



No. 53A

N° 53A

ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly
of Ontario

Third Session, 37th Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario

Troisième session, 37^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Monday 4 November 2002

Lundi 4 novembre 2002

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 4 November 2002

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 4 novembre 2002

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

SUDBURY REGIONAL HOSPITAL

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): After several delays that have for months kept the health care providers in our community on edge, the health minister finally has in his possession the operational review of the Sudbury Regional Hospital. For months, while hydro costs have soared and with construction costs rising, the debt-ridden hospital has remained in a state of stalled, partially finished construction because this government has abdicated its responsibility and promise to ensure that our hospital becomes a referral centre for northeastern Ontario. Right now, the dormant construction site, as the seasons change in the north, has quite frankly become a symbol of how the Harris-Eves government has broken its promises and abandoned health care in our community.

Hospital administrators and staff have put forth a valiant effort, but sheer will alone cannot ensure the hospital can serve patients. Funding is needed; provincial funding is needed. The hospital asked for the operational review, Minister Clement, so that your government can see first-hand that, rather than cutting corners, you must provide the funding necessary to ensure construction reaches completion and that the level of service adequately and safely reflects the needs of northerners.

Today my community demands that you, Minister Clement, release the results of the operational review, that your government ensures the number of beds will not be further reduced, that your government provides the funding that is owing and long overdue so our community can have restored faith in your health services and construction on our hospital can again begin.

OPTOMETRISTS

Mr Rob Sampson (Mississauga Centre): I rise today to recognize an important health care profession in Ontario: optometrists. Optometrists play an important role as primary eye care providers in this province. More than four million patients visit an optometrist annually and, as you can see, I'm one of them. Optometrists not only provide prescriptions for eyeglasses; they routinely diagnose and manage eye-related diseases and conditions, and refer patients for timely treatment to special-

ists. Optometrists are helping to save health care dollars through early detection and appropriate treatment of sight-threatening conditions in children, seniors, working aged adults and the medically at risk.

At Queen's Park today, we have representatives from the Ontario Association of Optometrists. The OAO is a voluntary professional organization that represents nearly 1,000 registered optometrists in Ontario. In addition to providing resources and continuing education to its members, the OAO is committed to raising awareness of optometry and educating the public about the importance of professional eye care. Each year, for example, the OAO partners with the Ontario region of the Canadian Diabetes Association in raising awareness about the damaging effects that diabetes can have on your eyes. The OAO is also working actively with educators on the importance of good vision in school and eye examination for children. The OAO is hosting an inaugural Optometrists on Site reception later today at Queen's Park. I'd encourage all the members in the Legislature to join us at that reception this evening.

PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITALS

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): In 1996, after the OPSEU strike, the Harris government decided it was going to get out of the business of running hospitals. Then-Minister of Health Jim Wilson promised that psychiatric hospitals and psychiatric patients would never be caught in the midst of a strike again. Yet this past spring, four of 10 psychiatric hospitals again faced the reality of striking workers, and patients in those hospitals paid a huge price. All 10 of the provincial hospitals were supposed to be transferred to either a public hospital or to a community board. In the case of six hospitals, the divestment went ahead. The money to finish the job with the other four hospitals in Thunder Bay, North Bay, Whitby and Penetanguishene was supposed to have been in the last two budgets, but the Minister of Health apparently decided that he had a better use for the money. The budget for mental health facilities went underspent by \$21 million two years ago and by more than \$52 million last year. In the meantime, patients in four psychiatric hospitals continue to experience the declining standard of care that is the inevitable consequence of this government's underfunding of its own hospitals.

The chairs of three of the hospitals' community advisory boards are here at Queen's Park today. The community advisory board at the Whitby hospital

resigned en masse last June out of sheer frustration. The Minister of Health refuses to meet with these community board members. He won't tell them why or how long the patients in their hospitals will be left hanging. The Minister of Health has apparently decided that mental health isn't a hot enough political issue to spend money on, but he can't avoid this forever. The consequences for patients will be his responsibility. It's past time for this minister to finish the job his government started six years ago.

BILL FERRIER

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): How far we have come over the last number of years as MPPs in this Legislature. I have had the pleasure today to bring to lunch Bill Ferrier, who was the member for Cochrane South from 1967 and consecutively for three elections. We had an interesting discussion about how the work in this Legislature has changed over the years. He hearkened back to the days when we didn't have time allocation motions in this House and you really did have debate, where members came to this House and had to convince each other of their ideas, and that the House, in some ways, used to work, I would argue, probably more progressively than it does.

He also talked about how they did the work as local MPPs in their own ridings back then. Bill talked about how Jean, his wife, who just passed away unfortunately about a couple of weeks ago, was his constituency assistant because members back then in 1967 and onwards had no constituency staff, had no constituency offices, had no assistance whatsoever. They used to sit in this House, write their letters themselves on their desk. They used to get on the train to get back to their ridings up in northern Ontario because travel was not paid for to the extent that it is now for members, and how when he got back to his constituency late on Friday night or on Saturday morning, basically Jean had everything laid out for him—the people he had to speak with, the people she had talked to, and how the phone rang all the time at the home—again, just the family to deal with that. I just reflect back to 1967 and say, we've learned a couple of things since then. We are certainly more privileged as members, but I would like to get back to a time when we don't have time allocation motions, such as the time when Bill was here.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Just before the next member begins, maybe we could recognize our former colleague, Mr Bill Ferrier, from the riding of Cochrane South. He's in the members' gallery west. Would all the members please welcome our honoured colleague.

Applause.

MISSISSAUGA ARTS AWARDS

Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South): The Mississauga Arts Council honoured a dazzling array of talent at this year's Mississauga Arts Awards Gala Night, held at the Living Arts Centre on October 16, 2002.

Recognizing both established and emerging talent in the visual, new media, literary and performing arts, this spectacular evening provided an exciting preview of our city's bright artistic future. From an impressive field of 100 nominees and 20 finalists the 2002 winners were: Juliana Schewe, visual artist—emerging; Tom La Pierre, visual artist—established; Patrick Thornton, new media artist—emerging; Rachel Sa, literary artist—emerging; Robert Sawyer, literary artist—established; Christopher Miranda, performing artist, individual—emerging; Rik Emmett, performing artist, individual—established; Cow Over Moon, performing arts group—emerging; Mississauga Players, performing arts group—established.

I was honoured to present the Laurie Pallett Patron of the Arts Award to Bette Pauli, who has gone beyond the call of duty over many years to help fellow artists.

On behalf of the Premier of Ontario and all residents of Mississauga, I extend our congratulations and appreciation to these fine artists who so deeply enrich our lives. We are also grateful for the leadership from the corporate community and all the sponsors and supporters who make these awards possible.

1340

LUNG CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East): In Canada this year alone, almost 21,000 Canadians will be diagnosed with lung cancer, and approximately 80% will die from this disease.

Unfortunately, for people diagnosed with lung cancer, treatment is limited and support is minimal. People who have been touched by lung cancer call it the "invisible killer" because it receives little public attention and lower amounts of funding when compared to research dollars spent on other types of cancer. They feel that this reflects the common misconception that lung cancer is simply a disease of smokers.

ALCASE, the Alliance for Lung Cancer Awareness, Support and Education, has recently been established as an organization to increase awareness about lung cancer, to support patients who are currently living with lung cancer and individuals who care for them, and to educate the public about the disease.

As part of their efforts, ALCASE has proclaimed November as Lung Cancer Awareness Month. I join them in urging the provincial government to lead the way in educating its citizens about the risk of lung cancer and the resources available to them. With more knowledge, more patients can be diagnosed in the early stages, when the chance of long-term survival is as high as 85%.

I hope members of this Legislature will take the time to read the information that ALCASE has provided to all members for your reference. I want to thank the board president, Ralph Gouda, and Laurie Bass, a member of their public relations committee and daughter of one of my constituents, Wayne Jacoby, for ensuring this valuable message has been brought to our attention. I want to wish them every success in their efforts in attracting needed attention to this killer disease.

At this point, on a point of order, Mr Speaker, I would seek unanimous consent of the House for members to wear the white ribbon supplied by ALCASE to all members in support of Lung Cancer Awareness Month.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Is there unanimous consent? Agreed? Agreed. The honourable member has consent.

CLARINGTON GREEN GAELS

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): I am pleased to rise and put on the record an outstanding success of the Clarington Green Gaels Junior B lacrosse team. This past summer, they captured the Founders Cup Junior B championship in Halton Hills. It was their third Founders Cup in the past five years. The Green Gaels also won the championship in 1998 and 2000.

The Clarington Green Gaels are an excellent example of the importance that residents of Durham riding place on sports and fitness. The Green Gaels are excellent ambassadors for our community and a source of pride to the many fans who attend the home games at the Garnet B. Rickard complex in Bowmanville. The Gaels were the underdogs this year after losing to the Spartan Warriors of St Catharines in Ontario Lacrosse Association finals, but they, like me, didn't give up. In the championship, they won five games in five days. On their way to winning the Founders Cup, the Green Gaels defeated New Westminster, Edmonton and Winnipeg.

Congratulations to head coach Brad MacArthur, his staff and of course the players who worked so hard this past season. Among the members of the team who were recognized with awards from the tournament were Marvin Barr, who was declared the most valuable player, and goalie Rick Passfield, who was named to the all-star team. Also named as a tournament all-star was Zach Greer. Congratulations also to Doug Trudeau, who scored the final two goals in the championship game.

The Green Gaels of Clarington have worked hard in this championship season, and as their MPP I share this with them and with the House today: a great achievement for the Green Gaels lacrosse team.

HYDRO RATES

Mrs Sandra Papatello (Windsor West): Families across Ontario today are wondering how they are going to pay their hydro bills. Our offices are being flooded with phone calls, e-mails and letters from people who cannot believe how much the Harris-Eves government has bungled the hydro file.

It seems some Tory members can't believe it either. Gary Carr thinks you guys messed up. Frank Mazzilli says your incompetence is hurting people in London. Even Cam Jackson, the \$104,000 man, can't believe how expensive hydro bills are. When a guy who spends more than \$800 on a meal thinks the rates are too high, they're shockingly high.

But who is standing up for families in Waterloo-Wellington who are being gouged by these out-of-control

hydro rates? It's not Ted Arnott. He hasn't said the word "hydro" in this House since 1996. Who is standing up for families in Ottawa-Orléans? Brian Coburn has never said the word "hydro" in this House. How about Gerry Martiniuk over in Cambridge? He's never said the word "hydro." Who is fighting for families in London Centre? It's not Dianne Cunningham. She hasn't talked about hydro since 1993. Gary Stewart hasn't talked about hydro since the year 2000. Tina Molinari never said the word in this House, neither has David Tsubouchi, Jerry Ouellette, Morley Kells or John Snobelen.

There's only one leader and there's only one party fighting for families on these outrageous hydro bills. That's Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberal Party.

HELLENIC CARE FOR SENIORS

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): I'm pleased to rise in this House today to thank my colleague, the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, for visiting my riding of Scarborough Centre last Wednesday. I especially want to thank him for attending the groundbreaking of the new Hellenic Care for Seniors long-term-care facility located at Lawrence and Kennedy in my riding. The new Hellenic home will consist of 128 new beds for the seniors of Scarborough. Other seniors will be drawn from other areas to this example of first-rate nursing home care.

I was pleased to be joined at this important event not only by the minister but by His Eminence Metropolitan Archbishop Sotirios. We had a good chat.

The new seniors' home is a classic example of co-operation between the Ernie Eves government and the diverse communities that make up the Scarborough I am so pleased to serve in this Legislature.

It's very important to recognize the great strides that are being taken by this government for our seniors. The groundbreaking is part of a bigger plan being put in place by my Scarborough colleague the Honourable Dan Newman, Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Altogether, new and redeveloped beds are being created across Ontario as part of the Ernie Eves government's unprecedented \$1.2-billion investment in long-term care for the seniors of today and tomorrow. The groundbreaking is an example of good government at work in our communities.

VISITORS

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I want to introduce to the Legislature some special guests we have in from Nipigon who are sitting in the members' west gallery. We have Levina Collins, project coordinator for the township of Nipigon economic development office, a great hard worker. She's accompanied by Nyomie Ray, who was a summer student, I believe, with her office this summer, and Courtney Wellman, who is actually from Nepean, Ontario. Welcome to the Legislature. They're great hard workers for the township of Nipigon.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'm presenting on behalf of my colleague Tony Martin, who is at the Kimberly Rogers inquest today, Mr Jim Steele, who is originally from Timmins but now lives in Sault Ste Marie and who is the father of Alexander, a page in our Legislative Assembly. I'd like to welcome him to the Legislature today.

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): On a point of order, Speaker: I would ask your indulgence and that of the members of the House to welcome my mother, June Christopherson, to the chamber. Along with my mom is our family friend Beatrice Harrison, and Zack Dayler, who is a co-op student in my office. I take particular pride in also recognizing my mom's brother, Uncle Chuck Clapham, who is a World War II veteran. Thanks to him, we get to be here today. Thank you all.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I thank the honourable member and we welcome his mother here.

The member for Davenport on a point of order.

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): On the subject, Mr Speaker: our page Grant Gonzales's mother and sister are here, Merlina Gonzales and Glenda Gonzales, and Sheryl Hennessey, the godmother of our page Grant Gonzales. Let's welcome them as well.

Bill 206, An Act to require open meetings for provincial and municipal boards, commissions and other public bodies / Projet de loi 206, Loi exigeant des réunions publiques pour des commissions et conseils provinciaux et municipaux ainsi que d'autres organismes publics.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member for short statement?

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): This bill requires that public bodies hold meetings which are open to the public. The public can only be excluded from meetings of the body if certain specified types of matters are going to be discussed by that body. Minutes of these meetings, open to the public, have to be made available to the public in a timely fashion and must contain sufficient detail.

The body is also required to set rules respecting public notice of its meetings and meetings of its committees, the availability of these minutes to the public and the availability to the public of the body's rules. The body is required to appoint a person responsible for compliance with the rules, and section 8 imposes a penalty for failure to comply with the requirements for notices, minutes and rules.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

GRAFFITI AND ADVERTISING SIGNS CONTROL ACT, 2002

LOI DE 2002

SUR LE CONTRÔLE DES GRAFFITIS ET DES PANNEAUX PUBLICITAIRES

Mr Kells moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 205, An Act to control graffiti on public and private property and advertising signs on public property / Projet de loi 205, Loi visant à contrôler les graffitis sur des biens publics et privés et des panneaux publicitaires sur des biens publics.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The member for short statement?

Mr Morley Kells (Etobicoke-Lakeshore): The bill prohibits applying or affixing graffiti to any public or private property and prohibits erecting or attaching advertising signs to public property. If a municipality enacts a bylaw in respect of the control of graffiti and advertising signs, insofar as the bylaw is more stringent, the bylaw prevails over the bill.

MOTIONS

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): I move that pursuant to standing order 9(c)(i), the House shall meet from 6:45 pm to 9:30 pm on Monday, November 4, Tuesday, November 5, Wednesday, November 6, and Thursday, November 7, 2002, for the purpose of considering government business.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

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

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1354 to 1359.

The Speaker: Would the members kindly take their seats, please?

All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

TRANSPARENCY IN PUBLIC MATTERS ACT, 2002 LOI DE 2002 SUR LA TRANSPARENCE DES QUESTIONS D'INTÉRÊT PUBLIC

Ms Di Cocco moved first reading of the following bill:

Ayes

Agostino, Dominic	Flaherty, Jim	Molinari, Tina R.
Arnott, Ted	Galt, Doug	Mushinski, Marilyn
Baird, John R.	Gerretsen, John	Newman, Dan
Bartolucci, Rick	Gilchrist, Steve	O'Toole, John
Beaubien, Marcel	Gill, Raminder	Parsons, Ernie
Bountrogianni, Marie	Gravelle, Michael	Patten, Richard
Boyer, Claudette	Hastings, John	Phillips, Gerry

Bradley, James J.	Hodgson, Chris	Pupatello, Sandra
Caplan, David	Hudak, Tim	Ramsay, David
Chudleigh, Ted	Jackson, Cameron	Ruprecht, Tony
Clark, Brad	Johns, Helen	Sampson, Rob
Cleary, John C.	Johnson, Bert	Sergio, Mario
Clement, Tony	Kells, Morley	Sorbara, Greg
Coburn, Brian	Klees, Frank	Spina, Joseph
Colle, Mike	Kwinter, Monte	Sterling, Norman W.
Curling, Alvin	Marland, Margaret	Stockwell, Chris
DeFaria, Carl	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tasca, Joseph N.
Di Cocco, Caroline	Maves, Bart	Tsubouchi, David H.
Dombrowsky, Leona	Mazzilli, Frank	Turnbull, David
Duncan, Dwight	McDonald, AL	Wetlaufer, Wayne
Dunlop, Garfield	McLeod, Lyn	Witmer, Elizabeth
Ecker, Janet	McMeekin, Ted	Wood, Bob
Elliott, Brenda	Miller, Norm	

The Speaker: All those opposed will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Bisson, Gilles	Kormos, Peter	Martel, Shelley
Hampton, Howard	Marchese, Rosario	Prue, Michael

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 68; the nays are 6.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Just before we begin with oral questions, we have with us today in the Speaker's gallery the parliamentary interns from the federal program in Ottawa. Please join me in welcoming our special guests.

ORAL QUESTIONS

HYDRO RATES

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West): My question is for the Minister of Energy. I have in my hands a copy of Bill 35. You remember that act: it was the one in which Ernie Eves, Jim Wilson and Mike Harris promised that consumers would actually be protected, and that would lower hydro rates. So that no one was confused, they actually named that piece of legislation "An Act to create jobs and protect consumers by promoting low-cost energy through competition...." You remember that bill.

Across the province, employers big and small are considering layoffs so that they can pay their utility bills. The rates in fact are going up, not down, and consumers are saying that they've been betrayed by you. Instead of being protected, they are being gouged by your government. Why did you and Ernie Eves bungle the opening of the market and break your promise to taxpayers?

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Energy, minister responsible for francophone affairs): I'm certainly familiar with Bill 35. I sat on that legislative committee. I will suggest—

Interjection: We can't hear you.

Hon Mr Baird: Then maybe you should listen.

There are a lot of consumers in Ontario who are not just concerned about the bills they have in their hands but about what the future holds, whether that be a working family, a small business or a farm operator. We understand that concern. The Premier has requested that I look at the issue of rebates and what can be done to acknowledge that this is really a problem.

I would indicate in strong terms to the member opposite that the view of the government, when we introduced Bill 35, was that we had to keep hydro rates lower than they would have been if we had taken no action.

Interjection.

Hon Mr Baird: If the member opposite checks the Hansard from that committee, that's actually what they'll find. In fact, we haven't had public power at cost in this province; we've actually had public power at cost minus \$38 billion.

Mrs Pupatello: I guess you're telling us it would be worse if you had done nothing.

I have in my hands a press release issued by then-Minister of Energy, Jim Wilson, two months before the market opening. It promises right there in a big, bold title, "Customers to Save \$3-\$6 Billion Under Electricity Competition." The customers are supposed to save, and he called that estimate conservative. We call it wrong.

On June 25, Ernie Eves stood in that spot and promised, "There is not going to be an electricity shortage and higher and higher prices." Wrong again.

The Harris-Eves government broke its promise to consumers about lower rates. You broke your promise to investors of greater certainty, and you've broken your promise of a reliable supply of new electricity. Given all of these promises, given your bungling, tell me why anyone should trust Ernie Eves to fix the hydro mess that he created?

Hon Mr Baird: I certainly acknowledge the concerns that families and small business people right across the province of Ontario have in this issue. The Premier has asked that we look into it and what has caused these increases and report back to him.

I would indicate the analysis done and quoted by my colleague was by Dr Fred Lazar, a professor of economics at York University, who looked at what the cost would be had we undertaken no change in Ontario after a substantial freeze in rates by successive governments, and look at what they would be under the new model.

The member opposite quotes Jim Wilson. I'm going to quote Dalton McGuinty: "Rates may very well have to go up. We've been getting a bit of a free ride here in terms of the hydro debt that Ontario Hydro has amassed"—and that's not Jim Wilson; that's your own leader, Dalton McGuinty.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Final supplementary.

Mrs Pupatello: I'll have to be sure to tell my constituents that that's the kind of answer we get from the Minister of Energy: a completely unsympathetic ear to people who cannot afford to pay their bills. It's that simple. Individuals in their homes and businesses cannot

pay these increases. We cannot get a sympathetic ear from Premier Ernie Eves. This is what he said: "The reality is, nobody likes to pay more for anything."

That's not what people in Ontario want to hear, Minister. Talk about being out of touch. Ernie Eves doesn't get it. Rather than working to find solutions, he's looking for scapegoats. His first instance is to blame Mike Harris. Wrong. It was Ernie Eves and not Mike Harris. Now he wants to blame the OPG. Guess what? He is OPG. He's the only shareholder. Besides, Ernie Eves himself was warned by the provincial government about problems at Pickering. The auditor told him and he did nothing. He tries to blame the management of OPG.

Ernie Eves looks like he's looking after his friends, like Bill Farlinger, the \$300,000-a-year man. While the Premier blames and looks for scapegoats, the public—

The Speaker: I'm afraid the member's time is up.

