sault Ste. Marie facilities and assist in the purchase of technology and communications equipment.

Ontarians may recognize names like SooToday, Orillia-Matters, StratfordToday and many other digital media platforms that are based at their headquarters on Queen Street in my hometown of Sault Ste. Marie.

And Village Media does not stop there. They own and operate local news sites in a number of markets and also provide technology, consulting and fulfillment services to strategic media partners.

Village Media has grown to become a worldwide media company, with outlets across Canada, the United States and even Nigeria.

I would like to congratulate Jeff and the entire Village Media team on the newest Village Media outlet based right here at Queen's Park, the Trillium.

#### INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

**MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam:** Today, on International Women's Day, I want to focus on real actions that this House has the power to take to support all women. To support all women, we need pay equity. This means enacting the Pay Transparency Act shelved by the Conservative government, which would have ensured that women in all sectors, such as law, technology and business, would receive equal pay for equal work.

To support all women, we need to take the housing and homelessness crisis seriously. Women don't want to hear vague talking points about how much you love them. They want this government to find the love to actually fund shelters and fund housing that will truly support them.

To support all women, we need to reverse the cuts to sexual violence support centres and legal aid. These services heal and empower women and allow women across Ontario to access justice.

To support all women, we need to implement recommendations from the Renfrew county inquest to stop gender-based violence in Ontario, including recommendation number one, which will declare intimate partner violence an epidemic.

To support all women, we need to pass the gender-affirming health care act and ensure all women have access to the health care that they truly need and deserve.

To support all women, we need to follow the lead of provinces like British Columbia and guarantee universal, free access to contraception.

To support all women, we need to repeal Bill 124, which is sexist and wage-suppressing. That will truly support women.

Happy International Women's Day, everyone.

#### MARCH BREAK

**Mr. Mike Harris:** Speaker, March break starts next week for families across my riding of Kitchener-Conestoga and, of course, across the province. Members from all parties will be heading back to their communities to connect with constituents and spend time with their families.

I want to remind everyone that when school is out, of course so are kids. With the weather warming up and school out, children will be excited to play outside and visit with friends. So keep in mind that crosswalks or intersections that normally have crossing guards during school days may not have them next week. On residential streets without a school, remember that kids will be present during weekdays. Exercise caution when near community centres, as they will be running camps and activities.

That said, there's plenty of free family fun to be had across Waterloo region.

Speaker, 3-on-3 basketball tournaments are taking place nightly at community centres across Kitchener. Participation is open to kids aged 12 to 17, and you can register at the door.

In addition, a number of local arenas across Waterloo region are holding free March break skates. There is a free skate on Sunday, March 12, from 3:30 p.m. to 4:20 p.m. at RIM Park. You can also check out the city of Waterloo and the city of Kitchener websites for more information.

Kitchener Public Library has hockey skates that you can borrow from the Central Library on Queen Street North. Waterloo has a similar program at the Eastside branch of the Waterloo Public Library.

Local libraries are another source of activities for little ones, as well.

## HOSPICE CARE

**Ms. Bobbi Ann Brady:** I rise today to talk about an amazing group of volunteers in Haldimand–Norfolk who are working to make life better for people in the worst of human situations.

The Norfolk Haldimand Community Hospice has been soldiering through the past few difficult years undeterred, with the long-term goal of building a six-bed hospice in a location central to the two counties.

Currently, we are fortunate to have Norfolk Haldimand Community Hospice as well as East Haldimand Hospice providing vital palliative supports in our communities, not only in the way of medical care, but spiritual and emotional care as well.

However, right now, Haldimand and Norfolk residents have to go to Hamilton, Brantford or beyond to live in a hospice facility during their final days. Families in already stressful situations find making the trip afar challenging, and it adds to the stress and grief.

I think we can all agree that we want the very best for our loved ones, and perhaps one day ourselves, when we are faced with end of life. Hospice care provides compassion, quality and dignity.

Locals are finding unique ways of fundraising for the Norfolk Haldimand Community Hospice, which comes with a steep price tag of about \$14 million. The group will undoubtedly reach its goal, but is asking the province to lend a hand with respect to operating costs. The estimated cost of operating the six-bed hospice would ring in around \$1.5 million annually.

I am asking this government, in its upcoming budget, to have a good look at the many benefits and value of investing in end-of-life care across Ontario.

## SKILLS TRAINING

**Mr. Anthony Leardi:** Mr. Speaker, in my riding we used to have a high school called Western Secondary School. It was a skilled trades high school, the only one in my riding, and the Liberals shut it down.

By contrast, this PC government invests and believes in the skilled trades, and that's why we have the Skills Development Fund, which we use to help purchase machines for high schools. Some of the high schools in my riding that have benefited from this fund are Belle River District High School, Sandwich Secondary School, Kingsville District High School and North Star High School. They have received CNC milling machines, plasma cutters, lathes, desktop milling machines, high-precision conventional milling machines, lathes with readouts and more.

1030

I want to thank the Minister of Labour and Skills Development for these fantastic investments in our young people and skilled trades because as we say often, when you have a skilled trade, you have a job for life.

## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I want to wish all members in this assembly, particularly the female members, a happy International Women's Day and I want to stand here to recognize the talented women, not only who sit in this assembly, but the talented women who are behind the male members of this assembly, as well as the non-binary members of this assembly.

This Parliament finally boasts what I would consider the most diverse and the most equitable that we've ever seen. We still have a lot more to do, but we should celebrate where we have come. And I can say that, Speaker, because this month I will celebrate 17 years in this assembly and my daughter this Sunday turns 18. Through her eyes, I have watched this assembly grow. Through all of you, I have been able to see some of the great changes.

In fact, during the first months of my tenure here at Queen's Park, when she was just an infant, we fought to make sure that there were change tables in the bathrooms and that we had seats for children in the restaurant. I remember her creating a security incident here because Christina Blizzard taught her that there were ghosts in the assembly and she took all of the other children and hid off in the library with them, causing a lot of parents from Nepean to be quite alarmed for the safety of their children. They were safe, and the ghosts didn't turn out.

She once asked me if Garfield Dunlop ate peanut butter and jam sandwiches, to which I said, "I don't know." She said, "But does Bob Bailey?" I said, "I can guarantee: Yes."

She has been a page on this floor. She learned to walk on the third floor of the assembly. She once had a very long and lengthy political debate with Steve Clark about whether or not Justin Bieber's song was Never Say Never or Always Say Always. She blamed me in 2020 on her birthday for cancelling her hockey tournament when I was Minister of Sport—it apparently coincided with a global pandemic.

And she has seen me work with nine leaders of the official opposition, four different Speakers—but I'm sure she was your first; she liked you the most, I'm sure. She has seen three Premiers and six elections. And through all of that, she has become an amazing young woman and on Sunday, my little girl Victoria Varner turns 18. She's not in the assembly with us today, but I wanted to say thank you to her for standing by me as a remarkable young woman on this International Women's Day. Through her, I see progress and I see growth.

REPORT, FINANCIAL  
ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICER

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I beg to inform the House that the following document has been tabled: a report entitled Ontario Health Sector: Spending Plan Review from the Financial Accountability Office of Ontario.

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Will Bouma:** I'd like to welcome Jason Cleugh, Lindsay Fitch, Colin Cleugh, Joe Raspa, Joel Spiridigliozzi, David McAdam, Richard Court, Charlie Lyons and Tim Schindel. Thank you for breaking bread with us this morning at the prayer breakfast.

**MPP Jill Andrew:** I would like to welcome Monsieur Antoine and Madame Danielle Mital and all the students visiting from l'École élémentaire catholique du Sacré-Coeur. Bienvenue au parc de la Reine. Welcome.

**Mr. Trevor Jones:** Please welcome members of the Ontario Dairy Council with us today, and a reminder that there is a reception in rooms 228 and 230 immediately after question period. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens:** I would like to introduce Dr. Hava Starkman, Dr. Mary Boulos, Dr. Nour Bakhache and Liz Thompson from Cover ContraceptiON. Welcome to Queen's Park today.

**Hon. Michael A. Tibollo:** I'd like, this morning, to welcome a constituent of mine who I was pleased to see when I walked in, Albert Borgo, from Quality Cheese. He's the vice-president, making cheese with Ontario milk and having it sold and distributed throughout the province of Ontario. Welcome to your House.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** I'd like to welcome Fraser Passmore to the Legislature. Fraser is a kind person who I had the pleasure of working with in my riding of Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas and can always be counted on to protect birds and rescue cats. Welcome to your House.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I just wanted to recognize someone who is friend of many in this assembly, someone who I'm very, very proud to consider a very strong woman in the place, and that is Kim Wright. Kim, it's good to see you today.

**MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam:** I'd like to recognize a friend and colleague, Toronto city councillor, James Pasternak. Nice to see you, Chainsaw Jimmy.

**Hon. Stan Cho:** Four special guests—one was just mentioned now—but my best man, Jaspal Singh, and his daughter Sophie are visiting me.

As well, of course, Councillor Pasternak, I think the members from Thornhill and Eglinton—Lawrence will agree is one of our favourite councillors, as well as Jenya Drazman, his outreach coordinator for the constituency. Welcome to the Legislature.

**Ms. Jessica Bell:** I'd like to recognize the staff and board members of Youth Without Shelter and Helix House in University—Rosedale. They include Kim Wright, Anastasia Kemp, Emily Reign, Jacob Messam and Don Martins. Welcome to the House.

**Mr. Sam Oosterhoff:** I'm pleased to welcome a number of members of the Ontario craft wineries who are here today: Norm Beal, Len Pennachetti, Paul Speck, Del Rollo and Erin Mitchell, as well as inviting all members to an important reception this afternoon at 5 o'clock in rooms 228 and 230. I look forward to seeing you there.

**Ms. Bhutla Karpoche:** I see in the galleries Parkdale—High Park page Lindsay Matheson's family: her father, brother, sister and grandma. Welcome.

**Ms. Effie J. Triantafilopoulos:** I'm delighted to congratulate Vedant Ravilla from Oakville North—Burlington who is page captain today, and welcome his parents and family: Damodar Ravilla, Lakshmi Kanderi, Kishanth Ravilla and Bhanunathi Kanderi. Welcome.

**Mr. Tom Rakocevic:** I want to welcome my friend Charlie the Chaplin. He's here every day to support members, to help members, to keep healthy faith at Queen's Park, and we thank him for his work and help in making a prayer breakfast this morning for everyone.

**Mr. Mike Harris:** We haven't had an opportunity to see her here in the Legislature over the last while, but I did hear Barbara Stevens—Barbara, it's good to see you on TV. Thanks for tuning in today.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** On behalf of the official opposition, I'd also like to welcome the Ontario Dairy Council here today. Ontario dairy farmers produce the best milk in the world, and without the people who process them to make the best products in the world, we wouldn't have the industry we have.

**Hon. Michael Parsa:** I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome Youth Without Shelter to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. Joining us here today are board members, directors, staff, as well as some of the youth who are visiting us from the shelter: Emily Reign, Jacob Messam and Don Martins Obioha. Welcome to the House. I look forward to seeing you after question period.

I also see my chief of staff, Alexandra Hoene, and my manager of stakeholder relations, Shaida Maleki.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Just to add on to the member from Timiskaming—Cochrane, Kawartha Dairy will be here at lunch scooping Kawartha Dairy ice cream from the great riding of Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock.

1040

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I feel compelled to remind members of standing order 33(a), and I'll read it to you:

“Members' Statements

“Length

“33(a) A member, other than a leader of a recognized party in the House or a minister of the crown, may be recognized to make a statement for not more than one and a half minutes”—one and a half minutes is 90 seconds.

I'm not singling out any one member or any party, it's just that we've gotten to the point where the members' statements are considerably longer and I'm going to have to start enforcing that standing order, if need be. I hesitate to interrupt members mid-thought or mid-sentence, but I think we have to rein that in. I just want to inform the members of that fact. Thank you.

## INDEPENDENT MEMBERS

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I recognize the member for Ottawa—Vanier on a point of order.

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** I am seeking the unanimous consent of the House that, notwithstanding standing order 40(e), five minutes be allotted to the independent members as a group to respond to the ministerial statement this afternoon on International Women's Day.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Madame Collard is seeking the unanimous consent of the House that, notwithstanding standing order 40(e), five minutes be allotted to the independent members as a group to respond to the ministerial statement this afternoon on International Women's Day. Agreed? Agreed.

#### INDEPENDENT MEMBERS

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The member for Ottawa–Vanier on a second point of order.

**M<sup>me</sup> Lucille Collard:** Thank you for your indulgence.

I am seeking the unanimous consent of the House that, notwithstanding standing order 100(a)(iv), the independent members be permitted to share the five minutes allotted to a single member for the debate on private member's public bill M62, standing in the name of the member for Haldimand–Norfolk.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Madame Collard is seeking the unanimous consent of the House that, notwithstanding standing order 100(a)(iv), the independent members be permitted to share the five minutes allotted to a single member for the debate on private member's public bill M62, standing in the name of the member for Haldimand–Norfolk. Agreed? Agreed.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** It is now time for oral questions.

#### QUESTION PERIOD

##### HEALTH CARE

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Good morning, Speaker. Happy International Women's Day.

Another day, another report showing this government's complete failure to address Ontario's health care needs. At nearly every turn, this government chose not to help Ontarians when they needed it most.

Today's report from the independent Financial Accountability Office shows that this government could have kept people—107,000 people—from waiting in pain. They could have protected our loved ones in long-term care. They could have kept emergency rooms open for when people so desperately needed them—and, Speaker, there were 145 unplanned emergency room closures last year. This government chose not to.

Speaker, to the Premier: Will the Premier admit his government underfunded health care as an excuse to sell it off?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The Deputy Premier and Minister of Health to reply.

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** I won't, because the numbers in fact show that since 2018 we have increased health funding in the province of Ontario by \$14 billion.

The Financial Accountability Officer is actually showing that the status quo doesn't work and cannot work into the future. Imagine for a minute, Speaker, if we had a Liberal government—or an NDP government when they were in power—that decided not to close residency spots. In the case of the Liberal government, over 50 new physicians would be practising in the province of Ontario if they hadn't made that decision in 2015.

We are making the investments. We are making those increases and I am incredibly proud of the work that we've been able to do in a very short period of time: 3,500 new hospital beds in the province of Ontario since we took power. Those beds are serving people safely, with caring and compassionate staff that will continue to be there when we need them.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Supplementary question?

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** The government can rattle off all the numbers they want. I'll just share one number from this report with them—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Order. Government side, come to order.

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** —\$21.3-billion shortfall for health care. There's a number. The fact is that people are feeling the effects of this crisis across this province every day. The FAO report shows that the Conservatives' ideological push toward a two-tier health care scheme is going to fail Ontarians. It's failing them now. There are still not enough hospital beds and not nearly enough staff to keep them in use, and that's in your plans. There's no real plan to reduce wait-lists, even more emergency room closures are coming and we'll still be 30,000 PSWs short.

So my question to the Premier, again, is, will this government abandon their plans to divert public dollars away from our hospitals and into the hands of private shareholders?

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** On International Women's Day, I have to ask if the member opposite, the leader of the official opposition, will join me in congratulating hospital providers and hospital leaders across Ontario who have successfully decreased our surgery backlog to pre-pandemic. That is a success we need to acknowledge.

We committed as a government to make sure that we were pre-pandemic for surgeries by the end of March. Because of health care workers and hospitals stepping up and making those investments, we actually achieved that goal earlier this month.

I am incredibly proud of the 50 new hospital builds, expansions and renovations that are happening right now in the province of Ontario. In Niagara, in Hamilton, in Ottawa, in Mississauga, we're making those investments because we absolutely understand that we need to be prepared for a population that continues to grow in the province of Ontario, and an aging population.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The final supplementary?

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Do you know what? If the minister wants to celebrate International Women's Day, repeal Bill 124. Stop suppressing the wages of health care workers in this province.

The Conservatives can say that nobody is going to have to pay for health care. They're praying that their plan is going to work, but this report tells a different story—and they have a terrible track record, Speaker. Why should anybody trust them? Because after all, this is the same government that said they'd never carve up the greenbelt. They said there was going to be no crisis in health care and that they'd never privatize it.

The people of this province deserve a government they can trust to put their needs first. The facts in this report speak for themselves. Speaker, to the Premier, will this government put patients ahead of profits?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Members will please take their seats. I'll remind members to make their comments through the Chair.

Minister of Health.

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** You know, we are already seeing some innovation that is making a difference in the lives of people who are waiting for surgeries, who want to be back with their family, at their job and in their community. In December, 49 new MRIs were announced—operational funding in the province of Ontario, including hospitals that had never had an MRI before, like Collingwood General and Marine.

We have invested and we will continue to invest because we want people to have access to those diagnostic opportunities and those surgical clinics in community. When we make those investments, we see hospitals and hospital workers stepping up and doing the right thing. And I have to highlight and congratulate Bluewater Health in Sarnia–Lambton: 10 new hospital specialist doctors are starting at Bluewater Health, and that's the kind of investment where we see we are actually making a difference on the ground and in community.

#### WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** Speaker, 107,000 people waiting in pain and this government sat on \$21 billion in health care funding. That's just shameful.

I want to wish everyone in this House, especially the women, a happy International Women's Day again, and I am reflecting on how far women and gender-diverse people have come and how far we have to go.

Nurses and personal support workers have been lauded by the government for their heroism. They hold up our health care system, they take care of our loved ones and they're predominantly women. But this government is fighting them in court over the right to suppress their wages—shameful.

My question to the Premier is, will he drop his wasteful appeal of his government's legislated wage gap, Bill 124?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The President of the Treasury Board.

**Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria:** I want to absolutely thank the incredible work that our health care heroes are doing across this province and all the work that they have done throughout this pandemic into today. That is why, as a province, we launched the largest health human resources recruiting and training program ever by any government, Mr. Speaker. That is why nearly 12,000 nurses were registered last year, a record high for any province, for this province. And that is why we have continued to make historic investments into ensuring that our health care human resources, our health care workers are supported by this government.

**1050**

In fact, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite have voted against each and every single one of those measures. We will continue to do whatever we can to support health care workers across Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** I guess that's a no, Speaker. It's very unfortunate. But it's not just nurses and personal support workers, it's education workers in the province who have faced a similar sexist fight with this government. Some 70% of CUPE's education workers are women, and more than half of them are working additional jobs to make ends meet. Instead of giving them a fair wage, this government used the "notwithstanding" clause against them like a sledgehammer, until they were forced to learn an important lesson, I think, for this government: Women will not back down. We will not back down.

My question to the Premier is, will he stop holding down women's wages?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity.

**Hon. Charmaine A. Williams:** We are getting more women into jobs, more than ever before. We are investing heavily in employment training and support so women have access to in-demand skills and opportunities. In fact, we've seen an increase just in December alone of gains for women in full-time employment of up to 63,000. So we are building Ontario, and women are at the forefront of that.

But, Mr. Speaker, I think what the members opposite may be failing to understand is that in order for women to have access to the support, to be in a healthy mindset to get jobs, maintain jobs, they need to feel safe. And women are not feeling safe, mainly because they don't have a safe home to go to. We are working to build homes faster in Ontario.

Many women are staying in shelters longer, because they don't have places to go. We've heard this in shelters across Ontario. I've been to Hastings, Oakville, Burlington—they're saying the same thing. So, Mr. Speaker, if the members opposite really want to support women and put women's safety and priority first, they'll support Bill 23, our government's—

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Thank you. The final supplementary?

**Ms. Marit Stiles:** I'd note, Speaker, that they never addressed the wage gap, which was my question. So that's a no: no to women who are working in the jobs that make our communities work, no to the women that care for our children, no to the women that care for the sick and the elderly and no to every woman who does the same job as a man, because—still—women in this province are earning 70% of what men earn. You fought the midwives. You refused the call to raise the minimum wage that so many women in this province rely on. You've stalled progress on pay equity and pay transparency.

Again, to the Premier, will you stop fighting women who just want what's fair?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Members will please take their seats. Again, I will remind members to make their comments through the Chair.

The associate minister, once again, to reply.

**Hon. Charmaine A. Williams:** The government is dedicated to supporting equal pay for equal value, for work of equal value, and that is why we've been working diligently on empowering women and providing women with the supports to make sure they have all the resources to enter and re-enter the workforce.

We're also breaking barriers for women so that they feel free to enter male-dominated jobs—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Opposition, come to order.

**Hon. Charmaine A. Williams:** —such as ones in skilled trades, STEM. We know those jobs pay well. Our government introduced the Supporting Retention in Public Services Act to ensure that existing pay equity gaps are not widened and to help employers meet their obligation when it comes to equal pay for equal work. So I would like to say that we also have the Pay Equity Office to ensure that we have functioning and strong complaint systems.

Mr. Speaker, wraparound supports, job training, entrepreneur supports—we're making investments. Women are at the forefront of the post-pandemic economy, and we're seeing women get into jobs more than ever before.

#### ACCESS TO PRESCRIPTION CONTRACEPTIVES

**Mrs. Jennifer (Jennie) Stevens:** My question is to the Premier. I have tabled a motion today that will have a great impact for people across this province. It is time that Ontario takes an important step towards gender and reproductive equality and commits to covering prescription contraceptive care under the Ontario Health Insurance Plan. We need to guarantee access to contraceptive care at no cost for anyone who needs it. This will ensure better gender equality and lead to better health outcomes. It will lower barriers to access, enabling people to make better decisions about their health and family planning. It is my sincere hope that this government will support this motion today, on International Women's Day.

To the Premier: Will the government follow British Columbia's lead and introduce a no-cost prescription contraceptive policy for all residents in Ontario?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Minister of Health.

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** I look forward to reviewing the member opposite's motion. We obviously are looking closely at what British Columbia has proposed. Look, I'm a firm believer that when there are good ideas, when there are innovative ideas, I am always willing to talk and have those conversations to see if and when it is appropriate.

As the member opposite would know, many private members' bills from across all parties have been passed in the last session and in this session. We'll continue to see whether there is validity and where we can work together on important issues like women's reproductive health.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The supplementary question: the member for Scarborough Southwest.

**Ms. Doly Begum:** Speaker, access to contraception is health care and offering anything other than publicly funded access is not good enough. While other provinces across the country are leading that change, lack of action from our government will make Ontario fall behind.

We know the reality. Study after study points out that existing coverage for contraceptives leaves low-income individuals, especially women from marginalized communities, behind. While this change comes at a small cost to the province, the difference it will make in the lives of those impacted will be immense.

Today is International Women's Day and all of us in the House are focused on the important issue of gender equity. My question is, will this government commit to ensuring universal access to contraception in the upcoming budget?

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** I'm not sure you heard my previous answer, but I said I am happy to take a look at and make an assessment on whether this is something that Ontario should be moving forward with.

Look, our record proves very aggressively that when there are new opportunities, like the cystic fibrosis drug Trikafta—it was actually the province of Ontario that was the first to put it on the drug formulary. Luxturna is another drug that as recently as last week we have ensured that a very limited number for very important treatment is available for individuals who are suffering from blindness.

We are there with patients to make sure that as innovations happen, we can move forward on changes that are impacting people's health and people's lives. We are absolutely going to be there.

#### PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Mr. Graham McGregor:** My question is for the Minister of Transportation—a great minister. For the people in my riding of Brampton North, access to reliable and convenient public transit must be a priority. People of all ages and from all walks of life rely on public transit for themselves, their families and their livelihoods.

The people of our province expect transit networks to be stable and efficient. Our government must continue to

deliver on its commitment to expanding Ontario's public transit system to meet local community needs. We know where the NDP stand: They vote no time and time again as our government works to get shovels in the ground and build the transit our communities desperately need.

Speaker, can the minister please explain where our government stands and how we are making critical investments in public transit that will strengthen communities and support economic growth?

**Hon. Caroline Mulroney:** Thank you to the member from Brampton North for the important question. Commuters deserve nothing less than a transit system that will get them where they need to go every day. That's why, in February, I was thrilled to announce that our government is investing over \$379 million for public transit in 107 municipalities across Ontario.

What does this mean for the people of Brampton, Mr. Speaker? It means that we're providing \$16 million to support public transit in the city of Brampton alone. The funding can be used to extend service hours, buy new buses, add routes, improve accessibility or upgrade infrastructure for local public transit services, including Brampton Transit and Züm.

1100

Our government is providing municipalities with the supports that they need to succeed. We're investing in public transit across Ontario, including in the great city of Brampton.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Graham McGregor:** Thank you to the minister for her response. A little louder for those around: "the great city of Brampton."

It is welcome news that our government is so significantly investing in public transit. As we know, Brampton is one of the fastest-growing cities in the country. As more people turn to public transit, there is no disputing that now is the time to invest in this key infrastructure. The gas tax funding will help to ensure that communities have the resources they need to continue to deliver safe and reliable transit service. After 15 years of neglect from the previous Liberal government, backed by the NDP, it is essential now that all governments work collaboratively together to provide the quality of transit service that our communities so rightly deserve.

Speaker, can the minister please explain how our government is working with our municipal partners in supporting effective public transit?

**Hon. Caroline Mulroney:** As the member notes, ensuring that people can get to work, home, to medical services when they need to is more than just a luxury, it's an essential service. We've heard from municipalities that they need our continued support after the last few challenging years, and we've been there to help them every step of the way.

To further support municipalities like the city of Brampton, we're providing a one-time additional top-up of \$80 million included in this year's funding through the gas tax program. This will allow Brampton to accommodate its growing population and its increasing ridership while supporting economic growth in the city.

With more people returning to public transit, now is the time to invest in this critical infrastructure. Under the leadership of Premier Ford, we're getting it done.

