



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)**

Wednesday 6 November 2002

Mercredi 6 novembre 2002

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

Hansard on the Internet

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

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/>

Index inquiries

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

Copies of Hansard

Information regarding purchase of copies of Hansard may be obtained from Publications Ontario, Management Board Secretariat, 50 Grosvenor Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8. Phone 416-326-5310, 326-5311 or toll-free 1-800-668-9938.

Le Journal des débats sur Internet

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

Renseignements sur l'index

Adressez vos questions portant sur des numéros précédents du Journal des débats au personnel de l'index, qui vous fourniront des références aux pages dans l'index cumulatif, en composant le 416-325-7410 ou le 325-3708.

Exemplaires du Journal

Pour des exemplaires, veuillez prendre contact avec Publications Ontario, Secrétariat du Conseil de gestion, 50 rue Grosvenor, Toronto (Ontario) M7A 1N8. Par téléphone : 416-326-5310, 326-5311, ou sans frais : 1-800-668-9938.



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 6 November 2002

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 6 novembre 2002

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

HIGHWAY 69

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): Yet another accident along Highway 69 between Sudbury and Parry Sound, this time around Britt, involving four cars and with 10 people involved, six taken to hospital in Sudbury and one in Sick Children's Hospital in Toronto. When will this government understand that that highway between Sudbury and Parry Sound doesn't need signs, it needs multi-laning? When will this government commit itself to improving that highway between Sudbury and Parry Sound? The people of northeastern Ontario, whether it be from North Bay, Sudbury, Timmins or Sault Ste Marie, have had enough. They want that highway four-laned. They want it four-laned from Sudbury.

Today we find out that the government has been sitting on two feasibility studies taking in the area from Sudbury to the French River that indicate that this highway must be four-laned. Let me quote you the 1974 study: "Ministry studies indicate that the existing Highway 69 route in the study area does not have sufficient capacity to serve transportation demands over the next 20 years." That was in 1974, 30 years ago. "Such growth can be expected to place greater demands on this route and ministry studies indicate that an arterial highway of the divided type" is necessary.

Your own government staff have told you that the four-laning of Highway 69 from Sudbury to Parry Sound should have taken place by now. Do it. Start it. Do it today.

TAKE OUR KIDS TO WORK DAY

Mr Rob Sampson (Mississauga Centre): I am pleased to rise today to offer support for the many parents, children, teachers and employers who are participating today in the Take Your Kids to Work Day. I'm actually honoured today to be standing in this House because my son is in the members' gallery over here. Nick is sitting here today.

Applause.

Mr Sampson: I should say to Nick that that's a far better reception than I ever get in this House from the

opposition. But I'm glad he's here today to participate with me in the job shadowing program that is being run by his school at Homelands. That school has recognized the fact that job shadowing is a first-hand opportunity to gather information on the various occupations that interest students, and there are many—including politics, believe it or not—around the province of Ontario and this lovely country. By visiting the workplace, students can visualize better what's involved in the occupation.

I've tried to make sure that my son was quite aware of what was involved in the business of being an MPP. I'm sure that the members today will be on their best behaviour in demonstrating what happens in the Legislature, because, while he can't have a piece of paper here, he's taking mental notes, and he does have to do a report in school tomorrow. So he's going to be watching the members opposite very closely.

I encourage all parents to participate in these programs, and I hope that all the students and parents have a safe visit to their workplace.

HYDRO RATES

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): The hydro horror stories from my riding continue. There is a family in Harrowsmith whose bill has tripled. A woman from Odessa fears that she will have to choose between buying health food to combat her diabetes and paying a hydro bill. She's on a fixed income, and her bill has gone from \$55 a month to \$150 a month. A family in Cardiff doesn't know if they'll be able to buy their daughter's Christmas gifts this year. The ODSP allots \$75 a month for hydro and \$75 a month for heat, and last month their hydro bill alone was over \$200.