Hon Mr Baird: The member opposite never lets the facts get in the way of a good rant. The Premier is very concerned about this issue. He's concerned about the effects on working families. He's concerned about farmers who are concerned about the future viability of their operation and about small businesses around Ontario. He's asked me to report back in short order with respect to what we can do to address those concerns, whether it's through the rebate or through others. The member opposite is dead wrong. There is a huge amount of concern that we have out there, not just for working families but for businesses in the province.

The member opposite didn't quote those quotes because they don't suit her own partisan purposes. The member opposite neglects to talk about how her own party was trolling for bucks on Bay Street, saying that she and Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberal Party have been consistent supporters of the move to an open market. This doesn't fit the arguments of the member opposite. What did she say? "Throughout Ontario's electricity restructuring process, Dalton and the Ontario Liberals have been consistent supporters of the move to an open market." Stand—

The Speaker: I'm afraid the minister's time is up. Come to order, please.

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): Minister, when your government was orchestrating this electricity mess, there were assurances that with the market opening there were going to be lower prices, plenty of supply, and stability from your electricity brainchild. I have a letter from the Inn of the Good Shepherd in my riding that says, "Utility bills' arrears have been the number one factor contributing to the growing problem of homelessness during this past year." I've heard from people on fixed incomes, on disability and from small businesses who don't know where they can turn. Mike from Corunna just wrote to me, saying that his bill for the low-usage period has gone up 100%, increased.

Dorothy, whose husband needs oxygen, a night cyclist and air, had her bill go from \$102 to \$258. Ramin, a small business owner, whose hydro jumped from \$1,884 for two months to \$1,500 per month.

Minister, how do you explain this mess? How and when are you going to fix it?

1410

Hon Mr Baird: I certainly share the concerns of anyone on a modest or fixed income who has concerns with respect to their hydro bill. That's why the Premier has asked that we look at the rebate and how we can provide relief to consumers.

Interjection.

Hon Mr Baird: People who pay 5.5 cents shouldn't get a rebate as if they pay 8.3 cents. But I say to the member for Sarnia-Lambton, we are looking at the issue.

The member opposite has said that she believes homelessness has been fuelled for the period of a year. Well, rates were frozen for seven years, until May 1. They went down in May, they went down in June and residents wouldn't have received their bills for July and August until September, so I suggest there were probably a number of other contributing factors to that.

We do have a concern with supply in Ontario. I acknowledge that. The member opposite might want to explain her personal view that we should close down 24% of the production in the province as their answer to the supply problem. The lights will be out, there will be brownouts and they will be brought to the people by the member for Sarnia-Lambton who would put 300 of her own constituents out of a job. That's quite an economic development initiative for Sarnia-Lambton.

The Speaker: Supplementary?

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): Thomas Green of Tweed is 64 years old. He heats his house with electricity, and he's worried that he won't be able to pay his bills this winter. His hydro rate has more than doubled since June. This man has worked his entire life, and on the eve of his retirement, he expects that his hydro bill will be almost \$700. In another case, a family on social assistance because of a disability must choose between paying the rent or paying their hydro bill. Their hydro bill for July was \$132; in September they got a whopping \$480 bill.

It is unacceptable that the Premier has dismissed these issues when he says, "No one likes to pay higher prices." His indifference and your incompetence are forcing people to choose between buying food or paying the rent. What are you going to do for families on fixed incomes who cannot pay their hydro bills?

Hon Mr Baird: We have a tremendous concern about those on fixed and modest incomes, whether they be social assistance recipients, seniors or those people with modest incomes who are working. The Premier has asked me to look at it.

The member opposite talked about bill increases in June. She would want to be clear, though, that while prices were frozen for seven years in the province of Ontario, she would want to say of course that they went down by more than a third in May and almost a similar amount in June. She would want to be honest to customers.

I do find it passing strange that this member represents a party that on second reading, agreement in principle,

voted for Bill 35. She would want to ask that. I know this member opposite certainly has problems managing her own household finances, but at least her constituents aren't seeking public redress from the Board of Internal Economy.

The Speaker: Final supplementary.

Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain): Minister of Energy, we know—

Interjections.

The Speaker: The member for Hamilton Mountain has the floor. Come to order.

Interjection.

The Speaker: That means you, member for Windsor-St Clair, please. It's your member asking the question. The member for Hamilton-Mountain, please.

Mrs Bountrogianni: Minister of Energy, let's stick to the topic at hand, and that is hydro prices for people on fixed incomes. No one is doubting your personal concern, Minister, but we are doubting the concern of the Premier when he says, "The reality is, nobody likes to pay more for anything any more." That shows what he truly believes. This is not about liking to pay more. The Premier should be ashamed to even suggest such a thing.

People's bills have more than doubled. On Saturday, within one hour on Hamilton Mountain, over 3,000 people signed a petition protesting your sale of Hydro One and asking for the immediate release of the rebate. People, particularly senior citizens, are worried that they're going to lose their homes. Minister, will you end this assault on the people of Ontario now?

Hon Mr Baird: I do appreciate the member opposite's comments that "No one is doubting your personal concern." In fact, her own colleagues did that, and I'd like to acknowledge the member opposite understands that all of us in this place do come to Queen's Park to try to improve the lives of our constituents and to do a better job to improve their lives.

The Premier said publicly in very strong terms on both Thursday and Friday that he was tremendously concerned about those on fixed incomes. I'm wondering why the member opposite doesn't want to use those quotes.

The Premier is concerned about this. He has asked me to look into both the rebate and the situation that those on fixed incomes are facing. We acknowledge that whether it's for small businesses, working families or farm operators, they're concerned not just about the bills they've got in front of them but they're also concerned about the future. In short order, we'll be coming forward with some responses.

The Speaker: New question. The leader of the third party.

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Minister of Energy. The number of Conservative MPPs who oppose the skyrocketing hydro bills that come with hydro deregulation is growing by leaps and bounds. Last week it was Gary Carr. Now it's Frank Mazzilli, Cam Jackson and—oh, yes—the Minister of Transportation, Brad Clark; he'd like to be in there, too.

Minister, when are you going to start listening to your own MPPs? They're telling you that talking about a one-time rebate, trying to hide the increases in hydro bills, won't work. They want a rate freeze. They want hydro rates to go back to what they were a year ago. Will you do that, Minister? Will you listen to your own backbench MPPs and terminate hydro deregulation?

Hon Mr Baird: I'll say to the leader of the third party that at least I can respect him on this issue. He has been a consistent fighter on this issue. He's not like Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberal Party—

Interjections.

Hon Mr Baird: You had to stand in your place and vote that Bill 35 in principle—

The Speaker: Order. Take your seat. It's getting too noisy in here.

Hon Mr Baird: When the opportunity came to stand and be counted, the leader of the third party was there, leading the fight. But who was standing up in favour of competition, an open market and collecting \$350 from anyone on Bay Street who would agree with them? It was Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberal Party.

Mr Hampton: I want to return to the question, which you didn't answer. I want to put it in the words of Garfield Dunlop's campaign manager—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Will the member take his seat? This is the last warning for the member for Windsor-St Clair. If I get up again, he'll be out for the day. I apologize. You get to start over. I'm just warning the member for Windsor-St Clair. He got a last warning. The leader of the third party may start over.

Mr Hampton: I want to refer to another MPP's—Garfield Dunlop's—campaign manager, Mr Bob Kehoe, who says, "I'm a lifelong Conservative." He says in the Orillia Packet and Times that hydroelectricity is an essential public service. He says, "Certain things such as education, health care and the electricity system should remain in the public control." He says, "I don't believe we should be selling off and opening up electricity to private interests. It should be a public service, owned by taxpayers for taxpayers." Get this: like the MPP for Oakville, he is circulating a petition that demands the government dispense with the competitive electricity market and revert to the system that was in place before May 1.

I ask the question again, Minister: when are you going to start listening to your own Conservative MPPs, your own campaign managers, and terminate hydro deregulation?

Hon Mr Baird: We certainly hear the concerns, whether they be members on this side of the House, small business people or a working family struggling to pay the bill they've got on their kitchen table today, or their concern for the future with the bill that will be coming in next month. We're looking at how we deal with a rebate mechanism that would provide some support to these people who are concerned about themselves, their future and their family. We're also concerned about what holds for the future. The Premier has asked me to look into it,

and I've committed to do that in short order, because the Premier, along with members on this side of the House, shares that concern.

I do again at least acknowledge that the member opposite has been consistent. Look at what his own colleague said. The official spokesman for Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberal Party: "Let me be clear. We need a competitive marketplace. The electricity market that we as Liberals envisage is one where we see a competitive market in the generation of electricity." At least the honourable member has been consistent on this issue.

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Mr Hampton: Minister, I hear both you and the Liberals talking about a hydro rebate. You would know this: just this week, the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in Ontario has had to lay off seven of their staff because their hydro bill has gone from \$5,000 a month to \$11,000 a month. What good would a \$200 or \$300 hydro rebate do for them? What good would it do for the majority of small businesses in this province? Virtually nothing.

The issue is this: hydro deregulation, no matter where it's been tried, has driven up people's hydro bills. That's what happened in California, that's what happened in Alberta, that's what happened in Montana and that's what's happening in Ontario. So no amount of playing with money over here or trying to bribe taxpayers with their own money through a rebate is going to do the job. Will you recognize hydro deregulation provides too many opportunities for price-fixing? It provides too many opportunities for market manipulation by companies like Enron. What you need to do is terminate—

The Speaker: The member's time is up.

Hon Mr Baird: Like I said, we certainly share the concerns and the Premier has asked me to look into it. We'll continue to do that in short order.

The member opposite spoke of one organization, a charitable organization, where he said they would receive only a \$200 rebate. Yet if they had to let go seven people, if they were making \$15,000 a year, that would be \$75,000. I would suggest that a rebate would be greater than \$200 for someone who had to slash expenditures by \$75,000. I think he would acknowledge that if he was being straightforward.

We are looking at the issue. We feel the concern that people of Ontario have in this issue. The reality is the member opposite is driving around Ontario in a bus preaching public power at cost. We have not had public power at cost in the province of Ontario for years. While the leader of the third party and his band of socialists sat on the executive council, they borrowed \$3 billion. Who is going to pay that? His children and his children's children. We don't think that was either sustainable or responsible for the future.

The Speaker: The minister's time is up.

New question, the leader of the third party again.

Mr Hampton: To the Minister of Energy, yes, I go around Ontario pointing out that we should have a regulated hydro system. It should be hydroelectricity at

cost. The reason I do is because if I look at, again, California, if I look at Alberta, if I look at Montana and if I look at what's happened in Ontario, deregulated hydro, privatized hydro means you get a whole bunch of profit-takers who all want to get their hands into the consumer's pocket and take some money, and you get Enron-style corporations that want to manipulate the electricity supply, create an artificial electricity shortage, drive up the price and gouge consumers. I don't think anybody should entertain hydro deregulation the way Conservatives and Liberals have.

So I say to you again, Minister, recognize that rebates won't do the trick. The kinds of incentives that the Liberals are talking about won't do the trick. End hydro deregulation. Recognize this is an essential public service that should be owned and controlled by the people.

Hon Mr Baird: We recognize that the policy the member opposite used was not successful. What he continued to do when he was in government was to take the Ontario Hydro credit card and borrow more and more money each and every year. He talks about public power at cost, but his actions speak louder than his words.

We're looking at what is the responsible approach to take for this year and for the years ahead to ensure that we can have a ready supply of safe and affordable electricity for the people of Ontario. Whether it's for working families, small businesses, farm operators or large industry, it's important for the people of Ontario. We long ago lost the plan that was envisaged with respect to public power at cost. That's not even a policy that he supported. We are looking at whether it's the cost of generation, what could be done with the rebate. We're also looking at what the reasons are for other bill increases to see what we can do to help acknowledge what is a real concern for the people of Ontario.

Mr Hampton: Minister, I hear you on the one hand saying that you believe hydro prices may have to rise higher. That was your statement in estimates committee, that hydro rates were unrealistically low and they might have to go higher to entice private investors in. I hear the Liberal energy critic saying that you may need to provide tax incentives or some other enticement to the Enrons and the Brascans, as if they're not making enough money already, to entice them into the province.

How much taxpayers' money are you and the Liberals prepared to spend? How much taxpayers' money are you and the Liberals prepared to waste trying to entice the Brascans, the Sithe Energies and the Enrons to build profitable, profit-driven hydro generating stations in Ontario? How much are you prepared to spend, rather than doing what you should do: terminate deregulation?

Hon Mr Baird: I've corrected the leader of the third party before and I'll do it again. He should check the Hansard. I said no such thing. He knows it and I know it. People can check the written transcripts of that committee. He knows I never said it and he should be straightforward with the people of Ontario.

What the member opposite is asking is, how much would we spend? We won't put Ontario into an

\$11-billion deficit; we won't allow a \$3-billion increase in such a short period of time on the Ontario Hydro debt as he did when he was in power; we won't allow it to be acceptable in Ontario to go from spending \$4 billion a year on interest to more than \$9 billion, as he and his party did in the province of Ontario. But at least I can look the member in the eye and know that he's been consistent.

The members opposite said they didn't vote in favour of Bill 35. On June 25, 1998, on second reading, agreement in principle on the bill, what was the vote count? It was 60 to 10. New Democrats were the only ones who stood up against competition. The Liberals are strongly in favour of this policy.

ONTARIO DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): My question is for the Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services. Dalton McGuinty often speaks of the just-in-time families who live in our communities. These are families who, faced with an unexpected bill like a car repair, are cast into financially dire straits. Often, for them, the only discretionary funds are for food. You can just imagine the effect on these families of the new electricity bills from your deregulated environment. You know—you should know—the absolutely devastating effect on Ontarians who are recipients of ODSP. These are people who are already, at the absolute maximum, \$7,000 below the poverty level in this province. They come to me with a question that I'm going to pass on to you for your answer. They say to me, "This month, should we pay our electricity bill or should we buy groceries?"

Minister, what is the answer that you would like me to pass on to these citizens on ODSP?

Hon Brenda Elliott (Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services): I thank my colleague from the Liberal Party for the question. As he will know, our government is very concerned about people with disabilities in Ontario, that's why it was our government that removed those with disabilities from the welfare file and created the Ontario disability support plan. It's also our government that was the first government to introduce the Ontarians with Disabilities Act. So we understand the challenges that those with disabilities face in Ontario. We've made great efforts to try to improve circumstances for their lives.

At present, gas and hydro expenses are covered under the shelter allowance. In extraordinary cases, caseworkers can issue a cheque to cover the actual cost of hydro or any other unexpected expense. We believe that no one in the circumstance of unexpected challenges should lose their home or place to live. That is why this government does already have in place provisions to deal with extraordinary costs, including paying for electricity.

Mr Parsons: Minister, I and others are disappointed in that answer. You have sent these people to poverty. It

is a shameful reflection on this province, on how you handle Ontarians with disabilities.

Hon Mrs Elliott: Is it?

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Mr Parsons: Please let me finish, Minister. This is not funny. They are choosing between electricity and food. Certainly there is a discretionary fund, but you capped the non-health discretionary funds that municipalities have to give out. I'm asking you—and I'm almost embarrassed to ask the question—if you will immediately raise the ODSP to the poverty level. It should be far above, but would you simply move it to the poverty level and remove these people from making the decision of do they buy food or do they have heat and electricity in their home. Minister, their increases do not begin to match the increases caused by the electricity gouging that is taking place.

Hon Mrs Elliott: While I tried to be very clear in my answer; I will try again. Perhaps I do need to speak slowly so the member across can understand what I said. I said that this government cares. We already have measures in place to deal with extraordinary circumstances for those who are on fixed incomes under the Ontario disability support plan. I said, and I will repeat, that in extraordinary circumstances caseworkers can issue a cheque to cover the actual expenses of hydro or any other unexpected expense. We have provisions in place to deal with extraordinary costs, including costs to keep electricity running.

KYOTO PROTOCOL

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): My question today is for the Minister of the Environment. Basically, I'd like to—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. Give the member the chance to ask the question, please.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. The member for Simcoe North has the floor.

Mr Dunlop: My question is for the Minister of the Environment. I'd like him, if he could, to give us an update on what's happening with Kyoto at the present time.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): Obviously, some members opposite don't think it's an important issue facing the province or the country today, and I do. Considering the recent events and the ministers of environment meeting in Halifax, that a request that the federal government have a first ministers' meeting was refused by the Prime Minister, it was disturbing to say the least. The impact of Kyoto, I think, has been universally accepted around this country, that the impact statements and the studies provided by the federal government are weak, not completely fulsome, and the questions that have been put by the provinces have not been answered. I was very, very, encouraged to read that the public has changed its

mind dramatically and that they would like some fulsome information too with respect to this. I'd like to follow that up, hopefully, in the supplementary.

Mr Dunlop: Minister, can you update us on what the federal government is actually trying to do before the Christmas season? Is it possible to get that answer? There seems to be a lot of dialogue floating around, but everybody wants to know exactly what our federal government is actually up to before the Christmas season begins.

Hon Mr Stockwell: The provinces at the last meeting were very clear. They suggested to the federal government that they need more explanation on exactly what Kyoto means: costs, impact studies, megaton reductions, credits etc. I know we stood in this House last week and there was much ballyhoo from the opposite side about 70% or 80% of the public supporting Kyoto, and they were prepared to sign last week. Both leaders suggested we should sign on to Kyoto.

We've discovered that maybe that just isn't the case. Maybe the public in the province of Ontario have taken a sober second look. They'd like to know the impacts cost. They'd like to know the job cost. They'd like to know the investment cost. They'd like to know what the economic impact is to the people of the province of Ontario. So I can only take a large sigh of relief that this government decided not to follow the instructions of those two parties opposite, listened to what they thought would be the best approach to take and—that's my leadership—now today the public said, "Boy, maybe the Conservatives were right. Before we buy a pig in a poke, maybe we should examine this project."

HYDRO RATES

Mr Ted McMeekin (Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot): My question is for the beleaguered Minister of Energy. Hydro from a different perspective: we've a very significant local problem impacting the Waterdown Legion and our precious war veterans. Since deregulation of the hydro market, the Waterdown Legion's hydro bill has climbed 149%. Minister, the Waterdown Legion is, as you know, a charitable organization. The impact of this 149% increase is simply devastating, as I suspect it is with other legions across the province. Here's what Legion treasurer Gary Titley told the Flamborough Post last week: "The increases are having an effect on the way the legion does business. We've had to reassess our commitment to our community just to meet projected utility costs."

Minister, this isn't right. Will you stand in your place today and tell these veterans what your government plans to do to help them?

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Energy, minister responsible for francophone affairs): Providing supports to organizations, to individuals, to working families and small businesses in the province is tremendously important for the people of Ontario. It's tremendously important for their government. The Premier has asked me to review the whole issue of rebates and what can be

done to help address these concerns with respect to taxpayers in the province of Ontario, and that's what we're doing.

The member opposite may want to ask his own official spokesman, his own party critic, Sean Conway, who was quoted in the *Ottawa Citizen*: "Conway said Ontarians paid artificially low electricity prices for years while the provincially owned power utility piled up billions of dollars in debt." We acknowledge there are concerns out there. We're working on solutions. I will say to the member opposite that the old way, where we simply took out the Ontario Hydro credit card and borrowed money from our children and our grandchildren, is not the way to go. It's not what anyone in the province would envisage.

Mr McMeekin: Artificially low? These rates are up 149%, for goodness' sake, and now, just a week before Remembrance Day, our Waterdown war veterans may have to sacrifice significant community work simply to pay their hydro bills.

Minister, our war veterans are frustrated and angry with your government. Don't take my word for it. Here's what Gary Titley said further in the article I quoted earlier: "Other businesses wouldn't be able to get away with this. This is mismanagement. Someone was asleep at the wheel."

When will you finally admit that your government's hydro policy is not working: not working for residential consumers, not working for small business consumers, not working for Ontario charities and not working, as we discovered today, for our war veterans?

Hon Mr Baird: Obviously it's a tremendous concern when any community organization like the Royal Canadian Legion, which provides excellent services to a lot of vulnerable people, including veterans and other community support groups, is facing some significant financial challenges. We acknowledge that, and we are looking at what we can do in terms of a rebate mechanism that would provide a measure of relief and support for this group, for working families, for farmers, for small business people and for industry in the province.

When the member opposite stands in his place and speaks against deregulation, his own party, the Liberal Party of Ontario, and his leader, Dalton McGuinty, stood in their place and voted in favour of Bill 35 in principle in 1998. And what did Michael Bryant, the critic, say just last week? "Our position has not changed since 1997." I know he'd want to be honest to his constituents and point that out.

NURSE PRACTITIONERS

Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington): My question is for the Minister of Health. Since this government was elected in 1995, we have made health care a top priority. This year, the provincial government will spend over \$25 billion on health care. This represents 47% of Ontario's total budget for this fiscal year. This is an all-time high. The government, since 1995, has increased spending on health care by 45%, or almost \$8 billion.