## HEALTH CARE

**MPP Jill Andrew:** Some 689,000 people in Ontario have eating disorders and they disproportionately impact women and girls. Sherri is one of them. Sherri has been waiting for a publicly funded adult in-patient bed since 2021. Why? Because there are only 20 publicly funded beds in Ontario. People who cannot afford to pay \$30,000, \$50,000, \$60,000 for private care are dying on wait-lists. Last we spoke, she was still on a wait-list that was closed. I don't want Sherri to die.

My question is to the Premier. Will this government increase adult ED beds, address the specialized staff shortage, make the temporary 14 pediatric beds permanent and create billing codes to ensure ED survivors and families aren't paying out of pocket for the physical and mental health care they so desperately need?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions.

**Hon. Michael A. Tibollo:** Thank you to the member opposite for that question. She and I have had many discussions about eating disorders and the work that needs to be done. Quite frankly, COVID-19 saw a surge in severe eating disorders among children and youth due to increased isolation, school disruption and social media exposure—as well as in adults.

The AG report in 2016 showed that the Liberals spent \$10 million to send 127 kids to the United States for eating disorder treatment. We spent \$16.5 million—and we spend that annually—to make sure that they can be treated closer to home, right here in the province.

Our investments are building the supporting treatments and beds and spaces across Ontario: \$8.1 million, seven beds at CHEO, five at SickKids, two at McMaster; \$11.1 million annually for 20 treatment spaces in underserved communities like Sudbury, North Bay and Sault Ste. Marie.

We are making investments to ensure that anyone who needs support in the province of Ontario gets it where and when they—

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much.

The supplementary question: the member for Niagara Centre.

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** Speaker, through you to the Minister of Health: Jane Wigmore, a retired OB/GYN nurse from Port Colborne, reached out to my office concerned about the unacceptable four-month wait for Pap test results. She said, "It is of the utmost importance for women to get their results as soon as possible because the chances of survival depend on early detection so that treatment for diseases like cancer can begin as soon as possible."

Jane would like to know, is it acceptable to this minister that women in this province are waiting over four months for the results of a Pap test?



**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The Minister of Health.

**Hon. Sylvia Jones:** No, I don't think it's acceptable. I think that as we get diagnostic imaging and as we get diagnosis and information in community, we need to get those tests back quickly so that if and when there is further intervention that is necessary, that is available quickly.

We all understand—I'm sure the member opposite understands—that the faster that a person has access to treatment and testing, the faster that they can move forward on their diagnosis and treating of it. I have been working closely with our lab partners to make sure that they have a plan to ensure that those tests that are taking, frankly, too long to come back are expedited so that we can get appropriate care in Ontario.

### COURT FACILITIES

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** My question is for the extraordinary Attorney General of Ontario. Ensuring our courts and justice system are up to date and modern is essential for a properly functioning justice system. Our government—and the Attorney General, in particular—has overseen a tremendous transformation in how courts function in Ontario. There are many modernization achievements.

Last week, our government announced the long-awaited opening of a new courthouse in downtown Toronto. The project has been in development for over nine years and replaces six justice buildings. Individuals are interested in how this new consolidated building will impact the delivery of judicial and court services.

Speaker, can the Attorney General please elaborate on how this new courthouse will provide improved justice services going forward?

**Hon. Doug Downey:** I want to thank the excellent member from Eglinton–Lawrence, and although I'm just the regular Attorney General, I'll answer the question nonetheless.

By building, upgrading and modernizing our infrastructure, including the ways we deliver justice, we're ensuring that Ontario is built to last, today and for the future. I'm honoured to talk about the new Toronto courthouse—a modern, accessible, state-of-the-art building. It brings together criminal courts from throughout Toronto, 73 judicial hearing rooms, modern technology that allows for virtual and hybrid hearings in every courtroom and upgraded security features throughout the building. It's truly a courthouse of the future.

The new Toronto courthouse is designed to support victims and accommodate the unique needs of drug treatment, Gladue and youth and mental health courts.

Mr. Speaker, it was our government, it was this infrastructure minister, it was this Premier, that got the courthouse of the future built. I'm very proud to stand with my colleagues on this momentous occasion.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The supplementary question?

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** Thank you to the Attorney General for his response—although, I am very impressed with the transformation we've seen in our court system, and that's why I'm such a big fan.

Unfortunately, the previous Liberal government did little, really, to improve and modernize our court system, which was outdated, bureaucratic and, frankly, inconvenient. It is essential that our government provide leadership and implement a new strategy that brings Ontario's justice system into the 21st century. Our government must focus on creating modern court services for Ontarians that work for them, especially in an increasingly digital and accessible world.

Speaker, could the Attorney General please explain how this new courthouse is accessible and better serves all Ontarians.

**Hon. Doug Downey:** Our government rose to the challenge of modernizing Ontario's courts, breaking down barriers, transforming access to the justice system in Ontario. It's all part of our plan to change the culture of the system, to identify the best path forward and to fix the problems that affect Ontarians in how they access justice in Ontario. We call this strategy Justice Accelerated, and it has informed our work in the last few years as we deliver a better justice system for everyone in Ontario.

Whether it was tens of millions invested in virtual and hybrid hearings or the new Toronto courthouse, it has been our government delivering for this province through transformation of the justice system. The new Toronto courthouse is an embodiment of this strategy. We are harnessing the power of technology, accessibility and state-of-the-art design. We are providing justice while housing essential social services and providing supports to protect victims. With the opening of the new Toronto courthouse, we are once again showing that Ontario will simply not let the justice system remain status quo. We are getting it done.

### WOMEN'S ISSUES

**Miss Monique Taylor:** My question is for the Premier. Every day, women in this province are expected to step up and fill a gap left by this government. A mother recently reached out to my office because she had to leave her job as a teacher to care for her child with autism. She was forced to switch careers, take on financial barriers and become a behavioural therapist so she could actually give her child the services that she could not get in Ontario.

1110

A parent should be able to be a parent. They should not have to become the service provider that this government is not providing.

The Premier and his government seem to be okay with mothers having to step up and run their own program. Can the Premier tell us if this is the new expectation for mothers in Ontario?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

**Hon. Merrilee Fullerton:** Happy International Women's Day to the member opposite.

Our government doubled the Ontario Autism Program budget. Nearly five times as many children are receiving services than under the previous government. That's approximately 40,000 children receiving services.

The reality is, we are in constant communication with families, with people across Ontario about autism. And the fact that we are improving the system from what it was before—about 75% to 66% of families and youth and children with autism were not going to get any service under the previous government's efforts, and that was supported by the NDP. So I'm questioning why you didn't speak up earlier. This is something that our government—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Order.

**Hon. Merrilee Fullerton:** Under the previous government, you did not take the action necessary to create a better program. Our government is doing that and will continue to do it.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Order.

Supplementary question: the member for Parkdale—High Park.

**Ms. Bhutla Karpoche:** My question is to the Premier. Ontario has a serious problem in recruiting and retaining staff in licensed child care centres. The wages of child care educators, who are overwhelmingly women, are not competitive with other occupations that require a college education. To have enough educators to offer good-quality care, there is no real alternative to raising the wages—simple as that.

The Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario has urged the Conservative government to develop and implement a province-wide salary scale for registered ECEs and child care staff to address recruitment and retention issues. On International Women's Day, will the Premier commit to that?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** To reply, the government House leader.

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** I appreciate the question from the member.

As the member knows and all colleagues will know, since 2018, we knew that we had to rebuild the province of Ontario, and that, of course, included child care. The member will know that we were left with a system that was completely unaffordable, that people could not access. Across the province, it was unequal—we couldn't bring people into the system.

We worked with our partners at the federal level to ensure that Ontario had a made-in-Ontario program that brought fees down for all of the people of the province of Ontario so that families could afford child care. What does that mean? It means that families have options. More people can get back into the workforce, including women.

But we went a step further. We are consulting with ECE workers across the province of Ontario because we know how important they are. We can't succeed if they don't succeed. That's why we're consulting and we're making

sure that the program that we fought for in the province of Ontario—that this Premier, this Minister of Education, ensured that we have a better program than anywhere else in the country. Unfortunately, they voted against it, but we're getting—

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Thank you.

The next question?

## AMATEUR SPORT

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** My question is to the Premier. The Greater Toronto Hockey League is a non-profit organization comprised of many hockey teams providing youth with the opportunity to participate in Canada's official winter sport. The GTHL is part of the Ontario Hockey Federation, the governing body of amateur hockey in Ontario and a provincial sports organization that receives operational funding from the province.

Parents teach their kids that team sports are a great way to have fun and learn important skills that can last a lifetime. And that's what parents buy into when they invest in their kids, these teams and the league, financially.

However, what we are seeing is that non-profit teams within the GTHL are quietly being sold and bought, under the cover of darkness, for millions of dollars.

Can the Premier tell us what kind of financial oversights are in place for the provincial sport organizations they govern, including the GTHL?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** To respond, the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

**Hon. Neil Lumsden:** Thank you for the question, and I couldn't agree with you more with respect to when it comes to our youth and sport. One of the biggest drivers for the development of young people in sport: learning how to deal with people, teammates, understanding direction, understanding that things aren't easy and they've got to work through things.

When we talk about the funding of the PSOs, which we do in a very successful way in Ontario, we allow them to get better at the levels they want to—that they need to provide the services that they provide.

You asked about oversight. We don't feel a need at this point to go into the books to find out what every minor hockey, football or soccer organization does. If there's a problem, we will look into it, but at this point, it's only speculation. So I can't get into that right now with specifics, but I will tell you that our ministry supports minor sport for all the right reasons and will continue to do so in the province of Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The supplementary question?

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** These transactions should be publicly available so that parents and players can understand where the proceeds are going and who is benefiting. The finances for the OHF and GTHL can be found on their websites, but unfortunately, this is not the case for the non-profit organizations within the GTHL, the largest minor hockey league in the world, with 500 teams

and over 40,000 players. It's a huge part of my community of Beaches–East York. Even my husband was a coach and my son a player.

Parents want their children to be healthy, happy, safe and active. They trust that when they provide them with an opportunity to participate in Canada's game, there will be transparency and accountability. Will the Premier show Ontario taxpayers, parents and kids the respect they deserve and shed light on these significant transactions? Because it's not clear who is benefiting, and parents want to know. Will the Premier help us follow the money trail?

**Hon. Neil Lumsden:** Again, thanks for the question. It's an interesting one, as a parent and as a guy who coached in the Burlington rep hockey system for about 20 years and other associations around Ontario in minor sports. I found that when I had meetings with parents, on all fronts, whether it was for the organization or about how we were teaching and directing our young people, regardless of the sport, and they wanted to take it past the ice surface or the field, that questions should be directed at the organization if there are concerns on how the organization is being run. So I'd suggest to those parents, as I would do myself as a parent, that if I have concerns, I'd be calling the office of the GTHL.

#### INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

**Mr. Aris Babikian:** My question is to the Minister of Infrastructure. Under the leadership of the Premier and this minister, our government continues to deliver on our commitment to actively build infrastructure projects in communities across the province. The essential work being done by the province's construction sector is critically important, yet they are encountering some challenges.

Within the current economic climate, it is all but certain that project costs could escalate due to a number of external factors. Nevertheless, it is essential that our government continues to prioritize projects that modernize our province's public assets.

For the good of Ontario's economic prosperity, job creation and the health and well-being of Ontarians, can the minister please explain how our government is investing in infrastructure projects while navigating the effects of global economic uncertainty?

**Hon. Kinga Surma:** Thank you to the member for the question. Challenges such as inflation, rising costs of products, materials and supply chain disruptions are all real challenges that we're facing here in Ontario, but also across the world. Our government, as a team, made a decision to face these challenges head on and forge ahead and continue to build Ontario.

Last week, we updated the P3 pipeline, which includes 38 major infrastructure projects which include an estimated value of \$35 billion. Mr. Speaker, there's some good news here, as two projects previously in pre-procurement now have gone to the market, where builders can make their submissions to Infrastructure Ontario: the Garden City Skyway twinning in Niagara, as well as the Ottawa Civic Hospital, one of our larger hospital expansion

projects. Mr. Speaker, this is not a time to hesitate or delay. It is a time to build Ontario.

1120

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Supplementary question?

**Mr. Aris Babikian:** Speaker, as the population continues to grow in my riding, it is critical that we build the necessary services to support their needs. Transit, highways, schools and long-term-care projects are important to the families and the people of my community. Under the previous Liberal government investments in expanding transit and improving health care facilities were not a priority. Sadly, the communities in my riding of Scarborough–Agincourt were left behind, as were many others across the province.

People deserve better and they are counting on our government to strengthen Ontario's communities by investing in critical infrastructure. Can the minister please explain how our government is delivering on the promise of building public infrastructure that supports the local needs of communities?

**Hon. Kinga Surma:** Thank you to the member.

Mr. Speaker, can I take a second to wish my parliamentary assistant, the MPP from Scarborough–Rouge Park, a very happy birthday today? I know this is something that's very, very close to his heart: Another P3 pipeline update is the Scarborough subway extension. We are now taking that contract off the pipeline because it has been awarded—the stations, rail and systems contract. This will now go into the partnership phase, where there will be a 12-to-18-month period where the contract owner—the province of Ontario—as well as the selected builder will work collaboratively to address risk and price.

I know how excited the people of Scarborough were when Minister Mulroney, the Minister of Transportation, was there in the new year to turn on that tunnel boring machine, which is drilling below the ground in Scarborough. Mr. Speaker, we have a lot to celebrate and we will continue to build Ontario.

#### GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

**MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam:** Since June 2022, front-line advocates have reached out to this government about the Renfrew recommendations. This is arising from the 2015 triple femicide, and included an implementation committee to make sure that all recommendations there would actually be carried forward to end intimate partner violence. Those requests have gone unanswered.

Again to the Premier: Yes or no, will this government use its political voice and commit to, today, the number one recommendation from that inquest and declare intimate partner violence an epidemic?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity.

**Hon. Charmaine A. Williams:** I really do feel for the community of Renfrew and their families and friends who were impacted by the loss of those three souls. In particular, the member from Renfrew has been actively

working with the community to ensure that things are progressing.

I do want to thank the members who participated in the inquest. It was not an easy inquest to participate in, but they persevered and provided our government with some valuable recommendations, which we are reviewing. On February 10 we provided part 1 of our response to the recommendations, and that response was quite comprehensive. It gave a full overview of what the government has been doing so far.

Mr. Speaker, I have been working across different levels of government to make sure we're implementing programs to keep women safe. For example, we had the opportunity to announce the pilot project in the Peel region with the Solicitor General that pairs police officers with social workers to respond to intimate partner violence calls and de-escalate the situation and connect individuals to resources and supports.

There are many things we're doing and we're going to keep pushing forward to ensure women are safe in Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Member for Thunder Bay–Superior North for the supplementary question.

**MPP Lise Vaugeois:** If women are to leave their abusers, we need investment in shelters, and safe, non-ghettoized housing, and we need to double social assistance rates. When women don't have access to enough money to live on, or safe places to go, they can't escape their abusers.

Will this government increase funding to shelters, increase safe, affordable housing? Here I'll digress a little bit, because the kind of housing that's available right now is ghettoized. That means that women in those places are targeted by gangs and their places are taken over. They are not safe spaces. They might be affordable, but they're not safe.

To continue, we need that safe housing, and we need to double social assistance rates. Will the government commit to increasing funding?

**Hon. Charmaine A. Williams:** I agree completely with the member opposite that we need safe housing for women. But, Mr. Speaker, women are not feeling safe because they are left to go back to their abusive homes when they go to a shelter and they're full. Women are staying in shelters longer because there's no housing stock, and the transitional supportive housing workers that our government funded are all saying the same thing to us: There's no place to move women.

So we need to build more homes in Ontario. If we're really going to put women's safety and make it a priority, we need to support the initiatives that the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Associate Minister of Housing, our Premier, our government is making to build more homes faster. Will they support Bill 23 so we can get this done to get women into safe houses?

## MINING INDUSTRY

**Mr. Ross Romano:** My question is for the Minister of Indigenous Affairs and Northern Development. There is so much to enjoy and discover in our communities across all of northern Ontario, Speaker. Unfortunately, the previous government, propped up by the NDP, failed to recognize the north for the importance of its vast resources as well as the ways in which northern communities contribute to our economic and cultural well-being here in Ontario. In short, they ignored opportunities to build infrastructure, to create jobs and to show the north the respect that it deserved.

This week, the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada held their annual conference here in Toronto. This mineral exploration and mining convention draws large attendance from across the sector for the purposes of information-sharing and networking. Speaker, can the minister please provide information about how our government is partnering with and supporting northern Ontario businesses as part of this conference and all the opportunities that will stem from that?

**Hon. Greg Rickford:** I want to thank the member from Sault Ste. Marie for the great work he does there. It's the steel manufacturing capital of northern Ontario and increasingly for mining. Thanks for your work, Ross; I appreciate it.

Mr. Speaker, the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada hosts the largest global mining conference the world over, and no doubt for sure our Minister of Mines has been very busy. But there's an important narrative developing on the floor of PDAC, and it's through the Northern Ontario Mining Showcase. It narrates a story about what's really happening on the ground in northern Ontario, the need for northern Ontario development—investments that are targeted at companies in the service and supply sector. They don't just work in mining; they work across resources. But they tell a story, an exciting one at that, about how our businesses are transforming our communities with real economic support, promoting Ontario's northern development.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The supplementary question?

**Mr. Ross Romano:** Thank you to the minister for that response. It is encouraging to learn about all the positive outcomes and collaboration between our government and northern leaders that came as a result of this conference. In fact, the minister and I were just present with the great member for Thunder Bay–Atikokan yesterday at the PDAC conference, and we're just really seeing how the mining industry is a catalyst to emerging research, job creation and economic development throughout northern Ontario.

While mineral exploration and mining are a key focus when it comes to opportunities in northern Ontario, our government must continue to ensure that our communities remain strong. Our northern communities deserve support in order to build the capacity that is needed to deal with the growth that comes from new and emerging mineral

extractions. Speaker, can the minister please explain how the prospectors and developers association convention was an opportunity to better showcase the central role and importance of northern Ontario?

**Hon. Greg Rickford:** At the Northern Ontario Mining Showcase floor, there's a lot of exciting activities going on, but what's important is that 80% of the booths at this showcase, Mr. Speaker, are supported by the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund. These are Indigenous-owned and -operated businesses, very small family businesses, and, in some instances, some of the largest mining companies in the world.

And since it's International Women's Day, Mr. Speaker, maybe I'll take this opportunity to highlight and showcase an announcement I made where the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund, Vale and Laurentian University joined together to support the Mining Innovation, Rehabilitation and Applied Research Corp.

1130

Under the leadership of Dr. Nadia Mykytczuk, they're going to be engaging in biotech, biomining and bio-remediation. This is an exciting technology being done in Sudbury for the benefit of mining across northern Ontario. We're excited to support it, and I hope one day the member from Sudbury will actually get up and support the investments that we make in northern Ontario, Mr. Speaker, especially—

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Thank you.  
The next question.

#### GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** My question is to the Premier. Speaker, the London Coordinating Committee to End Woman Abuse released a snapshot yesterday showing that there were more than 10,000 domestic and sexual violence crisis calls in the London area in 2022, an increase of 54% from the year before. The vast majority of those calls were from women. Over the same period, women were turned away 2,166 times from Anova's women's shelter because of a shortage of beds, a 62% increase from 2021. Anova is also seeing more severe cases of gender-based violence than ever before.

Speaker, will this year's budget include the increased and stable funding that organizations like Anova, Atlohsa and London Abused Women's Centre need to keep women and children safe?

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Minister of Children, Community and Social Services.

**Hon. Merrilee Fullerton:** All women deserve security and safety, and particularly that is in our thoughts on International Women's Day. Our government is constantly working to ensure that women, children and all Ontarians can live free from fear of threats, exploitation and violence, and we're working to prevent and address violence against women in all forms. We've made investments, we've launched programs and we've passed legislation aimed at ending violence against women in its many forms, and we'll continue to do that important work:

standing up against gender-based violence and supporting those affected by these crimes.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Supplementary question: the member for Waterloo.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Back to the Premier: Women's Crisis Services of Waterloo Region provides life-saving, safe and compassionate shelter and transitional housing to women and children experiencing domestic violence. In their pre-budget submission, they detailed the desperate need for core operational funding. Provincially, that number is \$60 million, noting the rise in domestic violence across the province.

A key ask involves transitional housing, which is foundational for survivors to move out of a shelter while they're maintaining support and safety before living independently. It is crucial to addressing the bottleneck on housing wait-lists and emergency shelters.

Will the government commit to providing organizations like Women's Crisis Services with operational funding for VAW transitional housing programs in the 2023 budget? Because I hope that we can all agree that we should not have to fundraise in the province of Ontario to keep women and children safe.

**Hon. Merrilee Fullerton:** Our government understands the importance of housing, and that's why my ministry and other ministries are working across the board to understand how we can improve the lives of women and their dependants. That's why we're working to increase access to safe and affordable housing and provide supports to people who have experienced homelessness during COVID-19. It's why we're investing \$18.5 million over three years in the Transitional and Housing Support Program to support victims of domestic violence and survivors of human trafficking to find and maintain housing and help transition to independence.

Our investment is helping survivors of domestic violence and human trafficking find and maintain housing, and it's helping them transition to independence. It also connects them to socially and culturally responsive wrap-around community supports like safety planning, counselling, health and wellness, education, legal and immigration services, financial resources and child care services.

Our investments also include holistic, culturally responsible services for Indigenous women. We will continue this important work, and I thank the member for—

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much.

The next question.

#### RECYCLING

**Ms. Laura Smith:** My question is for the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks—

**Interjection:** Great minister.

**Ms. Laura Smith:** I agree.

Everyone can play a role in protecting our environment, which is why it's so especially inspiring to see elementary

students in my riding take action in cleaning up their community. Recently, the minister visited St. Anthony Catholic Elementary School, a wonderful school in my riding of Thornhill. While there, the minister, in partnership with Call2Recycle and the Earth Rangers, helped launch Ontario's Battery Blitz collection contest. The Battery Blitz collection project represents a major initiative in educating consumers in Ontario and is part of a larger plan to drive battery recycling. I know because I brought them a batch of batteries myself.

Can the minister please elaborate on the initiatives that are under way across our province to help keep Ontario clean and protect the environment?

**Hon. David Piccini:** Thank you for the question. I was honoured to visit Thornhill with our incredible member from Thornhill and the amazing students at St. Anthony to launch the Battery Blitz. This is a challenge, first of its kind, across the province of Ontario where students are recycling batteries in this province. Thanks to the leadership of this Premier, this government, we're recycling more in the province of Ontario. You know the saying "recycle, reuse, reduce"? It's inspiring to look in the faces of our next generation, for them to go home to talk about all the things that they use batteries for and recycling—

*Interjection.*

**Hon. David Piccini:** Maybe pipe down and listen about kids who are recycling. Come on.

Speaker, I don't want to clip this. I just want kids to recycle. Thanks to Premier Ford and this government, we're recycling more.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Supplementary question?

**Ms. Laura Smith:** Thank you for the minister's response and for all the positive work that he does. It's encouraging that programs such as the Battery Blitz collection contest can help students to form lifelong habits and play positive roles in managing the environment. It is also commendable that the minister actively supports initiatives that focus on waste management and environmental protection.

The previous Liberal government talked a good game about the importance of recycling programs, but their words were not backed up by a realistic plan and tangible actions. In fact, under the previous Liberal government, only 30% of waste was diverted from landfills. Our government must continue to deliver on our commitment to protect the environment. Can the minister please explain the specific actions that our government is taking to enhance recycling programs across our province?

**Hon. David Piccini:** I'm going to send some AA batteries over to the opposition to keep the energy in their constituencies, to talk to students across Ontario, to participate in the Battery Blitz so that Ontario can be a national leader in recycling batteries.

Again, thanks to Premier Ford's leadership, we're recycling more in the province of Ontario. We've launched among the highest targets in Ontario to recycle, with extended producer responsibility, in the blue box.

We're finding new and innovative ways to recycle more. We're recycling hazardous waste, including recycling plants that create fertilizer from end-of-life batteries, an innovation that would not be possible if it wasn't for our government's leadership in promoting and investing in recycling alternatives. We're standardizing what goes into the blue box and expanding its services to more communities across Ontario than ever before. Partner municipalities have been asking for this for years. We're saving them hundreds of millions of dollars. I'm proud to see our next generation getting so active in recycling across—

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much.

The next question.

## WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ma question est pour le premier ministre. You will remember, in 1994, the NDP brought midwifery to Ontario. We gave Ontario families access to midwives for free and we paid the midwives respectfully. After 16 years of Conservative and Liberal governments, midwives faced a \$100,000 pay equity gap. No matter the analysis that the midwives presented, the Liberal and the Conservative governments refused to listen to these women. So the midwives launched multiple appeals in the courts and in the Human Rights Tribunal. And you know what, Speaker? They won each and every one of those appeals. The tribunal sided with the midwives and ordered the government to pay.

1140

Yet we are now in 2023. It is International Women's Day. Will this Conservative government do the right thing, respect the tribunal, respect midwives and give them pay equity?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Members will please take their seats.

To reply, government House leader and Minister of Long-Term Care.

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** Of course, we'll allow the process to continue on. I think that's very important. We can't, on the one hand, ask the government to stay out of the lives of people and, on the other hand, legislate. So we'll wait and see how that process unfolds.

But at the same time, Mr. Speaker, I think what you're seeing across the province of Ontario—look, I was in Blyth and Goderich just last week and I was doing a ground-breaking for another 160 long-term-care beds in that community, and it was just a wonderful opportunity in that community to see more health care coming to different parts of Ontario that have never had it before, Mr. Speaker, and that builds on top of the things that we're doing in health care.