Premier, your bungling and incompetence on the hydro file is affecting all Ontarians. Your government was not elected with a mandate to dismantle hydro. In fact, Mr Eves, you don't even have a mandate from the people of Ontario to be Premier—only from the Tories in Ontario.

In my riding, my constituents are sending me a very clear message. They don't like the direction that your government has taken, and they don't like your policies on hydro. It's hurting them and it's hurting their families. Premier, it's time to listen to the people of Ontario and clean up this hydro debacle so that families can go back to what they have always enjoyed, and that is a healthy, happy and prosperous life in the province of Ontario.

PANORAMA OF LIGHTS

Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant):

Every year, people from across Ontario, across Canada, and visitors from other parts of the world converge on Wellington Park in Simcoe to revel in the wonder of a glimmering December jewel at the heart of Norfolk county: the annual Christmas Panorama of Lights. It's been over 40 years now that the townspeople of Simcoe have combined their efforts to put on this magnificent seasonal display.

The panorama is highlighted with over 75,000 twinkling lights that reflect on the mirrored surface of the Lynn River. This year's edition will feature the return of one of the panorama's focal points to its former glory. The Panorama Fountain, generously donated by local artist Vic Gibbons close to a decade ago, will once again shower the park in a warm glow as lights dance off the rising water. It took the panorama committee a couple of months of work and over \$1,000 to get this fountain back in working order after it was frozen out of commission over four years ago. Just last week, after a couple of false starts, their hard work paid off. At the flip of a switch, the fountain sprang back to life as water once again shot skyward.

I encourage my fellow MPPs in the House and the people of Ontario to head down to Ontario's south coast, the "golden garden," this part of our country, and revel in the warm lights of Simcoe's Panorama of Lights and its revived fountain, which will spread seasonal spirit to young and old.

BECK 3 GENERATING FACILITY

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): It has become increasingly apparent that Ontario is in urgent need of new generating capacity for electrical power, particularly in view of a prolonged delay in returning the Pickering nuclear generating station to full capacity and the dramatic increase in the cost of electricity to Ontario consumers.

Once again I am urging Premier Ernie Eves to instruct Ontario Power Generation, which his government owns and controls, to begin immediately the construction of new generating capacity at the Beck generating facility in Niagara Falls. If the full project were to proceed, a third generating station to be known as Beck 3 would be constructed, along with the appropriate system of tunnels, and would add 1,100 megawatts of new capacity.

As a beginning and as a minimum, the building of a new 10.5-kilometre tunnel should proceed, adding an additional 200 megawatts to Beck's existing capacity and improving the flow of water through existing generators, thereby increasing the electricity generated at Beck by 15%. The proposed tunnel has received all planning approvals and has undergone an environmental assessment. It has the enthusiastic endorsement of local representatives and the Ontario select committee on alternative fuel sources. This project would produce more electricity for our province without any impact on air quality and

would be an economic boost to the Niagara region. I call upon Premier Ernie Eves to act without further delay.

1340

RAMADAN

Mr Bob Wood (London West): As many members of this House know, one billion Muslims throughout the world will be observing a month of fasting during Ramadan, which starts November 6 this year. Muslims regard Ramadan as a spiritual tune-up. It is a time for inner reflection, devotion to God, and self-control. The third pillar or religious obligation of Islam, fasting, has many benefits, the most important of which is that it teaches self-control. Ramadan is also a time of intensive worship, reading the Koran, giving charity, purifying one's behaviour and doing good deeds. In fulfilling the teaching of their faith, they demonstrate to us a commitment to righteousness and compassion for the needy, qualities to which we can all aspire.

Ramadan will end with the celebration of the feast of Eid ul-Fitr in about one month's time. At that time, Muslims will gather for prayers and then exchange presents and share alms with the needy so that all members of the community may be able to celebrate together.

Ramadan has been observed for many centuries, and each year it reminds us of the importance of spiritual renewal for both Muslims and non-Muslims alike. I know I speak on behalf of all members of this House in extending greetings to the Muslim community of Ontario and in wishing them Ramadan Kareem and Eid Mubarak. These greetings, which in Arabic mean, "May you have a month of giving and a blessed feast," speak to the central meaning of Ramadan.