One of the many provincial government initiatives on health care involves primary care reform, specifically supported by nurse practitioners. In Waterloo-Wellington, there is great interest in bringing nurse practitioners to our communities. Can the minister update my constituents and this House about the nurse practitioner program in Ontario?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): My honourable colleague is right: the nurse practitioner program is one of many initiatives that the Ernie Eves government is introducing to ensure that Ontario has timely access to universal and publicly funded health care. This year, our government has pledged \$11 million for up to 117 new nurse practitioner positions in the province.

I'd like to take this opportunity to dispel some of the myths about nurse practitioners. Many people hear the term "nurse practitioner" and simply think of a registered nurse, and yet a nurse practitioner is more than that. They have been trained to take on additional responsibilities. They are one step closer to being a general practitioner in the medical sense. For example, you can go to a nurse practitioner and get an annual physical examination. If you're concerned about a lump or other abnormality, a nurse practitioner can order a mammogram without having to wait for an appointment with a GP.

We have listened to Ontarians. Primary care reform is the top priority for them and it is for us as well.

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Mr Arnott: I've taken a great personal interest in the nurse practitioner program in our province. I know that my constituents in Waterloo-Wellington will benefit significantly from their services.

I'm aware that the Ministry of Health recently announced the commencement of the nurse practitioner application process. I was very encouraged to learn that there are plans to bring nurse practitioners to my constituency of Waterloo-Wellington. Could the minister inform the House about how many nurse practitioners the communities of Wellington and Waterloo are eligible to receive? Second, could the minister indicate a timeframe as to when we will have these nurse practitioners in place, serving the health care needs of the residents of Waterloo-Wellington?

Hon Mr Clement: This year, 31 communities are eligible to apply for nurse practitioners. I am delighted to inform my colleague for Waterloo-Wellington that the Waterloo region will be eligible to receive up to 11 new nurse practitioners, while Wellington county will be eligible to receive up to seven new NPs. The deadline for submissions is December 13. The ministry will review each application, and decisions will be announced next January.

I would like to add that many of the nurse practitioners, including those in Waterloo-Wellington, could begin serving their communities very shortly after their applications have been approved. Applications are found on the Ministry of Health's Web site and can be submitted—actually, HealthyOntario.com is the best place to receive this information. Certainly we are also interested

in submissions by interested groups within the 31 communities.

We are there for nurse practitioners and we are there for the people of Ontario.

HYDRO RATES

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): My question is to the Minister of Energy. You are now six months into one of the most disastrous policies any government of this province has ever undertaken. Ratepayers across this province are demanding that you scrap this plan and go back to something that worked since the beginning of the last century.

In Minister Molinari's riding, a ratepayer by the name of Shirley has called us and told us that when she phoned to say she couldn't pay her \$700 bill this month, Vaughan Hydro told her not to worry, that they had thousands of calls just like hers. They told them to make weekly instalments if they have to; they're not going to shut them off. I thank Vaughan Hydro for that. But there are thousands of people in Vaughan facing this problem.

In my own riding, a constituent phoned to say that his hydro bill for this month, November, has gone up to \$828. When he queried it, because it was only \$160 during the heat wave, he was told to pay now or have his hydro cut off.

Your own caucus is falling all over themselves, member after member, to distance themselves from this. When are you going to limit and change and go back to—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I'm afraid the member's time is up.

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Energy, minister responsible for francophone affairs): We recognize that there are a lot of people in Ontario—working families, small business people, farmers and others—who are concerned about electricity rates; so is their government, so is this minister and so is our Premier. He has asked me to look at the issue with respect to rebates and report back to him in short order on what we can do to express both the concerns people have around the kitchen table with respect to the bills in front of them and with respect to the fear they have for their future—their families and their families.

The member opposite is suggesting that we go back to the way it was. The way it was was public power at cost minus \$38 billion. I don't think it's responsible, as he and his party would, to borrow \$3 billion over five years for hydro or to borrow \$50 billion over five years to provide for people in Ontario. I don't think there's social justice in borrowing \$50 billion or \$3 billion on the backs of our children and our children's children to pay for our life today. That's why we have to move to a better way. We're looking at possible—

The Speaker: The minister's time is up. Supplementary?

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): Let me see if I have this straight. You're saying we're better off now; I fail to see how. The reality is that as we go around

the province, Ontarian after Ontarian is complaining that they're paying more for hydro now than they did prior to your deregulation scheme.

Just in the city of Timmins on the weekend, I had an opportunity to speak to a number of people. One particular couple, John and Anne, whose bill has gone up by \$100 a month, sent me this note after our conversation. They wrote, "My husband and I have been struggling to make ends meet for the last six years due to medical conditions.... Take a lesson from the American experience. Privatization increases costs and reduces services to the paying public."

They go on to make the point that they paid less under a regulated power structure that was publicly owned, and they pay more now. Minister, when are you going to turn the lights on over there and recognize that hydro deregulation is a disaster? Stop it. It's not by doing subsidies or anything else that will fix it. When are you going to stop it?

Hon Mr Baird: The member said it's not by doing subsidies that you're going to stop it. That's exactly what he and his party did in each and every year they were in government. They borrowed \$3 billion on the backs of hydro customers; they borrowed \$50 billion on the backs of families in the province of Ontario. I acknowledge particularly this member has been consistent in his opposition to privatization.

What do the other members think? Some members say one thing on Bay Street when they're in Toronto and another thing on Main Street when they're back in their ridings. Let's hear one member: "The only way we're going to get more made-in-Ontario electricity is to permit the private sector to come in and build electricity"—Michael Bryant, Liberal critic for energy. What else have they said? "We know that some areas of the province wouldn't have energy if it wasn't for privatization." Who said that? My friend the member for Hamilton Mountain, Marie Bountrogianni, said that—a consistent supporter of privatization on Bay Street, but when she's back in the riding on Main Street, the position changes.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): My question is to the Minister of Health. On Thursday, the Hamilton Health Sciences corporation announced it may be facing a \$30-million deficit. They will be laying off 250 staff. They're going to be closing 69 beds in a specialized complex continuing care unit at Chedoke. They're going to close outpatient physiotherapy and reduce clinical procedures.

Two and a half years ago your government fired the board and CEO of the same institution, because you felt they couldn't control the budget, and you brought in a new CEO and a new board. Two and a half years later we're facing many of those similar challenges. The problem is not the board, which you like to blame. The problem is not the administration, which you like to blame. The problem is your constant and critical underfunding of health care. They need \$5.5 million immedi-

ately simply to balance their budget, and it's still going to mean a reduction in programs that they've outlined here.

Minister, it's clear you're to blame and your government is to blame. Will you commit today to funding the proper needs of this hospital, the \$5.5 million that they asked of your staff on Thursday, to at least be able to balance their budget for this year?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I'd like to put two facts on the record for this House: first of all, there will be more beds available in Hamilton for complex continuing care patients when all is said and done, and that's what the people of Hamilton really care about.

I must correct the record from the honourable member. When it comes to funding the Hamilton health sciences centre, this government has been there for the people of Hamilton. The percentage increase from 2001-02, just in this hospital alone, is 8.5%. That's a \$36-million increase in one year. If you look over the last five years, the Hamilton health sciences complex has received an increase of \$138 million. That's a 43% increase. We have been there for the people of Hamilton, and it is time for Hamilton Health Sciences to do its job as well. We have confidence they can do that.

Mr Agostino: Once again, it's someone else's fault. We hear this story over and over: "It's the Hamilton Health Sciences corporation's fault; it's the staff; it's the board; it's the administration." When are you going to take responsibility for your decisions that have impacted on these cuts in Hamilton? The reality is there are 69 beds at the Chedoke continuing care centre. It's a family, it's a home to them. These people are going to be dispersed throughout the community. They don't pay co-payment fees now. They will be forced to pay copayment fees when they get put into these other institutions.

The reality is that you've got to stop pointing fingers and blaming this board and this administration and acknowledge it's your underfunding that is causing this problem. They may face up to a \$30-million deficit. You don't seem to get it. That's cuts in health care; that's cuts in programs, in services—250 staff being laid off. That's the simple truth and reality, Minister. When are you going to step up to the plate, do the right thing and fund this institution properly so it doesn't have to continue making these cuts to health care in Hamilton?

Hon Mr Clement: The fact is that St Peter's is staying open. That's 250 beds right there. The fact is that St Joseph's is building a new 148-bed complex. That is for continuing care as well. Those are the facts.

In the alternative Liberal universe, I suppose a 43% increase in the budget is somehow underfunding or cutbacks, but in the real world we have been there for the people of Hamilton, we have been there for health care in Hamilton and we will continue to be so.

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RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): My question today is for the Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and

Housing responsible for rural affairs. As you well know, the Ernie Eves government has made rural economic development a top priority. Our government is ensuring that the people who live, work and raise their families in small-town Ontario, like Blackstock, Nestleton, Newtonville and other rural communities, enjoy the same the opportunities for growth and prosperity as their urban neighbours.

Minister, I know you've been doing an exceptional job developing and putting in place strategies and programs that benefit the people of rural Ontario. Can you inform the House what you've been doing and how the success of your ministry's economic development programs have made life better for rural Ontario?

Hon Brian Coburn (Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I thank the member from Durham. His tireless efforts in and around Queen's Park certainly represent his constituents in Durham very well.

The task force report on rural economic renewal recommended the development of teams of highly skilled experts who could assess barriers to growth, recommend solutions and work with people to ensure that success and growth happen to their rural economies.

As a result of that, we developed the resource jump teams to achieve this objective. As recently as December 7, 2001, we assigned a group to jump-start tourism in the Land O' Lakes region of eastern Ontario. Thirty-five actions have been identified by that group, a long-term work plan has been done and a variety of new, innovative tourism packages are now being marketed.

We have seen the positive impact in this region as a result of these efforts. Tourism operators in the region are embracing its recommendations enthusiastically.

Mr O'Toole: That's a very thorough answer, Minister. It's clear your heart is still in rural Ontario. I know that for sure. It sounds like part of it is in Northumberland, actually.

This is great news for the people of the Land O' Lakes region and I commend you for the work. Tourism, as you know, is a vital part of not just the Land O' Lakes but the riding of Durham. It's a major economic contributor. Let's understand that. Can you expand on the scope of this project and future projects that might land in Durham?

Hon Mr Coburn: Recently, the member from Northumberland, the Honourable Dr Galt, visited the Land O' Lakes region on my behalf and presented funding in the amount of \$400,000, a full 50% of the project's cost, toward jump-starting Land O' Lakes tourism. This OSTAR-RED project is a direct result of the jump team's recommendations, and I'm confident that this exciting private-public sector initiative will indeed succeed.

This \$400,000 provincial investment in tourism enables the project partners to work better together, removing barriers to economic development and helping them build a stronger and more diverse tourism industry. We expect this program to have measurable results, raising the international profile of the Land O' Lakes region and enhancing its position as a must-see tourist destination here in Ontario.

DOCTOR SHORTAGE

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): I have a question for the Minister of Health. As you know, we have in Ontario a real crisis—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. I know it's fun lobbying, but the member does need to place a question. I'd appreciate your support. The member for Davenport.

Mr Ruprecht: I have a question for the Minister of Health. As you know, we have a doctor shortage in Ontario. We are indeed in a crisis. A lot of Ontarians are waiting to get an appointment with a doctor and they cannot. Some of our municipalities are totally underserved.

You know the facts. Right here in Ontario, we need at least 1,000 doctors, while at the same time we have over 1,100 doctors within the greater Toronto area who are foreign-trained professionals. The question is simply this: when will this minister make the announcement all of us are waiting for? As we know, Ontario created a special six-month assessment program this year. All foreign-trained graduates were required to redo parts of their residency program. These are punitive measures. Will this minister now stand up, because he knows—

The Speaker: The member's time is up.

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I thank the honourable member for his question that was offered in all seriousness, and I take it seriously.

As this House knows, Premier Eves and I have been working very hard on a new policy, a new initiative with respect to this area for international medical graduates. I can tell you that we are very excited about the progress we're making. We're still crossing some t's and dotting some i's, but in the fullness of time, this announcement will have every question that I'm sure the honourable member would like to ask answered. I would assume that the honourable member will support this Ernie Eves government initiative, just as I'm assuming that the opposition members supported us on the northern medical school, a brand new medical school for northern Ontario, just as they hopefully supported us on the new medical education campus at Windsor. Hopefully, they supported us when it came to all of the new initiatives when it comes to—

The Speaker: I'm afraid the minister's time is up.

Mr Ruprecht: Let me remind this minister that his much-lauded new fast-track program—you know what?—accepted only 44 of the 709 people who applied. Is that the program you're going to espouse in this Legislature: accepting 44 out of the 709 people who applied? That, obviously, can't be your new policy.

I remind the minister of one other fact. We met, about three years ago, with the OMA and the Ontario College of Physicians and Surgeons. We indicated to them, with our colleague from Kingston and the Islands—he made it very clear that we need some action. You have screwed

up this policy for the last six years, and now you're coming here to this Legislature and telling us, "Are you going to support this program?" Of course we're going to support this program. But we want you to stand up and say you're accepting more than 44 physicians when over 1,000 community residents are waiting to get some action. Tell us in the House: what are you going to do? When are you going to accept this—

The Speaker: The member's time is up.

Hon Mr Clement: The honourable member is clearly lunging, in some desperate manner, to try to attach himself and his party to the good-news Ernie Eves announcement that is forthcoming. But the people of Ontario can see through that.

In answer to his question, our new initiatives will be the equivalent of one and a half new medical schools for the people of Ontario and for citizens in Ontario to get access to excellent quality training by foreign-trained physicians. They can talk all they want. They're good at talking. We're good at doing.

WORKPLACE SAFETY FOR STUDENTS

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): Mr Speaker, if you'll allow me, please, my question is for the Minister of Labour. This assembly is well aware of your commitment to workplace health and safety, especially as it relates to young workers. I'm certainly very happy to see so many young people in the visitors' gallery today. I understand that you spoke to students at Hill Park Secondary School in Hamilton about young worker health and safety. Could you please update us on that?

Hon Brad Clark (Minister of Labour): I thank the honourable member for the question. Our government is committed to the health and safety of young workers in the workplace. That's why we're taking the message directly to the students with the Live Safe! Work Smart! presentation. This past Friday at Hill Park Secondary School, I spoke to over 800 students about the importance of health and safety in the workplace.

Interjection.

Hon Mr Clark: I see that the member for Kingston and the Islands is fully supportive of me getting out to the high schools and speaking to them about the need to be safe in the workplace.

The students at Hill Park were very interested in the message I had to share about young worker health and safety, what their responsibilities are and what their rights are. Students were eager to learn how to recognize hazards in the workplace and how to protect themselves on the job. There are no valid reasons for any injury or death to occur in the workplace. That's why the Ernie Eves government is taking the message of workplace safety directly to the students.

Mr Gill: Minister, I am glad to hear that you are taking such an active role in preventing injuries on the job for young workers. I think visiting schools and educating children about health and safety is very important.

Minister, please advise us on your future plans about visiting more schools and talking to youth about safe workplaces.

Interjection.

Hon Mr Clark: It would appear that the member for Kingston and the Islands would like me to come to his riding too and speak to the high school students there. In the near future—actually, next week—I'll be going to St Mary's Catholic Secondary School in Hamilton to share the same message with the students. The goal of these school tours is very simple: to increase awareness about workplace health and safety, inspire young workers to understand and exercise their rights and responsibilities for workplace safety, promote a Live Safe! Work Smart! culture for a new generation of workers and encourage a feeling of empowerment among young workers. We need to enhance the skill and knowledge level of our students to equip them with the fundamental skills to protect themselves in the workplace. Finally, we need to increase the level of awareness of the issue among young people, their parents, their teachers and the employers. These are the messages that the Ernie Eves government is bringing directly to the students to ensure that they are safe in the workplace.

1500

HYDRO RATES

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): My question is to the Minister of Energy. All afternoon you have been dancing around the real issues that are affecting real Ontarians. The NDP hydro hotheads have been responding to our call to tell us what's happening out there. From Brampton we're hearing this: "I can see a lot of people going bankrupt over these prices. Should we thank you now or after we file?" From Mississauga: "My brother is on a pension and his bill for two months was \$600. Where is a person supposed to find this kind of money?" From Guelph: "Admit your error and reverse this now." From Waterloo: "I will have to sell my house if this keeps up." From Mount Hope—and a monthly bill increase of \$320: "Do I pay the bill or feed my family?" And from Stoney Creek: "Please stop the deregulation. Help people on fixed incomes stay warm."

Minister, never mind all the macro talk. What are you going to do to help people pay their hydro bills so they'll have heat this summer?

Interjection: He meant winter.

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Energy, Minister responsible for francophone affairs): I don't want to make light of a serious issue. There's nothing I can do to make the summer not be warm. The member opposite must be listening, though; we did have the warmest summer in 50 years, and I acknowledge that.

I want to tell the member opposite that I also have heard the concerns of working families, of small businesses who are concerned not just about the high hydro bills they have on their kitchen tables today but about the future. The Premier has asked me to look at the whole

issue, about a rebate and the whole issue about the challenge that these families are facing. We've indicated that he has asked me to report back in short order and I've committed to do just that.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Supplementary?

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): The Conservatives and the Liberals support the deregulation and the privatization of hydro; 80% of Ontarians and the NDP don't. Chuck S., down in Welland: "The whole older generation of people on pension cannot wait for an election. Rebates or no rebates, it's all a sham and we know it." John and Margaret in Grimsby: "All essential services should be run by the government for the betterment of the province and the residents." Ed of Niagara Falls: "You're killing the economy big time. People won't be able to pay their hydro bills any more. That will hurt everyone in the long run."

These folks don't want your crummy rebate. They want restoration of a regulated, publicly owned, publicly controlled, publicly operated, hydro-at-cost hydro-electricity system. Why don't you listen to the 80% of Ontarians? Don't offer them \$100 or \$150 when they've already been slammed and whacked for what will amount to thousands by the time the winter is over. Tell them you're going to restore regulated, publicly owned hydro here in the province of Ontario.

Hon Mr Baird: The member opposite's own party, his own government didn't bring in public power at cost once when they had five years to do that. They borrowed \$3 billion; that's in addition and above and beyond the \$50 billion they borrowed out of the consolidated revenue fund, and our children and our children's children will have to pay for that. On the issue of privatization, at least the honourable member has stood in his place and been consistent. What did Dalton McGuinty say? "I am in favour of privatization, both in terms of the transmission and the generation." To clarify that, Michael Bryant said last week, on October 28, "Our position hasn't changed since 1997."

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I am not happy with the answer given me by the Minister of Health. Before he leaves, I'd like him to know that I would request a late show. Perhaps he can come back and expound on his new announcement that we all await.

The Speaker: If I could just remind the member to file the appropriate paperwork with the table, that would be helpful.

PETITIONS

AIR QUALITY

James J. Bradley (St Catharines): My petition reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Eves government's wholly owned Nanticoke generating station is North America's largest

dirty coal-fired electricity producing plant and Ontario's largest producer of the chemicals and acid gases which contribute to deadly smog and acid rain; and

"Whereas the Nanticoke plant, which has more than doubled its dangerous emissions under the Harris and Eves government, is now the worst air polluter in all of Canada, spewing out over five million kilograms of toxic chemicals each year, including many cancer-causing chemicals and mercury, a potent and dangerous neurotoxin; and

"Whereas the Ontario Medical Association has stated that 1,900 Ontarians die prematurely each year and we pay \$1 billion annually in health-related costs as a result of air pollution; and

"Whereas the Eves government has the opportunity to make a positive move on behalf of the environment by proceeding with the Sir Adam Beck 3 generating facility, which would produce air-pollution-free electricity in this province and would provide an alternative to the constantly increasing demands placed upon the Nanticoke coal facility; and

"Whereas the Beck 3 generating facility would also provide a major boost to the economy of Ontario through investment and employment in the construction and operation of the facility and in addition would offer additional energy for the power grid of the province of Ontario;

"Be it resolved that the Ernie Eves government, as chief shareholder of Ontario Power Generation, order the immediate development and construction of the Sir Adam Beck generating station."

I affix my signature. I'm in complete agreement.

HIGHWAY 69

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): I have another 2,000 names. We now have 28,000 names on this petition. It's to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, dealing with the multi-laning of Highway 69.

"Whereas modern highways are economic lifelines for the north; and

"Whereas the stretch of Highway 69 from Sudbury south to Parry Sound is a treacherous road with a trail of death and destruction; and

"Whereas the carnage on Highway 69 has been staggering; and

"Whereas, in the last three years, 46 people have been killed; and

"Whereas, this year alone, 10 people have needlessly lost their lives on this highway; and

"Whereas the Harris-Eves government has shown gross irresponsibility in not four-laning the stretch of Highway 69 between Sudbury and Parry Sound; and

"Whereas immediate action is needed to prevent more needless loss of life; and

"Whereas it is the responsibility of any government to provide safe roads for its citizens, and the Harris-Eves government has failed to do so;

“Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned” 2,000 people “petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to urge the Harris-Eves government to begin construction immediately and four-lane Highway 69 between Sudbury and Parry Sound so that the carnage on Death Road North will cease.”