When you talk about midwives, when you talk about building Ontario health teams, it's about building a blanket of care, so regardless of whether you need a midwife, whether you need a long-term-care home, whether you

need a primary care doctor, whatever other services—home care—you will be covered in the province of Ontario through these new Ontario health teams—

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Thank you.

The supplementary question: the member for Windsor West.

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** Speaker, as you know, today is International Women's Day, and I just listened to the Minister of the Environment tell one of my women colleagues to “pipe down” when she was standing up for the environment—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Order.

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** Maybe the minister actually needs to understand what International Women's Day—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Stop the clock. Order.

**Hon. David Piccini:** It's children recycling. Relax.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Order.

Restart the clock. Member for Windsor West has the floor.

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** My question is to the Premier. Health care workers, developmental services workers, education workers—

*Interjection.*

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** I wish the man on the Conservative side would stop trying to clap over me talking—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Order.

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** —education workers, social workers, clerical staff—all largely women-led professions have been attacked by this Conservative government time and time again. The government would rather spend tax dollars dragging those workers to court than give them the pay and respect they deserve.

With Bill 28, the lowest-paid education workers were attacked by the Conservatives using the “notwithstanding” clause to take away their right to free and fair collective bargaining. Bill 124, which was deemed unconstitutional by the courts, has done the same to workers in health care, developmental services and education—again, largely women-led professions.

Speaker, will the Premier commit today on International Women's Day to stop his government's appeal of Bill 124, pay the women workers the wages they deserve and respect their collective bargaining rights?

**Hon. Paul Calandra:** You know what? This government, since day one, has been focusing on all Ontarians, including women. When you look at this caucus, when you look at the leadership of this team, the Deputy Premier has been a woman. The person in charge of health care has been a woman. Our Minister of Transportation responsible for ensuring the largest building-out of transportation, public transportation, in the country's history—led by a woman. The infrastructure ministry—led by a woman, Mr. Speaker. The most diverse caucus that this government, this province, has ever seen.

But it goes beyond that. The Minister of Labour has been working hard since the beginning, and they voted against it every single time. They voted against those opportunities that we put in place to have more women in the trades. They voted against it. When we have brought measures in front of this Parliament to have thousands more people participate in the health care system, they voted against it. When we brought in \$3 more for our PSWs, they voted against it. When we brought hope and opportunity to families with better daycare, they voted against it.

It's not just on International Women's Day. It's every day. Try doing it once in a while—

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Thank you.

That concludes our question period for this morning.

## VISITORS

### VISITEUSES ET VISITEURS

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The Associate Minister of Housing has informed me he has a point of order.

**Hon. Michael Parsa:** On a point of order, when I was introducing people I missed two very important people of our team: Marcus Battaglia and David Uveges. Thank you very much for all you do, and welcome to the Legislature.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** The member for Newmarket–Aurora has informed me she has a point of order.

**M<sup>me</sup> Dawn Gallagher Murphy:** Je voudrais présenter l'Association franco-ontarienne des conseils scolaires catholiques. Bienvenue à Yves Lévesque, Melinda Chartrand, Suzanne Salituri et Émilie Tomory. Bienvenue à votre maison. Merci.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Order. The government House leader will come to order. The member for Niagara Centre will come to order.

The Minister of the Environment has a point of order.

**Hon. David Piccini:** Speaker, my apologies: I forgot to introduce Wenda Rodd and Mike Sharpe, who are here today for young page Wyatt Sharpe from our constituency of Northumberland–Peterborough South. I just wanted to welcome them to Queen's Park.

## DEFERRED VOTES

### CONSUMER PROTECTION

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** We now have a deferred vote on private member's notice of motion number 27. Call in the members. This is a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1146 to 1151.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Members will please take their seats.

MPP Bell has moved private member's notice of motion number 27. All those in favour, please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Andrew, Jill	Gélinas, France	Shamji, Adil
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Glover, Chris	Shaw, Sandy
Begum, Doly	Gretzky, Lisa	Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie)
Bell, Jessica	Harden, Joel	Stiles, Marit
Blais, Stephen	Hsu, Ted	Tabuns, Peter
Brady, Bobbi Ann	Karpoche, Bhutila	Taylor, Monique
Burch, Jeff	Kernaghan, Terence	Vanthof, John
Collard, Lucille	McMahon, Mary-Margaret	Vaugeois, Lise
Fife, Catherine	Pasma, Chandra	West, Jamie
Fraser, John	Rakocevic, Tom	Wong-Tam, Kristyn
French, Jennifer K.	Sattler, Peggy	
Gates, Wayne	Schreiner, Mike	

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** All those opposed will please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Anand, Deepak	Hardeman, Ernie	Rae, Matthew
Babikian, Aris	Harris, Mike	Rasheed, Kaleed
Bailey, Robert	Hogarth, Christine	Rickford, Greg
Barnes, Patrice	Holland, Kevin	Romano, Ross
Bouma, Will	Jones, Sylvia	Sabawy, Sheref
Bresee, Ric	Jones, Trevor	Sandhu, Amarjot
Byers, Rick	Jordan, John	Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh
Calandra, Paul	Kanapathi, Logan	Sarrazin, Stéphane
Cho, Raymond Sung Joon	Khanjin, Andrea	Saunderson, Brian
Cho, Stan	Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia	Scott, Laurie
Clark, Steve	Leardi, Anthony	Skelly, Donna
Coe, Lorne	Lumsden, Neil	Smith, Graydon
Crawford, Stephen	MacLeod, Lisa	Smith, Laura
Cuzzetto, Rudy	Martin, Robin	Surma, Kinga
Dixon, Jess	McCarthy, Todd J.	Tangri, Nina
Dowie, Andrew	McGregor, Graham	Thanigasalam, Vijay
Downey, Doug	Mulroney, Caroline	Thompson, Lisa M.
Fedeli, Victor	Oosterhoff, Sam	Tibollo, Michael A.
Ford, Michael D.	Pang, Billy	Triantafilopoulos, Effie J.
Fullerton, Merrilee	Parsa, Michael	Wai, Daisy
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn	Piccini, David	Williams, Charmaine A.
Gill, Parm	Pierre, Natalie	
Grewal, Hardeep Singh	Quinn, Nolan	

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker):** The ayes are 34; the nays are 67.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I declare the motion lost.

*Motion negatived.*

#### MEMBERS' PHOTOGRAPH

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** I'm very pleased to announce to the House that we're going to have a photograph taken in the chamber right after question period in recognition of International Women's Day for the female members of the Legislature. So I'll ask you to stay, if you can. Thank you.

There being no further business, this House stands in recess until 1 p.m.

*The House recessed from 1155 to 1300.*

#### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Logan Kanapathi:** I am so happy to introduce my good friend and great community leader and also a Gandhian leader—he's always teaching me the Gandhian principles in Markham—Mr. Indrakant Patel, and Mrs. Daxaben Patel. Thank you for being here.

Mr. Speaker, they took a picture with you. They are so excited to be here. Welcome to Queen's Park.

#### REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

##### STANDING COMMITTEE ON PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** I beg leave to present the first interim report on the study of the rehabilitation and restoration of the legislative precinct from the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs and move the adoption of its recommendations.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Ms. French presents the committee's report and moves the adoption of its recommendations.

Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** As Chair of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, I am glad to be able to table the committee's first interim report.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank committee members for their work to date. The committee extends its appreciation to the Deputy Clerk, the director of precinct properties branch, and House of Commons officials for appearing as witnesses.

The committee thanks Queen's Park precinct properties branch staff and House of Commons staff in Ottawa for providing the committee with guided tours of their respective precincts and openly sharing their knowledge and expertise.

The committee also thanks its federal counterparts for the meeting that they hosted in Ottawa during the committee's travel last month.

Finally, the committee acknowledges the assistance provided during the hearings and report-writing deliberations by the Clerk of the Committee and staff from both legislative research branch and table research office.

I would also like to note that the interim report that is tabled today is the first of a yet-to-be-determined number of reports. This is the English version, and the French version will follow shortly once translation has been completed.

With that, I move adjournment of the debate.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Ms. French moves the adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Debate adjourned.*



## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

**Hon. Charmaine A. Williams:** I am pleased to stand in the House today to recognize International Women's Day. On this day, Ontario joins communities around the globe in celebrating women for their contributions to making the world a better place.

As Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity, I am proud of the achievements our province has made. This includes women rising to the top in their fields and gaining recognition, like Nabeela Ixtabalan, chief operations officer of Walmart Canada; Rupri Kaur, Brampton native, New York Times bestselling author and poet; and Hayley Wickenheiser, four-time Olympic gold medallist and assistant general manager of the Toronto Maple Leafs; as well as the many women whose contributions are lesser known but who work hard each and every day to support their families and communities. From academia, sports and business leaders to carpenters, caregivers and farmers, women are at the heart of our province.

The UN's theme for this year's International Women's Day is about the great potential technology has to foster a new era of women in the workplace and society.

According to a recent UN report, women's exclusion from the digital economy in developing countries has cut \$1 trillion in GDP over the last decade.

We are at a crucial point where we can use technology to bring more women into the digital economy and achieve greater gender equity, boost innovation, and strengthen our economy. But there is still more work to be done to help us get there. Women still face barriers to hiring, retention and achievement in traditionally male-dominated occupations. These barriers include things like gender bias, inequitable workplace practices, pay gaps, lack of mentors and role models, and work environments where women do not feel safe.

Our government's vision for the future is for women across the province to thrive everywhere—at home, at work, and in their communities.

Helping women participate in the workforce and achieve financial security is the foundation to their prosperity and independence. We know that when women do well, their whole family does well.

Women are equally critical to helping Ontario address many of the pressing labour shortages that our economy faces.

For example, women currently make up only a fraction of the skilled trades workforce. Over the next decade, Ontario will need 100,000 workers in the construction sector alone. These careers are exciting, diverse and in demand, with good pay and benefits. As our Premier likes to say, when you've got a trade, you've got a job for life. That's why I am on a mission to get more women into the trades.

Our government continues to encourage young women and girls to enter the skilled trades and break down the workplace barriers they face. We have made a historic investment of more than \$1 billion over four years into the skilled trades strategy. Many of the initiatives in this strategy will support women and girls in exploring the skilled trades.

Whether as tradespeople, executives, small business owners, or in other vital sectors, women contribute to our province at every level.

We are also modernizing our school science and technology curriculum to place an emphasis on critical life and job skills and better prepare students for jobs in science, technology, engineering and mathematics—including young women.

Under our Premier, we have invested in empowering women, supporting them to enter and re-enter the workforce. The results speak for themselves. We are getting more women into jobs than ever before. Overall employment in January was up 346,000 jobs, 4.6% higher than the pre-pandemic high in February 2020. Women account for many of these gains.

The number of women not in the labour force has dropped considerably, and the participation rate for core-working-age women is steadily climbing, from the pre-pandemic high of 81.5% to 84.5% in January.

Economic empowerment isn't only about jobs; it's also about creating the conditions for entrepreneurs to thrive in this province. Our plan is to make Ontario the best province to do business in, and women are an integral part of that as well. One of the ways we are doing this is by supporting economic empowerment programs for women in communities across the province.

For example, over the next three years, my ministry is investing \$25 million in two important programs: Women's Economic Security and Investing in Women's Futures. These programs help women facing socio-economic barriers to build the in-demand skills they need to gain and secure employment. These programs have a proven track record of success.

In 2021, the Investing in Women's Futures Program served more than 5,400 women and helped more than 1,300 women secure employment, start their own businesses, or pursue further training and education.

#### 1310

We have found that women are eager to enter new fields like the trades, but some are discouraged because of stigma or, in some cases, lack of safety at work—and I'm not referring to PPE, but women's physical and mental safety.

I'm thinking of a woman I recently met at Building Up in Etobicoke, who shared her experiences with me. I will call her Sandra for her confidentiality and privacy. Sandra has been in the trades since she was 16, but when she arrived in Canada, her caseworker discouraged her from pursuing her dreams in the trades. While she was on the work site, she also experienced severe harassment. But things changed for her when she found an organization that was willing to train her and provide a safe space for

her and other women like her. She told me, “They made us feel comfortable. This has been our door to life.”

Mr. Speaker, there are many stories like Sandra’s. That’s why it’s important for us to continue to find ways to listen to women and support and encourage them, so that all jobs and opportunities are equally available to all the women of Ontario.

There are, of course, other supporting factors that contribute to women’s economic empowerment, and our government is making progress in those areas, as well.

For instance, women need to be safe to achieve economic independence and prosperity. That’s why our government is preventing and addressing violence against women in all forms. It is so important that women who are affected by violence and exploitation receive the support they need, while offenders are held accountable through our justice system. In 2021, we invested nearly \$200 million in services and supports, as well as \$11 million in violence prevention initiatives. This is in addition to the more than \$300 million we are investing over five years in our anti-human trafficking strategy.

We also continue to implement Pathways to Safety, which is Ontario’s plan to respond to the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls and address the root causes of violence against Indigenous women. Ontario’s government-wide strategy was developed in close partnership with Indigenous communities and organizations and the Indigenous Women’s Advisory Council.

Another key area we are addressing is child care. This is a crucial piece to removing barriers for women to enter the workforce—trust me, I know; I’ve had five children. It has always been a barrier. We recognize that under the former Liberals, for over 15 years, child care became totally inaccessible and unattainable—it increased by 400% for an average family in the province of Ontario. We knew that when we came to power, under our Premier’s leadership, we had to act to make life more affordable for working parents. That is why we signed a deal—a better deal—with the federal government, the Canada-wide early learning and child care system. This historic agreement will support Ontario to achieve child care fees of \$10 per day for children under the age of six by 2025. In fact, as of January 1 of this year, child care fees have been reduced by 50%, on average, saving anywhere between \$6,000 to \$12,000 a year per child. It’s significant. This is a massive step forward to the affordability program and agenda our government has undertaken for the upcoming year.

A second important factor is access to a safe, stable and affordable place to call home. When I speak to Transitional and Housing Support Program staff, they all say they can’t get women out of their shelters because there are no homes for women to move into—if they can find a home, it is not in their community. That’s why our government passed Bill 23, the More Homes Built Faster Act, which eliminated development charges for affordable, non-profit and select attainable housing. These changes will get more affordable and attainable housing built faster all across our province so that women can have a safe place to move to.

Women also need mental health and addictions supports, which is why in 2020 we launched the Roadmap to Wellness, our provincial strategy that takes a whole-of-government approach to address long-standing mental health and addictions needs. This is a historic investment of \$3.8 billion over the next 10 years.

As we celebrate this International Women’s Day today, Ontario can be proud of the steps we are taking to advance the status of women and to better empower them. I know we still have a long way to go, and we still have ways that we need to communicate—to put partisanship aside and focus on partnership, to address these issues. We also need to continue to reflect on what more needs to be done so that women and girls in Ontario can reach their full potential, pursue their dreams, and achieve the success that they fully deserve, because—I’ve said it in this House—when women succeed, Ontario succeeds.

I’ll add something more: When women prosper, we all prosper.

**The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott):** Responses?

**MPP Jill Andrew:** This year’s theme for International Women’s Day is #EmbraceEquity.

I’m honoured to speak on behalf of our caucus, as our critic for women’s social and economic opportunity.

Equality is giving everyone the same thing, regardless of their needs.

Equity is giving people exactly what they need, when they need it, without barriers and without stigma or blame.

I’d like to remind this Conservative government that it is impossible for them to embrace equity if they continue taking nurses, who are disproportionately women—and Black women and racialized women, at that—to court. This Conservative government must give our front-line health care workers what they need to be successful. Embrace equity. Bill 124 was ruled unconstitutional, yet this government continues their appeal against this ruling, attacking yet again some of the very women workers who have been disproportionately hit over these last challenging years.

This Conservative government’s privatization and profitization of health care in Bill 60 is gutting our public health care system by yet again attacking predominantly women, our front-line health care workers. We cannot recruit, retain and return nurses to a public health care system that has been grossly underfunded and understaffed by this government.

Embracing equity is properly funding public health care, so that people have fair and equitable access to exactly what care they need in Ontario—not in the States; just saying.

I want to make it clear that derailing front-line health care workers also derails the families of sick patients. Make no mistake: Society’s gendered division of labour is still very much in place. It is women, yet again, who must often take care of their loved ones, children, partners and aging parents when they fall through the cracks—cracks this government has widened, a crisis this government has worsened due to their Darwinian health care approach. These informal family caregivers are mostly women, doing this unpaid work at their own financial ruin, many

without vacation time, without equal pay for equal work, without pay equity, without paid sick days, without supports for their injuries from WSIB, without any access to a caregiver benefit program like what we, the official opposition, proposed to help put some money back into the pockets of folks caring for their loved ones. Some of these women who are caregivers are escaping gender-based violence themselves.

Speaker, our communities are built on the backs of strong women, and it's high time that this government not just commend women for being resilient, but that they invest in our community-based, non-profit programs, for instance, that are inextricably linked to the health care outcomes of our communities.

I want to extend my thanks to Elder Abuse Prevention Ontario CEO Marta Hajek for her leadership and her advocacy.

I want to say a special thank you to our local community member in St. Paul's, Jane Teasdale, who is working tirelessly, advocating for the rights and protections of aging adults.

There has been a 250% increase in elder abuse, yet we've seen this government, the Conservative government, cut supports for elders during a pandemic—the same elders that mostly women are caring for out of pocket. They need stable funding, and it cannot be below the inflation rate. Funding below an inflation rate is actually a cut.

I want to also recognize that March is Endometriosis Awareness Month, courtesy of legislation spearheaded by our former MPP for Toronto Centre, Suze Morrison, and the official opposition leader, Marit Stiles. Endometriosis impacts one in 10 women, one in 10 people who menstruate. As I learned from endowarriors Leah Haynes and Tami Ellis, founders of Endometriosis Events, and my fellow panellists there, it simply is not enough for the government to say they care—“thoughts and prayers”—while there's no funding for endometriosis. We need more funding for research. We need more training for doctors and surgeons to properly diagnose. Many with endometriosis have to go out of province and pay out of pocket.

Health care needs to be publicly funded.

### 1320

Let's be clear: Diseases that disproportionately impact women are often not the priority of this government. We only need to look at the health care wait-lists for eating disorders, for instance. We only need to look at our fight—we've been begging this government to cover take-home cancer drugs 100%. That's another disease disproportionately impacting women—still crickets from the government.

So on International Women's Day, while we celebrate the gains, let us remember the realities for far too many women in Ontario. We need help, and no amount of resilience can pay the rent, put food on the table, keep your housing secure—in an affordable housing market created by this government.

It is up to this Conservative government to do right by women and girls, because yes, when women win, we all win.

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** I'm honoured to rise today, on International Women's Day, to recognize and celebrate the achievements and resiliency of women, girls and gender-diverse people.

When I look around this House and when I go to my constituency office or my office here at Queen's Park, I'm thankful for the strong, smart women I have the opportunity to work with each and every day who are making a difference and improving people's lives.

And while I would like to say that we have come a long way, I also want to say that we have much more work to do.

This year's International Women's Day focus is on gender equity because simply aiming for equal opportunity is not enough. Equity is an act of inclusion. It is something that each and every one of us is capable of incorporating into our day-to-day lives. Paving a path for gender equity is not limited to women. They need allies—they need allies who identify as men, like I do—working together to forge a path that propels the social, economic and political advancements of women in our words, actions and laws.

Speaker, the caring professions are disproportionately comprised of women workers, who tend to be paid less and are especially negatively affected by laws such as Bill 124—which is why, today, I ask all of us in this House that we make a commitment to work with all sectors and communities to eliminate the barriers women face.

We can do better, we must do better, and we will do better.

**Ms. Mitzie Hunter:** It is a pleasure for me to rise on International Women's Day, on behalf of the people of Scarborough–Guildwood, who have elected me for the last 10 years.

As we reflect on this year's theme, “Embrace Equity,” we understand the importance of honouring the struggles and celebrating the achievements of all women who contribute to the history of this province and who continue to shape the values and traditions that we share today. It is both a day to celebrate the achievements of women and girls and to focus on the challenges that we still face as we work towards gender equality. In continuing these important efforts and building on the success of the pioneering women who came before us, we carry forward the critical mission of embracing equity. We must ensure that every young girl and woman has equitable access to resources in this province. We must ensure that every young girl and woman has access to the opportunities that fit their unique needs and circumstances. Our role is to empower them, because they are the trailblazers who will make the bold changes that we need in our world today.

As we mark International Women's Day 2023, it is important to remember that this day is rooted in the collective actions and movement of women who came together on March 8 for the goal of equal participation in society.

Women have made important gains in representation in recent years, and while the bar has been raised, the pursuit of equality—through equity—continues.

Women make up 50.7% of Canada's population. And here in Ontario, women make up the majority of the essential front-line workers in sectors that include health care and social services. Women also represent the majority of workers in the education and child care sectors, which are vital for our children's well-being.

It has been established that women were and continue to be disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, both economically and socially.

We must be mindful of women's participation at all levels and in all sectors of the labour market. This includes the need for women in leadership roles in corporate Canada—and today, I joined women at the Bay who are the leaders in that corporate space, representing gender parity in their leadership ranks. Making this happen requires support and meaningful assignments along the way, at every stage of a woman's career.

I want to note the Prosperity Project's annual report card, which tracks women in leadership positions in Canada's largest public and private companies and crown corporations. It raises the concern that nearly 35% of corporate director roles and nearly 32% of corporate executive roles are being filled by women—this is about the same or slightly better than the previous report card. This tells us that we have a long way to go. The report finds that there is serious under-representation of women who are Indigenous, Black or 2SLGBTQIA+, as well as a decline in women having moved to senior management roles. We have to ensure that the pipeline is ready to be filled.

I want to thank the women who stepped forward in all aspects of society, including those found in my local community of Scarborough–Guildwood.

## MOTIONS

### COMMITTEE SITTINGS

**Ms. Andrea Khanjin:** I move that the Standing Committee on the Interior be authorized to meet on Thursday, March 9, at 2 p.m.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Ms. Khanjin has moved that the Standing Committee on the Interior be authorized to meet on Thursday, March 9, at 2 p.m.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?  
Carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

## PETITIONS

### MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

**Ms. Bhutla Karpoche:** This petition is titled “Make Registered Psychotherapy Services Tax-Free.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas mental health care is health care;

“Whereas the mental health crisis facing Ontarians has gotten worse with the pandemic;

“Whereas BIPOC, 2SLGBTQIA+ folks, women, and people with disabilities have historically faced significant barriers to accessing equitable health care services due to systemic discrimination;

“Whereas registered psychotherapists provide vital mental health services, especially as an early intervention;

“Whereas a 13% tax added to the cost of receiving psychotherapy services is another barrier for Ontarians seeking this vital care;

“Whereas registered psychotherapists are still required to collect HST from their clients, while most other mental health professionals have been exempted;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to” immediately make psychotherapy tax free.

### HOSPITAL SERVICES

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** I want to thank the thousands of people across Niagara who are signing this “Petition to Save the Welland Hospital Emergency Department.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the current Niagara Health system restructuring plan approved by the Ontario Ministry of Health includes removal of the emergency department and associated beds and ambulances service from the Welland hospital site once the Niagara Falls site is complete, creating inequity of hospital and emergency service in the Niagara region and a significant negative impact on hospital and emergency outcomes for the citizens of Welland, Port Colborne and all Niagara;

“Whereas the NHS is already experiencing a 911 crisis in EMS, a shortage of beds and unacceptable off-loading delays in its emergency departments across the region;

**1330**

“Whereas the population in the Welland hospital catchment area is both aging and growing;

“Whereas the Ontario Legislature passed a motion by Niagara Centre MPP Jeff Burch on April 13, 2022, to include a full emergency department and associated beds in the rebuild of the Welland hospital;

“Therefore, be it resolved that we call on the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to work with the Ontario Ministry of Health and the Niagara Health system to implement motion 47 to maintain the Welland hospital emergency department and adjust its hospital plan accordingly.”

I sign my name and send it to the Clerk through the page.

### SCHOOL FACILITIES

**Mr. Todd J. McCarthy:** It is my pleasure to stand beside the member for Northumberland–Peterborough South with respect to this petition.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Newcastle Public School is currently over capacity at 109% and the Pines Senior Public School is at 116%. Over 240 students are being bused to Bowmanville from Newcastle;

“Whereas the current growth figures presented by” the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board “show that school-age residents will grow by 645 in the next five to 10 years; and

“Whereas the Pines and Clarke High School are located ... adjacent to Highway 115—the only school in Ontario reported” to be “right next to a highway. That is why we are putting forward a compelling solution” to address this “long-standing community concerns for the safety of students attending school on a provincially staged freeway by resubmitting the Capital Priorities Program business case proposed by” the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board “to seek funding for a new school...;

“Whereas funding for construction of this school will be offset by disposition of ... Clarke High School and the Pines Senior Public School;

“Whereas land has already been purchased by” the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board “for construction of the new school;

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

“That the Ministry of Education prioritize and collaborate with the applicant in order to expedite the review and approve the construction for the” much-needed “new school in Newcastle, Ontario.”

I and the member for Northumberland–Peterborough South have affixed our names hereto and submit it to page Wyatt Sharpe.

#### HEALTH CARE

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** I have a petition here from the residents not only of Kingston, but of Verona and Sydenham and other places north of Kingston.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the province of Ontario is experiencing a severe shortage of health care professionals; and

“Whereas the shortage of health care professionals includes the inability of many Ontarians to access family physicians; and

“Whereas this shortage of health care professionals is placing a strain on hospitals’ emergency departments, including the enormous increase in patient off-load times from ambulances at those emergency departments thereby taking paramedics out of service; and

“Whereas the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care drastically reduced the funding for virtual medical care effective December 1, 2022; and

“Whereas virtual medical programs have been the source of 40% of primary care visits; and

“Whereas this reduction in funding has now resulted in the denial of medical services for many Ontarians, especially in rural Ontario, and contributes to an increase to ever-strained hospital emergency departments;

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

“The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care shall immediately reinstate full funding to the virtual care medical program while it works with the Ontario Medical Association and pharmacies across Ontario to provide health care services to all Ontarians especially in rural communities where access is most difficult.”

