

NEW BILLS INTRODUCED

BILL 149, MINISTRY OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS ACT

NDP MPP France Gélinas (Nickel Belt) introduced this bill that would establish a stand-alone Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions. In her speech, Gélinas justified the need for this new ministry by [saying](#), “The strength of a stand-alone mental health and addictions ministry is that, for starters, it will be transparent and we will have a minister accountable to all of us, to everybody in Ontario, who will be responsible for finding more services, more funding, more resources and more attention. It will be the single focus of this ministry. It will be the priority of this ministry at all times.” Gélinas’ bill passed 1st Reading and moved to 2nd Reading by the end of the week. The bill was subsequently referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs after the NDP and PCs combined to pass the bill by a vote of 24–18. Despite Health Minister Eric Hoskins (St. Paul’s) speaking in opposition to the creation of a stand-alone Ministry, the Liberals did not have enough MPPs in the Legislature to defeat the bill at this stage.

BILL 150, SIMCOE DAY ACT

PC MPP Toby Barrett (Haldimand—Norfolk) introduced this bill that would formally proclaim the first Monday in August in each year as Simcoe Day. Barrett’s bill seeks to acknowledge the contributions of John Graves

Simcoe in the development of Upper Canada, now known as Ontario. Simcoe was the first Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada.

BILL 151, WORKPLACE SAFETY AND INSURANCE AMENDMENT ACT (PTSD BENEFITS)

NDP MPP Taras Natyshak (Essex) introduced this bill that would amend the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act* to expand the application of entitlement to benefits under the insurance plan for posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) to nurses, health care workers providing close assistance to first responders, and workers other than police officers who provide police services or support the work of persons who provide police services. In seeking to broaden the workers included, Natashyk [said](#), “The “who” are those who were left out of the original bill, Bill 163, that expanded post-traumatic stress disorder benefits and presumptive benefits to those first responders in policing, and to our firefighters and paramedics. There was a subset of that group who were explicitly removed or explicitly not put into the original bill.” In debate, the Liberals said that the current legislation was sufficient to address the PTSD issues of all workers. Nonetheless, the Liberals did not oppose the bill and it quickly proceeded to 2nd Reading and passed with all party support. The bill was then referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

BILL 152, REPRESENTATION STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT

Liberal Cabinet Minister Yasir Naqvi (Ottawa Centre) introduced this bill that would increase the number of constituencies in Ontario from the currently proposed 122 to 124 for the next election. The bill is a result of Premier Kathleen Wynne wanting to see greater representation for Northern Ontario and, specifically, for Indigenous communities, in Ontario's Legislature. The bill would divide the current two northern electoral districts of Kenora—Rainy River and Timmins—James Bay into four and rename them Kenora Rainy River, Kiiwetinoong, Mushkegowuk and Timmins. The current Ontario Legislature has 107 MPPs and most boundaries are aligned with the federal counterparts.

In proposing this bill, the Liberals also made some additional changes to their earlier [Bill 2, Election Finances Statute Law Amendment Act](#) specifically adding nominated candidates to the list of individuals banned from attending fundraising events. To the Liberals' consternation and embarrassment, the PCs had noticed a loophole in the law that only

barred sitting MPPs from fundraisers and not nominated candidates. As well, the Liberals clarified the law so that sitting MPPs and nominated candidates could attend party conventions such as annual general meetings.

BILL 153, ORGANIC PRODUCTS ACT

NDP MPP Peter Tabuns (Toronto—Danforth) and PC MPP Sylvia Jones (Dufferin—Caledon) co-sponsored this bill to prohibit the marketing and labelling of products as “organic,” unless they have been certified as organic in accordance with the Act. The bill would also require that the Minister assigned the administration of the Act create a register of all products that are certified as organic, and that the Minister periodically update the register.

BILL 154, CUTTING UNNECESSARY RED TAPE ACT

In what seems an endlessly recurring theme for many governments, Liberal Cabinet Minister Brad Duguid's (Scarborough Centre) bill aims to cut government red tape. Duguid [says](#) that his legislation will make it easier for businesses to grow and create more jobs.

BILLS REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

BILL 149, MINISTRY OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS ACT

Please see above.

BILL 151, WORKPLACE SAFETY AND INSURANCE AMENDMENT ACT (PTSD BENEFITS)

Please see above.

BILLS PASSED

None.

IN OTHER NEWS

NEW SAULT STE. MARIE MPP

Newly elected Sault Ste. Marie MPP, Ross Romano, was formally introduced to the Legislature this week. The Progressive Conservative MPP Romano took his seat after claiming a decisive by-election victory last spring over the previously Liberal held riding of long-time Cabinet Minister David Orazietti. Romano has been named PC Critic for Northern Ontario Jobs and the Ring of Fire.

LIBERAL CABINET MINISTERS LEAVING QUEEN'S PARK

MPP Glen Murray (Toronto Centre), the Liberals' Minister of Environment and Climate Change, resigned his position at the end of the summer to assume a private-sector job in Alberta. Premier Kathleen Wynne quickly announced that no by-election would be called to replace Murray with the provincial election less than a year away. Constituents would still be able to access a constituency office for help with government matters but would have no representative in Queen's Park until after the next general election. Wynne cited the cost of a by-election for making her decision.

As well, MPP Brad Duguid, Minister of Economic Development and Growth announced that he would not be seeking re-election in 2018. Duguid cited a need to seek new opportunities outside politics and said that his decision had nothing to do with the Liberals' future electoral prospects.

PCs SPEAK ON SCHOOL VIOLENCE IN LEGISLATURE

The PC Associate Critic for Education, PC MPP Lorne Coe (Whitby—Oshawa), [raised](#) the issue of school violence in the Legislature citing concerns for student and staff safety. In his [remarks](#), Coe acknowledged the efforts of all education affiliates in raising attention to this issue. He urged the Liberals to address the concerns brought forward by the education unions.