I of course affix my signature to this petition, and give it to Lauren, our page, to bring to the desk.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION FUNDING

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas average tuition fees in Ontario are the second-highest in Canada; and

“Whereas average undergraduate tuition fees in Ontario have more than doubled in the past 10 years; and

“Whereas tuition fees for deregulated programs have, in certain cases, doubled and tripled; and

“Whereas Statistics Canada has documented a link between increasing tuition fees and diminishing access to post-secondary education; and

“Whereas four other provincial governments have taken a leadership role by freezing and reducing tuition fees;

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

“Freeze tuition fees for all programs at their current levels, and

“Take steps to reduce the tuition fees of all graduate programs, post-diploma programs and professional programs for which tuition fees have been deregulated since 1998.”

This is signed by several hundred more students who share this concern. I affix my signature in full agreement with their concerns.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Further petitions? The member for Thunder Bay-Superior North hasn't had one in a while.

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): My colleague from Thunder Bay-Atikokan and I were recently at Lakehead University, where thousands of students signed petitions calling for a tuition fee freeze, and certainly I'm here to read some petitions as well. This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas average tuition fees in Ontario are the second-highest in Canada; and

“Whereas average undergraduate tuition fees in Ontario have more than doubled in the past 10 years; and

“Whereas tuition fees for deregulated programs have, in certain cases, doubled and tripled; and

“Whereas Statistics Canada has documented a link between increasing tuition fees and diminishing access to post-secondary education; and

“Whereas four other provincial governments have taken a leadership role by freezing and reducing tuition fees;

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

“Freeze tuition fees for all programs at their current levels, and

“Take steps to reduce the tuition fees of all graduate programs, post-diploma programs and professional programs for which tuition fees have been deregulated since 1998.”

I want to thank Glendon Tremblay, president of the Lakehead University Student Union, for organizing this petition campaign. I'm very pleased to add my name to the petition.

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HYDRO RATES

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I'll try one in the back row: the member for Sarnia-Lambton.

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas electricity bills have skyrocketed under the Harris-Eves government's flawed electricity plan; and

“Whereas some consumers have signed higher fixed-rate contracts with retailers, without adequate consumer protection; and

“Whereas the Harris-Eves government has failed to address electricity supply shortages in Ontario, forcing the purchase of American power at a premium prices, driving up prices still further; and

“Whereas the Harris-Eves government appointed a board of directors for Hydro One that has been paying themselves extravagant salaries, compensation packages and severances for senior executives; and

“Whereas Hydro One bought 90 municipal utilities, serving about 240,000 people across Ontario, at premium prices and with borrowed funds. These purchases with borrowed funds have increased Ontario's debt burden; and

“Whereas the Harris-Eves government has added additional fees and taxes to local electricity distribution companies. These charges have also been passed along to consumers;

“Therefore be it resolved that we, the undersigned, demand that the Harris-Eves government take immediate action to ensure that Ontarians have fair and reasonable prices for the necessary commodity of electricity in Ontario.”

I have thousands of signatures. I affix my signature to this petition.

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): The petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. There are about 300 names on this petition, which reads as follows:

“The unreasonable and inhumane restrictions that the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR) is placing on wildlife rehabilitators with respect to the release of orphaned animals will eliminate their ability to help wildlife.

“Whereas wildlife rehabilitators provide an essential public service for many thousands of people seeking help on behalf of orphaned and injured wildlife in Ontario; and ...

“Whereas this will incur significant new costs for local governments with respect to bylaw and public health and safety interventions while creating an emotional and volatile climate because the majority of people in Ontario are simply unwilling to see healthy young animals euthanized,” which means killed;

“We, the undersigned, are deeply concerned that the release restrictions imposed by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources will eliminate the provision of responsible wildlife services in our community.

“We petition the government of Ontario to work with wildlife rehabilitators to ensure that progressive, humane and responsible regulations with respect to release criteria for rehabilitated orphaned wildlife are put in place in Ontario.”

I affix my signature to this petition as well.

COMPETITIVE ELECTRICITY MARKET

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): I have a petition concerning the increases in hydro rates. The petition reads as follows:

“Whereas the government has legislated the opening of the Ontario electricity market as of May 1, 2002, and the price per kilowatt hour for electricity in the province of Ontario has nearly quadrupled since May 1; and

“Whereas Ernie Eves has done a poor job in educating the public as to the ramifications of an open electricity market in the province of Ontario and has done little to punish the unscrupulous sales practices of door-to-door energy retailers; and

“Whereas” the government “appointed the board of directors for Hydro One, who approved exorbitant salaries and compensation packages for Hydro One executives;

“Be it resolved that the Ontario government move immediately to protect our province’s electricity consumers by addressing the serious generation problem in Ontario, by punishing unscrupulous electricity retailers and by moving forward with a rebate to offset the increasing costs of electricity in Ontario.”

Since I agree, I’m delighted to pass it on to Maureen.

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): The member for Prince Edward-Hastings has been up since the beginning.

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): I have a petition with over 1,000 names from 280 different cities to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“The unreasonable and inhumane restrictions that the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR) is placing on wildlife rehabilitators with respect to the release of orphaned animals will eliminate their ability to help wildlife.

“Whereas wildlife rehabilitators provide an essential public service for many thousands of people seeking help on behalf of orphaned and injured wildlife in Ontario; and

“Whereas the unreasonable release restrictions imposed on wildlife rehabilitators by the OMNR will prevent responsible wildlife rehabilitation, not only compromising wildlife and frustrating the public but forcing it underground and jeopardizing public safety; and

“Whereas this will incur significant new costs for local governments with respect to bylaw and public health and safety interventions while creating an emotional and volatile climate because the majority of people in Ontario are simply unwilling to see healthy young animals euthanized;

“We, the undersigned, are deeply concerned that the release restrictions imposed by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources will eliminate the provision of responsible wildlife services in our community; and

“We petition the government of Ontario to work with wildlife rehabilitators to ensure that progressive, humane and responsible regulations with respect to release criteria for rehabilitated orphaned wildlife are put in place....”

I am pleased to add my name to these thousands of signatures.

POVERTY

Mr Mario Sergio (York West): I have further petitions addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas we are seniors and low-income people finding it very hard to live and pay all expenses every day; and

“Whereas with all the increases in our utilities in the last several months, we no longer can afford to have a warm house, or buy enough of a variety of foods, or buy some of the drugs that we desperately need; and

“Whereas we feel helpless, abandoned, and totally neglected by our own government; and

“Whereas, without some sort of assistance from our government, either in terms of subsidy or lowering the cost of utilities,” such as hydro or “...gas for heating, we will have to seriously limit the quality and quantity of prescription drugs, or decide to buy food or pay the ever-increasing utility costs;

“We, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to help us live in dignity and with compassion and care.”

I concur in the content of the petition, and I will affix my signature to it.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Eves government has increased the fees paid for by seniors and the most vulnerable living in

long-term-care facilities by 15% or \$7.02 per diem effective August 1, 2002; and

“Whereas this fee increase will cost seniors and our most vulnerable more than \$200 a month; and

“Whereas this increase is 11.1% above the rent increase guidelines for tenants in the province of Ontario; and

“Whereas the increase in the government’s own contribution to raise the level of long-term-care services this year is less than \$2 per resident per day; and

“Whereas according to the government’s own funded study, Ontario ranks last amongst comparable jurisdictions in the amount of time provided to a resident for nursing and personal care; and

“Whereas the long-term-care funding partnership has been based on government accepting the responsibility to fund the care and services that residents need; and

“Whereas government needs to increase long-term-care operating funding by \$750 million over the next three years to raise the level of service for Ontario’s long-term-care residents to those in Saskatchewan in 1999; and

“Whereas this province has been built by seniors who should be able to live their lives with dignity, respect and in comfort in this province;

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

“Demand that Premier Eves reduce his 15% fee increase on seniors and the most vulnerable living in long-term-care facilities and increase provincial government support for nursing and personal care to adequate levels.”

I am very happy to sign this petition, and I will be handing it to Hin-Hey, who is the page.

HIGHWAY 69

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): This is part of the 28,000-name petition. It comes from Tecklenburgs Restaurant in Sudbury. It is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and it deals with the multi-laning of Highway 69 from Sudbury to Parry Sound.

“Whereas modern highways are economic lifelines for the north; and

“Whereas the stretch of Highway 69 from Sudbury south to Parry Sound is a ... trail of death and destruction; and

“Whereas, in the last three years 46 people have been killed on that stretch of highway; and

“Whereas” so far this year “10 people have died needlessly on the stretch of highway between Sudbury and Parry Sound; and

“Whereas the carnage on Highway 69 has been staggering; and

“Whereas the Harris-Eves government has shown gross irresponsibility in not four-laning the stretch of Highway 69 between Sudbury and Parry Sound; and

“Whereas immediate action is needed to prevent more needless loss of life; and

“Whereas it is the responsibility of a government to provide safe roads for its citizens, and the Harris-Eves government has failed to do so;

“Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to urge the Eves government to begin construction immediately and four-lane Highway 69 between Sudbury and Parry Sound so that the carnage on Death Road North will cease.”

I affix my signature to this petition and of course give it to Maureen and ask her to bring it to the table.

1520

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

ATTRIBUTION DE TEMPS

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): I move that pursuant to standing order 46 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 175, An Act respecting the cost of water and waste water services, when Bill 175 is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment and at such time the bill shall be ordered referred to the standing committee on general government; and

That the vote on second reading may, pursuant to standing order 28(h), be deferred; and

That the standing committee on general government shall be authorized to meet at its next scheduled time for the purpose of consideration of the bill; and

That five days be allotted to hearings and one day allotted to clause-by-clause consideration of the bill; and

That, no later than 4 pm on the day the committee is scheduled for clause-by-clause consideration, those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto. The committee shall be authorized to meet beyond its normal hour of adjournment until completion of clause-by-clause consideration. Any division required shall be deferred until all remaining questions have been put and taken in succession with one 20-minute waiting period allowed pursuant to standing order 127(a); and

That the committee shall report the bill to the House not later than the first sessional day that reports from committees may be received following the completion of clause-by-clause consideration. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

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

That when the order for third reading is called, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That the vote on third reading may, pursuant to standing order 28(h), be deferred; and

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

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Mr Stockwell has moved government notice of motion 57. Minister?

Hon Mr Stockwell: Mr Speaker, this is Bill 175, which is the source-to-tap cost recovery bill from the Ministry of the Environment. To set aside six days of committee time to hear this bill, I think it would be important to let the Legislature decide to let the committee decide how they want to manage their time in six days, how they want to travel and how they want to go about doing their business. We couldn't get an agreement from the three parties about exactly how to do that, but I think everyone would agree that six days is a fairly reasonable amount of time to be set aside for Bill 175 to be heard in public hearings at committee.

I know the good work of the general committee. I think it will be up to them and they will do the decision-making, which I think by and large will resolve the issue.

Interjection.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I say to the member opposite, I appreciate the fact of what you're saying. I've canvassed all caucuses on this bill with respect to what it is they'd like to see. Having not heard back from one of them, it was difficult to get a consent motion to determine how we carry forward on this bill. So I did make a decision to go with six committee days in consultation with one of the opposition parties; that seemed to satisfy their concerns. It's the best I can do, considering I can't get consent from all three parties. Therefore we can't move forward in any kind of collegial agreement about how we manage this bill. I've tried my best to be as generous as possible with respect to committee time on this bill, and I'm interested in hearing from the opposition members.

As I spoke to this bill for the first time in the House, I said to the member for St Catharines that I'm interested in seeing your amendments, I'm interested in seeing the amendments from the opposition, I'm interested in travelling this bill. By turning it over to the committee, I think it's the best possible world that we can have for it.

At this time, I'll be happy to sit down.

The Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener Centre): I'm pleased to take part in the debate today on second reading of the Sustainable Water and Sewage Systems Act. I know there are a number of members here who will remember back 45 or 50 years to the days when we were

in elementary school and our memories of safe drinking water and how we heard, back then, about the problems that the people in Europe had insofar as safe drinking water is concerned, and how, through carelessness or lack of regard, those countries no longer had safe drinking water. Well, 45 or 50 years have gone by and of course we in North America are now faced with the same situation.

Safe drinking water, I have to say, is a non-negotiable priority for this government. It is something that the people of Ontario expect will not be compromised. I expect it. I expect that I will be able to drink safe water. I expect that my children will be able to drink safe water. If passed into law, the Sustainable Water and Sewage Systems Act will set another benchmark and provide an even stronger foundation for safe drinking water. It makes for good planning, it promotes water conservation and is an integral part of this government's clean water strategy. And I do want to emphasize the conservation aspect of water. We should all employ water conservation tactics.

This government is committed to implementing all 121 recommendations from Commissioner O'Connor's report of the Walkerton Inquiry, parts one and two. Our clean water strategy will help to make this commitment. We believe that one of the critical steps toward implementing the recommendations is the government's proposed Sustainable Water and Sewage Systems Act.

The driving force behind this proposed act is the concept of full-cost accounting and recovery. Our government believes that legislating full-cost accounting and recovery from municipal water and sewage services is one of the best ways to protect public health and our environment. The principles of full-cost accounting and recovery are fundamental to sustainability and are key aspects of Commissioner O'Connor's recommendations in the report of the Walkerton Inquiry, part two. Full-cost accounting reports will provide us with an accurate picture and a transparent method for identifying all costs, both operational and capital, to ensure that human health is protected when it comes to delivering water and sewage services. The full-cost recovery plans will provide a guide to ensure that sustainable systems are developed and supported.

In his report, Commissioner O'Connor made several references to the need for municipalities to ensure that their water systems are adequately financed. To quote Commissioner O'Connor, "Over the long term, safety depends on stable and adequate financing to maintain the water system's infrastructure and its operational capacity to supply high-quality water consistently."

Commissioner O'Connor also stated his support for the proposed act after it was first introduced to the Legislature as Bill 155. He said, "In my opinion, if passed into law, the act will address many of the important issues concerning the financing of water systems.... The requirements for a full-cost report and cost-recovery plan, as generally expressed in the proposed act, are in my view appropriate."

Through our clean water strategy, of which the Sustainable Water and Sewage Act is a significant part, the Ernie Eves government has pledged to invest more than half a billion dollars over the next two years. I repeat that for emphasis so our critics can be aware of it: this government has pledged to invest more than a half a billion dollars over the next two years in clean, safe drinking water for the people of Ontario. This year alone, the government will provide \$245 million, including investments to help municipalities upgrade their water systems to meet our tough new standards and make improvements to their waste water systems.

1530

While we acknowledge that there is still work to be done, this government continues to make significant progress on several other components of its clean water strategy.

We will also deliver on our budget commitment to establish the \$50-million Clean Water Legacy Trust and the Clean Water Centre of Excellence in Walkerton. The centre of excellence in Walkerton will provide access to the best scientific knowledge, research and technology, and training in the management and monitoring of our safe drinking water. Again, I want to emphasize that: the centre of excellence will provide access to the best scientific knowledge, research and technology, and training in the management and monitoring of our safe drinking water.

In addition, the government plans to consult with key stakeholders on watershed-based source protection planning issues this fall. Several groundwater studies are already underway to support this planning.

So far, action has been taken on many fronts to help ensure that clean, safe drinking water is delivered to all of the people in Ontario. Our accomplishments include the drinking water protection regulation; the drinking water protection regulation for smaller waterworks, serving designated facilities; the Nutrient Management Act, 2002; and work toward a Safe Drinking Water Act. These examples demonstrate that our commitment is unwavering and the momentum is strong. We fully support Commissioner O'Connor's recommendations and are moving forward to complete their full implementation.

I'd like now to highlight some details of the proposed bill. If passed into law, the new Sustainable Water and Sewage Systems Act will make it mandatory for municipalities to assess and cost-recover the full amount of water and sewer services. The proposed act will ensure that water and sewer systems generate sufficient revenue to fully recover all their long-term operating and capital costs.

As members are aware, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing first introduced the legislation as Bill 155 last December 2001. In his report, Commissioner O'Connor has stated that the previous bill addressed a number of major financing concerns. The act has been reintroduced to give legal authority to the Ministry of the Environment, as announced by Premier

Eves in August of this year. It is also the government's next step in fulfilling Commissioner O'Connor's recommendations.

The concept of full-cost recovery is not a new one. Municipalities are already able to apply full-cost recovery if they wish. In fact, some municipalities have implemented this to some varying degree. But although some municipalities claim to be recovering full costs, the province doesn't know the extent to which they are recovering all of their long-term investment needs. The proposed act will give us the full picture of what it costs municipalities to provide water and waste water services and will require municipalities to do cost accounting according to a regulated standard.

Specific reporting requirements and detailed analyses would include all operating and capital costs; financing costs; renewal, replacement and improvement costs; infrastructure and investments required to maintain and expand the systems; and last, all sources of revenue. Accountants are quite familiar with these types of standards.

The proposed act will also require system owners to develop comprehensive asset management reports. At present, municipalities use different methods in determining water rates. In general, few of these methods include investment needs or what will be needed for repair, rehabilitation and expansion of related infrastructure. As a result, it is difficult to get an accurate estimate of the shortfall.

The reality is that most municipalities do not have a handle on the long-term costs of maintaining their water and sewer systems. That's a fact. This leads to under-investments in water systems, because much of the infrastructure is buried. The old adage "Out of sight, out of mind" is an unfortunate fact in many cases.

Underpricing of water can lead to deferred maintenance and overconsumption by water users. Deferred maintenance ultimately leads to deteriorating infrastructure and potential risks to public health.

Legislating full-cost accounting and recovery ensures that safe water is a priority municipal service that cannot be traded off with other services; the standard of service is mandatory.

Make no mistake: this is an environment and public health issue. But while the proposed Sustainable Water and Sewage Systems Act addresses the issue of infrastructure financing and cost recovery, there is also a much broader issue at stake. That issue relates to the overriding principle of municipal accountability.

A new provision in the proposed Sustainable Water and Sewage Systems Act would require municipalities to report to taxpayers annually on any service delivery improvements and any identified barriers to improving service delivery.

Through better communications, increased knowledge and more consistent financial and full-cost accounting processes, municipalities will be in a stronger position to know exactly where things stand and the true cost of their water and sewer services. This will enable them to take a

more proactive view and adopt a more integrated and holistic approach to environmental protection.

Environmental improvement is a continuous journey, and it is a journey that we must travel together. The answers to our environmental challenges cannot come from any one source. Our government recognizes that it must involve consultations and partnerships with municipalities, industries, community organizations and individual Ontarians.

We are open to hearing amendments that make sustainable water and sewer financing work for our partners, but as I said in my opening remarks, our government's commitment to safe drinking water is a non-negotiable priority. There is no way we will allow the amendments to take away from the priority to make safe drinking water a must in this province.

We all need to know the true cost of the water and sewer services that we take for granted. It is the only way we can ensure that these services will be there to support the health and prosperity of future generations—your children, my children and their children. By working toward common environmental goals, we are able to explore opportunities, take appropriate action and together be at the environmental forefront as we solve our environmental challenges.

I believe, if passed, this bill will become an important legacy of our government. I certainly will look with pride on this as a legacy. I encourage members of this Legislature to support the Sustainable Water and Sewage Systems Act.

Mr Mario Sergio (York West): I'm delighted to join in the debate on Bill 175.

Just to add to the comments made by the member on the government side, the member from Kitchener Centre, Mr Wettlaufer, we would love to see this going through as speedily as possible. It does not represent the final document we would like to see, and I believe it doesn't represent the final document that Justice O'Connor would like to see because it does not address all the recommendations in his report, but I believe this would be a good first step to move on with addressing safe, clean drinking water in Ontario.

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It has already taken a couple of years since Justice O'Connor made his recommendations, and they are good recommendations. But finally something is here, so for my part I can say that, yes, we should support this bill even though it lacks some very major, important recommendations. But at least it's a first step, and I would say to the government side and to the Premier here, get on with it. Don't delay it. We can work on some of the other details as we go along. We'll see what the government indeed is going to do with respect to some of the recommendations that we as Liberals, and Dalton McGuinty, have been making with respect to safe drinking water.

One very important aspect that the bill is not doing is addressing the problem at source. I believe, and I believe even Justice O'Connor is saying, that controlling the water at source is very important. It's not only important; I don't think we should contemplate water contamina-

tion, pollution, at any stage, but at source it's most important.

Let me read what Justice O'Connor has been saying with respect to two of the important aspects of his reports. It says very explicitly, "... may constitute a significant burden for low-income families and individuals.... Suffice it to say that, since water is an essential need, it would be unacceptable for those who are unable to pay for safe water to go without. The provincial and municipal governments should ensure that this does not occur by whatever means they consider appropriate." This was on page 313 of Justice O'Connor's report, part two. He was addressing water rates and his concern with respect to affordability. I will try in the next few minutes to address the accountability that Justice O'Connor is speaking of in his report as well.

But there is another passage that I want to read to the House, where Justice O'Connor is practically admonishing the government. Justice O'Connor made a specific warning that the Conservative government's municipal downloading may make it impossible for municipalities to pay for water and sewer infrastructures. Let me say, before I continue with what Justice O'Connor has said, that it's not just a question of approving another piece of legislation without addressing the real problem. The real problem is that a lot of the infrastructure needs a complete overhaul costing millions and millions of dollars. One cannot accomplish clean, safe drinking water unless the government—and it's in the report itself again. It needs funding and it needs qualified staff as well.