#### HEALTH CARE

**Ms. Doly Begum:** I have a petition here that I’m pleased to present.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Bill 124, titled Protecting a Sustainable Public Sector for Future Generations Act, 2019, caps salary increases at 1%, at a time of historic rates of inflation and interest rates;

“Whereas the nursing crisis has compromised patient safety and the functioning of our public health care system;

“Whereas emergency rooms are closing and even ICUs are at risk of having to close because of health care staffing shortages;

“Whereas the Ontario Superior Court of Justice ruling released on Tuesday, November 29, 2022, by Justice Markus Koehnen says that the law infringes on the rights to collective bargaining and freedom of association and declared the act to be ‘void and of no effect;’

“Whereas the courts have declared this legislation to be unconstitutional;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately repeal Bill 124, Protecting a Sustainable Public Sector for Future Generations Act, 2019.”

I fully support this petition, will affix my signature to it and give it to page Riya Azaredo, who will take it to the Clerks.

#### OPTOMETRY SERVICES

**Mr. Ted Hsu:** I have a petition from my constituents in Kingston and nearby.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario government has underfunded optometric eye care for 30 years; and

“Whereas the government only pays on average \$44.65 for an OHIP-insured visit—the lowest rate in Canada; and

“Whereas optometrists are being forced to pay substantially out of their own pocket to provide over four million services each year to Ontarians under OHIP; and

“Whereas optometrists have never been given a formal negotiation process with the government; and

“Whereas the government’s continued neglect resulted in 96% of Ontario optometrists voting to withdraw OHIP services beginning September 1, 2021;

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

“To instruct the Ontario government to immediately commit to legally binding, formal negotiations to ensure any future OHIP-insured optometry services are, at a minimum, funded at the cost of delivery.”

#### CLIMATE CHANGE

**Mr. Joel Harden:** I have a petition that reads as follows:

“I Support Serious Climate Action Now.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the climate crisis remains an urgent and existential threat; here in Ontario we are seeing record-breaking heat waves, floods, tornadoes, and even forest fires;

“Whereas the Rideau Canal Skateway could not open for the current winter season for the first time since it opened in 1971 due to warmer-than-average winter temperatures;

“Whereas Ontario needs to take bold steps to fight our climate crisis and create thousands of good jobs through investments in energy-efficiency retrofits, affordable housing, a public intercity bus program, renewable energy, infrastructure, electrified transit, child care and other low-carbon sectors, and” paid for “by taking on big polluters;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to stop the development of greenbelt lands, invest in public”—all caps, for “public”—“transit projects, curb urban sprawl, and commit to real action on green energy, housing, transportation and jobs.”

I am honoured to sign this petition and I’ll be sending it with page Yonglin to the Clerks’ table.

#### HEALTH CARE

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I’d like to thank all of the citizens of London West who signed a petition to stop the government’s health care privatization plan. It reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontarians should get health care based on need—not the size of their wallet;

“Whereas” the Premier “and Health Minister ... say they’re planning to privatize parts of health care;

“Whereas privatization will bleed nurses, doctors and PSWs out of our public hospitals, making the health care crisis worse;

“Whereas privatization always ends with patients getting a bill;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately stop all plans to further privatize Ontario’s health care system, and fix the crisis in health care by:

“—repealing Bill 124 and recruiting, retaining and respecting doctors, nurses and PSWs with better pay and better working conditions;

“—licensing tens of thousands of internationally educated nurses and other health care professionals already in Ontario, who wait years and pay thousands to have their credentials” recognized;

“—making education and training free or low-cost for nurses, doctors and other health care professionals;

“—incentivizing doctors and nurses to choose to live and work in northern Ontario;

“—funding hospitals to have enough nurses on every shift, on every ward.”

I fully support this petition. I will affix my signature and send it to the table with page Harry.

#### ROAD SAFETY

**Ms. Bhutla Karpoche:** This petition is titled “Protect Vulnerable Road Users” and it reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas vulnerable road users are not specifically protected by law; and

“Whereas Ontario’s Highway Traffic Act allows drivers who seriously injure or kill a vulnerable road user to avoid meaningful consequences, facing only minimal fines; and

**1340**

“Whereas the friends and families of victims are unsatisfied with the lack of consequences and the government’s responses to traffic accidents that result in death or injury to a vulnerable road user;

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

“—direct the government of Ontario to commit to reducing the number of traffic fatalities and injuries to vulnerable road users;

“—create meaningful consequences that ensure responsibility and accountability for drivers who share the road with pedestrians, cyclists, road construction workers, emergency responders and other vulnerable road users;

“—allow friends and family of vulnerable road users whose death or serious injury was caused by an offending driver to have their victim impact statement heard in person in court by the driver responsible;

“—pass the Protecting Vulnerable Road Users Act.”

I support this petition and will affix my signature to it.

#### CLIMATE CHANGE

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** I have a petition entitled, “I Support Serious Climate Action Now.” I want to thank the MPP for Ottawa Centre, MPP Harden, for this petition.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the climate crisis remains an urgent and existential threat; here in Ontario we are seeing record-breaking heat waves, floods, tornadoes, and even forest fires;

“Whereas the Rideau Canal Skateway could not open for the current winter season for the first time since it opened in 1971 due to warmer-than-average winter temperatures;

“Whereas Ontario needs to take bold steps to fight our climate crisis and create thousands of good jobs through investments in energy-efficiency retrofits, affordable housing, a public intercity bus program, renewable energy,

infrastructure, electrified transit, child care and other low-carbon sectors, and pay for it by taking on big polluters;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly to stop the development of greenbelt lands, invest in public transit projects, curb urban sprawl, and commit to real action on green energy, housing, transportation and jobs.”

I'd like to say the Rideau Canal belongs to all of us, it's a national treasure, so that's why it is important that I read out this petition today.

I fully agree with this. I'm going to sign it and give it to page Mary to take to the Clerks' table.

### SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

**Ms. Bhutla Karpoche:** This petition is titled “Raise Social Assistance Rates.” It reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario's social assistance rates are well below Canada's official Market Basket Measure poverty line and far from adequate to cover the rising costs of food and rent: \$733 for individuals on OW and \$1,227 for ODSP;

“Whereas an open letter to the Premier and two cabinet ministers, signed by over 230 organizations, recommends that social assistance rates be doubled for both Ontario Works (OW) and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP);

“Whereas the recent small budget increase of 5% for ODSP still leaves these citizens below the poverty line, both they and those receiving the frozen OW rates are struggling to live in this time of alarming inflation;

“Whereas the government of Canada recognized in its CERB program that a ‘basic income’ of \$2,000 per month was the standard support required by individuals who lost their employment during the pandemic;

“We, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly to double social assistance rates for OW and ODSP.”

I fully support this petition. I would like to thank Sally Palmer for it. I will affix my signature to it.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### BUILDING MORE MINES ACT, 2023

#### LOI DE 2023 VISANT L'AMÉNAGEMENT DE DAVANTAGE DE MINES

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 8, 2023, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 71, An Act to amend the Mining Act / Projet de loi 71, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les mines.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Further debate?

**Mr. Mike Harris:** I wasn't sure if my colleagues across the aisle were going to finish their time or not, but I'm glad

to start off the afternoon session and just say it really is a pleasure to be able to rise today and of course speak to another great government bill, Bill 71, the Building More Mines Act.

When introducing the Building More Mines Act, the Minister of Mines hit the nail on the head when he explained this bill and why it was being introduced. Quite frankly, it should not take 15 years to build and open a mine. The process to open and close a mine is too time-consuming and costly. This has led to project delays and lost opportunities for Ontario's mineral exploration and mining sector. At a time when Ontario is securing game-changing investments in its growing automotive sector, we have to do better. If passed, these changes would benefit the entire mineral sector and advance Ontario's plan to build an integrated supply chain. We will integrate the supply chain by connecting mineral producers in the north, including those in the Ring of Fire, with the manufacturing sector in the south.

As many of you know, I was first elected to this House in 2018, but I have been around provincial politics for pretty much my entire life. I know that the government often must clean up the mess of the one that came before—and no, I'm not referring to the Harris-Eves government, following Bob Rae's adventures with four-day workweeks. But I am talking about the years of neglect that the mining sector faced under the McGuinty-Wynne Liberals. So I'll be taking a few minutes to highlight their lowlights on the mining file and their mistreatment of northern Ontario overall.

Although I am a proud resident of Kitchener–Conestoga, many of you will know that I grew up in the beautiful town of North Bay. North Bay is about three and a half, four hours north of here, and it relies very, very heavily on the mining sector and forestry sector to provide good jobs for its residents. North Bay has roughly about 50,000 people nowadays, and it has gone through several challenges. We've seen what happened under the McGuinty-Wynne Liberals—it drove great jobs out of North Bay. It's very unfortunate, because that has such a big, we'll just say, ancillary bearing on a lot of the other things that happen.

When we lose good jobs in the mining sector in North Bay and other communities around northern Ontario, it has a profound impact on the commercial sector, on housing, and all kinds of different things.

I want to give a quick example that really demonstrated the Wynne Liberals' approach to the mining sector. I'm going to quote a few things here, Madam Speaker. The following exchange took place during the pre-budget consultation in 2013—we'll just paraphrase out of here, so I hope it's okay, and the Clerks will correct me, I'm sure. These members are no longer members in the House anymore, so I think I can use their names, but I guess we'll find out shortly.

Mr. Norm Miller was speaking here: “You mentioned the mining tax. What specifically did you say about the mining tax?”

In response, Ms. Soo Wong, who was a member as well—and this is as part of the McGuinty-Wynne government—said, “We have one of the lowest in all of Canada.”

Mr. Miller responded, “So you want to raise the mining tax—”

And Ms. Wong said, “Absolutely.” Even though we had one of the lowest mining tax rates in Canada, she wanted to raise it to be able to pay for a lot of their other “projects” that they had under way. My colleagues in the Liberal benches must be saying, “Well, that was 2013. That’s not us anymore.” Fair enough, but again, she was approved as a candidate. This was someone who wanted to raise the mining taxes to some of the most exorbitant in Canada. She was a candidate under former Liberal leader Steven Del Duca in the last provincial election.

We can look at some more recent examples. In the fall of 2017, months before the Liberals lost power, another member made comments that truly angered northern Ontario. Some of you may remember this. I know the member from Nepean will probably remember this very well. There was a headline that appeared in BayToday.ca. The headline was “Do We Live In ‘No Man’s Land?’”

“During a speech by Parry Sound–Muskoka MPP Norm Miller on the north, Lou Rinaldi”—

**Hon. Lisa MacLeod:** Louie—sweet Lou.

**Mr. Mike Harris:** Sweet Lou —speaking off camera, heckling the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka, called northern Ontario a “no man’s land. Being from northern Ontario myself, I took great offence to that at the time.

To be fair here, let’s also tell Lou’s side of the story, which I think is kind of interesting. His excuse for the heckling was that he was speaking to the now current Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. But there was just one problem with his comments: The minister formerly known as MPP Fedeli had left the room several minutes before the heckling. Unsurprisingly, the excuse didn’t help.

The following quotes came from a great mayor of North Bay and also a former member of this House, AL McDonald—just like the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, one of North Bay’s greatest mayors:

“I understand in the heat of debate in the Legislature and life, sometimes things are said that shouldn’t be said. I also believe it’s the solution to the problem that defines us. Make no mistake, your comments may have damaged northern Ontario’s brand.

**1350**

“MPP Lou Rinaldi, we work hard to promote our city and northern Ontario as a great place to live, raise a family. We try every day to attract business/industry, retain our youth and promote our region.

“It’s a challenge all of us face here in building our northern cities and northern Ontario. Comments like this are a kick in the teeth for all of us that believe in our region.”

I wholeheartedly agree, and quite frankly, it didn’t go well.

Let’s see if he had better luck the next day the Legislature sat. I know we’re all waiting on pins and needles to find out what happened.

The Liberal MPP was then disciplined by the Speaker the following Monday after apparently—again, some of the members may remember member Rinaldi saying, “Maybe we should take it outside,” to talk a little bit more about what was going on in the House.

So here we are again with the Liberals being very out of touch with what is happening in northern Ontario.

**Mr. Will Bouma:** What else is new?

**Mr. Mike Harris:** Great segue, because my next line is, “And this is why I will be coming back to the bill,” which ties it all in—amazing; it’s incredible.

If anyone, just out of curiosity, was wondering how the story of Mr. Rinaldi ended, he finished a distant third in the 2018 election, losing his seat to the current Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks. To my knowledge, that minister hasn’t asked anybody to take it outside yet here in the Legislature, but hey, anything can happen.

Let’s track it back a little bit to why we’re here today. The proposed package of legislative amendments that have been posted on the Environmental Registry is open to the public until April 16, 2023, so I encourage everybody to go ahead and check that out. Realistically, Ontario has a responsibility to support the development of the critical minerals supply chain. This is a simple fact as industries continue to change as we move forward into the 21st century. Whether it’s building EV batteries or components for semiconductors, the world will need more critical minerals. Ontario has such an important role to play in mining, and I’m glad our government is supporting the sector through this bill.

This is a stark contrast, as I had mentioned earlier, in comparison to the former Liberal government. The Ring of Fire was mentioned in every speech from the throne from 2010 to 2017, and in most budgets. They didn’t even bother to mention it in their 2018 speech from the throne, which was, quite frankly, their speech on the way out the door.

I will quote from a few of these:

“Your government is fully committed to working with northerners, Aboriginal communities and mining partners to fully realize the Ring of Fire’s potential.” That quote was from the throne speech on March 8, 2010.

I’ll read another one: “Your government remains fully committed to turning the vast, untapped potential of the Ring of Fire into good, leading-edge northern jobs.” That was from November 22, 2011.

Another one: “A commitment of \$1 billion to develop strategic transportation infrastructure in the Ring of Fire and unlock the north’s economic growth and jobs potential”—that was from the budget of the summer of 2014.

As I looked over the years of quotes, I noticed that the promises got bigger but the actions did not. To put it another way, they failed when concerning the Ring of Fire—and I’ve got a little bit of Johnny Cash that we might



work in here, but I think maybe just for the sake of time, we'll skip the singing today.

Realistically, when you go and look through these quotes, by 2016, they had really stopped pretending to care. This comes from a 2016 TVO article on the budget:

“No movement on the Ring of Fire.

“The government made no new commitments on the Ring of Fire, despite reports of a mining sector that's anxious about the slow pace of work.” That doesn't sound fully committed to me.

The business world took notice of their fear, of the former Liberal government's lack of commitment.

When we look at what the Ontario Chamber of Commerce has said in relation to these, we'll say, lacklustre benchmarks that the previous government had hit, the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport was welcoming the Ontario chamber—they were just here yesterday, I believe, colleagues. Was it yesterday? It was really great to hear them talk a lot about what this government has done right.

We've got a very, very positive relationship moving forward with the Ontario chamber, but this was not the case with the Liberals back in 2015. That year, the chamber released its report, *Where Are We Now? A Report Card on the Ring of Fire*. I just want to highlight a few pieces that came from that. The truly sad thing about these failing grades was that the chamber wanted to work with the government. So why did they give the government of the time a failing report card? According to a CBC article from the time—and I'll just read through it a little bit—the Ontario Chamber of Commerce executives said that they wanted to talk about projects like the Ring of Fire, but government officials just weren't returning phone calls. Quite frankly, colleagues, that's shameful.

Members of this House will know I have five children and I get to see a lot of report cards. So let's go over the Liberals' report card for a little bit here. The first grade was for accelerating development of the Ring of Fire. Colleagues, can anyone guess what the grade for whether or not they were able to expedite these types of things was?

**Mrs. Robin Martin:** F?

**Mr. Mike Harris:** An F. Can you imagine that?

The second grade—it does get a little bit better, but we don't really get above a C here, so—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Mike Harris:** Well, there you go.

So what was the grade for following through on the regional framework agreement between the Chiefs of Matawa member First Nations and the government of Ontario? They got a C on this one, so we're getting a little bit better here.

The next grade was for addressing the physical infrastructure deficit of the Ring of Fire: C-minus.

Oh, it gets better: on capturing more value-added processes in Ontario, a D.

Finally, on addressing the barriers that impede the development of the Ring of Fire and the competitiveness of the mining sector, they got another C.

With report cards like that, it's no wonder that Ontarians grounded them in 2018. They had a lot of failing grades, so that grounding may last a little while. I'd love for some of the members of the Liberal opposition to stand up and refute me on this in questions and comments, but we'll see what happens. I'm looking forward to it.

With that, I'm proud to say that our government has given the mining industry—and the opportunity for future generations—the respect that they deserve. I think that's very important. The Liberals would not answer the call on this file, but we will.

Earlier this week, our government made an announcement at the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada—or PDAC—annual convention in Toronto. We announced that our government has approved the terms of reference for the northern road link, and this is very important. The northern road link will connect First Nations communities to the Ontario highway network and the critical mineral deposits that are contained within the Ring of Fire. This will help secure the supply chain for electric vehicle manufacturing here in Ontario. Those at the announcement included the Minister of Mines; the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks; the Minister of Northern Development; the Minister of Indigenous Affairs; and, of course, the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade. Really, I think that just goes to show how serious we are in this government about seeing these things, which the Liberals failed for so many years on, actually come to fruition. In a Liberal government, ministers wouldn't even pick up the phone, whereas we're sending four or five ministers to PDAC to make sure that we are engaging with the sector as best we can. We know how critical it is to support this industry, especially when we move into the future. The mining industry in Ontario is responsible for—this is a pretty staggering number—over 75,000 jobs across the province. It produces \$11.1 billion worth of minerals that contribute approximately \$13 billion to Ontario's now—ready for this, colleagues?—for the first time in history, trillion-dollar economy.

**1400**

The Ontario government released its Critical Minerals Strategy last year—a five-year plan that includes addressing regulatory challenges to get mines built more efficiently. And the Building More Mines Act that we're here to speak about today is an important part of that plan. In November, our government launched the Critical Minerals Innovation Fund as part of that Critical Minerals Strategy. We are supporting the critical minerals sector by funding research, development and commercialization projects to stimulate investments in Ontario's critical minerals supply chain and protect the province's economic interests—some tongue twisters in there. Holy smokes.

As I kind of digress here a little bit—these funds really are very important in positioning Ontario as a global leader in supplying critical minerals to grow the economy. These create good-paying jobs and connect resources for future clean technology that I think we can all agree is going to be very important as we move forward. These are such

things as electric or hybrid vehicles that we will be manufacturing here in the province of Ontario.

The goals of the fund are to help increase exploration, development, mining production and processing of critical minerals within the province to enhance collaboration between industry, post-secondary institutions, start-ups, research and development firms. As part of this week's event at PDAC, the Minister of Mines announced the first recipients of that fund.

As I begin to wrap up my remarks here today, I really want to hammer home the magnitude of mining opportunities in Ontario.

The Ring of Fire region has long-term potential to produce chromite, cobalt, nickel, copper and platinum. Critical minerals like these play a role in the future of low- and zero-emission vehicles and transportation, and they help support the transition to a cleaner, sustainable global economy. We are able to mine, refine and manufacture here in Ontario, here in Canada, where we have some of the most stringent regulations in the world—where we're not relying on countries like China or Russia to be mining, refining and then shipping, exporting these into the areas where they're actually manufactured.

The world will continue to increase demand for these minerals as we move forward through the 21st century. We have a chance to lead the way with world-class environmental standards, like I mentioned. These are opportunities that Ontario cannot afford to lose. After years of missing out under the Liberals, we are finally back on track.

As we continue our work to land historic investment in new technologies, such as battery manufacturing, we need to support mining in the province as well. So I commend the Minister of Mines for his steady commitment.

As I said, I am very, very proud to support this bill. I cannot wait to see what it's going to do for communities in northern Ontario, like the community that I came from, that I left when I was in my 20s, just like many other people in my age bracket who could not find a quality job. Too many jobs were chased out of the province, whether it be through manufacturing, whether it be through the forestry sector or through the mining sector, under the previous Liberal government. I am glad to see this progressive Conservative government stand up for not only the people of Ontario, but more importantly, the people of northern Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Questions?

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Thank you to the member.

I would like to offer your government a failing grade when it comes to your obligation under Treaty 9, as a signatory to Treaty 9 to respect Indigenous rights and the right to be consulted—free, prior, informed consent.

A failing grade for Conservatives when it comes to the treatment of Indigenous communities is not new. You said that you've been around provincial politics all your life, so you certainly will be familiar with Ipperwash. Ipperwash was a confrontation that ended in the death of Dudley George. There was a long inquiry, and in that inquiry, the

Premier of the day, Conservative Premier Mike Harris, said that he wanted the bleeping “Indians out of the park.”

So what do you have to say to people who have absolutely no trust—why should anyone trust Conservative governments to do the right thing when it comes to Indigenous communities in this province?

**Mr. Mike Harris:** It is unfortunate that the member opposite would use a situation like that for what I, at least, perceive to be political gain.

On June 2, 2022, I think the people of Ontario spoke pretty loud and clear as to who they trusted to actually move forward with better jobs, a better economy, better schools, and better health care. I certainly won't be taking any lessons from the members opposite when it comes to those types of things.

I will say, just on the issue of consultation, I think it's very important that we continue the good work that has been done. Certainly, the Minister of Indigenous Affairs and Northern Development and the Minister of Mines have been consulting as they've moved forward through this process, and it's really great to see that so many things are going to happen for northern communities.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Question?

**Ms. Natalie Pierre:** Ontario is blessed with some of the most mineral-rich deposits in the world, including critical minerals like nickel, cobalt and lithium used in manufacturing batteries for electric vehicles, smart phones, pharmaceuticals and advanced manufacturing technologies.

My question for my colleague is, what will this bill, Bill 71, do for northern and Indigenous communities?

**Mr. Mike Harris:** That's a great question, member from Burlington.

When you look at the benefits that these types of jobs can create in small northern communities, it truly is exponential. It has so many great opportunities to spin off, just from those jobs within the mine. I heard someone bring up earlier how communities often will spring up around these mines. Quite frankly, that's how we got several of our northern communities.

It will be really great to see investment come into northern Ontario to be able to provide good-paying jobs. It is, quite frankly, going to benefit the community greatly.

Thank you very much for the question.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Question?

**Mr. Jeff Burch:** Thank you to the member from Kitchener–Conestoga for his comments.

He started out his comments by saying that an open-pit mine shouldn't take 15 years, but a lot of what's being addressed in this bill is hard rock mining. I'm just learning about all this myself, but from speaking to mining executives and people like my seatmate here, who is very experienced in mining, 15 years was a very reasonable amount of time to open a mine; the communications from your party seem to suggest that it wasn't.

I'm wondering how, specifically, this bill allows a mine to be open in less than 15 years.

**Mr. Mike Harris:** Thank you to the member from Niagara Centre. Certainly, his seatmate is a wealth of

knowledge, being from Sudbury and having worked in the mines himself.

I think that there's some misconception here. This bill doesn't mean that all checks and balances are just thrown out the window. What we're looking at doing is figuring out ways that we can remove redundancies, remove red tape, remove regulation that impedes the overall opening of these mines. It doesn't necessarily say that just because you want to open a mine you get to just do it. It still has to go through all of the procedures that would be in place.

What we're trying to make sure of is that we look at ways that we can expedite some of those things. Obviously, there will be more that will come in regulation with this bill, just as with any bill that has been passed through this House for many, many years. What we want to do is make sure that we're able to provide certainty for folks who are looking to come in and make investments into our mining sector here in the province. This is a good way of doing that.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Question?

**M<sup>me</sup> Dawn Gallagher Murphy:** Thank you to the member from Kitchener–Conestoga for his presentation—I have to admit I've never been so excited about the mining industry until what I've heard today.

Could you provide us an overview of the top five changes that we can anticipate and what the goal is, what we're looking to achieve, with this act?

**Mr. Mike Harris:** Thank you very much to the member from Newmarket–Aurora for the question.

I think that's really what we're looking at here—what do these changes mean? The member from Burlington hit the nail on the head—to pull from my remarks earlier. When we look at the—I don't want to use the term “brain drain,” but there have been a lot of people from northern Ontario who have almost been forced to move south, because there just aren't the jobs there. Quite frankly, I am a by-product of that; I'm thankful. We've been in Waterloo region 10 years now. We love it and still get a chance to get back home to North Bay every now and then. We still have quite a bit of family up there.

1410

At the end of the day, we want to provide good-paying jobs to the people of northern Ontario, and we want to make sure that we're mining sustainably and that we're able to then bring that product to southern Ontario, so that we can have, really, a whole ecosystem when it comes to—almost from farm to table, if you will, when we look at the things that we're going to be doing with critical minerals and auto manufacturing here in the province. A cyclical economy is a great thing for everyone.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Question?

**Ms. Bhutla Karpoche:** Speaker, with this bill, once again, the government is not going through the required consultation with the First Nations rights-holders on whose lands most, if not all, of the exploration will take place and where former mine sites are.

We also have learned now from the chief of Neskantaga First Nation—he has said that no development will proceed without the prior consent of his and other First

Nations who will be directly impacted by the development.

So my question to the member from Kitchener–Conestoga is, why is the government avoiding their duty to consult with First Nations and essentially going down the wrong path with this bill?