HYDRO RATES

Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming-Cochrane): I want to bring forward today to the Ontario Legislature an example of two hydro bills from constituents in the south end of my riding, around Noëlville and Markstay, that really show the idiocy of the Harris-Eves government's electricity policy and how it is giving great hardship to the people.

First, a business. This is a small mom-and-pop meat and variety store in Noëlville and, typically, the bills would run at \$1,200 a month before deregulation. Then all of a sudden, they started popping up to over \$2,000, \$2,600, and the last month, when summer was over so we can't blame Mother Nature, \$4,187 for this small meat market in Noëlville. The proprietor there tells me that that's basically his gross profit margin per month and that now he'll be forced to make some very tough decisions about the number of people he's going to be able to afford to keep on his payroll.

Another example in the same neighbourhood is a senior couple on a fixed income. Typically, because of their electrical heating, they've been paying about \$180 per month. Now all of a sudden in their third-month re-

conciliation bill, they're hit with a whopping \$690. These are people on a fixed income who have been just managing to pay their under-\$200 bill, but now they've got triple that amount thrown at them from this system.

It's time the government fixed this mess that they started and start managing the electricity system in Ontario, and make sure the economy and Ontarians stop suffering from this.

SCHOOL BOARDS

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): Ernie Eves, welcome to Mike Harris's chicken coop, which you are a part of, because all his chickens from his failed Common Sense Revolution are coming home to roost. It started with Walkerton. Not only are you left with that mess, but now you have created a massive crisis in our hydro rates, and now, increasing prices in education.

A legal challenge has been launched today by five Toronto school trustees, three parents and three unions, claiming that you have acted unlawfully by letting the supervisor, Paul Christie, violate the act by suspending all of the trustees' functions and denying parents and trustees their basic right of free speech.

I met with parent councils in my riding last night, and what they said is happening in their schools is truly shocking. You've heard it before and I'm going to repeat some of them now: teachers are not being replaced and classroom sizes have grown to large numbers; educational assistants have been cut and are not being replaced. The loss of lunchroom supervisors, teachers, educational assistants and secretaries contributes significantly to the safety factor.

What I would say to this government today, so this lawsuit doesn't have to go ahead like the Toronto Hydro One lawsuit, which they lost, is that they should immediately pull that supervisor out, wait until the review on their funding formula is done, leave the funding where it is and give the extra funding that they need now to put these people back in the classrooms.

AGNES JACKS

Mr AL McDonald (Nipissing): I'd like to take this opportunity to tell the people of Ontario about a very special lady in my riding of Nipissing who has done wonders for the sport of ringette. In fact, she and her husband were the founders of the popular game almost 40 years ago.

Last weekend, I attended the first annual Agnes Jacks invitational tournament, and it was a great success. Ringette may have been introduced in North Bay, but now it has grown and is played throughout the world. It is Agnes's hope that ringette will be an Olympic sport some day.

Mrs Jacks was honoured for all her dedicated years in maintaining the sport of ringette. Unfortunately, her husband passed away several years ago, but Agnes is

diligent in keeping his dream alive. In fact, Agnes Jacks received the Order of Canada.

She is an example of integrity and devotion. For more than 30 years, she has promoted ringette as a medium for girls and women to benefit from physical activity and personal growth derived from team sports.

As honorary president of the International Ringette Association, she continues the legacy of her late husband, who conceived the game, by sponsoring trophies and scholarships for outstanding players, coaches and officials. She has become a goodwill ambassador, imparting the importance of good conduct and fair play to thousands of young athletes.