Let me continue with what Justice O'Connor was saying: "The financing of water systems does not occur in isolation of other pressures on municipal budgets. In light of recent restructuring in the municipal sector, especially the transfer of additional open-ended social service costs (eg, welfare) to municipalities in 1998, there is currently some uncertainty about the ability of municipalities to finance all of the programs they are responsible for, including water services.... I encourage the province to publicly review the program responsibilities and fiscal capability of municipalities in light of recent restructuring to ensure that the financial pressures of municipalities do not crowd out the adequate financing of water systems."

I think this is quite clear. I know the Premier and the government members have the same report which we have, I have read from, showing the concern of Justice O'Connor.

It's not a question of when they knew it or how long this has been in existence; it is a question of doing something about it to make sure that instead of just approving a piece of legislation, the government gets on with the action and says, "Let's do it. We are going to do it."

The bill itself addresses two or three main points. One point is full cost accountability, which I think is fair; another point is full cost recovery. I think these are two very important points. But, as I said just a moment ago, reading from Justice O'Connor's report, who is going to

pay? Ultimately, who is going to pay? The government has been totally mute on the issue, solving the problem of who is going to pay for it and how. I'm afraid that ultimately the individual taxpayer is going to get clobbered. Who is going to be clobbered the most, finally, for whatever action the government is going to take will be the working class people and, most importantly, the seniors who cannot afford any increase in water rates, especially at this time, with what we are going through with hydro rates.

Today I had another family come to my office delivering their hydro bill and asking, "How come the last bill we had was \$199 and the new bill is \$378?" These are seniors living on a fixed income in a 900-square-foot, two-bedroom pre-war bungalow. I wonder how high the rates will go, how hard the seniors in our province will be affected before the Premier and the government get off their butts, if you will, and do something about it and freeze the rates so we can bring some lasting relief to working families and seniors.

But let me get to Bill 175. I just wanted to throw that in because the government, unfortunately, in introducing Bill 175—I will try to address as well the fact that they are cutting debate.

Bill 175 does not address full-cost accountability and who is going to pay. Eventually they hope that the municipalities and taxpayers will bear the brunt. But as Justice O'Connor has been saying, I am afraid this is going to be done at the expense of those who can least pay for it. Are they working together with the municipalities? I doubt it. They have been too busy concentrating on how to sell some of the publicly owned agencies to cover the losses they have taken in the last few months, so they can look good in the next budget, that they have forgotten the essence, the real action, to make sure they deliver safe, clean drinking water to Ontarians.

The question indeed should be, who is ultimately going to pay for the actions of this government? We cannot afford to continue with the present situation, where the government has cut 50% of the environmental budget and one third of the staff. No wonder. We're not totally blaming the government, because the problem existed many moons ago. But the fact is that as soon as this government came into power they annihilated practically every major budget, and one to suffer the consequences was this particular ministry, the Ministry of the Environment. How can we not suffer the consequences when you cut 50% of the funding and one third of the staff?

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The quality is measured by the staff that we have in the field, not only used by the ministry but by the various municipalities as well. When the monitoring stations are cut down from 730 to 240, well, that really sends a big signal. Between 1995 and 2000, the monitoring stations were cut by 500, 100 monitoring stations per year. You can't tell the people of Ontario, you cannot tell the municipalities, you cannot tell the consumers that when you cut 500 monitoring stations, this will not have a serious

detrimental effect on the quality of water that we have in Ontario. I'm sure that along the way, if we had proper funding and, as we had in previous times, enough quality stations and inspectors, they would have bumped into some of the problems and we wouldn't have had the serious problems we experienced with Walkerton.

The other thing the government must understand is that we cannot continue to impose more responsibilities and more restrictions on the small municipalities in Ontario: more downloading, less money for the municipalities, less-qualified workers, fewer monitoring stations, less funding for municipalities and more responsibility. The government cannot accomplish with this bill what Justice O'Connor is saying in his report. We cannot accomplish it unless the government gets down to business and says, "Yes, we have to put back some of the funding that we cut originally. We have to bring the monitoring stations up to par to make sure that they do their job."

They have to understand that they have to get those qualified inspectors that they let go—and we said, "Don't do it, because we are going to suffer the consequences." In other words, the government, by approving of this legislation, cannot deliver safe drinking water to people in Ontario unless they include most of the recommendations from Justice O'Connor's report, more funding and qualified staff, as well.

Quality of water is not only when you in your own home or factory or place of employment open your TAP and say, "Well, the water seems clean." I think there is more than that. One important factor is worth repeating, and that is controlling the water at source. The way it is now, municipalities don't have the capacity, the quality of staff or enough staff to do that. The last scope of the government was indeed to deliver that, but I would like to again address Justice O'Connor's report, which goes further than the present bill.

I do hope that whatever action the government is willing to pursue from here on in, either pass the bill as it has been introduced or send it to committee and bring it back—I heard someone from the government side say, "We cannot accept any amendments." If you cannot accept any amendments, then I say to the Premier and the government, approve the bill as it is today. I believe there is room for improvement. If you send it to a committee, then do it quickly. But then don't come to the House and say, "Well, we will not accept any amendments." I believe there is room for that, because as much as the government, the opposition as well, and our leader Dalton McGuinty, have been saying we have to have a bill that will deliver, indeed, the best safe water to the people of Ontario.

I think my time is up. I have been negligent if I missed saying that I haven't been watching the clock but I believe I'm running close to my time. I'll let my colleague the member from St Catharines—you're not going now? OK. We're going in rotation, so I think my time is done, and I hope that my colleague the member from St Catharines will add more on Bill 175.

The Acting Speaker (Mr David Christopherson):

Thank you, and your colleague will of course be given that opportunity in the rotation.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): I look forward to this little bit of time. I've got another time allocation motion by this government.

I'm really disappointed, you know? I would like, for once, the government to bring in one of their key pieces of legislation where they didn't have to do time allocation, that we would actually have an opportunity to go back to the way this House used to work at one time, where the parties actually had some ability to negotiate how long issues would be in the House and how much committee time we got. But since the government has changed the rules—and I would say, in fairness to the Conservatives, the Liberals introduced the concept of time allocation, we built on that and the Tories just made it a practice at this point. Quite frankly, we're going to have to go back to redoing the rules in this House, because we've gotten to the point that it's really not functional any more.

I want to start off by saying I've listened to the government House leader and Minister of the Environment get up and talk to us for a few minutes when this time allocation motion was introduced. He said he thought he was being very fair; he was offering to the opposition parties six days of hearing, and said in that comment that he thought that was more than fair given the circumstances. He said the Liberals were prepared to make a deal with him and the NDP wasn't, and that's true. I want to say, as the whip for the New Democratic Party who was part of that negotiating process, I've been at the last two sets of House leaders' meetings that we've had on this particular issue and it's true that we have not agreed to acquiesce to the government on this because we think there are a number of issues that, quite frankly, have to be dealt with. For the government to come in and say, "You're going to get six days of public hearings" on what is, probably for a lot of communities, a very serious bill when it comes to the actual impact on those communities, we think is a bit pale.

I would just say to the government House leader, I remember when I first came here in 1990 and, actually, when a bill that was a key, signature piece of the government came to the House, you had more than three days of debate in the House at second reading. In fact, you probably had, in a key, signature piece, I would argue, the better part of a couple of weeks of debate. Then, if you remember, Mr Speaker—you were a member of the same NDP government that I was—when you had a key, signature piece of legislation of a government that passed second reading, it went off to committee and it had lots of committee time.

I remember, for example, that one of the, probably, most key, signature bills that we did was the anti-scab legislation that our government had put in place. I remember travelling that around prior to it becoming a bill and then, when it became a bill, ad infinitum, because the opposition wanted to have hearings.

I remember our first budget in 1991, when the third party of the day, the Conservatives, basically demanded and held up this House for umpteen number of days because they had the ability to do that, with the way the rules were back then, and wanted to have our first budget go out for consultation through the committee process. We acquiesced to that. There was a fair process of committee time where the public were allowed to come and speak for and against parts of the first budget our government had put in place, and I think that was not a bad process. I would think, in a democracy, we should not be afraid to have public scrutiny of bills in the House.

So I just say the government across the way: I'm not saying I'm offended—I would really be going over the top if I said that—but I'm certainly disappointed that when the government House leader comes in here and says, "Oh well, I gave you the offer; you could have had more than six days of hearings, but you guys wouldn't acquiesce." Well, there's nothing to acquiesce to. The rules in this House are quite simple. The government has made it that every bill that comes through the House basically, especially government initiative bills, are time-allocated. So what am I going to negotiate when I walk into the House leaders' meeting? It's real simple. The government says, "Well, what do you want?" It doesn't matter what I want. You guys have got all the rules: three days of second reading, one day of time allocation and the bill is done. You don't even have to send it off to committee under the current rules.

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I look forward to the day, probably within the next 12 months, when we will have a provincial election. I'm sure we New Democrats will increase our number of seats in this Legislature, I believe the government will lose their majority and we will be back here as a minority Parliament. I think only then will there be enough initiative and enough ability across the parties to really sit down and redo the rules so that the rules of this House reflect a little bit of common sense. I would argue, at this point, there is very little in the way of common sense in the way these rules operate.

I believe you have to have a process of fair debate in the House, and on key, signature items, the opposition should be allowed to hold up key signature pieces for a period of time. Eventually the government has to be able to get their bill through—I understand that—but there needs to be ample time for discussion at second reading. I would argue strongly that you also have to have a fair amount of time to allow a bill to go to committee because, after all, public scrutiny is what this should be all about. If the bill doesn't stand up to public scrutiny then maybe we've got something wrong and we need to get back to the drawing board.

For example, what this bill does, among other things, is allow for what they call full-cost recovery on the water systems in Ontario. In other words, currently, by and large, what you've got is municipalities across Ontario some of which charge for water and some of which don't. What they want is to be in a system where you take the

full cost of producing water in the province, from the source to the tap, and pass that on directly to the consumers, to the utilizers of water.

I have a bit of a problem with that. I'm probably in a little bit of a minority on this side. I think certain things should be paid through our tax system. We all pay municipal taxes. We all pay property taxes at the municipal level, and we pay provincial and federal taxes of different types. I believe there are certain things that we should expect from our government by way of our tax system. To put more things and more pressure on having people pay user fees for things—I think it comes to the point where a user fee becomes a tax by any other name. We still end up paying our municipal taxes, we end up paying our federal and provincial taxes, and on top of that we end up paying large user fees and we fall further and further behind. What you end up having is governments that, because they don't want to raise taxes per se, increase user fees and say, "We're not the tax hikers."

I just want to say that this government have been masters at raising taxes by way of user fees over the last seven years. I look at fees for people who utilize arenas—those sports clubs that do figure skating, power skating, speed skating and hockey. I look at the utilization of swimming pools, where people are having to pay more. When it comes to using baseball diamonds and soccer fields, people are paying far more in user fees because of this government's approach, saying, "We need to take away from the tax base those services that used to be paid for by the taxpayer and transfer them over to user fees." So the government has a bit of a sleight of hand that goes on when it comes to how they pay for things.

All I would argue is that we should be a little more transparent in the process and allow a better way of making sure that every level of government takes its responsibility when it comes to safe drinking water, and that we not try to increase user fees in order to pay for the system. We should fund them properly.

I also want to point out very quickly in the time I have left that municipalities are now having a hard time trying to meet the requirements that were put on them by the provincial government as a result of Walkerton. We all know what happened: people drank the water in Walkerton and people died. The reason for that was fairly clear: the government privatized the labs and cut the Ministry of the Environment by 50%. As a result, there was no mechanism to safely test the water, and unfortunately people died.

The government put in some rules in the short term to deflect attention off them for some of the things that happened in Walkerton. They put in new rules and said, "Here are the new rules you have to meet in order to produce safe drinking water in your communities." I just want to say to the government, there's a whole bunch of communities across Ontario now that can't afford to pay for the new responsibilities you've given them. In this bill there is still no mechanism to do that except charging somebody a user fee. So, yeah, we're going to have full-

cost recovery and it's going to be the users in each community who will end up paying for water. What that means at the end of day is that people living in Opatatika or Hearst or Timmins will end up paying more for utilization of water now that you've done everything you've done in the water systems. So I have a bit of a problem about where we are getting the money from.

I also want to say there is a huge issue—unfortunately there is not enough time to get into this one—in rural communities across Ontario, and that is those private hotels and motels, trailer parks and those classes of properties out there that utilize water. For example, not seasonal trailer parks but residential trailer parks or motel complexes are having to follow the new regulations, and they don't have the means to offset their costs. As a result, they're not able to afford to do the changes the government wants in the first place.

The government's response to that up until now has been not to provide money to assist them in meeting the regulations; they've just delayed by a year the time people have to comply with the new regulations under the Ministry of the Environment. As a result, they've pushed back the date until June 2003 for trailer parks and others to comply with the new water regulations.

I'm just saying it's basically a shift of hands. They're trying to say, "Let's push this off until after the next election. In that way, we're not going to have to worry about it going into the next election." Well, the chickens are going to come home to roost at one point, and it's going to be far too difficult, I will argue, for those types of water utilizers to pay for the system.

Je pense que ce qui est important est de réaliser, comme j'ai dit, que oui, c'est important qu'on ait un système qui est fiable quand ça vient à la production et à la transmission d'eau pour les utilisateurs à travers l'Ontario. Je pense qu'il n'y a personne à l'Assemblée, soit Conservateur ou dans l'opposition, qui est contre le principe de s'assurer que l'eau a besoin d'être sécurisée et que les utilisateurs ont l'assurance nécessaire que l'eau que l'on va utiliser est potable et saine.

Le problème, comme j'ai dit plus tôt, est que le gouvernement a déjà créé un problème. Le gouvernement, à cause de ses actions qui ont résulté en Walkerton, a mis en place des réglementations. Jusqu'à date, beaucoup de municipalités à travers la province ne sont pas capables de rencontrer les obligations de ces réglementations. Je regarde justement à travers mon comté les communautés de Hearst, Kapuskasing, Opatatika et autres qui ont beaucoup de difficultés à rencontrer ces réglementations parce que ça veut dire qu'ils ont besoin de payer plus d'argent. Au lieu de prendre la position que je pense qu'il doit prendre, c'est-à-dire, « On va payer d'une manière adéquate pour les résultats de nos réglementations, » le gouvernement répond en disant, « On va transmettre les frais d'utilisation aux consommateurs pour être capable de s'assurer que c'est bien financé. »

À la fin de la journée, tout ce que le consommateur sait est qu'il va payer plus. Si le gouvernement essaie de

se cacher à l'arrière de, « On est le gouvernement qui a mis en place beaucoup de réductions d'impôts, » je dirais, « Oui, on a eu des réductions d'impôts d'une poche, mais on est en train de les payer dans les frais d'utilisation de l'autre. » À la fin de la journée, pour le consommateur ou la personne qui paie les taxes, c'est le même fardeau qu'on leur demande, et je dirais même que le fardeau est plus haut.

Notre critique va avoir beaucoup de chances de parler en plus de détail de ce projet de loi. Je regarde avec certitude que les commentaires que M^{me} Churley va faire seront bien raisonnés et bien pensés. Je pense que ce qui est clair est qu'elle a démontré dans tout ce débat que, quand il vient à quelqu'un pour être clair sur les questions de l'environnement et de l'eau, Marilyn Churley, notre députée néo-démocrate, est certainement l'avocate qui était, franchement, la plus claire dans tout ce débat. Je regarde vers elle puis je regarde aussi vers M. Prue pour faire une couple de commentaires plus tard.

Avec ça, j'aimerais vous remercier. Je sais que d'autres membres de l'Assemblée voudraient parler sur cette motion.

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Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): I'm particularly pleased to rise this afternoon to speak to Bill 195, the Safe Drinking Water Act, because I think it's a clear demonstration of how committed the Ernie Eves government is in sparing absolutely no effort to ensure that Ontario residents have access to clean, safe drinking water.

Not only that, I think it's a clear demonstration of the fact that we intend to ensure the toughest and best drinking water standards in the world. That's important. I maintain, for example, that in Toronto—and I see my colleague across the way. He and I used to sit on the same municipal council right here in the great city of Toronto. Actually, we both sat on the transportation committee together. We were equally committed to ensuring that Toronto lead the world in providing the absolutely safest, cleanest drinking water. I think that Bill 195 is a reaffirmation—Mr Prue, I don't believe we actually sat on the same Metro council at the same time, although it's interesting that there are representatives from the Liberal, New Democratic and Conservative parties who sat on the same municipal council that was—I have absolutely no question as to the commitment on their part—equal, as on our part, with respect to ensuring the absolutely toughest, best standards in the world.

I met with my municipal counterpart on Friday. I like to meet with my school board and council counterparts from my riding just to share the issues of the day. I want to assure you, Mr Speaker, that this government is absolutely committed to listening to those concerns and ensuring that we do enact the wishes of the people. In terms of the best safety standards for our drinking water, I'm absolutely committed, and there isn't a person in this chamber or in council chambers across this province who isn't absolutely committed, to ensuring that we have the best water standards in the world.

I think it's important that we make sure those water standards continue to be sustainable into the future. That's why I'm particularly pleased to take part in this debate on the Sustainable Water and Sewage Systems Act, because this legislation continues to the decisive action that we've taken since the summer of 2000 to ensure safe, clean drinking water.

I would sure like a refill of this very good drinking water that's in front of me, please.

We believe in Commissioner O'Connor's report of the Walkerton Inquiry, and because of that we have committed to implementing all of the 121 recommendations that he made. We agree with him that sustainable municipal water and sewer financing is absolutely essential. It's good planning that promotes water conservation and indeed will help to provide clean, safe water, not just for my constituents in Scarborough Centre but for all the people of Ontario. That's why we're doing this. We need to have those province-wide standards, not just in providing safe drinking water—certainly we did it with the Ontario curriculum. I think it us incumbent upon this government to ensure that we continue to sustain that into the future.

I would like to turn briefly to the details of the proposed bill. If the bill is passed, the Sustainable Water and Sewage Systems Act would require all owners of these systems to undertake a full-cost accounting of their water and sewer systems. A detailed analysis would include all operating and capital costs, all sources of revenue and the investment required to maintain and expand their systems.

Bill 175 would also require system owners to develop comprehensive asset management reports and then to provide a plan for implementing full-cost recovery.

If passed, the government would implement this bill in two stages. The first step is aimed at assessing the full cost of water and sewage services in each municipality. The second would involve bringing full-cost recovery forward in a way that makes sense for municipalities. I know my colleagues across the way would agree with that.

Commissioner O'Connor said, "In my opinion, if passed into law the act will address many of the important issues concerning the financing of water systems. The requirements for a full-cost report and cost-recovery plan, as generally expressed in the proposed act, are in my view appropriate." He also strongly supported the implementation of asset management and full-cost-recovery plans in relation to drinking water treatment and distribution systems.

I know this bill isn't new to the members of the Legislature, since it was first introduced in December 2001 by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Now the Ministry of the Environment is bringing forward this bill in keeping with the Premier's announcement in August that he will take full responsibility for leading Ontario's comprehensive strategy.

There's a good reason for tabling this act at this time. In the months since the previous bill was tabled, the

Walkerton inquiry has concluded. Commissioner O'Connor made far-reaching recommendations, as members of this House well know, and now the government wants to implement all of them; and I think that's very important to stress.

We also understand and appreciate that consultation is essential if we want to make this happen. The government has already conducted consultations about the proposed Safe Drinking Water Act and is currently doing so with respect to the regulations for the Nutrient Management Act.

I want to reiterate that this government will continue to encourage public and stakeholder involvement.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): The unfortunate fact of life in this Legislature these days is that most of us end up, particularly in the afternoon sessions, speaking on what are called time allocation motions. They are motions which are designed to choke off debate, to end debate, on a particular piece of legislation that would be before us. This government, in an unprecedented way, has utilized the avenue of the time allocation motion to control the agenda of this House.

There is a discussion going on, probably not widespread in terms of the general population but amongst those who follow the democratic, parliamentary and legislative processes at the federal and provincial levels, about the role and responsibility of individual members.

It seems to me that every time we have a time allocation motion forced on this House by a majority government and rule changes made which diminish the role of individual members, and in particular the members of the opposition, who are the watchdogs on behalf of the people, the legislative body in which we happen to be involved becomes less relevant to the general population.

So there is a discussion out there about the relevancy of elected bodies, the power of the individuals within those bodies, the power of the executive, that being the cabinet, and of course the non-elected people in the Premier's office and the minister's office, the people I refer to as the whiz kids. These are political people. They're not elected. They're not members of the public and permanent civil service. They seem to have an undue amount of influence on what goes on in government business in this province and indeed, if I may say so, in many other jurisdictions.

1620

The debate is on at the federal level about this at this time. There has been a lot of publicity surrounding it. Some of the same people who are very critical of what happens in the House of Commons have been silent—notable by their silence, in fact—on what's happening in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

I recall a—I'll refer to it as an impassioned speech that I made, I think back in 1993, when the Honourable Dave Cooke, who was then the government House leader for the New Democratic Party, brought in what I referred to as draconian new rule changes that would be designed to favour the government in having its legislation pushed through the House in what the government would con-

sider to be a timely fashion. Built upon this were two changes made by the Harris government to the rules of this House, which again diminished the role of individual members and essentially took away any of the so-called bargaining chips the opposition would have to deal with legislation.