**Mr. Mike Harris:** As I mentioned before, we continue to consult with First Nations—not only that, but they're partners in many of these projects. It is really important to understand that, at the end of the day, the Indigenous partners we have and First Nations people of this province and of this country are the ones who are going to benefit from these jobs. They are going to be able to stay in their communities, and certainly that's very important. I've had many conversations with Indigenous leaders across this province, and that's one of the things they have come to me and said—that they have so many young people who want to be able to stay in their communities but just can't find good enough jobs to be able to do that, and then they have to move to places like Thunder Bay, Sault Ste. Marie and, typically, Sudbury just to be able to be close to their family, which could be a two-hour flight.

So it's really important, of course, that we continue with consultation, but it's also really important to keep the finish line in sight and make sure that we're able to provide good-paying jobs to the people of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Question?

**Ms. Laura Smith:** Thank you to the member from Kitchener–Conestoga for his very thoughtful information.

Ontario has a responsibility to expand on the critical mining industry. We were talking about the 10 to 15 years for approval of a project, but that's before a shovel starts to dig.

Given the future of our province, the jobs, the global positioning, will the member from Kitchener–Conestoga comment on what this act will do to ensure we are the number one jurisdiction for mining globally?

**Mr. Mike Harris:** We're in a global environment. We have a \$1-trillion economy here in the province, and we want to see that continue. So we need to be poised, we need to be ready, we need to be able to get shovels in the ground, we need to be able to extract these critical minerals and get them into the things that we use every day and build out greener technologies and look at ways that we can do that.

This bill is going to lead to more investment, more streamlined regulations and, hopefully, good jobs for the people of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Further debate?

**Mr. Chris Glover:** Before I begin my formal remarks, I just want to acknowledge that it is International Women's Day. On Saturday, I was marching in the International Women's Day parade, and I was speaking with some women from the Equal Pay Coalition. They were telling me a little bit of the history there. In 1970, there was a federal commission that recommended equal pay for work of equal value, and the Pay Equity Act was passed in 2017, 47 years later. It was actually enacted in

2020. So it took 50 years to get from the recommendation for equal pay for work of equal value to actually having the act enacted, and still, today, women make 69 cents on every dollar that men do. So there are actions this government can take, and I would say the first action this government should take in respect to International Women's Day is to repeal Bill 124, which suppresses the wages of nurses and other health care professionals, which are professions where the predominant number of employees are women. I just wanted to start with that.

I heard the member opposite talking about his love for northern Ontario. I also have a love for northern Ontario. I lived off and on in Geraldton for four years, in the 1980s. Geraldton had a silver mine at one point. At that time, it was a logging town. And today, there's a giant open-pit mine in Geraldton, so it's another mining centre.

There are 37 active mining operations in Ontario. They generate \$11 billion worth of minerals every year. They contribute \$8 billion to the GDP. There are 75,000 jobs in mining and related fields, and they paid \$2.9 billion in wages and salaries last year. The mining sector is a vital sector to our economy, and it also creates the opportunity to not only mine the minerals here, but to smelt the minerals and to build the cars and other products from the minerals that are mined.

I will speak to this partly because I'm from Oshawa. Everybody in my family—my brother works at General Motors, my father, grandfather. My great-grandfather was building horse carriages when they converted over to building cars.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Chris Glover:** It's a long history there.

The member from Sudbury was saying today that if you take a car and remove everything that is mined from it, the only thing you're left with are plastic bumpers, the windshields, and the vinyl and foam on the seats—the rest of it is all mined, it's all aluminum and steel.

The mining sector is vital to all of the things that we enjoy in our modern lives. So we need to support the mining sector.

That's why, generally, we want to support this bill, but there are some flaws with the bill, and I'll get to the flaws in a little bit.

I mentioned that I lived in Geraldton. Most of my work was in the logging sector, but I did have a job through one winter cutting line for a mining company. I was a sub-sub-contractor for a mining company. The idea of cutting line is that you cut a grid pattern through the bush, and, every 100 feet, you put up a marker. Then somebody comes along after you with a magnetometer and measures the magnetic readings in the land, they create a map of the magnetic readings and, from that, they can determine where they think the iron is, and, from that, they can determine—and this was a gold prospecting operation—where they could send down test drills to see if there's gold in the ground. My job was to take a chainsaw and cut these lines through the bush and mark every 100 feet. It was often minus 40, and I was doing it in four feet of snow. I tried doing it with snowshoes on, but I couldn't operate a

chainsaw with snowshoes on. I've got to say, maybe it's because I'm a southerner, but I was not that great at it. I didn't make that much money. There was another guy from the area, though, that I knew—his name was Sonny Gagnon; he actually became the chief of Aroland later—and he could cut one and a half to two miles a day. I think, if I remember right, we were making \$200 a mile for what we were cutting. If I cut three quarters or one mile a day, that was a darn good day for me.

Anyway, the thing about it is that the mining sector is really vital to the north.

The other experience that I have with the mining sector is that I used to teach a course at York University on the history and economics of Ontario. We did it through an equity lens. One of our guest speakers one year was the CEO of Detour Gold. Detour Gold is a large mine northeast of Timmins. He talked about how that mine had been developed. They had made agreements with five Indigenous communities. They were providing good-paying jobs, and they had money set aside for a cleanup fund. He told me and the class that they had invested \$2 billion before they got an ounce of gold out of that mine. That really speaks to the amount of investment that has to go in. And they're so far off the grid that they created their own hydroelectric dam to generate electricity for the mine site. The scale of these mines is astronomical, absolutely enormous.

**1420**

I want to talk about one of the concerns that we have with this bill, and that's the cleanup fund. The CEO of Detour Gold talked about the cleanup fund, and that's absolutely vital.

When I lived in Geraldton, across the highway from where I lived there was a field of mine tailings. These mine tailings contained mercury that was leaking into the local lake, Kenogamisis. So even though Geraldton was built on this beautiful lake, they couldn't use the drinking water from that local lake. They had to pipe the water in from a lake farther north because of these mine tailings. Another guest who came to my class, Michael Power, was the mayor of Geraldton at the time. He actually organized the community, and they sealed in those mine tailings and they built a golf course over it. For decades, those mine tailings had been leaking into the local lake. He was actually able to organize a project to restore that land.

We've got to make sure, when we are building mines, that we don't leave the next generation or local communities with a toxic mess to clean up. There have been a number of times when this has happened.

There's the Kam Kotia mine disaster—this is a mine that operated from September 1943 to December 1944, so it operated for a year and three months. It left behind 200,000 tonnes of waste rock and six million tonnes of mine tailings on the site. This was a toxic mess that the community had to deal with for decades afterwards. Finally, the government—which means us as taxpayers—had to contribute \$28 million to clean up the site.

Part of this bill is about the cleanup. It's about extracting minerals from existing mine tailings. This is a

really good project because those mine tailings—the technology has changed over the decades.

The previous mine in Geraldton, the silver mine, closed in the 1960s. It operated, I think, from the 1940s to the 1960s and it had left these tailings. Those tailings were actually quite mineral-rich, but they didn't have the technology to extract the minerals that we do today. Some of those technologies are biotechnologies, and they can extract the minerals in environmentally friendly ways, and then they can leave the site cleaner than it was.

One of our concerns with this legislation is that, currently, the Mining Act states that when you're going into mine tailings to extract additional minerals—the wording is, “The condition of the land with respect to one or both of public health and safety or the environment is improved following the ... remediation, as determined by the director” of mine rehabilitation. This means that if you're going to go into those tailings and you're going to remove some of the remaining minerals that are in there, you have to improve the site; you have to leave it in better condition than what you got it in, and this is going to be determined by the director of mine rehabilitation. The director of mine rehabilitation is an expert in the area, and they are a public servant. The new language, and what the government is proposing with this bill, is that the condition of the land following remediation must be “comparable to or better than it was before the recovery, as determined by the minister.” There are two concerns in this new language. One is that instead of saying you have to improve the site—you have to leave it at least comparable, and the measure, the scorecard for this will be determined by the minister.

My colleague from Sudbury, when he was making his opening remarks, said he has great respect for the Minister of Mines, but the Minister of Mines doesn't necessarily have the expertise that the director of mine rehabilitation has. The Minister of Mines—and it's not just this minister, but in future governments, because when you change the act, it's not just for today; it's for the future. The future ministers may not have that expertise, and they will also be under political pressure. They will be under pressures from their government members, maybe from their Premier, to potentially not bring the site up to snuff, not bring the site up to an improved state of condition, and that leaves the communities to deal with the toxic waste, the toxic mess, and it also leaves the taxpayers of Ontario to deal with the additional cost of rehabilitating that site in the future. So, these changes are deeply concerning. It's the politicization of this process, and that's a danger. There's a reason that we have public servants and we maintain some distance between the ministers and the ministries, between the public servants—so that you can have processes like this where the public good is protected and not subject to political influence.

The other thing I wanted to talk about with the mine tailings is that it's a good project. As I mentioned at the beginning of my remarks, we need mining. It's an essential component of our economy. This mining of these tailings, or the re-mining of these tailings, to extract the additional minerals, is a good thing, because not only do we have

biotechnologies to remove some of those minerals—and so we remove some of them, and some of them are toxic in themselves—but we also save the energy of removing the initial rock. So if it's much cheaper and much more environmentally friendly to look at mine tailings, to extract minerals from mine tailings, than it is to dig a new mine—because if you dig a new mine, you've got to go into the ground, you've got all the energy, all the environmental damage of doing that. So it's actually environmentally friendly in a number of ways.

As I mentioned at the beginning of my remarks, there is incredible potential in our mining sector. We can build electric cars. I was actually at three different events a year ago in my—well, one was outside my riding but two in my riding. One was a tall timber building at George Brown College, down on the waterfront in downtown Toronto. This is not related to mining—I'm diverting a little bit—but it's good for northern Ontario, because we're finding new ways to utilize lumber in Ontario, and it's environmentally friendly, because the carbon in that wood is being sequestered in the building. So this is actually an exciting project. If you're driving along the Gardiner, you can see the frame of that building going up right now.

It's also good for our northern communities, because where I lived, in Geraldton, the next town was Longlac. They had a big pulp mill, and pulp mills across northern Ontario got closed down over the last 15 years. Those communities need—we need new ways to use the lumber industry.

The other event in my riding was the launch of Canada's first electric ferry. The Marilyn Bell ferry goes across the channel between Toronto and the Toronto Islands and to Billy Bishop airport. The electrification of this ferry was designed and built in Ontario by Ontario companies, and now it has set the standard. The city of Toronto is looking at electrifying all of the ferries that go out to the Toronto Islands. So there is incredible potential here for building electric vehicles, even ferries.

The third event that I attended, and this one was outside my riding, was at Daymak. It's a company in Scarborough, and they make electric bicycles and scooters and things. They launched just over a year ago what they're billing as the world's fastest three-wheeled electric car. Now, I got to sit in it; I didn't get to drive it, so I can't verify that it's the fastest in the world, but it did look pretty slick. It looked like the Batmobile, I've got to say—the new Batmobile, not the 1960s Adam West Batmobile.

Anyway, we have the potential here in Ontario to have the entire supply chain, from minerals to smelting to building the cars and the vehicles, the electric ferries, the batteries that we're going to need for the future. But in order to do this, we also need to build on our competitive advantages, and we've got many competitive advantages. We're talking about the mines. We've got the minerals here. We've got the technology, and we've got the people who can actually smelt that here. We've got the factories to do that. We've got the factories to build the cars here.

**1430**

We need to build on our public services because our public services are some of our biggest competitive

advantages. I'm thinking in particular, in this context, of our public colleges and universities. I toured Laurentian University and Cambrian College in Sudbury a few years ago, before the pandemic. That college and that university have close links to the mining industry in Sudbury. A lot of the technology that they use in the mines is being developed in partnership with our public colleges and universities in Sudbury, and our public colleges and universities make business partnerships across this province to develop our technology here and give us a huge competitive advantage, and we need to invest in them.

This government cut tuition fees by 10% four years ago, which was a good thing because we had the highest tuition fees and the highest student debt levels, but it was an unfunded tuition cut. It meant that the colleges and universities lost somewhere—well, it wasn't a full 10%, but they lost a huge percentage of their income and the funding has been frozen since then. Government funding for our public colleges and universities has been frozen for almost a decade. We need to unfreeze that because that's almost a billion-dollar cut.

The other competitive advantage that we need to maintain in this province is our public health care system. When companies are deciding whether they're going to locate in Canada or the United States, one of the factors they look at is our public health care system because our public health insurance is far, far cheaper for employers in Canada than it is in the United States. So the government's current drive to privatize our public health care, to profitize it, to convert it into a private, for-profit industry is actually undermining one of our big competitive advantages.

I'm going to conclude with a few concerns, like we need to support the mining industry. It's absolutely a vital component of our economy in Ontario. But there are concerns with this bill, and we're hoping that we can work out those concerns in committee.

The concerns are that the government is replacing the duties of the director of mine exploration and the director of mine rehabilitation with the minister, so they're politicizing this process, and that politicization of that process can leave communities stranded with toxic waste that they can't deal with, and it can leave taxpayers dealing with billions or millions of dollars in cleanup costs for future generations. They're weakening the environmental requirements. It's not the right thing to be doing at this time.

The third concern that we have on this side of the House is the Indigenous right to free, prior and informed consent. The Neskantaga First Nation is deeply concerned and expressed their opposition to the Ring of Fire.

I look at what's happened. This government has to start building trust with our First Nations communities. When he and I were elected in 2018, the first question my colleague from Kiiwetinoong asked the government was, "Will you help provide clean drinking water to remote First Nations communities in the north?" The Minister of Indigenous Affairs at the time, his response was, "Well, actually that's federal jurisdiction. We'll help you write a letter."

If the government had actually cleaned up the drinking water and provided clean drinking water over the last four years to all First Nations communities in this province, you would have built some trust, so that when you're dealing with the extraction of minerals in the north, you would have a framework of trust to start those negotiations.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Question?

**Mr. Will Bouma:** I enjoy interacting with my friend from Spadina–Fort York. I'm curious, because I've heard this a couple of times about the hesitation that the opposition has about allowing the minister to expedite—not politicize, but expedite—some of these approvals for things because, just a couple of weeks ago, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing had a bill before the Legislature on changing the boundaries of St. Thomas and, I think, Central Elgin in order to expedite putting together a parcel of land so that we could do something really good for workers in the province of Ontario. It seems to me that this legislation does the exact same thing.

I guess my question is, why were you so comfortable supporting a minister expediting something there, on the one hand, but now have great hesitation on a minister being able to expedite something in the north to make life better there?

**Mr. Chris Glover:** I thank the member from Brantford–Brant for the question. We did support that bill to expedite the development of the battery factory in St. Thomas. The big concern that we have is that governments in Ontario, governments in Alberta—Conservative governments in particular—do not have a good record of enforcing regulations so that mining companies leave the site clean and safe for local communities.

In Alberta, for example, they've got 170,000 abandoned oil wells that the taxpayer is now on the hook for cleaning up and sealing. We don't want the communities to be left with a toxic mess and we don't want the taxpayers to be left with millions or billions of dollars in cleanup costs. That should be part of the operation. That's the concern we have.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Further questions?

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Thank you to the MPP for Spadina–Fort York. I want to pick up a little bit on the theme that this Conservative government has not built confidence or trust when it comes to the environment. With this bill, they are actually undermining trust in this mining industry, particularly when it comes to the idea of watering down financial requirements.

You talked about a mine—was it Iamgold?

**Mr. Chris Glover:** Detour Gold.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Detour Gold spent \$2 billion in investment before they actually got anything out of the ground. That's a lot of money. That's taxpayer dollars, that's investor money, that's pension funds: That's a lot of money to be put at risk. That's in some way why it take so long to get these mines built. Now that they've politicized the decision-making in the minister's office, people will have less confidence to part with their hard-earned money

to invest in the mining industry. Can you speak a little bit about that?

**Mr. Chris Glover:** A lot of regulations are designed. They're either consumer or environmental regulations. Environmental regulations protect not only this generation; they protect future generations. When you water down those or when you undermine those environmental protections—we've got all kinds of examples. Right now, at Ontario Place in my riding, the government is trying to avoid doing an environmental assessment of the Therme project down at Ontario Place. It raises all kinds of concerns. What is it that you are afraid will be uncovered if you do that environment assessment?

The government has not created trust in their ability to be stewards of the environment for future generations.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Further questions?

**Mrs. Daisy Wai:** Thank you to the member for Spadina–Fort York for your presentation. I'm referring to what the member from Kitchener–Conestoga was saying, how at the age of 20 he had to come from North Bay to another place to develop his career and his future. I heard this very, very often when I was at either ROMA or AMO, that the problem is that a lot of the next generation has to go either to Toronto or to the south to find jobs. The problem is the seniors, the older folks, will stay behind and they have all sorts of social problems.

I still can't understand why the opposition is voting against this act, when members from the party are clearly in favour of industry—

**Miss Monique Taylor:** We're not voting against it.

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** Pay attention.

**Mrs. Daisy Wai:** Sorry?

**Ms. Sandy Shaw:** We're not voting against it.

**Mrs. Daisy Wai:** Oh, I just want you to understand how important it is, when the overall economic well-being of the entire province is at stake. I'd like to hear from the member again what your position on this is.

1440

**Mr. Chris Glover:** First of all, I can appreciate the need for jobs in northern Ontario. One of the things that I would recommend doing is that if the government is working on a last-mile strategy for broadband—broadband is absolutely essential to northern and remote communities, and right now, the government's standard for rolling out broadband is 50 gigs upload and 10 gigabytes download. That's an old standard. The broadband that this government is rolling out is actually obsolete before you roll it out, and you're going to be cutting job opportunities from future generations and from this generation of northerners.

I would highly recommend you go for one gig symmetrical for the broadband rollout. That would be one way that I would create jobs in northern Ontario and create opportunities for people in northern Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Question?

**MPP Jamie West:** Thank you to the member from Spadina–Fort York. During his debate, he was talking

about the auto strategy and all the things that are connected, and it reminded me that, in 2018, I had meetings with several of the larger car companies. More or less what they had told me, Speaker—it was during a time when the Conservative government was tearing up charging stations—removing charging stations and removing the incentive for EV vehicles. They said, “Look, the next Detroit is on the horizon.”

Ontario is very desirable because of our universal health care. We're very desirable because of our post-secondary education—because these new cars are as much technology as they are physical machines—and very desirable because of the mineral strategy and the minerals that we have here.

You talked about several of those things. I'm just wondering: The member opposite was talking about the grades of the past government. What grades would you give this government when it comes to post-secondary education, when it comes to universal health care and anything else?

**Mr. Chris Glover:** I would have to give this government an F on post-secondary education and health care. You look at the health care crisis that we're facing; we had—what was it—140 emergency room closures last year in this province? That's unacceptable.

This Bill 124 wage-suppression bill that disproportionately targets women needs to be repealed. It's actually already been declared by the courts to be unconstitutional, that it's an infringement on the constitutional, fundamental freedoms of the health care workers, and yet this government is appealing that in court.

Our post-secondary education system: I would have to give them an F on that, but I'm out of time, so I'll have to wait for a supplementary question to answer.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Question?

**Ms. Andrea Khanjin:** My question to the member opposite—

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Andrea Khanjin:** Thank you to my colleague from Brantford–Brant—always a great supporter.

One of the conversations we often have within the community is that a lot of people want to get into, say, a more environmentally sustainable vehicle, but there's the ethics involved of the full life cycle of that particular car and that vehicle. And so many have been hesitant to opt into that market because they realize that if they look at the cradle to grave of the product, there are some really unethical labour practices that happen overseas.

In terms of having this particular expansion in our area, what are your thoughts on how Canada can now position itself as a very sustainable, ethical country? You know, we mine not using coal; we have ethical labour practices versus those countries overseas that are producing the same product but may not have the same practices.

**Mr. Chris Glover:** Obviously, we need to build cars here. We need to build electric vehicles here. I think that's just so vital. General Motors—I think the member from Oshawa and I can agree on this too, having grown up in Oshawa. We need to be building those cars, and we need

to be building electric vehicles in Ontario with Ontario workers. In order to do that, we need to maintain our competitive advantages.

One of the things that drove me most crazy before I got into this House was that the Conservatives, when they were in power from 1995 to 2003, started to break up and sell off Ontario Hydro. Then the Liberals finished that off by selling off the majority share of hydro. Our hydro rates in Ontario used to be one of our biggest competitive advantages, at four cents a kilowatt hour. We're now paying four times that, and we're subsidizing a private, for-profit company that used to be Ontario Hydro: \$6.9 billion a year.

We've got to maintain our competitive advantages—health care, education, post-secondary education—and somehow, we've got—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Thank you. Further debate?

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** It's an honour to rise to participate in second reading of Bill 71.

I want to be very clear to everyone watching today: Mining is going to play a critical role in Ontario having a competitive advantage in the fast-growing climate economy. We need critical minerals that are mined in a sustainable, ethical way. We need to have a mining-to-manufacturing supply chain not only to build electric vehicles but to also build renewable energy generation, battery storage, micro-grids, electrified public transit. Critical minerals are going to play a vital role, so I want to say to the government, let's not be hostile to renewable energy anymore. Let's have this Critical Minerals Strategy be a part of building low-cost renewable energy and resilient grids.

I also want to say to government—and I said this to the Liberals when they were in power—if we're going to avoid delays in developing the Ring of Fire, then two key critical things need to happen. One is a comprehensive, sustainable land use planning system in place ahead of time to minimize environmental damage and to ensure that we mine in a both fiscally and environmentally sustainable way; and, two, that we work with Indigenous communities to ensure that there's free, informed and prior consent in the development of mining projects and that we work with those mining companies—and I have met with them—who want to have Indigenous equity ownership as part of mining development in the north.

We can do this. Sudbury's already leading the way globally in developing sustainable mining practices, especially if you look at places like the mining innovation centre in Sudbury—

**Hon. Greg Rickford:** You're voting against it, Mike.

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** I didn't say I was voting against this bill. I'm actually encouraging members to vote for this bill at second reading. I want to see this bill go to committee, and I want to see us address two issues at committee.

One is the phased financial assurances plan that's in the bill. There can be very good reasons why you would phase that in, but we need to do it in a way that protects Ontario

taxpayers. The 2015 Auditor General report says there's \$3.1 billion worth of liabilities of abandoned mines to the people of Ontario. Let's avoid that in this legislation, moving forward, to protect taxpayers.

And the second one is through the deferred closure plans. Again, I can see the rationale to have flexibility in closure plans, but we need to ensure that those are approved by an independent third party, not by mining companies themselves, to avoid a conflict of interest. So let's fix that at committee, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Question?

**Mr. Will Bouma:** Just a quick question for my friend from Guelph—I have spoken to him about this personally. I so appreciate how supportive he is about our Critical Minerals Strategy and how we have to get this from Ontario because we can do this cleanly and greenly here. He knows and was actually educating me on how so many of the critical minerals that go into our batteries come through child labour and through horrible practices and environmental devastation in other parts of the world.

I do apologize, because I wasn't listening as intently as I would like to, but I did want to ask him—and I think I heard that—will he be supporting this bill at second reading so that we can get it into committee and look at some of those things?

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** I appreciate the member's question. I will be supporting this bill at second reading, and I'm hoping at committee—and I want to talk about these two points, because they're so important. I want to reiterate them.

We need to ensure that the financial assurances system protects the taxpayers of Ontario. According to the Auditor General, we have \$3.1 billion in abandoned mining liability; some estimate that's as high as \$7.6 billion now. So we need to ensure that the system is set up in a way to protect the people of Ontario.

And secondly, deferring closure plans: I can understand why we would need flexibility there, but the approval should be done by an independent third party, not by the mining companies themselves.

So I would ask for those changes at committee.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** The member from Sudbury.

**MPP Jamie West:** I appreciate the conversation from the member from Guelph. He had mentioned Sudbury, he talked about Sudbury, and it reminded me about the Superstack, that we used to measure our pollution in tonnes per hour. The year I was elected, we had eliminated SO<sub>2</sub> from coming out of the stack unless there was an emergency.

There's a theory out there that business will do this and move in this direction on their own at some point, but I know factually that the reason we made this move was because over time, legislation forced less and less pollution to come out, to the point now where they're talking about removing the Superstack because it's no longer needed.



1450

And so I'm just wondering, to the member: Do you think that it's positive to have regulations that protect the environment or do you think that business will make these moves on their own?

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** I appreciate the member's question. Actually, it has been well documented that environmental regulations not only improve communities, like what we've seen in Sudbury, but, most of the time, it improves the company's bottom line. Most of the best fiscally run companies also comply with environmental regulations and have strong environmental and social goals. The reason is because if you are going to manage your ESG goals well, you're likely going to manage your financial goals well. The two go hand in hand. We've seen that.

Sudbury now is seen as a global leader in sustainable mining practices. Everything from electrifying mining equipment to re-mining tailing ponds—there are a whole host of opportunities that, if we have the proper regulations in place, we can be economically competitive in and be a beacon to the world around sustainable mining practices.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Question?

**Mr. Will Bouma:** I'm really enjoying the conversation this afternoon. I appreciate all the members, I appreciate the support on second reading—oh, I still have a few seconds there where I can ask this question. I always appreciate having a conversation with my colleague from Guelph. It's always profitable for me.

The comment was made by the member from Sudbury that we need government regulations in order for the companies to do the right thing, and I can't disagree with that. That is often the case. Yet, talking about ESG goals for companies, I don't think there's any government involvement in ESG. This is something that companies are doing entirely on their own because that's what investors are looking for.

So, is there room for companies to figure things out, to innovate to find those solutions without government overreach?

**Mr. Mike Schreiner:** I would argue it's both. If you talk to companies, they will tell you that responsible, predictable regulations help them with good business planning and, oftentimes, result in better fiscal performance. I can also tell you as a business owner myself, a lot of businesses make those kinds of decisions on their own because that's how they can attract capital investment, it's how they can retain employees. So the two go hand in hand.

I think it's a false narrative to say that we don't need regulations or that we need to overregulate. We need smart regulations that protect the public, the environment and the people of this province.

**MPP Jamie West:** Point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** The member for Sudbury has a point of order.

**MPP Jamie West:** Speaker, the member for Brantford—Brant asked me if I was correct about tonnes per hour. I

made a mistake; it's actually tonnes per day. Tonnes per hour is the amount of feed we run through. Thank you for jogging my memory.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Thank you for that.

Further debate?

**Mr. Deepak Anand:** It's always a pleasure to rise in this House and speak on the wonderful, important bills that we debate here. Before I start, I just want to talk about the only thing, in this House of responsibility—I say, the only thing certain is the uncertainty. When we talk about things today, I must start my debate with: What day is today? March 8, which is International Women's Day. As we celebrate the remarkable achievements and contributions of women around the world, it is a day to recognize the progress we've made towards gender equality and to acknowledge a lot of work that still needs to be done. Together, we can create a world where every woman is valued, respected and empowered. Let's choose to challenge the status quo and work towards a more equal and just society. It's not just a word; we need to take action.

By the way, Madam Speaker, I want to mention—an honourable mention: Kudos to my wife, Aruna Anand, and daughter, Suvidhi Anand, two wonderful women, for doing a great job. I have to say this: Thank you for doing everything you do. I don't know what I would do without you. So thank you, Madam Speaker, I just wanted to acknowledge this. Happy International Women's Day. Now you guys can clap.

Over to Bill 71: I rise in the House today to speak on Bill 71, the Building More Mines Act, 2023, and the benefits that this bill will bring to our province's economy, industry and its hard-working people. Canada is a source of many, many resources. It is a resource superpower. But years of neglect and red tape have been roadblocks for our mining sector. I think it is fair to say that it should not take 15 years to issue a mining permit, but that's what is happening right now in the province of Ontario.

Mining in Ontario supports 28,000 direct jobs and approximately 47,000 indirect jobs. It is a big driver of our provincial economy. In 2021, the average median weekly wage in Ontario's mining and quarrying sector was 60% higher than the average for all industries combined, according to the Labour Force Survey. That's how important it is. By 2025, the mining industry will need to hire between 30,000 and 48,000 workers to fulfill its labour needs. These are immense challenges we must confront head-on, as part of this government's strategy to address labour shortages in this province. On one side, when we talk about saying that there's going to be a lot of immigrants coming to Canada, about 500,000 every year by 2025, and 300,000 of those are going to end up coming and choosing Ontario as their new home, we want to be making sure there are enough resources, there are enough jobs, there is enough structure in place to support them. This bill helps in that direction as well.

The Ontario Mining Association's 2022 economic report said that in 2019, OMA member mines provided nearly 3,000 jobs with average earnings of over \$87,000

to Indigenous community members. Indeed, these are positive figures, but our government is dedicated to further improve these numbers, so that we can share the prosperity with everybody.

In 2021, mining in Ontario directly contributed to an estimated total of \$8 billion to GDP, \$2.9 billion in wages and salaries. Additionally, the 2022 State of the Ontario Mining Sector survey said that the GDP contribution from the mining industry in Ontario will grow 25% in the next five years. Approximately 77% of Ontario's mining company contributions stay inside Ontario. Look at it this way: When we create this economy, we actually have the benefit of income multiplier. When you create \$1, that actually adds up, gives a job to someone else. There is a domino effect, and it creates an additional \$8 to the economy. That's what we're doing. When we strengthen our mining sector, we're strengthening our Ontario. These figures indicate that the mining industry is indeed one of the major drivers of our economy. That is why it is important for us to pass this bill.

Ontario's rare minerals are used in products worldwide, not just for us. We are helping the world to grow as well. Our province sits on mineral reserves considered critical by many places for domestic and economic needs.

Madam Speaker, you must have heard this loud and clear multiple times from our caucus members: While the Liberals and the NDP like to burn bridges in our province's economic prosperity, this side of the members is here to build, to make sure we have a strong Ontario, and we will continue to do that. We are building a supply chain bridge between southern and northern Ontario. Northern Ontario will boost mineral supply production and the south gets game-changing investments like the EV industry. This way, we're able to help each other. This will build a resilient supply chain and will greatly contribute to the wealth and prosperity of our province.

1500

Let's look at what this bill is doing. If passed, the Building More Mines Act, 2023, would save companies time and money without sacrificing our world-class environmental standards or the crown's duty to consult. Specifically, the act will approve mines faster by eliminating duplication, providing operational flexibility and reducing costs, and advance critical mineral projects by making it easier for companies to get a permit to recover minerals from mine tailings and waste. These are the materials left behind after a mine has closed.

Madam Speaker, think about a situation when, many, many years back, if there was a mine which closed and had the deposits sitting, back then, the value of those metals was maybe a fraction of what it is today. That metal today is worth way more than when it was there. It may not be economically feasible at that point in time to regenerate or recollect that mineral, but today, that makes it easier, makes it financially better, and when we recover those metals, they're actually taking less from our Mother Earth so we're able to accomplish a better economic benefit without even going back to our Mother Earth to ask for

more. This is what we're doing through this bill, Madam Speaker.

It will improve closure planning by having more qualified professionals available to certify plans and allow companies to conditionally file a closure plan while deferring certain documents to a later date, and allow more flexibility in the techniques used to rehabilitate mines once they're closed, again, without changing anything related to Ontario's world-class environmental standards and duty to consult.

We're doing this as we create more options for companies to pay financial assurance. Instead of paying financial assurance upfront, it could be paid in phases tied to the project's construction schedule so they can invest more, they can invest better, into these mining projects.

Madam Speaker, as you can tell, this act has nothing to do with cutting corners. It is all about making sure government is acting in the most efficient way possible.

But I do want to talk about what this bill doesn't do: This bill will not compromise our world-class environmental labour or Indigenous consultation standards. We're not going to compromise on the environment. We're not going to compromise on labour standards, and we're not going to compromise on our Indigenous consultation standards.

This is about improving the ministry processes and making sure that we are able to attract more investment into the mining sector. This is what we're doing through this bill, Madam Speaker.

Every time you talk about prosperity, we can't do it without the people of Ontario. In order to service and sustain the mines, we are promoting careers in the mining sector. We're encouraging enrolment in the skilled trades and mining-related training programs. We are targeting funded apprenticeship programs to help skilled trade workers and get them working in well-paying positions in the mining industry.

We are accomplishing all of this while being committed to our strong environmental standards. Madam Speaker, Ontario has exceptional mineral potential and environmental governance fundamentals, which will ensure that we create jobs while minimizing any impact to our environment.

With the continued work and collaboration between ministries and our partners in the mining sector, we will continue providing opportunities to our workers and continue on the path of growth for our province.

Madam Speaker, I'd like to share something very important. I want to talk about the Mining Act, R.S.O. 1990. The purpose, it states—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Sorry to the member from Mississauga–Malton. Pursuant to standing order 50(c), I am now required to interrupt the proceedings and announce there have been six and a half hours of debate on the motion for second reading of this bill. This debate will therefore be deemed adjourned unless the government House leader directs the debate to continue.

The member from Barrie–Innisfil.

**Ms. Andrea Khanjin:** Thank you, Speaker. It's a great speech, so please continue.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Thank you. The member from Mississauga–Malton.

**Mr. Deepak Anand:** I was a bit worried when I saw Madam Speaker standing up that I wouldn't be able to finish this important piece. Thank you to our deputy Houser leader. Thank you so much. I truly appreciate your giving me an opportunity to read out the rest of my remarks.

Madam Speaker, I would like to share something very important. The Mining Act, RSO 1990, starts with the purpose:

“The purpose of this act is to encourage prospecting, registration of mining claims and exploration for the development of mineral resources, in a manner consistent with the recognition and affirmation of existing Aboriginal and treaty rights in section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982, including the duty to consult, and to minimize the impact of these activities on public health and safety and the environment. 2009...”

Madam Speaker, this reaffirms that our government is committed to First Nations consultation. It is very important that every member of this House understands that First Nations consultation is 100% preserved, and we're not making any changes to it.

In a nutshell, our government is making real progress to help develop the infrastructure necessary to ensure Ontario's long-term competitiveness. Our mining sector is a major part of the position. We need to develop our mining sector to provide more opportunities and drive innovation. This bill proposed by the Minister of Mines, Bill 71, the Building More Mines Act, will help achieve this goal. The changes in this bill will help cut red tape, encourage investment and develop the economy of northern Ontario, which benefits all of us.

This bill exemplifies the mission of this government to cut red tape, to encourage economic growth and, as the Minister of Labour always says, to work for workers. Under the leadership of this Premier, we're going to get things done for the workers of this province and the residents of this province to get prosperity.

I encourage everyone in the House to support this bill and support northern Ontario's economy and the future of our province.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Questions?

**MPP Jamie West:** I appreciate the member opposite's debate on it. One of the concerns we have on this bill has to do with closure plans and weakening environmental protections. The question I have is that, on the day this bill was tabled, the chief from Neskantaga First Nation had said they're strongly opposed to any sort of process towards the Ring of Fire and actually talked about having to drag their bodies away to prevent this.

It feels like this is a bill that doesn't have strong support by Indigenous people in the communities where the mining companies are. What can be done to this bill to

improve that relationship so that they'll have faith in mining in northern Ontario?

**Mr. Deepak Anand:** Thank you to the member opposite for that question. A few things I want to talk about: What is this bill about? This bill is not just about efficiency; it is a bill about creating prosperity for northern and Indigenous communities.

As I said earlier, Madam Speaker, I talked about the Mining Act, RSO 1990. I talked about the consultation and I made sure that I said, “The purpose of this act is to encourage prospecting, registration of mining claims and exploration for the development of mineral resources, in a manner consistent”—I used the word “consistent”—“with the recognition and affirmation...” Madam Speaker, this bill reaffirms our commitment to First Nations communities, and we will always stand by that.

1510

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Further questions?

**Ms. Laura Smith:** Through you, Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for Mississauga–Malton for his—

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Laura Smith:** Yes, we appreciate that.

The legislation, if passed, will attract more investment and support in the made-in-Ontario supply chain for new investment. But securing that supply chain requires Ontario to be able to be competitive with other jurisdictions. What will this act do to ensure that we are the number one jurisdiction for mining globally?

**Mr. Deepak Anand:** Before I proceed, I just want to say again to the member from our team, you're doing an incredible job. Madam Speaker, this is the province where we have 39% of our MPPs who are actually women. That shows the strength of our province, so, again, thank you for that important question.

You talked about the supply chain that has to be competitive. We are creating economic incentives, like adding an option for the companies to provide additional financial assurance as construction milestones are reached, rather than providing a lump sum upfront, to help to reduce costs. We're reducing regulatory burdens and we're ensuring we remain competitive by adapting our regulation processes so that they are on par with the other places in Canada and around the world.

All these changes will put us ahead of the competition and aid Ontario in becoming the number one place in the world for mineral exploration and development. As the Premier states, when we grow, we make enough policies for the businesses to come and invest. When they grow, Ontario grows.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Further questions?

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Bill 71 obviously requires roads and infrastructure. The Premier once said that he would get on the bulldozer himself, but that clearly is not going to happen to build the road to the Ring of Fire. In fact, those comments are fairly damaging to the trust that some of the companies have been working on with First Nations.

I do want to quote Neskantaga First Nation Chief Wayne Moonias. He said, “We intend to defend our rights, our homeland, our river system, even if it costs us our lives.” Chief Moonias has also vowed that his community will prevent the building of a road to the Ring of Fire even if it means direct confrontation with the authorities.

Indigenous opposition has a long history now with this government because you’re only consulting with two of the First Nations as it relates to the Ring of Fire. Can the member from Malton tell the House how dangerous, how damaging it is when you are very selective in your consultations with First Nations and talk about the lawsuits and the legal action that will happen because you have not done your due diligence as a government as it relates to Indigenous peoples in Ontario?

**Mr. Deepak Anand:** Before I answer the question, I want to share this: This government, the members of this caucus, are committed to meeting the crown’s duty to consult with the Indigenous community on all projects. Madam Speaker, we are thankful to the Indigenous community for taking care of this land for all these years and thanks for allowing us to meet here.

First Nations are not just part of the process; they’re part of the heart of it, as they are leading the environmental assessment for these roads and infrastructure projects. I said that earlier and I’m going to repeat again: These changes will not compromise our world-class environmental, labour or Indigenous consultation standard. This is about improving the ministry process and making sure we attract investment.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Further questions?

**Mr. Will Bouma:** One of my dearest friends in this place is the member from Mississauga–Malton. As everyone knows, we used to be seatmates in the last term and that caused no end of discussion because we’re somewhat different in height. But I got to know him really well and I know that he came to this country with nothing and he made a life for himself and for his family in this country by hard work. And I know he’s talked to me a lot about the opportunities that are needed for youth in his riding, where they have a high youth unemployment rate.

I’m wondering if he could talk to this House about what it means to be building Ontario, to be building a stronger Ontario, to be creating a future not just in southwestern Ontario, not just in southern Ontario, not just in eastern Ontario, but especially in northern Ontario, and what that will mean, those jobs, that growing economy, for people in his riding.

**Mr. Deepak Anand:** Thank you for acknowledging the hard work that my family has done. You’re so right: Canada is a place where, if you can dream it, through hard work, you can achieve it.

Madam Speaker, in my riding of Mississauga–Malton, something which we talk about when we talk about Mississauga is that we have the highest number of youth, 24%; we have the highest number of youth unemployment, 26%. For that one reason, I’m always concerned and I’m always working with the local members of the

community on how we can increase the employment, give our youth a hand so that they can get the skills that they need. So, what this bill is going to do: This bill will make sure we’re able to invest, we are able to attract more investments in the mining sector. And as I said earlier, in the mining sector, the salaries are 60% more than the average salary. By investing, by attracting these investments, we’ll make sure we’re creating more jobs for the residents of Mississauga–Malton.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Question?

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** I’d like to thank the member from Mississauga–Malton for his presentation. As I’m sure he is well aware, the official opposition is in support of this bill on second reading. But one of the official opposition’s main concerns remains this government’s track record not only on relations with Indigenous peoples, their track record on the environment—and their love of unfettered and unchecked power, quite frankly.

Industry sources did not push for transferring powers from directors to the minister, and we worry about this centralization of power. My question, though, to the member is, who specifically recommended this transfer of power from the director to the minister?

**Mr. Deepak Anand:** Madam Speaker, I can tell you what this bill is going to do: This bill is going to create more opportunity for the people of Ontario. This bill is going to attract more investment, without compromising the environment, without compromising working with Indigenous communities, without compromising the labour standard. Through this bill, we’re going to create a better Ontario, an Ontario for all.

**MPP Jamie West:** Point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Point of order: the member from Sudbury.

**MPP Jamie West:** Earlier, I mispronounced “Neskantaga.” It’s because it’s spelled N-E-S-K-A-N-T-A-G-A, and when I saw it, I was trying to read it phonetically. But it is “Neskantaga.”

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Thank you.

Further debate?

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** I am pleased to be able to stand in this House and add what I hope are my thoughtful comments on Bill 71, Building More Mines Act. I’m standing here as the official opposition critic for infrastructure but also as an Ontarian who knows that there are a lot of pieces that interconnect in this province. I am proud to represent Oshawa, and the automotive industry is a huge part of Oshawa’s story, of its history and of its future, and there’s that important interconnection when we’re talking about mining, about critical minerals and what those mean to the EV industry, to the future of various technologies. So I’m looking forward to taking this time and doing a little bit of a sharing lesson with folks at home, because I had to do some—it was like science class in preparation for this presentation.

But something else—and this is just a frame of reference for folks, because we are fortunate to come to this Legislature from all across the province, and different

experiences. Some on our benches we've learned from through the years about their time in mining or in various industries. In Oshawa, I was at a hockey game, actually, and I got to meet someone who handed me a card, and it was for a mining company. I said, "Oh, nice to meet you." They explained that they were looking to open a mine in Oshawa or in the Durham region, and I thought, "Pardon me? Oh, opening a mine in Durham." And it took me a second. They explained this was for crypto mining—data mining servers, but a mining farm. We have Oshawa PUC, we have different rates for energy, and so we're a bit of a destination spot for industry. It was an interesting conversation. So when you talk about mining, I have a little bit of learning to do. That's not where I'm starting from, but just for an interesting point of reference for folks.

**1520**

Speaker, this bill—first of all, the government has talked about how this is going to make mining move ahead more quickly. They've talked about the Ring of Fire. But I'll say, on the opposition benches, we want mines to be successful. We don't want to slow them down. We want to talk about the Critical Minerals Strategy. We want to talk about responsible mining. We want to talk about safe mining. We want to talk about reclamation, and we want to talk about mine rehabilitation, certainly at the end stages. We want to talk about all of that. The Ring of Fire isn't going to happen because of this piece of legislation, and this government has a lot of work to do when it comes to their relationships.

We've heard some of our members remind the government—I'm happy for them to be reminded—that the Premier has talked about driving the bulldozer himself, that sort of thing. And that has come up not just because it's an interesting picture in our minds, but because it speaks to the—there's a problem there about how this government is not tending to or respecting the relationships with First Nations in a way that the First Nations are—to say "appreciating" is the wrong word—not recognizing as appropriate involvement.

So when you have mining companies, as I understand, who have been building relationships with First Nations through the years, the government, and the Premier specifically, were doing a fair bit of harm to that. This bill, as any bill about the mining industry and mining opportunities, is an opportunity to strengthen those relationships. Unfortunately, that's not what happened. In fact, the day that this bill was tabled, I understand Chief Moonias, as we have heard said publicly—and I'm quoting here from an article called, "Neskantaga First Nation Says it Wasn't Adequately Consulted in Key Ring of Fire Environmental Study." Specifically, "Chief Wayne Moonias said that the First Nation had not provided its consent to the terms of the environmental assessment, and vowed to fight against the development.

"This is unacceptable. This is something that is very concerning to us, and something that the CEO of Ring of Fire Metals needs to know. You're not going to cross our river system without our free, prior and informed consent,"

said Chief Moonias. 'You're going to have to kill us. You're going to have to do more than just getting access from the province of Ontario.'"

This is important. Free, prior and informed consent is important. It should direct how we move forward as a province. And I'm raising that because this particular bill, as best as we can find out, as we understand it from industry and as we understand it from First Nations that we have been able to connect with about this bill which is quickly before us—there wasn't formal consultation. They found out about it—and I'm saying "they" broadly—Indigenous communities found out about this the day it was tabled. That is not free, prior or informed.

Speaker, let me break down this bill. Parts one and two are about the decision-making process. Basically, there are two statutory positions, the director of mine exploration and director of mine rehabilitation. And I'm going to put this in significantly layman's terms, so please correct me, member from Sudbury, if required. But the mine exploration is assessing permits, gathering data of the potential of a site—it's kind of the beginning stages of will there or won't there be a mine, I suppose, is the way I'm going to put it. Mine rehabilitation is the opposite end of that process: the wind-down, the reclamation, maybe when the land gets a chance to heal, how it is left environmentally, how it is left with the community in terms of legacy infrastructure or various pieces, right? That's the end stages.

There have been two roles, but it was one person—it was a director responsible for multiple parts. What this bill does is move powers away from the director of mine exploration and mine rehabilitation and now, all of a sudden, the minister is the only person with responsibility for mine rehabilitation. So that end stage, the environmental piece, that's only the minister.

I would love for the government to answer this question; they've been asked it throughout debate: Where does this come from? Because industry has not said—there has been no one in the mining industry who said, "We requested this." So where does that come from? Is it ministry frustration? Does the minister feel left out? If somebody's unhappy about the way I worded it, explain it to me, because, when you don't have rationale for why you completely eliminated that director of rehabilitation position, if the ministry cannot explain it, then we're left to wonder. I'm going to go with "because the minister wanted it."

When I look at the environmental track record of this government, I get very nervous about putting all of the reclamation side, all of the rehabilitation, all of that responsibility to the minister, who—if I'm going to be fair, this particular minister knows mining. That's a fair comment. But I don't know his background on the environment. If cabinet decides somebody else gets to be Minister of Mines, I don't know which of these members has that background either. I see that as a problem.

The rehabilitation responsibility is only the minister's now. It's no longer a public service director who has years—she has years of experience working for the

Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, a background in environmental science. That's who held that responsibility before, and now it's this minister—for now. I wouldn't say that is going to do anything to build that kind of trust with Indigenous communities who are concerned about how that land will be left, or broader communities who are worried about how that will be left.

I'm going to jump ahead to the third section about mineral recovery—actually, no, I'll keep going in order. The other thing is there are amendments in this bill about closure plans and, again, that's talking about the end stages. When you're starting a mine, you need the plan for how it's all going to end. That's responsible planning. There's money involved, there's time involved, and if a mine wants to go ahead, they need a closure plan ahead of time to even start mining. They need a plan for what they're going to do at the end of the mine.

Before this bill, they would hire an engineering firm to create a significant and lengthy report, and then that work was, in effect, duplicated by the ministry. This is, I think, where the government is saying, "We're going to make things faster," that duplication of work. In effect, they're talking about that this would make it a faster process. This specific piece.

I'd like to know what a "qualified person" is according to this government, because they say if a qualified person certifies this closure plan then it's deemed to be complete, and they don't have to redo the process in-house. But what is someone who's qualified? I'd like to know that. Before regulations, if they could get up and say, "Don't worry, it won't just be someone who is interested in the ministry and works in the bureaucracy." No disrespect to them, but what should the qualifications actually be? What level of environmental engineering? Do some reassurance here, because you're making a significant change.

Also, this bill would allow the minister to have the power to accept a conditional filing of a closure plan if they're reasonably assured. It allows them to make amendments to the closure plan without having to refile a new one. I can see how this would speed up the process. I do have a question, though, about how First Nations, how Indigenous partners feel about this particular part. Because if it's not going to be the same focus that it was—the closure plan—and we are taking all of the mine rehabilitation responsibility, we're taking it from qualified professionals, frankly, and giving it to the minister, who does not have a background in science—correct me if I'm wrong—how is this what's best for the environment? How is this guaranteeing that this will be responsible environmentally? Please reassure us, and don't say, "Trust us." I can't hear that again this week—real answers, please.

**1530**

Okay, the last part that I will get into, Speaker, is the part that is quite interesting for those of us who are looking at the road ahead for technology, electric vehicles, and it's that conversation around critical minerals. I did some homework about some of the critical minerals that matter to the industry, especially when it comes to electric vehicles. You have lithium; you've got graphite, nickel,

cobalt, copper, rare earth elements, some of which are important on the battery side of things. You've got magnets; you've got hydrogen fuel storage containers—all sorts of things. It was, like I said, science class in preparation for this. I won't delve into the nitty-gritty of each one, but there are a lot of them in Ontario, which is why folks are quite interested in accessing them, which is why there is so much interest in the Ring of Fire, and that is a big conversation for us to have about the future and how we compete in the global market and whatnot.

But then I want to dial it back a second, because we have an opportunity. The mineral recovery of rare earth minerals, those that are in the Ring of Fire—there are some that are also left behind from previous mining ventures that are in something called tailing ponds, which are basically leftover pools—can I say that? I've seen a tailing pond. For those of us who are not in the north—anyone who is watching from the north is probably like, "What is she talking about?" But—

**MPP Jamie West:** It's waste product.

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** Thank you. Waste product in these—ponds? Pools? Tailing ponds? And it turns out that, because technology being what it had been before at the closure of previous mines, our technology is different now, so they could go back to those tailing ponds and basically scoop up the minerals that are in there and take a second pass at them with newer technologies. And there's interest in that because while we're developing—if it's the Ring of Fire, other opportunities—there are minerals to be had if we can take that second pass at those ponds.

But, Speaker—and again, this is the stuff that gets me with this particular government—there was a bill that the government had passed before about—I think it was Bill 13, maybe? It gave permission to go back and scoop up through these tailing ponds for the critical minerals but said that they had to leave the ponds better than how they were found, better than it was before the recovery. So that was in the last bill. That's where we're at right now, that if they go back, they have to leave it better than it was. And now in this bill, if you want to scoop up tailings, you don't have to improve the land to make it better; you have to leave it comparable to or better than it was before the recovery. They've added "comparable to," so instead of "better than," it's "or the same."

And why? It's a fairly open-ended "better than." If you look at it before, whatever that land looked like, whatever was around the pond before—I'm thinking even as simple as there was litter around, and then you clean it up. Isn't that technically "better than"? I'm not meaning to say that's what we should do. But it is not an onerous task to leave a place better than how you found it, especially when it does not specify what "better than" means. So for this government to go back and be like, "Aww that's a lot. That's really positive. And since we're doing so much negative stuff here, let's just make it comparable. Let's bring it down. Let's downgrade that. 'Better than' is a lot. I don't like that." And who asked for that? Go back to them and say, "You know what, you want what's in the tailings?"

You can leave that area better than how you found it.” Because the community around there cares.

I know that we’re going to hear from the northern members about what has been left historically in the wake of different mines, big and small, of the lessons learned of how we can do better. You guys are like, “Oh, we can’t do better. Let’s just do comparable.” Again, rehabilitation is only up to the minister. I think that is a mistake. Because it wasn’t even industry that asked for that, I think you guys have some explaining to do.