My good friend who sits across from me, the Honourable Norm Sterling, Minister of Transportation, who I thought in opposition made a compelling case against those kinds of rule changes—I'm sure that in his heart of hearts, as he sits in the House this afternoon, he still harbours those views, though he might be in the minority among those who are sitting on the government side. Mr Sterling, on a number of issues, would be considerably to the right of many of us on this side. But I want to say of him that on issues such as information and privacy and on many legislative issues that relate to the rules of this House and indeed on a couple of environmental issues, I believe he happens to be a progressive person. I don't say that only when he's in the House; I think that is the case. It's nice to see that from a person whom many in the opposition would like to paint as an unrepentant right-wing Conservative. I know differently, from observing him on certain issues such as the Niagara Escarpment Commission.

I love time allocation motions, as I'm sure you do as Speaker, because it allows the flexibility of debate that we like to see in this House. While I'm on the issue of the Niagara Escarpment Commission, which affects your riding as well as my riding, Mr Speaker, I hope that the Honourable Norm Sterling, if I may use his name, the Minister of Transportation, will try to exercise within the cabinet his considerable authority in dealing with matters related to the Niagara Escarpment Commission. He made a couple of what I thought were good decisions when he was the minister who had responsibility in that regard, and I said so publicly at the time. It's not usual for the opposition to say that, because we know we'll read it in some literature somewhere, or it will be read back to us in the House. Also we know that the government has enough people to congratulate themselves, and all government members are born with a third hand to pat themselves on the back. So we know that can happen.

But I do want to say of the minister, first of all, that I think he recognized the importance of appointing to the Niagara Escarpment Commission people who are there to protect the plan, as opposed to those who are there to ignore the plan for the preservation of the escarpment lands. I remember a subdivision which he turned down that he could easily have approved, as a member of the cabinet. The cabinet turned that down, I think with a good deal of input from the minister—I'm not at the cabinet meetings, obviously. But again, he was a guardian of that particular unique piece of land, declared by UNESCO as being a world biosphere. I encourage him to continue his efforts in that regard. I did mention him earlier because I remember some of the impassioned speeches he made in favour of having rules in the House which would allow the opposition to at least slow down

for further consideration the legislative agenda of the government.

I want to say that I wish—as you do, because you were kind enough, Mr Speaker, the other day to bring a resolution before the House that I thought was timely—that instead of dealing with a time allocation motion, we were dealing with the issue of hydro bills. Again today you rose in the House to bring specific instances to the attention of the Minister of Energy, instances where people are really feeling the impact of huge increases in their hydro bills. That's something very basic, and I will tie that into the bill which is being time-allocated today.

One of the concerns I have is that if we place all of the onus on the water rate itself to provide everything that has to do with the provision of clean water and sewer projects and so on, we may find that people at the bottom rung in terms of economic wherewithal—people who are on fixed incomes, people who unfortunately are on social assistance, people who are working but are low-income people—find it very difficult when they see their insurance bills going up, their hydro bills skyrocketing, their natural gas bills increasing. When they go to the pump to get gasoline for their car, that cost has gone up. Their municipal taxes may have gone up, and user fees at the local level. I hope there is sufficient funding from the partner called the provincial government to alleviate part of that hardship on those individuals in those municipalities, and I hope that elected municipal representatives take that into consideration.

But you and I know that if you asked this afternoon, “Are we getting most of our calls on full-cost accounting of water in this province?” we'd have to say no. I'd say that easily the largest number of calls coming from the most impassioned people are about their hydro bills. I see members of the government now have indicated their concern about the hydro bills. They're feeling a lot of the heat as well. I suspect the government is scrambling now to do something to get the pressure off in this regard. Hopefully your resolution had some impact, and the questions that are directed to the government from both of the opposition parties.

I, for the life of me, cannot see why this government got itself into the jam of having GST charged on the interest on the debt, on the debt charges. All you had to say was “It's a tax.” I know they hate saying that, but it is a tax, in effect, which pays the debt. If you declared it that, you wouldn't have the GST on it. For the life of me, I don't know why this government wouldn't have done that and wouldn't do it now.

There are some members who may be familiar with what I call the Beck 3 project in Niagara Falls. We have Beck 1 and Beck 2. What is that? That's a huge generating station along the Niagara River in the city of Niagara Falls and it produces hydroelectric power. That is power which has no impact on the air at all—it is benign environmentally in terms of the air—and minimal impact on the waterways. There is a plan sitting and waiting to be implemented.

I was in Niagara Falls with Dalton McGuinty, the leader of the Liberal Party, and both of us at that time

were calling for the implementation of what we would call the Beck 3 project, another generating capacity for Niagara Falls which would, first, produce a lot of power for the grid, and that's needed at this time; second, would do so in a relatively environmentally benign manner; and third, would create good jobs in the area while that construction was taking place.

You may ask, doesn't it have to go through an environmental assessment? In fact, my understanding is that the environmental assessment has been completed, that the project was ready to go in 1998 and that the government made a decision not to do so. I would hope we would have that announcement made in the House. I think that would do two things, as I say: first, help to improve the air quality in this province and, second, provide more capacity for the grid system in the province.

1630

I would have hoped that this afternoon, instead of dealing with the issue of a time allocation motion, we could deal with what you would, again, perceive in your riding and I would in mine, and that is the problem of the doctor shortage, where we have, particularly in the category of general practitioners or family doctors—

Interjection.

Mr Bradley: The member for Kitchener says, “Be patient.” I want to say to him that I saw a program on the issue on his local station, which I don't know if he saw. I thought it was very well done. I saw half an hour of it. I didn't hear Mr Wettlaufer's name mentioned at the time, but I saw what I thought was a good group of people, a panel and an audience, talking about a very timely issue. The people of St Catharines and Niagara would say, “Wouldn't it be nice, instead of dealing with a time allocation motion this afternoon, if you were talking about ways to bring more doctors into our underserved areas.”

There are a few options, and the member would probably have a consensus with me on these. One is that we have to get—

Interjection.

Mr Bradley: Of course, we're on a time allocation motion. We're talking about a time allocation motion. The former Speaker is trying to intimidate the present Speaker, as he always does; to no avail, I can see, in this particular case. Engaging as I am in a conversation through the Speaker with my friend from Kitchener, one of the things we obviously have to do is increase the number of spaces in the medical schools in the province.

Interjection.

Mr Bradley: We certainly have to do that. The deputy leader of the Liberal Party says Dalton McGuinty has a very detailed plan in this regard, and I agree with her.

However, there's a second one I want to talk about that people have mentioned, and that is foreign-trained doctors who are in our country and who have—

Hon Mr Stockwell: Who drink water.

Mr Bradley: The minister says, “Who drink water.” I'll get to him in a minute. I have a shot to take at him a little later, after I was complimenting the previous min-

ister. Some of those individuals would be able to practise if it were made—not easier but if there was a faster and more comprehensive evaluation of them to allow them to practise.

The third thing is, and the member for Kitchener would agree with me on this, there's another group too many people have forgotten about. That's the number of young Canadians who have gone abroad to medical schools and are now practising in the United States who would love to come back to our communities but don't have a chance to do so. Even in Etobicoke Centre there may be individuals of that kind.

Interjection.

Mr Bradley: I know he does. He is eager to talk about what—I just wish he was as eager to provide the 411 pages of secret material that he is hiding in the Ministry of the Environment on the Kyoto accord.

Interjection.

Mr Bradley: He says it may have arrived today. I heard a question in the House, as you did, Mr Speaker, a lob-ball question. I saw the minister go over to Garfield Dunlop and say, "You've got to ask this question." Up gets Garfield and asks the question, and the minister is all smiles about it and he's saying the federal government won't provide this information for us. I think it was—correct me if I'm wrong; I know you will—back in March that I first made a request for all the information available within this government, all the studies you've done on the potential implementation of the Kyoto accord, and you've refused to provide that information. My assistant even had to pay something like \$350 out of his own pocket to get this information. He wouldn't have been so annoyed with that if indeed he had received it right away. But I think in a gesture of benevolence the Minister of the Environment should reimburse my staff member for having to pay all of that money for that information.

Hon Mr Stockwell: You got it today.

Mr Bradley: He tells me I got it today, at long last. I think it was the threat of the Information and Privacy Commissioner, who said, "Either you produce it now or the minister must resign," or words to that effect. But he has been hiding that information for all this time—and chortling.

I remember when my good friend Norm Sterling was the Minister of the Environment. He may not have always been a person who wanted to defend every environmental part of the government policy, but he was prepared to do so because he was the Minister of the Environment. He knew that the Treasurer, who is the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Economic Development and the Minister of Energy would take the non-environment side, the anti-environment side, but he knew that as Minister of the Environment he had to stand up for the environment. Today, my very good friend the former Speaker, the member for Etobicoke Centre, loves to be up there fighting the government of Canada, fighting against the environment. Who on that side speaks for the environment? I would say, behind closed doors,

likely the former Minister of the Environment, now the Minister of Transportation. But certainly it is very discouraging to see the present Minister of the Environment, who is a very articulate and bright person in terms of his ability to handle questions and to deal with the news media—what an asset he could be to the environment if he were out in the hallway fighting for the environment instead of against the environment. All this talent is being wasted in this particular case.

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): Jim, can you imagine him against Kyoto?

Mr Bradley: Exactly. I can't imagine that. And I know, because they look to the future, that his wonderful wife and children would be on the side of the environment. I know them well. They are good kids, and his wife is a very, very nice person. I remember that when he was Speaker they would come down the hallway and play ball hockey in the hallway and so on. But I want to say to the minister: that's the role and responsibility of the minister. He's a very talented person. I would love nothing better than to see this individual, my good friend Chris Stockwell, fighting for the environment instead of against the environment.

However, let me go on to some other issues. You'll be interested to know—this is a time allocation motion—that Maude Barlow is coming to town in St Catharines. This is on November 13 at 7 o'clock at the Sir Winston Churchill Secondary School auditorium. What is she going to talk about? Something near and dear to your heart and mine, and that is privatization of health care. She is an expert in this, as she is on water, and she certainly is cautious about any applause to this government for its water policies, although I will have some Toronto water at the present time. I know the pages will want to get that for me at the quickest opportunity. Thank you.

What else shall we look at here? Oh, yes, what it's going to take to implement this policy, both bills. There are some virtuous parts of both this bill and Bill 195. I want to say that. I'm not completely negative about them. I think there are some provisions in this legislation that we're time-allocating this afternoon and in Bill 195, which is another piece of legislation dealing with water, that merit support and approval. There's much that is missing. It's not as comprehensive as we'd like it to be. There are a lot of question marks out there about the dollars and cents, particularly for municipalities that are unable to afford the provisions of these bills, and for lower-income people, who would have a tough time meeting the costs.

I also wish that this afternoon we were talking about the disruption this government has caused to education in our part, the Hamilton-Niagara area, and across the province, because that would be worthy of a lot of discussion in this House. People are looking for some stability, some peace. They want the teachers to be able to teach instead of constantly being harassed by this government. They want to be partners in education, and yet we see policies implemented by this government and just the general

attitude toward members of the teaching profession which discourage them and lower morale within that group of people.

Hospital restructuring has been somewhat of a disaster. We now have a former Minister of Health in the Conservative government of Bill Davis, Dennis Timbrell, in our area looking at the system. I think he's got the status now of investigator. One of my recommendations would be that there be a very significant infusion of provincial funding in the area to assist us in meeting the needs of the people of Niagara, because we have in our area probably the oldest population, on a per capita basis, in Ontario.

I want to look at, because I have to mention this with the minister here, the massive and damaging cuts to the Ministry of the Environment where—well, that was the Honourable Ernie Eves, as Minister of Finance. I know that as minister, the Honourable Norm Sterling was fighting against those cuts behind closed doors and that the Minister of Finance, the Honourable Ernie Eves, was the one with the hatchet out, cutting fully one third of the staff of the Ministry of the Environment and 50% of the operating budget. An interesting fact that a lot of people don't know: the operating budget of the Ministry of the Environment today is lower than it was back in 1976. So we are talking a long time ago. We are talking 26 years ago. The budget of the Ministry of the Environment was higher than it is today. So there is going to have to be a massive investment, not only in the Ministry of the Environment, but a restoration of the staff and funding to the Ministry of Natural Resources, which of course had a lot to do with water protection in this province, and to the conservation authorities.

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Neither this bill nor the so-called Safe Drinking Water Act deals with the sources of contamination. The Minister of Natural Resources is listening carefully—I want to give him his credit—because he knows that his ministry has received the hatchet and so much has been taken away from it. I want to help him out, to have restored to his ministry some of the staff and clout and the financial resources he needs to his job properly. He'll want to work as a partner with the conservation authorities, who are only too eager to access the funding that the provincial government can provide for the purposes of defending our raw water supply from contaminants that would come into it. That is clearly missing from all this legislation.

I want to say as well to the minister—he will extol the virtues of the Nutrient Management Act, a management act which allows raw sewage from what we would call outhouses to be spread on farmland at this time for five years. If it were treated sewage, one would say that may have some merit. In days gone by, when there was a staff available to police this, they couldn't get away with some of the things that are happening today. But without the staff there, it's wink, wink, nod, nod and spray all over the province of Ontario. I want to say that the regulations surrounding this act are not in effect yet. They talk about

it, but it's really not in effect, not having its major effect. I don't know who the minister is making reference to, but there we are.

What can the minister do? Where can he find some of this money to do this? Well, he can forgo the corporate tax cut to the friends of the Conservative government. A \$2.2-billion corporate tax cut is to be implemented in this province. There's also a tax credit to go to private schools in this province. With that kind of funding available, there's a lot of reallocation of funds that could be brought about to assist the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Natural Resources and our conservation authorities.

I want to say as well that when we look at general health care in the province we look at medical officers of health. It was pointed out many times, including by Dr Richard Schabas, the former esteemed and highly regarded chief medical officer of health in Ontario, who said that Mike Harris's government turned its back on the people of the province of Ontario and public health in Ontario—he noted that we have to have all of those positions of medical officer of health filled in the province. I think that the minister is now talking about doing so.

I want to say as well that there is a discussion about implementing every recommendation of the O'Connor report. Well, if they are going to do so, there is going to be a significant amount of money that is going to be required to do that. I suspect it's going to be a wink and a nod to many of those recommendations and not really full implementation. The minister will check it off, but if those who have the time and wherewithal to do so check carefully, they will note, in fact, that those provisions have not been implemented.

I say that there is a lot that can be done in the province of Ontario. I look at this bill, and one of the parts I worry about—it obviously doesn't worry some on the government side—is the spectre of privatization of water systems. You have experienced that in Hamilton in an unfortunate circumstance, I think most people would say. Surely one basic thing can be said: that municipalities or some public sector entity should own the water systems in this province. That's a basic. I have a personal bias in favour of owning and operating by municipalities and by OCWA, which is a quasi-government agency. That's the clean water agency. But the least I can say from this government is, I would hope they would include in this bill eventually a provision that all water systems must be publicly owned, at the very least. I think that would be important.

As I say, there are a lot of recommendations in the O'Connor report that will require some scrutiny. I know the minister has been reluctant to move forward on water source protection. He said he's taking a bold new step: he's going to set up a committee. Well, he's the only one who thought it was a bold new step, if he thinks setting up a committee is that. I lament the fact that the government is not moving more quickly, more comprehensively. I do want to say, because I'm a very fair person, that some of the provisions, both in this bill and

in the so-called Safe Drinking Water Act, are worthy of support and are to be recommended to the public of Ontario, and I'd be happy to do that. I simply believe that what we're seeing so far does not meet all of the requirements we'd like to see. We know that the only reason we're seeing this kind of legislation coming forward today is because of the tragedy of Walkerton, where seven people died from drinking the water and well over a thousand people were seriously ill, some of them with complications which will last for many years, or perhaps for a lifetime. That in itself is very sad.

What a lot of people don't realize is that there was an outbreak of cryptosporidium not too far away from there previous to that, where many people became ill. You'll remember that over a hundred people in Milwaukee, those with compromised systems of protection against disease, immune systems, died, and thousands became ill because of that. We found about 20 or 30 municipalities—and these are fairly sizeable municipalities—that didn't have proper treatment systems for the water. All they did was throw some chlorine at it; there was not the full treatment system that was necessary to keep out things such as cryptosporidium.

I notice that the Minister of the Environment is nodding, obviously either in agreement or off to sleep, one of the two, but I'm sure in agreement on some of the things I have said.

The member for Scarborough talked about people in the municipal field. I think the signal is clearly out there; some moved years ago to ensure that they had adequate water systems. But the minister would know and others in this House would know that these systems require constant upgrading. If you were to check the pipes underground in many municipalities, you would find a lot of them corroded, some of them even with holes, and I think that's—

Interjection.

Mr Bradley: This is where I say, because you couldn't see them—the member for Etobicoke Centre will remember when he was on municipal council, it wasn't always attractive to spend money on those things because you couldn't see them. I think one of the benefits of legislation of this kind is that it will focus attention on those needs. I remember at one time in the late 1980s we had a program called LifeLines, where the government paid a percentage of the cost of replacing the old systems, the old pipes underground. We are obviously going to have to have those upgraded for a long period of time.

I'm glad the Minister of the Environment was able to make it in for at least a portion of the remarks that have been made by the opposition, and I look forward to his implementing all of the suggestions that we have made this afternoon.

1650

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): It is indeed a privilege to stand here today to debate this motion. I wish it was not closure that I was talking about. It seems that although I've been here some 14 months, I never had the opportunity to see this Legislature at a time when

they did not impose closure literally on every bill. I have become quite used to at least making a speech on why you shouldn't be doing it.

Today I hope to talk more about the bill than the actual closure process, and before I begin, I'd like to talk a little bit about Marilyn Churley. I think very much credit should be given to her, to her Safe Drinking Water Act and the great work she has done around the issues of water, groundwater and safety for all Ontarians in being realistic and being assured that when they lift a glass such as this, they can put it to their lips and drink it and will not suffer the consequences of doing so. I will just prove I have great faith in this.

In my time on Metro council, and this has been alluded to by some of the previous speakers, we prided ourselves on how safe the water was for the 2.4 million people of Toronto and for all of those municipalities around Toronto, particularly York, the Markham area and Mississauga, which derived their water from Metropolitan Toronto. In fact, the water is absolutely pure. In tests that have been done on Toronto water versus the water one might find in a bottle that you pay a thousand times more for than what you would for the water coming out of a tap, you will find that in almost every case, the Toronto water is superior. I think we take that a little for granted in the city of Toronto, but it is also a source of huge municipal pride.

If you go to a Toronto council meeting today, at the start of that meeting there will be the singing of O Canada, and there is a screen presentation shown at the same time that O Canada is sung by the members present. In that screen presentation, one of the proudest moments is when a small child, obviously about three or four years of age, takes a glass, runs up to the tap and pours himself a glass of water totally knowing that water is safe. That is something the people of the city of Toronto and I suppose all of Ontario have come to expect.

This bill before us today has many good parts, but there are two parts that worry me. There are two parts that worry me as a former Metropolitan Toronto councillor and as a former councillor with the megacity of Toronto. The first part is that it allows the minister, at his discretion, to impose privatization on any municipality; and in line with that, it allows the minister the authority to privatize or change the business practices of any municipality. That's the first one. The second one is that it allows full-cost recovery for the water, which is a good thing, but does not include source protection, which I think is an omission of some great concern. So those are the two concepts of the bill that I believe need to be strengthened and/or altered completely.

In terms of privatization, we now live in a whole complex area of the economy of North America that is governed by NAFTA, the GATT rules, free trade, and we have to look at the consequences of privatization of our water resources in this province and the municipal water resources.

When it comes to the actual sale and export of water, I do not believe that this bill contains adequate safeguards.

It will not allow, for instance, for public accountability into the sales of water; it will not allow for the sales themselves. Once it has been privatized, people can sell enormous amounts of water south of the border or to any other jurisdiction that wants to buy it; not just water which is put into bottles and sold at \$1 a crack, as one can buy in the supermarket, but water that is sent by tankers, as Newfoundland has attempted to do for the United States, or whole water systems that might be diverted, as there was talk several years ago of diverting part of the Great Lakes to feed the Mississippi when that river system was experiencing a drought.

We need to make sure that our water and our resources, which are so important to the public and people of Canada, are never controlled by a private corporation or especially by private corporations or governments that are not Canadian.

Under this bill, a private corporation will have the ability to design, approve and implement the full-cost recovery set out in the bill. I would suggest that this may in fact be problematic and may run counter to what Justice O'Connor was trying to do.

I would like to briefly quote from Mr Justice O'Connor's second report on the Walkerton inquiry, *The Role of Municipal Governments*, pages 312 and 313, in which he writes:

"Ideally, water rates will rise as necessary to generate adequate resources for drinking water safety while remaining within reasonable boundaries of affordability. This should be possible in the large majority of municipalities.