Speaker, one of the things that I’d like to talk about when we’re talking about critical minerals and the opportunity in Ontario—I’d like to take a minute and share about Project Arrow. Ontario Tech is an excellent university in my neck of the woods, and they had the opportunity at the ACE automotive centre’s aerodynamic climatic wind tunnel at Ontario Tech to be a part of a really special, globally exciting project, and it’s called Project Arrow. Project Arrow phase 2 was an all-Canadian-engineered concept vehicle that just debuted earlier this year. It is a wonderful success story. And the university was chosen because of its global reputation for its excellence in energy and automotive, smart mobility. This vehicle is like the perfect vehicle. Yes, it was cool, but it went from being a concept to reality. It was to show the potential in Canada.

It doesn’t have an engine or a gas tank, so there’s room for bigger passenger compartments. It’s smaller than many crossover-style vehicles on the market today. People were quite excited to look at it. It’s part of the EV revolution. Cutting-edge-technology suppliers were involved. It’s really a wonderful focus opportunity for and a showcase of Canadian talent, Canadian product and Canadian potential. We were very proud in Oshawa to be super-secret hosts to Project Arrow before the global launch. Now, I can’t keep track of Project Arrow anymore. It’s travelling around the world; I’m not sure which country it’s in right now. But it’s a wonderful showcase.

As we’re looking to those exciting futures—electric vehicles, technologies we have yet to imagine—there are important conversations to be had connected to critical minerals but also, fundamentally, our responsibility to do things well and sustainably here in the province of Ontario. We should be leaders with everything we do. This bill is an opportunity. I’d ask the government to take it.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Question?

**Mr. Mike Harris:** The member from Oshawa and I come from similar communities when you look at some of the things she was highlighting today: of course, auto manufacturing. We’re very lucky to have Toyota in our neck of the woods in Waterloo region and, of course, some first-class universities when it comes to engineering, design, technology.

I was just wondering maybe if the member opposite from Oshawa could highlight what investment in the mining sector in Ontario could mean for her community. We talked a little earlier about how these types of investments in minerals will lead also to great jobs not only for northern Ontario but also for southern Ontario. I was just

wondering if she might be able to comment a little bit on how, like I said, investment in the mining sector here in northern Ontario could translate into good-paying jobs for her community.

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** I think, as the member asked, it is important to talk about investment in innovation and investment in talent. Project Arrow was a great example of that—a lot of money behind that provincially, federally and a showcase of university talent, students’ design, parts manufacturers. Project Arrow is pretty awesome and a really special example. But I think, broadly speaking, we want to see investment, but I’m going to put an asterisk beside it: We want to see responsible investment, and we want to see sustainable investment. Slash and burn: Those days are behind us. So we want to make sure that when we’re talking about mining, we want safe and unionized and responsible mines. We want to make sure that we build relationships with those involved, respect Indigenous voices and First Nations and work with them so that these opportunities can continue for generations.

1540

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Further questions?

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** It’s very interesting, because of all this new technology and where we’re headed into the next century and all of that kind of stuff, yet we can’t get drinking water in Brantford. Six Nations have no drinking water. Up north, they have no safe drinking water. Maybe we can invest in safe drinking water for our First Nations in the province of Ontario. Let’s do that first.

But my question is, the Conservatives continue to take credit for saving the auto sector like Oshawa, Windsor and Ingersoll. It’s why this Bill 71, Building More Mines Act, 2023—so my question to you, I think, is fair and reasonable, seeing you’re from Oshawa. Do you think it was the Conservative government that saved the auto sector in Ontario?

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** I am from Oshawa. I’m very proud to be from Oshawa, and I was very proud to stand up with the workers and the broader community in calling on this government to stand with us through very, very rocky and uncertain times. This is the Premier who said that the ship has left the dock, and it turns out he was wrong. We knew that he was wrong at the time for not believing in us, but what made the pieces come together that allowed for the kind of investment and, hopefully, long future of automotive in Oshawa was the bargaining units, was the workers and was the quality of work that has been done for so long and—

**Interjection:** For a century.

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:**—well, for a century. But as I said before, it was Oshawa that built General Motors, and I’m glad that we will continue to have a strong relationship with them and hopefully a strong future for a long time, but that’s because of the workers, the bargaining unit, the unions.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Question?

**Mr. Anthony Leardi:** I wanted to ask the member from Oshawa a question on the environment since she was

seeking an assurance about the government's environmental record. So my question is, in light of the fact that this government is the government which converted the Hamilton furnaces from carbon to clean electrical energy, thereby removing the equivalent of two million cars off the roads of Ontario, there being more environmental progress in that one decision than the previous government did in 15 years, and in view of the fact that this government's environmental record is probably the best environmental record of any government in the history of the province of Ontario, given that no other government has removed equivalent of two million cars off the road, is that enough assurance?

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** No. This government's record is abysmal on the environment. If you would like to be reminded of the harm and the damage that has been done on your watch, feel free to come to Durham region. Let me escort you through the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve that is phenomenal but on the chopping block. Duffins Creek and that area—you had your own Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, who was willing to sign to do away with that provincially significant wetland classification just because. You guys do harm without even blinking. So if you're going to stand up and point to one thing that you're proud of, let me stand up and point to the fact that you pulled out all the charging stations right when you got here, and here we are talking about the future of electric vehicles. You have more to do, but please stop doing so much harm.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Question?

**MPP Jamie West:** When the member from Oshawa was talking during her debate, she was talking about the old regulation of leaving mining sites better than they were before and how it's now comparable and how that's a difference. While you were saying that, I was thinking about my experience with Scouts Canada. I was a Cub Scout and a Scout, and I was also a leader for Beavers, Cubs and Scouts. One of the tenets when you're a Scout is that you leave the site better than when you found it. I joined scouting when I was 10 years old, when I was in grade 5. So I feel like if you can do that at grade 5, why does it seem burdensome for adults to be able to do this when it comes to closing down mine sites?

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** I was in the Girl Guide movement for 10 years, which—I don't know if that surprises anyone, but it explains my love of camping and my enthusiasm for the environment. I also had to leave the campsite or wherever we were better than how we found it. I don't remember that being an onerous part. I just remember it being part of being a good citizen in nature.

Here we have a bill that was recently before this House that said it had to be better than it was before the recovery, and they've just slipped in there now "comparable to ... as determined by the minister." So it's not just the "comparable" language that bothers me; it is that they've taken this from the public sector, where they had people with science backgrounds, like a particular director they snaked it from, and given it to the minister. What does he know that's more than the folks who have been doing this

work for years, and why can't they explain that? It's dodging environmental responsibility for no reason except just because it's easier, I guess—but not in the long run,.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Further questions?

**Mr. Will Bouma:** I always enjoy interactions with the member from Oshawa. I was hoping she could help me with something that I was having a conversation about with the member from Spadina–Fort York.

The opposition, and in this bill also, is very hesitant about expanding ministerial powers to expedite mining applications. We've heard that before about the ministerial zoning orders, and we've heard that before about the City of Toronto Act, and yet here, just a couple of weeks ago, in order to help the automotive industry, which is critical to her riding, the NDP joined us in voting for a minister's bill in order to expedite a land transfer which just took land from one municipality and put it to the other because those municipalities couldn't figure it out on their own. I was wondering how she could be supportive of that bill which would—ministerial orders—and yet be against it on this bill to expedite mining in the north.

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** I don't know; that felt like a lot of tangle.

Again, processes that are smoother and faster, done well, is I think what we're talking about, but this government hasn't defined a qualified person or individual—is it somebody who has ever even worked in the Ministry of Mines who can sign off on? What assurances do we have that that isn't going to create problems down the road?

**Mr. Will Bouma:** That sounds like a non-answer to me.

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** Of course, it's a non-answer. He's heckling me—"It's a non-answer." I'm not going to answer your question, because none of mine have been answered.

We want to know, who is this qualified person and how do you define it? What makes the minister qualified to do the reclamation and the rehabilitation at the end of a mine? Does this make it faster? Does it make it better? It's yet to be determined.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Further debate?

**Ms. Jess Dixon:** I'm standing today to add my voice to the chorus of support for the Building More Mines Act. In reading over the act as well as the rationale behind it, I was reminded yet again—I can usually find a connection almost anywhere—of one of my favourite authors, Douglas Adams, the mind behind the wonderful book *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, known for having the words "don't panic" inscribed in large friendly letters on its front cover. But to be more specific, I was reminded of his description of the Vogons, an alien race of officious interstellar bureaucrats. The Vogons "wouldn't even lift a finger to save their own grandmothers from the Ravenous Bugblatter Beast of Traal without orders signed in triplicate, sent in, sent back, queried, lost, found, subjected to



public inquiry, lost again, and finally buried in soft peat for three months and recycled as firefighters.”

It turns out the process by which Ontario has been opening and closing mines has been operating in a way that I feel Vogons might find astonishingly similar, and this bill aims to fix that, and our firefighters will have to be sourced elsewhere.

1550

Right now, it can easily take 15 years to permit a mine. That kind of timeline is never going to work if we are going to accomplish what we promised to accomplish for the mining sector, for northern Ontario, and for the many communities and people who make northern Ontario their home.

What does the current sort of Vogonesque bureaucracy look like? If we talk about mine closures—closure plans, specifically—a closure plan is a plan that sets out in detail all the steps that a company will take to rehabilitate the mine after the mining is done. Of course, a mine does not last forever. At some point, you exhaust the resources within it that you’re looking for, but at that point you close the mine.

Under the existing legislation, a mining company has to file the closing plan for the mine before it in fact actually even begins to mine, which is challenging, as a mine can last 100 years or more—and in fact, some have. It’s quite challenging to predict what is going to happen 100 years on and how you are going to close and rehabilitate that mine, as you are stuck predicting the future.

The other issue, of course, is, before you open a mine, you have to file the financial security, which is the money that it’s going to take to close the mine and restore the location as much as possible to its original condition. None of that money is used for producing product or getting it to market, but it has to be posted in advance before you even start producing. So you’re investing in a project, having to put up a large amount of money before you are allowed to start on that project or to start making any money off of that project, and you also have to read the tarot cards to determine exactly how long that mine is going to last and how you are going to plan and finance its closure, before you have been able to open it.

As I said, this is why I thought of the Vogons when I was reading the rationale behind the Mining Act. Mining remains a very specialized industry, and with these very arcane current rules there aren’t a lot of places where you can go to find financing for a mining project.

Investment in the mining sector offers incredible benefits to all of Ontario. Those benefits go far beyond just the supply of critical minerals for EV battery projects. The new roads proposed as part of this investment will create economic opportunities for First Nations and northern communities. It will make it easier to access health services and education. Easier transportation of goods improves food security. It also reduces the cost-of-living increases that are increasingly borne by those living far up north. This isn’t about imposing southern Ontario transit choices on the north, though.

I want to highlight that the terms of reference for the all-season, multi-use road that will connect to the Ring of Fire were designed and submitted by the Webequie and Marten Falls First Nations.

There’s also the benefit from resource revenue-sharing. Back in 2018, there was one thing that the NDP, the Liberals and the PCs all agreed on, and that was resource revenue-sharing. It was, essentially, a non-partisan issue because everybody realized how much sense it made to give First Nations actual partnership and ownership in the projects that were occurring in their traditional territories.

**Hon. Greg Rickford:** It sounds like an opportunity.

**Ms. Jess Dixon:** It does sound like an opportunity. Give me a moment.

At this point—well, for decades, the wealth of the north just headed south and left northern communities with little. Now, First Nations with resource revenue-sharing agreements receive 40% of the annual mining tax and royalties for operational mines and 45% from the future mines in the area covered by the agreements. It’s important to understand that those funds go to our First Nations partners with no strings attached. They can use the money to address local needs, which allows for a very important amount of self-determination to assess their own needs, what their own communities require, and provide that—and, frankly, those needs remain very substantial.

When you look at, as I said, what these roads and what these mines bring—what this resource revenue-sharing brings, if you look at Webequie First Nation, which is closest to some of these mineral discoveries, is an excellent opportunity for that community to benefit from the planning or the development and the operation of any mines in the area. Webequie is a community that currently doesn’t have year-round access to an existing all-season road network. This type of remoteness significantly limits the economic opportunities for Webequie First Nation and its members. It’s difficult for community members, essentially, to continue living there with the limited employment opportunities of a place that is not accessible all-season round, as well as the high cost of living that’s caused by the fact that food, fuel, construction supplies often have to be transported by air most of the time. There’s also reports that the winter road season has been getting shorter.

In Marten Falls First Nation, there isn’t even a store for in-person shopping. So if someone runs out of essentials like milk or eggs or meat, diapers, formula, they have to wait until the next plane arrives and be prepared for high costs that are further inflated by shipping fees.

I saw an article recently about another community close in geographical location where a bag of flour was, I think, \$40 and a can of coffee was \$32. These are some of the consequences of inflation, of fly-in-only areas.

What, as I said, this offers is an opportunity to become free of that, to live in traditional territories, to benefit from the resources of those territories, to exercise self-determination, to have the finances available to make choices for their own communities in the way they best see fit.

Really, what this mining act does is, it says, “Instead of waiting for 15 years more for you to see the benefit of those resource revenue-sharing agreements, we’re going to get it done now. We’re going to make it so that if you have children right now, they’re going to see the benefits now.” They’re not going to be waiting for their children to see the benefits, who by that point may have left the community entirely because of the challenges of living in an area without road access.

The way I see it, with our current Mining Act, we can’t attract the type of investment that we need. There are unclear processes, inflexible requirements, and ultimately a whole lot of Vagon-style bureaucracy that’s holding back the sector. We have project delays, we have runaway costs, and we have all of Ontario losing out on opportunity.

The part that does, as I said, stick in my mind the strongest is what this offers to the First Nations partners in this area and the fact that it is so closely tied to those resource revenue-sharing agreements that were basically the subject of a non-partisan agreement that they were necessary in the 2018 election.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Will Bouma):** Questions and responses? The member for Niagara Falls.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** Thank you very much, Speaker. It’s good to see you in the chair today.

I’ve got something that’s really bothering me, and you didn’t address it very much. Do you know that there has been very little consultation with First Nations on this bill? Also in this bill, which I raised when I got a chance to stand up for another question—there’s nothing in the bill that is going to make sure that we have clean drinking water in Brantford, in Six Nations. And no clean drinking water in this bill—to say we’re going to make sure they have clean drinking water in First Nation communities in the north.

As we talk about making sure corporations can make billions of dollars, why are we not providing First Nations communities with clean drinking water—and doing it in the bill?

**Ms. Jess Dixon:** First off, I would disagree that there has been no or very little consultation done. As I said, the all-season road that is being proposed is, in fact, designed and submitted by two First Nations communities.

1600

My commentary, when we talk about clean drinking water, for example, is that one of the challenges with this is, generally speaking, a lack of infrastructure, a lack of education, a lack of people in the community who are trained and able to deal with these things and availability of parts.

The way I look at it is, a community that is left fly-in only, that has no ability to profit from its own resources, is a community that will continue to be plagued by those kinds of problems.

Really, I see this as very much part of the solution and not part of the problem.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Will Bouma):** Questions?

**Ms. Laura Smith:** I’m so glad the member from Kitchener South–Hespeler provided such a picture of her thoughts on the process in communicating what she did. She talked about a qualified person being there to certify the plans involved and the investment that a company has to put forward even before an operation gets one shovel in the ground.

Would the member please advise on new innovations in this act that will help ensure that the mining industry is responsibly developing resources?

**Ms. Jess Dixon:** As I said in my reference to the Vogons, a lot of this is about making sure that we are modernizing the act, that we are streamlining a very antiquated and overburdened by bureaucracy process. So I criticize the current system by which mine closure planning is done. Right now, we are talking about significantly improving that system so that we have progress timelines, we’ve got lower upfront expenses for opening a mine—and simplifying the process by which we prepare that closure plan, and allowing phased financial assurance in order to fulfill that obligation which is not currently available. In many ways, we are, as I said, tackling those bureaucratic inefficiencies head-on.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Will Bouma):** Questions?

**MPP Lise Vaugeois:** You have communication with two First Nations, but I’m wondering what your plans are for the five other First Nations in the region who are opposed and who are very, very upset that announcements have been made about the Ring of Fire without their free, prior and informed consent.

**Ms. Jess Dixon:** I’ll echo, I believe, an earlier response, which is that our government takes seriously and puts first its duty to consult with First Nations.

I will go back to what I was talking about before, which is the benefits.

I would encourage any First Nations that feel they have more to contribute to, by all means, reach out and share that.

However, I believe that my example of the \$40 bag of flour and the \$32 can of coffee actually came specifically from one of the First Nations that is indicating that it has some objections, which seems an odd position to take.

At this point, my response remains that this is going to offer untold benefits to communities that have not been able to benefit from their own resources.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Will Bouma):** Questions?

**Mr. Ric Bresee:** I really appreciated, first of all, your use of classic literature, with your references to the Vogons.

My question to you is, I will say, one of timing—through the Speaker, of course. We heard that it takes 15 years to get a mine up and running. I come from an IT background, and I’ve seen the changes and the progress made and how technology keeps on moving forward and changing. If we have to wait 15 years for that next mine, do you think the technologies that are being explored across the world will actually have moved beyond what is currently planned? Do you think that timing is appropriate for the evolution of our green technologies?

**Ms. Jess Dixon:** I think the longer that we have this bureaucratic process, the further we fall behind when it comes to actually taking advantage of those technologies. Working in the Ministry of Energy—obviously, there's a strong energy component here—I chose to focus more on the First Nations component. But as I said, these are critical minerals that are going to be used in large part in the production of EV batteries. These are also mines that are going to be operated in Ontario with stringent not just environmental standards but also labour standards, human rights standards. For many of these minerals, the pull or the demand for them is so high that—if not from here, they will come from somewhere. But when they come from here, they come from a place that is environmentally sound, that is clean, and that is committed to excellent working conditions and consultation.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Will Bouma):** Question?

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** I listened intently to my regional colleague from Kitchener South—Hespeler. Some of the language that she used I found very interesting. She said that all these projects offer everything to First Nations communities—that in and of itself indicates a power imbalance.

When you have a selective consultation process, you end up in court—and this government is very well acquainted with ending up in court. They just lost a very big court case this week again, on election finances. The judge determined that that piece of legislation undermined the right of citizens to meaningful participation in the political process and to be effectively represented. The government is fighting this court case that they've lost.

You've lost 15 court cases now. You have a pattern which is very disturbing and also wasteful, and so the trust is not there, particularly with consultation with First Nations, Métis, Inuit folks in Ontario. Why should anybody trust this government?

**Ms. Jess Dixon:** It's interesting; I find the members' comments somewhat patronizing to First Nations communities. For years, the impact of colonialism was that colonial settlers could use traditional First Nations territories for their resources, could take it, could pillage it, could benefit from it without any return on that investment going to the First Nations. That was remedied now with these resource revenue-sharing agreements where we are now saying, "Yes, you have the right to benefit from the resources on the land that you have, the same way that every civilization that oppressed you did." So to stand there and to say that First Nations are somehow not capable of making that decision for themselves, I think, is offensive.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Will Bouma):** There's time for one more quick question and response.

**M<sup>me</sup> Dawn Gallagher Murphy:** As I'm listening to the debate, I have to say that what's most interesting is that there is so much innovation going on in the mining industry. That's something I've been hearing over and over, and it's leading to what we are looking for as a province to develop our mining base.

So my question to the member is this: Are there any new innovations in this act that will ensure the mining industry is responsibly developing our resources?

**Ms. Jess Dixon:** I think when you talk about the restoration and rehabilitation, one of the things I remember reading about—and again, this is not my area of expertise—is about the tailings, the idea of backfilling mines versus using tailing ponds, which I think is a new innovation. That's the type of thing I think we can expect to see.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Will Bouma):** Further debate?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I am the MPP for Nickel Belt, and I'm willing to bet that I have more mines and abandoned mines in Nickel Belt than in any of your ridings. So right now, whether you talk about coal mines; Copper Cliff north; Copper Cliff south; Creighton, the deepest mine, where the neutrino laboratory is; Frood mine; Garson mine, an over-100-year-old mine; Murray mine; Craig mine; McCreedy mine; Totten mine—Totten is one of the new ones from Vale, where everything is electric underground. It's pretty cool. We also have Fraser and Nickel Rim South mine, which are Sudbury Integrated Nickel Operations, Glencore—also, a new mine in my riding, very high-tech, very different from the old mine, Chester mine, Côté Lake. I could go on and on, Speaker, but I just wanted to give you an idea that mining is doing well in Nickel Belt.

1610

I attended the PDAC conference, and I must say that I was quite pleased to meet the chief from Wahnapiatae First Nation, Larry Roque. Some of the band leaders were there with him—Councillor Craig Tyson, and many more. Do they want change to the Mining Act? Yes, absolutely.

Wahnapiatae First Nation is on the side of Wahnapiatae Lake, a beautiful, huge lake in the city of Greater Sudbury. When the treaty was written, Wahnapiatae First Nation was to have a six-mile-by-six-mile reserve on the side of Wahnapiatae Lake. For some reason—I won't go into the details, but it's nothing good—they ended up with a two-by-two piece of land on the side of Wahnapiatae Lake. They had to go through years and years and years so that everybody agreed that Wahnapiatae First Nation has a treaty right to a territory of six miles by six miles on the side of Wahnapiatae Lake. Move forward and say, "Okay, the government finally agrees. How do we change the territory?"—because they are full to capacity. They have a wait-list of 78 of their members who want to move back to their reserve, who want to move back to Wahnapiatae First Nation, but they can't, because they're stuck in a two-kilometre-by-two-kilometre square on the side of the lake. That has been going on for decades. Have we seen the government make changes to the Mining Act so that we can—do you know why they cannot gain the territory that is justifiably theirs? Because there are mining claims all the way around. And when some of those mining claims expire, somebody anywhere in Toronto clicks on his mouse and says, "Well, I'm going to put a claim here." You don't have to come to Nickel Belt. You don't have to

stake. You don't have to do anything. You click with your mouse, and that's it. Wahnapiatae cannot expand. Why isn't that in the act?

Wahnapiatae First Nation's leadership has met with the government multiple times. The government agrees that they are allowed six miles by six miles on the side of Wahnapiatae Lake—but yet, it's not being done, and the 78 families who want to move back in have nowhere to call their own, until they can.

Wahnapiatae is always at the forefront—if this doesn't work, they put alternate ways of doing things forward. They said, “Okay, well, if there are mining claims all the way around, how about we take”—they did the math. They own 20,000 acres. “Okay, we'll take our 20,000 acres on crown land elsewhere, and we'll make it work one way or another to have”—but we need the government to listen, and they're not willing to listen to First Nations. They're not willing to listen to First Nations who have gone through the courts, who have won all their cases, who are being very reasonable as to what their rights are—their rights that were taken away from them. And they're still waiting. That's not right.

Wahnapiatae First Nation deserves to be heard. They deserve to have their 20,000 acres of land given back to them. They deserve to have a government who realizes that when a mining claim expires, you put a big X on it and you say, “No, this goes to Wahnapiatae First Nation, because this was their traditional territory, and it belongs to them.” But the government is not willing to do this. The government is not willing to change the Mining Act in a way that would respect First Nations—much to the contrary. The government is willing to change the Mining Act so that the director of mine rehabilitation will be no more, and the provision for a closure plan respecting advanced exploration may be filed even if it does not meet the act or the regulations.

Let me tell you what that means.

I have abandoned mines throughout my riding. I will talk to you about Long Lake gold mine. Long Lake gold mine was abandoned—because it's always the same: They come, they make millions of dollars, then they declare bankruptcy and disappear, but the mess stays. Long Lake gold mine has been leaching arsenic into Long Lake. Long Lake is a beautiful lake in the city of Greater Sudbury, with lots of people who enjoy drinking it, fishing in it, swimming in it—and now there's arsenic leaking in it since 1970. I have been writing to ministers after ministers after ministers to say, what is the plan to rehabilitate the old gold mine so that it stops leaching into Long Lake—and then it goes all the way to Lake Panache. It affects the fish; it affects the drinking water. They have been working at it—I actually pulled out some of the letters that I sent. I look at my picture on my letterhead and say, “Who is this woman?” because it was so long ago that I wrote those letters. I get answers and everything—same thing.

The last time, I got an answer from this Minister of Mines telling me that the Long Lake mine rehabilitation project is at the top of the list, that they have the money for it, that it's happening. But it's 2023, and nothing is

happening. The leaching from the abandoned gold mine into Long Lake is still going on, and nothing is happening.

So when you tell people who live close to those mines—“I don't work in a mine, and I have no intention of working in a mine, but they are all around me.” When you say that you're going to change the Mining Act—yay, there are lots of things we want changed in the Mining Act. But when you tell us that the change that you're willing to do is that they won't have to have money put aside to do rehabilitations of their mine site—when we have hundreds of abandoned mines, like the gold mine in Long Lake, that are polluting the environment? Would anybody like to have arsenic in their water? Does anybody go to a lake in the summer to swim, to boat, to fish, to—whatever you'd like to do in the lake—and know that there's a mine a couple of hundred feet up that is leaching arsenic into your lake? This is what we are living with throughout Nickel Belt, because there are hundreds of them. You travel through the bush in Nickel Belt—and all of a sudden, there's a big fence. Don't cross the fence, because there's a good chance there is a mine shaft in the middle of that fence that will send you down 200 or 300—a couple of miles down; we'll never see you again. This is the reality of Nickel Belt. This is what we live with, and we're okay with this, but we are not okay with a government who puts forward changes to the Mining Act without talking to Atikameksheng Anishnawbek, without talking to Wahnapiatae First Nation, without talking to Mattagami First Nation.

Let me tell you about a new mine that just opened. Premier Ford was there, for the grand opening of Côté Lake gold mine. Côté Lake did their homework. Côté Lake is in Treaty 9. They sat down with Mattagami First Nation; they sat down with Flying Post First Nation; they sat down with Treaty 3 Métis. They made sure that they had a solid relationship with them, a sharing agreement in writing. All of those people were there for the opening of Côté mine—not this fall, but the fall before. They were all there, because the mining company—at the time, it was Iamgold. They're now in partnership with—I forgot who the partnership is with. It will come to me. Anyway, they were all there, because the mining company knew that in order to be successful, they needed to have a strong relationship with the people who—this is their territory. This is Mattagami First Nation and Flying Post First Nation; this is Métis territory. They did their homework. They were welcome. They were supported. They were there at the opening.