"That said, the financing of water systems does not occur in isolation of other pressures on municipal budgets. In light of recent restructuring in the municipal sector, especially the transfer of additional open-ended social service costs (eg, welfare) to municipalities in 1998, there is currently some uncertainty about the ability of municipalities to finance all of the programs they are responsible for, including water services. Municipalities may be reducing spending (including borrowing) to plan for potential increases in social service costs. Although I consider it beyond my mandate to make a recommendation in this area, I encourage the province to publicly review the program responsibilities and fiscal capability of municipalities in light of recent restructuring to ensure that the financial pressures on municipalities do not crowd out the adequate financing of water systems.

"I also recognize, however, that rising rates may constitute a significant burden for low-income families and individuals. I do not see it as being within my mandate to comment on the means by which this problem might be addressed. There are a variety of possible approaches. Suffice it to say that, since water is an essential need, it would be unacceptable for those who are unable to pay for safe water to go without. The provincial and municipal governments should ensure that this does not occur by whatever means they consider appropriate."

If we go into that whole flow of privatization, if this government does with water what it has purported to do

with electricity, then I would suggest there are very grave consequences for our poor, for consumers, for our government and for our control of one of the most essential resources of our province and our country.

Around the world where privatization has taken effect, we can see there have often been more problems than solutions. Just to give you a few—some Canadian and some worldwide—I go no further than our sister city of Hamilton. One can go there and see that they have gone through a succession of private owners or private companies that have managed the water system. That system is now in the hands of a private company called RWE, but there have been many, as you well know.

What we have seen in Hamilton is a whole history of sewage spills, dumping of toxic wastes, poor treatment of waste water and a municipality struggling to get back control of its vital water supplies. We have seen that the private corporations, far from being the answer to the problems facing that city, have actually exacerbated the very problems they were hired to solve.

We go then to the town of Goderich, not too far from here, and we see that they have recently hired a firm, Vivendi of France, to try to treat the water, to get a handle on the municipal costs in that town. Vivendi is a very large corporation, known worldwide. Just so people might understand what they have done or what they have not done in the past number of years, this firm that has been hired by the good people of Goderich is being investigated for six cases of corruption in France and is under French judicial review, mostly for attempting to form cartels to hike up the price of water, to stop municipalities from questioning what they were doing and to ensure that they would get rich while people would have a very difficult time getting water that was affordable and, in many cases, decent. This all occurred between 1989 and 1996.

1700

But this company, Vivendi, went even further. They had a policy where they charged an extra 2% for water in order to take that money and that profit and disburse it among political parties. They did that to make sure that the message they were sending out was not challenged by any of the political parties. That, too, is being investigated. I guess it's all part of being a privatized company in that country and I'm afraid might all too readily become a priority of any privatized company in this one.

From that same company, we also see the problem they had in Tréguex, France, which in a three-year period, between 1990 and 1993, served the poor people of that town some 476 days of water not fit for human consumption. So for 476 days out of some 1,000 days, they failed in their duty. As I said, a very large French corporation that made huge amounts of money is now being investigated.

We go to Sydney, Australia, and we see what happened there. They hired a company called Suez-Lyonnaise des Eaux. That city was quite famous a few years ago for having cryptosporidium in the water for about a month before that company even told anyone

they had found it in large concentrations. People were starting to get sick before any medical doctors or medical officers of health or the equivalent that we have here in Ontario were even notified. They did that because it was going to hurt the bottom line.

In Britain, we see what happened after Margaret Thatcher privatized the water. We can see that the water quality in that country has not gone up, but down. We can see that the lower-income people are often cut off water, much as some Ontarians today are being cut off electricity, because they cannot afford it. We see that the infrastructure that was once the hallmark of the British water system, as it was being built and replaced, is no longer being replaced. We can see that there is far less focus on the environment and the environmental concerns around water in Britain than there was before when it was publicly owned.

There are some problems with this bill. I think the major problems are that it does not give the municipalities sufficient control and gives too much ministerial prerogative, but the greatest problem of all is that of potential privatization. The good people of Toronto will be wrestling with this this very month as we debate this in the House and as there are public meetings held, starting on November 20. That coincides almost to the day with the city of Toronto's questioning about what they're going to do with their water sources; whether they're going to contract them out, in line with what this bill allows; whether they're going to have an arm's-length agency and get the politicians off the hook; and whether they are going to be able to raise the necessary funds.

In fact, the public needs to be aware of that. This is far too important an issue to simply be decided in this chamber and this chamber alone. It is an issue that literally affects every single person and the health of every citizen of Ontario. We need to speak out. We need to say that the systems that have worked in this province for 200 years, which provide safe, clean, pure drinking water, need to be preserved. There is nothing wrong with the system. It is not broken. If the pipes are old, then the pipes will need to be replaced. If the water sources cannot be totally protected the way they are, then moves will have to be made to protect them. But we cannot allow this to fall into private hands and suffer the same consequences as happened in Hamilton, France, Germany, Britain, Australia and in every other place that has tinkered with this, trying to save money. There is no sense in saving money when public health is at risk.

The whole factor of what took place in Walkerton has brought us here today. Let us never forget that the water that is safest is that which is controlled by municipal governments directly responsible to the people who live there.

With that, I'm going to stop because I would like to give maximum time to my colleague Marilyn Churley to deal with this. She is, after all, probably the expert in this House.

Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton Centre): Rather than getting into the immediate comments I have before me, I just want to respond for a moment to the member for Beaches-East York and also to the member for Timmins-James Bay, both respectable, honourable colleagues.

The member for Beaches-East York mentioned that the biggest problem their caucus has with this bill is privatization. I would remind the member for Beaches-East York, who was not around in the days that you were an honourable minister of the government, Speaker, that the NDP government of the day in fact were the ones that permitted municipalities to use private sector laboratories instead of government labs, and they did it with just guidelines. When they downloaded that to the municipalities and gave them the flexibility to use private sector labs, they did it with just guidelines—no regulations, no legislation, just guidelines.

However, to their credit, they did indicate that the individuals responsible for the safety of the water system, for the reporting structure and the testing, had to be qualified individuals—an admirable goal, absolutely—and they should be. However, they grandfathered the existing individuals. Hence, when the people from Walkerton, particularly the Koebel brothers, were allowed to remain in their positions, notwithstanding the other problems they had—and that was clearly brought out in the Walkerton inquiry—the reality was that Stan Koebel was unqualified to do the job for which he was responsible.

How did the system work? The system was that the people in charge of the water system do the testing and file a report. The report goes to the medical officer of health and to Ministry of the Environment inspectors. Did the system work? The member for Beaches-East York said it very well. He said, if I may paraphrase him, "The system worked well for 200 years and the problem is not with the system." Perhaps it wasn't, but the reality is that it was people within the system who made it go awry, who caused the deaths that were there. Even with the guidelines the NDP government put in place at the time which allowed municipalities to use private sector labs, it worked when the individuals acted in a responsible, qualified, trained manner.

Do we need proof of this? Of course. There were many other municipalities in this province that from time to time encountered water-table problems. I'll give you an example that I experienced, as many of us did if we travelled at any time during 1997 or 1998. If you went to Thunder Bay, landed at Thunder Bay airport and went into the washroom, there was a sticker in the washroom that said, "It's non-potable water. Don't drink the water." If you stayed at the Valhalla Inn or one of the other hotels near the airport, on the old Fort William side of the city, they supplied bottled water for drinking, for brushing your teeth and so forth.

1710

Non-potable water: why did this happen? Well, you know why. I remember very distinctly this case. I was at an awards banquet for northern Ontario businesses in

North Bay, and the mayor of Thunder Bay at the time, before Mayor Boshcoff, was sitting at the same table I was. Three times he was interrupted by a cellphone call which was clearly a very urgent situation. Who was he on the phone with? Well, I can tell you in retrospect, afterwards obviously speaking with the mayor, he was speaking with the medical officer of health for Thunder Bay district. His last comment on his last call was this: "If that's the case, shut 'er down."

They shut down the water system in Fort William. Why? When Fort William and Port Arthur amalgamated, just to give you a little historical perspective, Port Arthur was on lake water and had a fully treated sewage system, water treatment system; Fort William did not. They were on well water. As with well water in many environments, of course, you run the risk of runoff and so forth, which is part of what happened in Thunder Bay; you run the risk of elements getting into the well system that can contaminate it. But they were bright enough, smart enough, trained enough and qualified enough to (a) detect it early and (b) report it accurately to the medical officer of health. Therefore they nipped it in the bud, as it were. They shut the water system down and issued a boil-water warning. For the nine or 10 months that we were on committee, I think, at one point we travelled through there, and we were not permitted or able to consume the water, because the boil-water warning was in effect and the Fort William side of town had to be upgraded and brought into the proper and complete system for the city.

So there's an example of where the system worked, and even with the guidelines it was the people portion of the system that made it work. Conversely, in Walkerton it was the people portion of the system that allowed it to fail.

Safe drinking water: this Sustainable Water and Sewage Systems Act is a very important bill. One of the elements that is critical of today's debate is that it's another time allocation motion. The honourable member for St Catharines is probably one of our biggest critics when it comes to time allocation motions. Well, if anybody in this House fundamentally supports the context, the objectives and the value of this bill in meeting the recommendations of Justice O'Connor on the report from the inquiry, then don't drag it out with debate. Let's get on with it. Let's get the bill passed here and sent to committee for the five or six days that the House leaders have agreed it is to be at committee for public hearings and, in addition to that, of course, clause-by-clause and amendments. Let's get on with it. If we did that, we wouldn't have to resort to another time allocation motion.

This bill continues the decisive action we have taken since 2000. It demonstrates that this government is sparing no effort to give Ontarians access to clean, safe drinking water. The Sustainable Water and Sewage Systems Act makes for good planning, promotes water conservation and is an integral part of this government's clean water strategy.

I commend the member from Toronto-Danforth—I almost called you by your old riding—because she really

started this ball rolling a few years ago and is a committed crusader. You like that, don't you? Yes. She's a committed crusader on the issue of safe water. I would hope, therefore, that she would be very supportive of the objectives and the details in this bill. I know it may not be perfect, but I know that the member will have her opportunity, as her party will, to propose amendments to the bill when it gets to the committee stage.

Commissioner O'Connor said this would address many of the important issues concerning the financing of water systems. "The requirements for a full-cost report and a cost recovery plan, as generally expressed in this proposed act," are, in his view, "appropriate." I am pleased that Justice O'Connor made that comment, because this act has now been reintroduced to give legal authority to the Ministry of the Environment, as announced by the Premier earlier this year, and it delivers on the Premier's announcement.

We're moving forward in such a way as to ensure a full and robust consultation process. As I indicated earlier, we want to continue to meet with our key stakeholders, particularly people from the municipalities, who unquestionably will have ramifications as a result of this bill. A critical part is that many of them will have to invest major capital dollars to not only upgrade their water treatment and sewage systems, but they are also going to have to invest in either the front end, back end or both ends of the testing process of their municipal water.

We also have a number of small businesses across this province that are being impacted by this bill. We want to ensure that we don't put them out of business but at the same time have some responsible delivery of water services for their people. These are business people like trailer parks, for example. Trailer parks can be severely impacted if we put undue pressure on them to have to test water coming, going and so forth. We want to make sure that we implement a system in this bill that gives them the flexibility to deliver good, safe, clean water to the tenants of their trailer park and that at the same time it doesn't become a burden of cost to the trailer park tenant or to the business owner who runs the park.

We also agree that a fundamental cornerstone needed to ensure safe and clean drinking water is the sustainable financing of municipal water and sewer services. This is absolutely essential. The proposed bill is a tangible recognition of that requirement and is the government's next step in fulfilling O'Connor's recommendations.

We believe that one of the critical success factors behind implementing Commissioner O'Connor's recommendations is the proposed act. The driving force behind this act is the concept of full-cost accounting and recovery. The government believes that legislating full-cost accounting and recovery for municipal water and sewage services is one of the best ways to protect public health and our environment.

The principles of full-cost accounting and recovery are fundamental to sustainability and are key aspects of O'Connor's recommendations in his Walkerton report,

part two. Full-cost accounting and recovery provides us with an accurate picture and a transparent method for identifying all the costs, both operational and capital, associated with water and sewage. They must be distinguished so that, first of all, it's a very transparent process and, secondly, so that we can better address the issue of who pays for what.

1720

I know one of the elements that the member for Timmins-James Bay mentioned earlier was the difference between user fees and taxes. Well, there is a very distinct difference between user fees and taxes. He claims that user fees are in fact taxes and that they're somehow unfair. Well, I beg to differ on this fundamental underlying point. A tax is something that is paid by everyone who pays taxes. A user fee is something that is paid for by the individual who is using the service.

Interjection: Hence the term "user fee."

Mr Spina: Thank you, Minister: "Hence the term 'user fee.'" Well, do you know what? I think that's an even fairer system than taxes, because when certain individuals do not want to support the usage by people or others who are using a service, then why should I as a taxpayer support or subsidize that particular usage?

In Brampton, for example, we have probably one of the best parks and recreation systems, second to virtually no other city in Canada. It is the legacy of our city, it is something to be proud of, and I can tell you that as a taxpayer I know that a substantial chunk of my property taxes go toward carrying the cost of these parks and recreation systems. They are great systems, but nevertheless, folks, there are users of that system and there are non-users, and at the same time, virtually none of our recreation centres, with the exception of one or two, are profit-making. They don't even break even. But the reality is that if we enrol our children there for swimming classes or if we ourselves take the opportunity to go to a senior swimming class or a water fitness workout, whatever the element is, I should have to pay for the use of that pool. I don't have a fundamental problem with that, but at the same time, if I have retired seniors or people on fixed incomes or low-income people, it's not fair; if they are not using the system, they shouldn't have to pay and subsidize it with their taxes. User uses, user pays; big difference from taxpayers.

As you've undoubtedly heard, Justice O'Connor made several references in his report to the need for municipalities to ensure that the systems are adequately financed. To quote him, "Over the long term, safety depends on stable and adequate financing to maintain the system's infrastructure and its operational capacity to supply high-quality water consistently." If passed, this act will make it mandatory for municipalities to assess and cost-recover the full amount of water and sewer services. This act will ensure that water and sewer systems generate sufficient revenue to fully recover all their long-term operating and capital costs.

The concept of full-cost recovery is not new. Municipalities are already able to apply full-cost recovery if

they wish and, in fact, some have implemented this to varying degrees. But, as the saying goes, the devil is in the details, and although some municipalities claim to be recovering full costs, they really don't know the extent to which they are recovering all of their long-term investment needs. It's easy enough to get a quote to build something and to then run it for two, three, four, five years, but sometimes, when you get into the third, fourth or fifth year of operating that pool, park and rec centre, sewage disposal plant or whatever it is, you kind of forget that you floated a debenture to finance this thing, but when somebody is asked, at the end of the line, "How much did it cost to build that sewage treatment plant?", well, it was \$25 million or \$45 million, whatever the case may be. They floated a debenture, and 10 years down the road you've got a change in council, you have a change in administration, and all they know is they're still carrying this debenture they floated 10 years ago that they've got to pay off and they forget, often, what it was for.

So we want to make sure that the reporting requirements and the detailed analyses of full-cost accounting would include things like all operating and capital costs, financing costs, renewal, replacement and improvement costs, infrastructure and investments required to maintain and expand the system, and in addition all sources of revenue.

Just on that point, I got a letter today from the chair of the region of Peel. It may sound critical in some way, but I think of it as a very forward-thinking government that is very interested in what is happening as part of this act. I'm going to read as much of it as I can, given the time. This is from the acting regional chair and Matt Zamojc, who is the commissioner of public works:

"I am writing to advise that regional council approved the following resolution at its meeting held on August 8, 2002:

"That regional council request the Minister of Environment and Energy" at the time "to advise the region of Peel on the status of the overall guidelines review of land application of biosolids, given the outcome of the Walkerton recommendations;

"And further, that the region of Peel express its concerns about the specific site described by the delegation of Mr David Hughes of Sewage Sludge Application ... St Andrew's Road, Caledon as the information provided indicates serious watershed/groundwater issues;

"And further, that the region of Peel request the opportunity"—this is key—"to be involved in both the guideline and application review by the MOEE and that consideration of the environmental process be applied;

"And further, that a copy of the subject resolution be forwarded to the Peel area MPPs and the Peel Federation of Agriculture."

I just give that as an example. There is a perceived problem here in Caledon, within the region, and they are making it very clear and very succinct that they want to be involved in the process of evaluating what is happening in this, but also how what we are doing here impacts on what they are trying to do for the citizens.

We want this act to pass very quickly, because it's important for the people of our province. It is a perfect response to Justice O'Connor's recommendations, but clearly any member of this Legislature who applauds the objectives of the Walkerton inquiry should support this bill.

The Acting Speaker: The floor is now open for further debate. The chair recognizes the member for Toronto-Danforth.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): Thank you, Mr Speaker. You got the name of my riding correct. I appreciate that. But I still do prefer the name of the riding previously. Of course, it was Broadview-Greenwood and before that Riverdale. Dennis Mills, the Liberal member, unilaterally changed the name after the Harris government made the ridings the same as the federal ones, without consulting me or the constituents in the community. None of us were amused by this because we thought—Donna is agreeing with you; you have to be good over there, you're in the audience—that it would have been a perfect opportunity, since the riding came together—Riverdale and East York—to call it East York-Riverdale, Riverdale-East York or something like that, a perfect opportunity to include the names of the two ridings that were jelled. But no, now we're called Toronto-Danforth. I'm sure the people on the Danforth appreciate that. It's a great street—Greek restaurants and all kinds of other diversity on that street—and it's good for them, so maybe we could have gotten Danforth in there as well because it's the middle of the riding. But no, we're called Toronto-Danforth. Anyway, that's what we're called and I am the member for Toronto-Danforth. I had to get that out because I'm really annoyed by it. I must say, psychologically—I haven't even changed my sign yet, but I know I have to do it and we're about to make that change. Finally I'm catching up with reality here.

I was listening earlier to the Minister of the Environment and just then to the member for Brampton—where is he from? Brampton something. I understand that we are actually debating the bill, I suppose, in a way, but what we're debating here is yet again another time allocation motion. Is that what we are doing here today? I was home sick today and I came in so that I could participate in this debate and finish my leadoff on the Safe Drinking Water Act tonight.

1730

I did catch your question. I just want to let you know it showed up on TV when you said the line about keeping their heat on all summer and after you sat down you immediately corrected it and said, "I meant winter." I heard it loud and clear. I just want you to know that it came across on TV.

I'm just really dismayed that here we are again debating a time allocation motion on an important bill like this and already the minister has decided on how many days of hearings we are going to have across the province. We also have to figure out how many days we have for the Safe Drinking Water Act. These bills are of

monumental importance to the people of Ontario. I would say to the minister that this particular bill is of great concern to individuals and municipalities across the province.

It seems that what we've all tended, for obvious reasons, to focus on with this bill more than anything, although there is a need for a great deal of discussion on many aspects to this bill, is full-cost recovery. We are going to have to have a very good discussion about this and what we mean by it. It's so easy for the government members and everybody to stand up—almost everybody seems to be onside with full-cost recovery. Justice O'Connor recommended it, I know the environmental community likes it, and we in general are saying the concept sounds good that we should be conserving our water and taking care of our water and not taking it for granted. But when we start throwing out the term "full-cost recovery", what do we mean by that?

Can you imagine how people in municipalities must be feeling as they listen to us get up and lightly talk about how we are going to pass this bill and we are moving to full-cost recovery, when they are getting the hydro bills they are getting now with the excuse from the government that, "It's just full-cost recovery; people have to pay the amount it costs to produce the energy"? Can you imagine what they must be thinking? "Oh no, now they are going to stick it to us with water." They have reason to be legitimately concerned here.

I want to hear from the public, and I don't think five days is going to do it. Is this when we are in session here in the Legislature? Is it going to be after we meet here at 3:30 or 4? Are we going to travel the province so that people have an opportunity to talk about this bill and to talk about what they would see as a fair funding formula, ie the province coming back into that partnership that used to be there when you and I were in government and governments before us, a fair-funding partnership between the province and municipalities? If this is an excuse now for this government to walk away from that fair-funding partnership that used to exist, then that is just not on. We have to have a discussion of what we mean by this.

When the member from Brampton—I have to find out where he is from, because it is going to show up; can you tell me where he is from?—talks about user fees, he says "Well, you know, user fees are user fees. They are not taxes," I wish he had been in this House or had been listening when we were over there—

Interjection: Brampton Centre.

Ms Churley: Brampton Centre—and every time there was any discussion about a user fee in any capacity on our side of the House, they would get up on their hind legs—do you remember this, Mr Speaker?—and start going on and on: "User fees are just another tax. There is only one taxpayer in this province." Now suddenly: "User fees are different, and if you are not using it, you shouldn't have to pay for it." What a change in values we are seeing here today.

Mr Bisson: But that was then.

Ms Churley: But that was then, that's right. They should not be allowed to get away with that. I believe that user fees are applicable in many situations, and I believe that there should be full-cost recovery for water. But what does it mean? Perhaps it means that the government's got to get back into establishing what I call a safe drinking water fund, which was part of my safe drinking water bill and it's no longer included in the government's bill, where the government comes in and spends under general revenues the amount of money that needs to be spent to upgrade our systems clear across the province. Indeed, what the province has been doing is just the opposite. The Tory government brought in new regulations after the tragedy in Walkerton and then did not supply the funding for municipalities, particularly the smaller ones, which needed to upgrade their systems. What did the government do instead of giving them the money? They extended the deadline. So some of these communities may have unsafe drinking water. They may not know whether it's safe or not. Instead of giving them the funding they needed to upgrade their systems, they walked away from it and said, "We'll give you a longer time to meet the requirements of the new regulations."

Perhaps what we should be talking about when we're talking about full-cost recovery is the government spending whatever it takes to upgrade the system so that the systems are safe and we're paying the costs of source protection, which isn't included, by the way, in this bill in cost-recovery, nor is it included in the Safe Drinking Water Act. We're still not talking about how we're going to pay for the cost of protecting our water at its source. It's left out of this bill as well.

I'm sure the public, environmental groups, municipalities, the AMO and all kinds of people will give us different models as to how we should implement a full-cost recovery system—it not only means when you turn on your tap. Here in Toronto, of course, we already pay. We can afford it, but we certainly don't want to see our rates go through the roof either; nor does anybody. What we should be talking about is who uses water. It's not just you and me when we turn on our taps, it's all the industry out there using water for free. They just have to pay for a permit to take water. I know that would make them nervous as well, thinking that they may suddenly have to start paying. It could be a small amount, but you can't just say it's municipalities, you and I, when we turn on our water. We have to figure out what a fair share is that the government should be paying under a fund set up specifically to deal with safe drinking water.

I would say to the Minister of the Environment and the government, when you get up and start talking about the full-cost recovery, bear in mind that you cannot get away with doing what you've just done to hydro rates. That is just not on, and people out there, I can tell you, will guarantee it.

Let's say in principle we agree to some kind of full-cost recovery, basically so that we don't take water so far granted any more, but at the same time really stringent conservation and efficiency measures are brought in, like

the NDP did when we brought in OCWA, the Ontario Clean Water Agency. In order for municipalities to get funding to upgrade their systems, they actually had to build in a conservation plan, which worked; it saved them money down the road.

That should be true of all water users as well. We should have incentives from the government. They should be helping us. The government should be helping people conserve and take care of our water.

I just want to say to the people out there who are concerned and nervous about this, we will be fighting hard to make sure that those systems are put in place and you do not end up being stiffed with huge water bills like you are for hydro right now. For heaven's sake, nobody can afford it. That is not to say we don't need programs in place, jointly shared with the government, to make sure our water is safe to drink. That should be what this and the other bills are all about.

I've talked quite a bit about this bill in the past, and I'm not going to go into a lot of detail about it today, but I do want to respond to—where did you say he was from, Brampton North?

Mr Prue: Brampton Centre.

Ms Churley: —the member for Brampton Centre, who talked about, when we were discussing the safe drinking water bill the other day, when the minister introduced it—and you'll hear more from me about this tonight; I have about a half-hour or so left on my leadoff for the NDP caucus—coming full circle, like these books, like all the work and money that went into the inquiry that happened under Justice O'Connor, didn't happen. I'm hearing government members now saying—it has become a mantra—"Let's come full circle; let's go back to blaming the Koebel brothers completely," and going back to, "Well, the NDP privatized some labs in the first place." Remember, that's where Mike Harris started. One of the reasons why we had this inquiry was to find out what went wrong so we'll never repeat those mistakes again.

1740

I advise all members, if you're really interested in knowing what happened with the privatizations of the labs and what went wrong, read the Report of the Walkerton Inquiry, part one. Turn to page 372, 10.3.2: "The Failure to Regulate Private Laboratories." Justice O'Connor goes on at great length about what happened there. It's not a pretty sight when he outlines in great detail the way this government did it.

Yes, when we were in government the NDP allowed certain labs to do some of the water testing in this province. But we kept the four labs open; not only that, but there were 13 Ministry of Health labs. You don't hear about those at all. We focus on the four Ministry of the Environment labs that we shut down, but there were 13 Ministry of Health labs that also did water testing. In fact, that's where Walkerton used to get its water tested.

They were not consulted with. This is not me saying this alone. This is in Justice O'Connor's report. The Ministry of Health were told that they had to do it. They

were not consulted with around the possible health implications. Neither did the ministry nor the government of the day listen to warnings from officials that closing them down so quickly—there was a directive in 1994-95 about the possibility of privatizing all the labs that tested water, but it said it would take two to three years to get it right, to get an accreditation system and all of the regulations in place, the reporting, all of that; two to three years. The government reduced it to four to eight weeks. All of a sudden, every jurisdiction in this province was told, “You have to privatize right now. We’re shutting down the labs.” The Ministry of Health labs closed down a few months later. So there was nothing left. The infrastructure that had been built up over the years that tested the water of most of the municipalities, particularly the smaller ones, in this province was shut down almost overnight with nothing in place. There were warnings given to the government and nobody paid attention.

As you know, I was one of those people on my feet warning the government back when they closed those labs in 1996. In fact, it was cited that when former Premier Harris was being questioned at the inquiry—I was there—there were four or five warning bells in a couple of questions I directly asked the then minister, Mr Sterling, and the Premier about the closing of these labs. The possible dangers were just sloughed off and Eva Ligeti’s report was sloughed off. There were warnings; they can’t say that there weren’t.

So I want to say to the members, when they get up and try to bring this full circle again and say it was just the Koebel brothers—oh, absolutely they played a big role in this; nobody is denying that. But the reality is that these two reports go into great detail about this government’s role and the downsizing, the downloading, the deregulation, all of those things. The privatization of the labs played a key role in what happened in Walkerton, and we’re supposed to be learning from that. It doesn’t do any good for government members to now be trying to get the mantra out that it was really just the Koebel brothers.

I also want to point out, and I’ve pointed it out many times in this Legislature and I’m going to do it again, that these are important reports for people to read. On pages 312 and 313 in part two of the Walkerton Inquiry report—I’m coming back to cost recovery, which Justice O’Connor talked about, although he didn’t recommend a particular model; again, that’s something we need to discuss when we go out there in the public, and I just don’t think four or five days is enough time to do that—he raises serious concerns about downloading. He calls it “restructuring,” but really it’s the downloading that the government imposed on municipalities.

On page 313 he says, “The financing of water systems does not occur in isolation of other pressures on municipal budgets. In light of recent restructuring in the municipal sector, especially the transfer of additional open-ended social service costs (eg, welfare) to municipalities in 1998, there is currently some uncertainty about the ability of municipalities to finance all of the programs

they are responsible for, including water services. Municipalities may be reducing spending (including borrowing) to plan for potential increases in social service costs. Although I consider it beyond my mandate to make a recommendation in this area, I encourage the province to publicly review the program responsibilities and fiscal capability of municipalities in light of recent restructuring to ensure that the financial pressures on municipalities do not crowd out the adequate financing of water systems.”

So let me make it abundantly clear that we in the New Democratic Party will not put up with having this government go out and do to people exactly what they did to them on hydro, saying that Justice O’Connor and environmentalists support full cost recovery, in isolation of the other parts of the Justice O’Connor report that talk about the problems that municipalities already have in dealing with the costs that have been downloaded.

There are a lot of other things I could say about this particular bill before us. I will talk more about the Safe Drinking Water Act tonight, but I would say to the government that the Ministry of the Environment was more severely cut than any other ministry, regulatory-wise, staff-wise and resource-wise. That’s documented in Justice O’Connor’s reports as well.

If we are really sincere, all three parties, in trying to make sure that what happened in Walkerton never happens again, we have to get out there and listen to the people in Walkerton and to the people across the province, to their criticisms of this bill and their ideas of how we can bring in such a bill, bring in some kind of full cost recovery, but in full partnership with the government so people don’t literally have their water turned off. Can you imagine that? That’s what’s happening with hydro right now.

I want to say to everybody who is in favour of full cost recovery of our water services, bear in mind that we in this party are not going to allow any kind of full cost recovery to go ahead without built-in mechanisms to support those municipalities and individuals who need some kind of funding and resources from the government to make sure that they adhere to stricter conditions to make their water safe and that they can pay for those and that their water will never be turned off.

I look forward to this bill going out to hearings so we can hear from the people of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker: The time for debate has expired. Mr Stockwell has moved government notice of motion number 57. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please indicate by saying “aye.”

All those opposed will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1747 to 1757.

The Acting Speaker: Those members in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be counted by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Hardeman, Ernie	Mushinski, Marilyn
Baird, John R.	Hastings, John	Newman, Dan
Barrett, Toby	Hudak, Tim	O'Toole, John
Beaubien, Marcel	Jackson, Cameron	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Clark, Brad	Johns, Helen	Sampson, Rob
Clement, Tony	Johnson, Bert	Snobelen, John
Coburn, Brian	Kells, Morley	Spina, Joseph
DeFaria, Carl	Klees, Frank	Sterling, Norman W.
Dunlop, Garfield	Martiniuk, Gerry	Stockwell, Chris
Ecker, Janet	Maves, Bart	Tascona, Joseph N.
Elliott, Brenda	Mazzilli, Frank	Tsubouchi, David H.
Flaherty, Jim	McDonald, AL	Turnbull, David
Galt, Doug	Miller, Norm	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Gilchrist, Steve	Molinari, Tina R.	Witmer, Elizabeth
Gill, Raminder	Munro, Julia	Wood, Bob
Guzzo, Garry J.	Murdoch, Bill	

The Acting Speaker: Those members opposed to the motion will please rise one at a time and be counted by the Clerk.

Nays

Bartolucci, Rick	Dombrowsky, Leona	Martel, Shelley
Bisson, Gilles	Duncan, Dwight	McLeod, Lyn
Boyer, Claudette	Gerretsen, John	Parsons, Ernie
Bradley, James J.	Gravelle, Michael	Patten, Richard
Caplan, David	Hampton, Howard	Phillips, Gerry
Churley, Marilyn	Hoy, Pat	Prue, Michael
Colle, Mike	Kennedy, Gerard	Pupatello, Sandra
Crozier, Bruce	Kormos, Peter	Ramsay, David
Curling, Alvin	Kwinter, Monte	Ruprecht, Tony
Di Cocco, Caroline	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sergio, Mario

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude DesRosiers): The ayes are 47; the nays are 30.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

It now being after 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 6:45 this evening.

The House adjourned at 1800.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon / L'hon James K. Bartleman

Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Gary Carr

Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers

Deputy Clerk / sous-greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks at the Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Agostino, Dominic (L)	Hamilton East / -Est	Chief opposition whip / whip en chef de l'opposition
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Waterloo-Wellington	Parliamentary assistant to the Deputy Premier and Minister of Education / adjoint parlementaire à la vice-première ministre et ministre de l'Éducation
Baird, Hon / L'hon John R. (PC)	Nepean-Carleton	Minister of Energy, Minister responsible for francophone affairs, deputy House leader / ministre de l'Énergie, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones, leader parlementaire adjoint
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Agriculture and Food / adjoint parlementaire à la ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation
Bartolucci, Rick (L)	Sudbury	Deputy opposition House leader / chef parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition
Beaubien, Marcel (PC)	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance / adjoint parlementaire à la ministre des Finances
Bisson, Gilles (ND)	Timmins-James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	Chief New Democratic Party whip / whip en chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Bountrogianni, Marie (L)	Hamilton Mountain	
Boyer, Claudette (Ind)	Ottawa-Vanier	
Bradley, James J. (L)	St Catharines	
Brown, Michael A. (L)	Algoma-Manitoulin	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Bryant, Michael (L)	St Paul's	
Caplan, David (L)	Don Valley East / -Est	Deputy opposition whip / whip adjoint de l'opposition
Carr, Hon / L'hon Gary (PC)	Oakville	Speaker / Président
Christopherson, David (ND)	Hamilton West / -Ouest	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance / adjoint parlementaire à la ministre des Finances
Churley, Marilyn (ND)	Toronto-Danforth	
Clark, Hon / L'hon Brad (PC)	Stoney Creek	Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
Cleary, John C. (L)	Stormont-Dundas- Charlottenburgh	
Clement, Hon / L'hon Tony (PC)	Brampton West-Mississauga / Brampton-Ouest-Mississauga	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Coburn, Hon / L'hon Brian (PC)	Ottawa-Orléans	Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre associé des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Colle, Mike (L)	Eglinton-Lawrence	
Conway, Sean G. (L)	Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke	
Cordiano, Joseph (L)	York South-Weston / York-Sud-Weston	
Crozier, Bruce (L)	Essex	
Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne (PC)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Curling, Alvin (L)	Scarborough-Rouge River	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
DeFaria, Hon / L'hon Carl (PC)	Mississauga East / -Est	Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors / ministre des Affaires civiques, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Di Cocco, Caroline (L)	Sarnia-Lambton	
Dombrowsky, Leona (L)	Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington	
Duncan, Dwight (L)	Windsor-St Clair	Opposition House leader / chef parlementaire de l'opposition
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / -Nord	Parliamentary assistant to the Premier and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / adjoint parlementaire au premier ministre et ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales
Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet (PC)	Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge	Minister of Finance / ministre des Finances
Elliott, Hon / L'hon Brenda (PC)	Guelph-Wellington	Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services / ministre des Services à la collectivité, à la famille et à l'enfance
Eves, Hon / L'hon Ernie (PC)	Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey	Premier and President of the Executive Council, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif, ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales
Flaherty, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC)	Whitby-Ajax	Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation / ministre de l'Entreprise, des Débouchés et de l'Innovation
Galt, Hon / L'hon Doug (PC)	Northumberland	Minister without Portfolio, chief government whip / Ministre sans portefeuille, whip en chef du gouvernement
Gerretsen, John (L)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	
Gilchrist, Steve (PC)	Scarborough East / -Est	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of the Environment and Energy and government House leader / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Énergie et leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Gill, Raminder (PC)	Bramalea-Gore- Malton-Springdale	Parliamentary assistant to the Premier and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / adjoint parlementaire au premier ministre et ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales
Gravelle, Michael (L)	Thunder Bay-Superior North / -Nord	
Guzzo, Garry J. (PC)	Ottawa West-Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest-Nepean	
Hampton, Howard (ND)	Kenora-Rainy River	Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services / adjoint parlementaire à la ministre des Services à la collectivité, à la famille et à l'enfance
Hastings, John (PC)	Etobicoke North / -Nord	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Affaires civiques, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC)	Haliburton-Victoria-Brock	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Hoy, Pat (L)	Chatham-Kent Essex	
Hudak, Hon / L'hon Tim (PC)	Erie-Lincoln	Minister of Consumer and Business Services / ministre des Services aux consommateurs et aux entreprises
Jackson, Cameron (PC)	Burlington	
Johns, Hon / L'hon Helen (PC)	Huron-Bruce	Minister of Agriculture and Food / ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation
Johnson, Bert (PC)	Perth-Middlesex	Deputy Speaker, Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-Président, Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Kells, Morley (PC)	Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Kennedy, Gerard (L)	Parkdale-High Park	
Klees, Hon / L'hon Frank (PC)	Oak Ridges	Minister of Tourism and Recreation / ministre du Tourisme et des Loisirs

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Kormos, Peter (ND)	Niagara Centre / -Centre	New Democratic Party House leader / chef parlementaire du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Kwinter, Monte (L)	York Centre / -Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	
Levac, Dave (L)	Brant	
Marchese, Rosario (ND)	Trinity-Spadina	
Marland, Margaret (PC)	Mississauga South / -Sud	
Martel, Shelley (ND)	Nickel Belt	
Martin, Tony (ND)	Sault Ste Marie	
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
Maves, Bart (PC)	Niagara Falls	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transportation / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Transports
Mazzilli, Frank (PC)	London-Fanshawe	Parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General and Minister responsible for Native Affairs / adjoint parlementaire au procureur général et ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
McDonald, AL (PC)	Nipissing	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de l'Entreprise, des Débouchés et de l'Innovation
McGuinty, Dalton (L)	Ottawa South / -Sud	Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition
McLeod, Lyn (L)	Thunder Bay-Atikokan	
McMeekin, Ted (L)	Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough- Aldershot	
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound-Muskoka	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Molinari, Hon / L'hon Tina R. (PC)	Thornhill	Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre associée des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Munro, Julia (PC)	York North / -Nord	Parliamentary assistant to the Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet and Minister of Culture / adjointe parlementaire au président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement et ministre de la Culture
Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of the Environment and government House leader / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de l'Environnement et leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Mushinski, Marilyn (PC)	Scarborough Centre / -Centre	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities and Minister responsible for Women's Issues / adjointe parlementaire à la ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités et ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Newman, Hon / L'hon Dan (PC)	Scarborough Southwest / -Sud-Ouest	Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre associé de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
O'Toole, John R. (PC)	Durham	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Ouellette, Hon / L'hon Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	Minister of Natural Resources / ministre des Richesses naturelles
Parsons, Ernie (L)	Prince Edward-Hastings	
Patten, Richard (L)	Ottawa Centre / -Centre	
Peters, Steve (L)	Elgin-Middlesex-London	
Phillips, Gerry (L)	Scarborough-Agincourt	
Prue, Michael (ND)	Beaches-East York	
Pupatello, Sandra (L)	Windsor West / -Ouest	
Ramsay, David (L)	Timiskaming-Cochrane	
Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W. (PC)	Leeds-Grenville	Minister of Public Safety and Security / ministre de la Sûreté et de la Sécurité publique
Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Davenport	
Sampson, Rob (PC)	Mississauga Centre / -Centre	
Sergio, Mario (L)	York West / -Ouest	Deputy opposition whip / whip adjoint de l'opposition

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Smitherman, George (L)	Toronto Centre-Rosedale / Toronto-Centre-Rosedale	
Snobelen, John (PC)	Mississauga West / -Ouest	
Sorbara, Greg (L)	Vaughan-King-Aurora	
Spina, Joseph (PC)	Brampton Centre / -Centre	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Travail
Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W. (PC)	Lanark-Carleton	Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Stewart, R. Gary (PC)	Peterborough	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Natural Resources / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Richesses naturelles
Stockwell, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC)	Etobicoke Centre / -Centre	Minister of the Environment, government House leader / ministre de l'Environnement, leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)	Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Consumer and Business Services / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Services aux consommateurs et aux entreprises
Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H. (PC)	Markham	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Culture / président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement, ministre de la Culture
Turnbull, Hon / L'hon David (PC)	Don Valley West / -Ouest	Associate Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation / ministre associé de l'Entreprise, des Débouchés et de l'Innovation
Wettlaufer, Wayne (PC)	Kitchener Centre / -Centre	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Tourism and Recreation / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Tourisme et des Loisirs
Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC)	Simcoe-Grey	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener-Waterloo	Deputy Premier, Minister of Education / vice-première ministre, ministre de l'Éducation
Wood, Bob (PC)	London West / -Ouest	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Public Safety and Security / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de la Sûreté et de la Sécurité publique
Young, Hon / L'hon David (PC)	Willowdale	Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Estimates / Budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Gerard Kennedy
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Alvin Curling
Gilles Bisson, Ted Chudleigh, Alvin Curling,
Gerard Kennedy, Frank Mazzilli, Norm Miller,
John R. O'Toole, Steve Peters
Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Finance and economic affairs /
Finances et affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Marcel Beaubien
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Ted Arnott
Ted Arnott, Marcel Beaubien,
David Christopherson, Monte Kwinter,
John O'Toole, Gerry Phillips,
Rob Sampson, Joseph Spina
Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

General government / Affaires gouvernementales

Chair / Président: Steve Gilchrist
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Norm Miller
Marilyn Churley, Mike Colle,
Garfield Dunlop, Steve Gilchrist, Dave Levac,
Norm Miller, R. Gary Stewart, Wayne Wettlaufer
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

Government agencies / Organismes gouvernementaux

Chair / Président: James J. Bradley
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Michael Gravelle
James J. Bradley, Leona Dombrowsky, Michael Gravelle,
Bert Johnson, Tony Martin, Frank Mazzilli,
Wayne Wettlaufer, Bob Wood
Clerk / Greffière: Anne Stokes

Justice and Social Policy / Justice et affaires sociales

Chair / Présidente: Toby Barrett
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: AL McDonald
Toby Barrett, Marcel Beaubien, Michael Bryant,
Garry J. Guzzo, Ernie Hardeman,
Peter Kormos, AL McDonald, Lyn McLeod
Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

Legislative Assembly / Assemblée législative

Chair / Présidente: Margaret Marland
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Julia Munro
Caroline Di Cocco, Jean-Marc Lalonde,
Margaret Marland, Bart Maves,
Julia Munro, Marilyn Mushinski,
Michael Prue, Joseph N. Tascona
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

Public accounts / Comptes publics

Chair / Président: John Gerretsen
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Bruce Crozier
Bruce Crozier, John Gerretsen,
Steve Gilchrist, Raminder Gill,
John Hastings, Shelley Martel,
AL McDonald, Richard Patten,
Clerk / Greffière: Anne Stokes

**Regulations and private bills /
Règlements et projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Rosario Marchese
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Garfield Dunlop
Gilles Bisson, Claudette Boyer, Garfield Dunlop,
Raminder Gill, Pat Hoy, Morley Kells, Rosario Marchese, Ted
McMeekin, Bill Murdoch, Wayne Wettlaufer
Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

These lists appear in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month. A list arranged by riding appears when space permits.

Ces listes figurent dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et du premier lundi de chaque mois. Par contre, une liste des circonscriptions paraît si l'espace est disponible.

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