The mining companies know how to do this. The government has to respect First Nations.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):**  
Questions?

**Mr. Will Bouma:** I always very much appreciate the speeches that we hear from the member from Nickel Belt. She makes it very real and very personal, and I appreciate that.

My question to her is, what would it do for Nickel Belt to be able to see more quick, safe expansion of mining in

that area, to provide more jobs—not just for the north, but for all of Ontario?

1620

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** We have been mining in Nickel Belt for over 100 years. We know how to mine in a way that is respectful of the environment, respectful of the people, and respectful of the treaties that exist with First Nations and Métis people.

In order to move projects faster, you need to engage with the community, because we are activists in Sudbury. If a mining company wants to do something that does not respect First Nations, that does not respect the environment, expect us to block the highway like we did on Highway 144 before, because we won't take this.

You want to move things forward faster? Be respectful, talk to people, have established relationships. This is how success comes.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** The member from London North Centre.

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** I'd like to thank the member from Nickel Belt for her eloquent speech about how this government's changes deliberately exclude Indigenous people. Members on the Conservative benches, earlier this afternoon, seemed to suggest that the burden should be on Indigenous people to reach out if they have concerns.

My question to the member is, is this Conservative government moving backward in terms of reconciliation?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I can assure you that the First Nations in Nickel Belt were not consulted before they put that piece of legislation forward. I can assure you that the traditional territories of every single First Nations in Nickel Belt have mining in them, have opportunity for more mining development within their traditional territory.

If we want our society to have access to every kind of mineral from nickel to copper to precious metals—we have them all in Nickel Belt. In order to mine them, you have to have support from the population, and you have to have a relationship with the First Nations territory that those mines go on. It's as simple as that.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Question?

**Ms. Laura Smith:** I appreciate what the member opposite has been discussing. But what I'd like the member opposite to appreciate is that the world is going to keep spinning regardless of what Ontario does, which means—the numbers are out there. Russia and China have a stranglehold on the market right now. So 10 to 15 years to get a project complete is going to change the economic hold of these locations. We are actually strangling these communities if we don't allow this to happen.

My question is, does the opposition think that China and Russia are viable trading partners for critical minerals?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I'm really proud of the mining evolution that has taken place in my community. Whether you talk about nickel, copper, critical minerals, rare minerals, precious minerals, you can mine all of that in Sudbury, in Nickel Belt. People come from all over the world to look at Totten mine. Do you know why? Because

Totten mine is completely electric—no more diesel on the ground, no more pollution. People come from all over the world to look at Nickel Rim, because Nickel Rim is a new mine that can mine without any damage to the environment, while respecting the First Nations territory that they're in and creating good jobs for the people of Sudbury. It is possible to do this. A lot of people who want to build those batteries, who want to build the electric vehicles come to Sudbury because we can show them what environmentally sustainable mining can look like and how respecting not only the environment but the people who live there looks like. China and Russia do not do that.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Question?

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** I want to say to my colleague from Nickel Belt, that was a very interesting 10 minutes of talking about your community, and I learned a lot about it.

I try to listen to everybody here, but I listened to the Conservatives here, and they're saying that First Nations were consulted. You're saying First Nations—and you listed the First Nations and Indigenous communities that weren't consulted. Which one of you is telling the truth? I'm a little confused.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have no idea who they consulted. But go to PDAC; right now, there are a number of First Nations at PDAC. PDAC is the biggest mining—we have over 40,000 people from all over the world in Toronto, right here, right now, talking about mining, and do you know the number one thing they talk about? It's Sudbury. We had the Sudbury reception last night. It was packed with people who spoke all sorts of languages who came from all over the world to talk about how Sudbury does mining. When Sudbury and Nickel Belt mine, we respect First Nations. We talk to them. We consult with them. We make sure that there's written agreements with them that are enforceable, that are good for them and that are good for the mining company.

I can assure you that the Atikameksheng Anishnawbek, Mattagami First Nation and Wahnapiatae First Nation were not consulted before Bill 61 was put out.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Further questions?

**M. Stéphane Sarrazin:** Merci à la députée de Nickel Belt. J'apprécie la leçon sur le secteur minier de votre circonscription. C'est plus ou moins intéressant pour moi parce que j'ai de la famille dans ce coin-là.

Quelque chose qui m'a fait réfléchir à ce que vous avez dit exactement c'est que les peuples des Premières Nations réclament des terrains, à ce que j'ai pu comprendre, puis ce qui arrive, c'est qu'ils ne réussissent pas à avoir ces terrains-là par rapport à, je ne sais pas, quelques ententes qui se produisent avec le gouvernement ou—je n'en ai aucune idée.

Mais une affaire que j'ai pu constater avec des membres de la famille qui demeurent au bord du lac Wanapitei—je suis allé visiter la place, puis j'ai réalisé qu'il y a beaucoup de terres qui appartiennent au gouvernement dans ce coin-là, beaucoup de « crown land », comme on l'appelle, même dans le coin du lac Nipissing. C'est quelque chose qui m'a frappé parce que je n'étais jamais allé dans un

endroit où il y avait autant de terres qui appartenait au gouvernement.

Puis je me demandais, comment est-ce que ces terres-là pourraient jouer un rôle pour remplacer les terres qui peuvent être utilisées pour l'exploitation minière?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Vous avez parfaitement raison : tout autour du lac Wanapitei, tout autour de la réserve de Wahnapiatae, il y a des terres de la Couronne. Mais sur les terres de la Couronne, il y a ce qu'on appelle des « mining claims ». Donc, la Première Nation n'a pas droit à ces terrains-là parce qu'il y a quelqu'un qui a cliqué avec sa souris puis qui a dit : « Bien, moi, j'ai l'intention d'ouvrir une mine là ». Ils ne sont jamais venus à Sudbury. Ils n'ont jamais dépensé un sou noir pour ça. Ils ont juste besoin de cliquer et dire : « Moi, je suis intéressé à faire l'exploration minière dans cette terre de la Couronne-là » et la Première Nation n'a plus le droit d'y aller.

Ce qu'on demande, ce que la Première Nation demande, c'est que lorsque les terres de la Couronne deviennent vacantes et qu'il n'y a plus de « mining claims », qu'il n'y ait pas droit d'en mettre un autre, surtout quand c'est quelqu'un qui n'a aucune intention de jamais ouvrir une mine là. Ils ont seulement l'intention de peut-être faire l'argent à un moment donné, mais pour la Première Nation, ça veut dire que, eux, ils continuent d'avoir 78 familles qui veulent venir dans la Première Nation qui ne peuvent pas venir parce qu'ils n'ont pas de place.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** We'll do further debate; we are out of time. Thank you so much.

**Mr. Ric Bresee:** I'm very pleased to stand in the House today representing the wonderful people of Hastings-Lennox and Addington and in support of this legislation which supports the mining industry. This, of course, is especially noteworthy in my own riding. As the previous speaker was talking about, my own riding is actually the original epicentre of mining in Ontario, even in Canada, starting as early as in the 19th century.

Some 204 years ago, in 1819, there was a blast furnace erected in Marmorata township in Hastings county. The ore was obtained from the nearby Blairton mine. Iron production began in Marmorata in 1822. I would also note the first discovery of gold in Ontario at the Richardson mine was at Eldorado in Hastings county, which started Ontario's gold rush. The Deloro gold mine is believed to have started in about 1868. In 1881, gold was discovered at Kaladar and iron ore was discovered at Coe Hill and Mayo/Carlow. In 1883, actinolite mining began in Hastings county. In 1890, more gold discovered in Marmorata township; fluorite discovered near Madoc.

1630

On an interesting note, the Canadian talc mine located in Madoc, Ontario, was one of the oldest continuously producing mines in Ontario. Mining operations began in 1896 and continued until 2010. It was at that time one of only three mines on the planet that had operated continuously for more than 100 years.

And there are many more. The mines in Eldorado have iron and copper and, of course, gold; fluorite in Madoc;

marble quarries in Dungannon and Faraday. Cobalt; silver; stellite, a cobalt-chromium alloy; fluorspar and magnetite—and in 1949, there was the discovery of uranium ores in Faraday township near Bancroft. Production began in 1957, and a total of four uranium mines were operated in that area in Bancroft until 1967. Faraday, the last one to close, has actually since reopened as Madawaska Mines and currently produces uranium for the world markets.

Madam Speaker, my riding certainly knows mining. Suffice it to say the counties of Hastings, Lennox and Addington have a long mining history that goes back over 200 years, and that was a major pillar in the original development and successes of this province. We know what significant economic drivers these facilities can be.

It's fair to say that the opening of the railroads across this country led to an awesome period of economic growth and the literal development of this country. It's also very fair to say that those railroads were developed because of the availability of iron from these mines. The big buildings here in Toronto, the economic centre of the country, are still standing in many cases because of the iron from those mines. It's quite possible that the skeleton of this very building we're standing in has iron ore from Marmorata.

Mining provides the minerals that have been the backbone of this country, and it is the critical minerals that this bill will enable to get to market that will be the backbone of the next wave of the green industrial revolution. As mentioned, there is still mining in the Marmorata and Bancroft area, but the greater focus of the bill, as has been talked about, is about the mines coming on stream in a reasonable amount of time and, most often, in the northern parts of the province that have unfortunately too often been ignored by past governments.

While these new mines will be geographically located in the north, the impact and the economic drivers will provide a tremendous benefit for all of Ontario, for our environment and for the whole world, in fact. The world needs these critical minerals for that next wave of green technologies.

Last July, there was a major announcement in my hometown of Loyalist township: a new battery plant that will bring 1,000 new jobs. For a community of 18,000 people, that's just absolutely a once-in-a-generation fantastic injection of economic growth. This firm will build battery components that will go into all types of batteries to support the technology that is driving our world, and it will use minerals that this bill will help to open up. These minerals and these batteries could be used for grid-level battery storage.

These installations will help offset the missing component that the previous government didn't figure out. The Green Energy Act imposed alternative energy electricity generation facilities on areas that didn't support them, and it paid more per kilowatt hour than they were selling the electricity for. We all know their plan was to keep increasing those prices so that we'd all pay through the nose.

But they also forgot that while these generators do make green electricity, they're intermittent generators and

therefore can only be a small part of the solution until we manage to catch up to the storage-of-power requirements that this province truly needs. Battery and kinetic storage are part of the plan that the Ministry of Energy and the minerals in these mines will make possible.

These batteries will also be used for the future of the electric vehicles that will drive the automotive sector here in Ontario. With the Premier's leadership and the amazing work by Minister Fedeli, we are reversing the job losses that dominated the last 15 years under the previous government and gaining tremendous ground, bringing in hundreds of thousands of jobs across Ontario and ensuring the future economic prosperity of this province. We've seen new plants in Windsor, in Essex, in Brampton.

These vehicles are also a major element in our plan to protect the environment. We know that the internal combustion engine is a major contributor to greenhouse gases. Being able to move an entire worldwide industry to newer, greener methodology is a massive undertaking.

By supporting mining here in Ontario, we're encouraging that critical mineral extraction here in Ontario, where we have respect for the environment, where we have respect for the human rights of our workers and where we have respect for the First Nations that partner with us in these mining regions.

The last few years, the COVID pandemic and the invasion of the Ukraine have shown us just how sensitive our supply chain is. It taught us that we should never again allow these minerals to be only available from jurisdictions around the world that have little interest in human rights, have little interest in environmental protection. Right now, these jurisdictions have a stranglehold on the supply of the very minerals so critical to the entire world moving forward with high-tech green technologies.

Here in Ontario, we have a stable government environment, and we have the resources to not only provide for our own future but to support the world during this climate crisis. The minister, in his comments earlier, made the point that governments don't create mines, companies do. And companies are made up of people, made up of mining engineers and geologists and materials scientists—the best and the brightest. We just heard that 40,000 of them are down at the conference right now. They're here in Ontario, in Canada from around the world. These are the people that will actually get this done.

Most of you know I am no geologist or engineer, so I'm both fascinated by and excited about the new technologies that are being developed right here in Ontario. I was recently made aware of a new innovative process that's being developed by one of our companies. The company is working on the extraction of lithium—no surprise—in support of our battery and electric vehicle industries. But they've also developed a technique that can use the waste rock from that mine as sort of a sponge to permanently absorb and sequester carbon dioxide. So not only are they preparing to provide the very important minerals for the latest technology; they're also helping to solve an existential threat to the world. Creating this new, innovative

material will aid all of us in our attempts to achieve net zero.

When smart people—people smarter than me, certainly—are provided with the flexible environment to be innovative and successful in their fields, the province and the whole world benefit. This bill will modernize and simplify the application process and provide regulatory certainty to those innovative technology geniuses who are doing this. And in doing so, they will bring us greater prosperity and they will provide benefits to the province and the whole world.

I've heard that they will, and I do hope that all members of this House will want to see strong environmental protection in mining and not the dangerous and damaging processes that we see overseas. I hope that all members of the House want to see Ontario build its sustainable—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Thank you. Questions?

**MPP Jamie West:** Thank you to the member from Hastings–Lennox and Addington. One of the things I love about afternoon debate is you get to learn about different ridings and their backgrounds. I looked very quickly at the history, and I hope I have the right place, but apparently there was a cheese factory. It was one of the first industries that came in.

1640

**Mr. Ric Bresee:** Oh, there are several cheese factories.

**MPP Jamie West:** I always find it really interesting. I know it's a small town, small area, and I know how important the gold mine was to the industry as well, but I think about the Kam Kotia mine outside Timmins which operated for a short amount of time and left the cleanup bill for the community. That is one of the concerns we have with this bill: that it could allow an opportunity for an unscrupulous developer to leave the cleanup bill to a local community like the ones we represent. Is this something you're concerned with as well?

**Mr. Ric Bresee:** I appreciate the question. Of course, we are all concerned about the environment around any of these activities. That is why we have such great control, such important environmental protections built into the Mining Act and still supported through this amendment to the act.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** The member from Essex.

**Mr. Anthony Leardi:** It was a pleasure listening to the member from Hastings–Lennox and Addington talk about the incredible benefits that are going to be derived by the citizens of his riding as a result of amendments to this act and the fantastic investments attracted to this province by the government that's bringing so many jobs and so much investment that are helping the people in his riding.

I'm excited about it because the same thing is happening in the riding of Essex. I know that the member from Windsor–Tecumseh is very excited because the same thing is happening in his riding. I know members from Brampton are excited because the same thing is happening in Brampton. The excitement being developed and created in this province is infectious, and I was wondering if the

member would talk about what's happening in his riding as a result of these remarkable developments and the changes that are being made and the investment that's being brought to the province by the Premier and the Minister of Economic Development. Tell us about that excitement.

**Mr. Ric Bresee:** Thank you to the member from Essex for the question and for the work he does for his riding.

All of these investments, whether it's Brampton or Essex, Windsor or Loyalist township in Hastings–Lennox and Addington, bring jobs and they bring all of the secondary industries that come to support all of those jobs. As I mentioned in my speech, 1,000 jobs in a community of 18,000 is massive. It is absolutely massive. But on top of that, there's going to be another 2,000 to 3,000 spinoff jobs for the entire region. So, not only does this support my riding, but it supports the ridings on either side of me and all around that area.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Further questions?

**Mr. Terence Kernaghan:** I'd like to thank the member for his presentation. Here in the chamber, we've seen many presentations where it appears as though the Conservative government is reversing progress that has been made towards reconciliation. Also, in this bill, we see contradictory treatments of closure plans. On the one hand, they allow an applicant who may not meet the requirements to submit an incomplete closure plan and then subsequent actions give the minister broad discretion in permitting applications. My question for the member: Does it make good business sense to rubber-stamp plans that are written on the back of a napkin?

**Mr. Ric Bresee:** I appreciate the question, and I'll address the first part of it by reading, if I may, a quote from the Mining Act, 1990:

"The purpose of this act is to encourage prospecting, registration of mining claims and exploration for the development of mineral resources, in a manner consistent with the recognition and affirmation of existing Aboriginal and treaty rights in section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982, including the duty to consult, and to minimize the impact of these activities on public health and safety and the environment."

Madam Speaker, nothing in the bill proposed today changes that part of the original Mining Act.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Further questions?

**Mr. Brian Saunderson:** It was a pleasure to hear the MPP from Nickel Belt talk about the electrification of their mine in Sudbury. That mining equipment comes from the riding of Simcoe–Grey. MacLean Engineering has been a manufacturer in Collingwood for over 30 years. In addition, a spinoff from MacLean Engineering is now looking at creating ALTDRIVE, which is electrical transmissions for 18-wheel rigs so that we can electrify our transport trucks.

My question for the member from Hastings–Lennox and Addington is that these are just a number of examples of the type of innovations that opening up our mining

sector will allow us to pursue in this province. I'm wondering if the member could speak about the additional opportunities that are out there if we develop our mining resources.

**Mr. Ric Bresee:** Actually, I really appreciate the mention of yet another range of spinoff technologies and spinoff industries that are coming about because of the starting point of our mining industries. We take it out of the ground. We then process it, we manage it and we use it in technologies here in Ontario. And no matter where you are in Ontario, we will see the economic spinoff of that. We will see the increase to jobs. We will see the increase to prosperity everywhere in the province, especially in northern Ontario and especially in those First Nations communities that are directly attached to these.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Question?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I was wondering if the member thinks that it is okay for a community like the people who live along Long Lake to have to wait so long for remediation? The changes in the law will make remediation more questionable.

I have a letter from the Honourable Greg Rickford, Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines: "Remediation work will begin in late summer of 2019, with project completion by autumn 2022." Nothing has been done and arsenic has been leaking into the lake since 1970. Do you think that loosening protections of site remediation will make this more acceptable to people?

**Mr. Ric Bresee:** I do appreciate the question. I would like to start with, certainly, an understanding that, no, 50 years of environmental damages is not appropriate. I would also like to remind the member that in 2019 to 2022, the world has been rather occupied with COVID and with a number of things. There were a number of projects that were delayed through that. I'm sure the minister's intention is to continue with those projects.

No, I don't think that they should have to wait further, but I also don't see anything in this bill that will actually reduce the environmental protections involved.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Patrice Barnes):** Question?

**Ms. Laura Smith:** I want to thank the member for his very exciting information. I had no idea; we'll have to discuss this further. But it was exciting to hear about the new innovation that utilizes modern mining techniques and solves environmental problems at the same time. Could the member please talk about how these changes will help with the Critical Minerals Strategy?

**Mr. Ric Bresee:** The Critical Minerals Strategy is about providing the entire supply chain to make sure that our industries, from the ground, to the vehicles, to whatever the technology is at the other end, are able to be provided for right here in Ontario and we don't have the risk, we don't have the threat of these other jurisdictions that don't have the environmental protections that we have, that don't have the respect for human rights that we have.

Part of the Critical Minerals Strategy is making sure that we do it right and we do it right here in Ontario.

*Report continues in volume B.*



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Ted Arnott

Clerk / Greffier: Todd Decker

Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffier: Trevor Day

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Valerie Quioc Lim, Wai Lam (William) Wong,

Meghan Stenson, Christopher Tyrell

Temporary Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes par intérim: Mike Civil

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Anand, Deepak (PC)	Mississauga—Malton	
Andrew, Jill (NDP)	Toronto—St. Paul's	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London—Fanshawe	
<b>Arnott, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (PC)</b>	Wellington—Halton Hills	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Babikian, Aris (PC)	Scarborough—Agincourt	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia—Lambton	
<b>Barnes, Patrice (PC)</b>	Ajax	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Begum, Doly (NDP)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough- Sud-Ouest	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Bell, Jessica (NDP)	University—Rosedale	
<b>Bethlenfalvy, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (PC)</b>	Pickering—Uxbridge	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Blais, Stephen (LIB)	Orléans	
Bouma, Will (PC)	Brantford—Brant	
Bourgouin, Guy (NDP)	Mushkegowuk—James Bay / Mushkegowuk—Baie James	
Bowman, Stephanie (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	
Brady, Bobbi Ann (IND)	Haldimand—Norfolk	
Bresee, Ric (PC)	Hastings—Lennox and Addington	
Burch, Jeff (NDP)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	
Byers, Rick (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	
<b>Calandra, Hon. / L'hon. Paul (PC)</b>	Markham—Stouffville	Minister of Legislative Affairs / Ministre des Affaires législatives Minister of Long-Term Care / Ministre des Soins de longue durée Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
<b>Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)</b>	Scarborough North / Scarborough- Nord	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
<b>Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Stan (PC)</b>	Willowdale	Associate Minister of Transportation / Ministre associé des Transports
<b>Clark, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (PC)</b>	Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds— Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby	
<b>Collard, Lucille (LIB)</b>	Ottawa—Vanier	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Crawford, Stephen (PC)	Oakville	
Cuzzetto, Rudy (PC)	Mississauga—Lakeshore	
Dixon, Jess (PC)	Kitchener South—Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud—Hespeler	
Dowie, Andrew (PC)	Windsor—Tecumseh	
<b>Downey, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)</b>	Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	Attorney General / Procureur général
<b>Dunlop, Hon. / L'hon. Jill (PC)</b>	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Minister of Colleges and Universities / Ministre des Collèges et Universités
<b>Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)</b>	Nipissing	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique, de la Création d'emplois et du Commerce
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	
Flack, Rob (PC)	Elgin—Middlesex—London	

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
<b>Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)</b>	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
<b>Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Michael D. (PC)</b>	York South—Weston / York-Sud—Weston	Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism / Ministre des Affaires civiques et du Multiculturalisme
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
<b>Fullerton, Hon. / L'hon. Merrilee (PC)</b>	Kanata—Carleton	Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires
Gallagher Murphy, Dawn (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Ghamari, Goldie (PC)	Carleton	
<b>Gill, Hon. / L'hon. Parm (PC)</b>	Milton	Minister of Red Tape Reduction / Ministre de la Réduction des formalités administratives
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Grewal, Hardeep Singh (PC)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harden, Joel (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Harris, Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
Hogarth, Christine (PC)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	
Holland, Kevin (PC)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	
Hsu, Ted (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Hunter, Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough—Guildwood	
<b>Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)</b>	Dufferin—Caledon	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health / Ministre de la Santé
Jones, Trevor (PC)	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	
Jordan, John (PC)	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	
Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
<b>Karpoche, Bhutla (NDP)</b>	Parkdale—High Park	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Ke, Vincent (PC)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
<b>Kerzner, Hon. / L'hon. Michael S. (PC)</b>	York Centre / York-Centre	Solicitor General / Solliciteur général
Khanjin, Andrea (PC)	Barrie—Innisfil	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe du gouvernement
Kusendova-Bashta, Natalia (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	
Leardi, Anthony (PC)	Essex	
<b>Lecce, Hon. / L'hon. Stephen (PC)</b>	King—Vaughan	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Lindo, Laura Mae (NDP)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
<b>Lumsden, Hon. / L'hon. Neil (PC)</b>	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean	
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiiwetinoong	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Martin, Robin (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
McCarthy, Todd J. (PC)	Durham	
McGregor, Graham (PC)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
McMahon, Mary-Margaret (LIB)	Beaches—East York / Beaches—East York	
<b>McNaughton, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (PC)</b>	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development / Ministre du Travail, de l'Immigration, de la Formation et du Développement des compétences
<b>Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)</b>	York—Simcoe	Minister of Francophone Affairs / Ministre des Affaires francophones Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	
<b>Parsa, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (PC)</b>	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	Associate Minister of Housing / Ministre associé du Logement
Pasma, Chandra (NDP)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	
<b>Piccini, Hon. / L'hon. David (PC)</b>	Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs
Pierre, Natalie (PC)	Burlington	
<b>Pirie, Hon. / L'hon. George (PC)</b>	Timmins	Minister of Mines / Ministre des Mines
Quinn, Nolan (PC)	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	
Rae, Matthew (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
<b>Rasheed, Hon. / L'hon. Kaleed (PC)</b>	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	Minister of Public and Business Service Delivery / Ministre des Services au public et aux entreprises
<b>Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)</b>	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Indigenous Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones Minister of Northern Development / Ministre du Développement du Nord
Riddell, Brian (PC)	Cambridge	
Romano, Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
<b>Sarkaria, Hon. / L'hon. Prabmeet Singh (PC)</b>	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	President of the Treasury Board / Président du Conseil du Trésor
Sarrazin, Stéphane (PC)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Saunderson, Brian (PC)	Simcoe—Grey	
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	
Shamji, Adil (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
<b>Skelly, Donna (PC)</b>	Flamborough—Glanbrook	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-présidente et présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-présidente
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, David (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Graydon (PC)</b>	Parry Sound—Muskoka	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)</b>	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Smith, Laura (PC)	Thornhill	
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Surma, Hon. / L'hon. Kinga (PC)</b>	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
Tangri, Nina (PC)	Mississauga—Streetsville	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain / Hamilton-Mountain	
Thanigasalam, Vijay (PC)	Scarborough—Rouge Park	
<b>Thompson, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa M. (PC)</b>	Huron—Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
<b>Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)</b>	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions / Ministre associé délégué au dossier de la Santé mentale et de la Lutte contre les dépendances
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)	Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming—Cochrane	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Vaugeois, Lise (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
Wai, Daisy (PC)	Richmond Hill	

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
<b>Williams, Hon. / L'hon. Charmaine A. (PC)</b>	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity / Ministre associée des Perspectives sociales et économiques pour les femmes
Wong-Tam, Kristyn (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	
Vacant	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	