I would have to say that North Bay has a lot to be proud of, thanks to the creativity and tireless dedication that Mr and Mrs Sam Jacks put forth in introducing the game of ringette to Ontario, Canada and the world.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Just before we begin, we have with us today in the Speaker's gallery a delegation from the Russian Federation, led by Vladimir Zoran, their Minister of Federation Affairs. They are in Toronto to participate in a workshop, Law and Federalism in the Russian Federation and Canada, which is being held at the University of Toronto. Please join me in welcoming our honoured guests.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received the ninth report of the standing committee on government agencies.

Pursuant to standing order 106(e), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

RETAIL SALES TAX RELIEF FOR AMATEUR YOUTH SPORTS ACT, 2002

LOI DE 2002 VISANT À ALLÉGER LA TAXE DE VENTE AU DÉTAIL EN MATIÈRE DE SPORT AMATEUR POUR LA JEUNESSE

Mr Sampson moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 207, An Act to amend the Retail Sales Tax Act to provide an exemption from tax for amateur youth sports /
Projet de loi 207, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la taxe de vente au détail pour prévoir une exemption de taxe en matière de sport amateur pour la jeunesse.

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

The member for a short statement?

Mr Rob Sampson (Mississauga Centre): This bill, if it is approved by the House, would allow amateur youth sports teams or associations, or amateur youth as individuals, to be exempt from paying all or a portion of the Ontario provincial sales tax on equipment or uniforms that they purchase. This bill would also apply, if it was incorporated in the regulations, to school teams and teams that are involved in school activities.

This bill would also encourage organizations to participate in equipment swaps and would exempt the transaction of equipment swaps, which would help those who can't get equipment, from attracting PST as well.

I encourage the House to support this very valuable initiative for amateur youth sports across Ontario.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Without speaking to the substance of the bill—because we have not seen it; we have read press accounts of it this morning—the question to you is the appropriateness of the bill, given the rules with respect to non-treasury bench members bringing forward an item that would impact on a budget.

Secondly, would it be more appropriate for the member to put this in the form of a resolution that could be brought to this House and debated as a resolution incorporating many of the elements that may prove very worthy both to that side of the House and this side of the House?

The Speaker: The member is correct. We haven't had a chance to see it either, but as we do with all bills, we will check and look for the appropriateness of it, and we'll advise the House if there are any problems. Then if there are, the member may take whatever option he wants. But we thank the member for bringing it to our attention. We do look at all the bills.

1350

VISITORS

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Our page, Grant Gonzales, has some very important visitors here today: his uncle and his aunt, Ron Turner and Jill Turner.

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): On a point of order, Speaker: This is take-your-nephew-to-work day. My nephew, Adriano Marchese, is here. Just briefly, I want to put the Etobicoke politicians on notice: he's very interested in politics.

1350

Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): On a point of order, Speaker: I'd like to acknowledge and welcome a special guest to the Legislature today. It's Take Our Kids to Work Day. It's a great program and our ministry has a number of students who are participating in that program. I'd like to mention that my son, Clayton, is here as well in the gallery.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Welcome. I understand he's a good hockey player.

Hon Jim Flaherty (Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation): On a point of order, Speaker: it is Take Our Kids to Work Day. As the Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation, I'm pleased to welcome the enterprising young people who are children, offspring, of some of the fine public servants at the Ministry of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation, as well as Kaitlin Visser, who is the daughter of my constituency assistant.

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): Not only is it Take Our Kids to Work Day, and we're thrilled to have all the students here in grade 9, but today is also Ontario Principals Day at Queen's Park. I'd like to welcome the president of the council, Helen Spence, and the principals who are with us today.

The Speaker: We'll know where to send some of the members if they misbehave: down to the principal.

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): On a point of order, Speaker: We have some very special people who came all the way from Fenelon Falls in beautiful Victoria county. They're here with us today. There's Councillor Faye McGee, Lyn Boldt and other members of the tax revolt in Victoria county who are here today to fight for fairness.

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): On a point of order, Speaker: The page from Sault Ste Marie is very proud of the work he does here. He keeps bringing relatives in to have a look. Today we have Nancy Robertson, an aunt of the page, and Andrew Kadwell, a cousin of the page, from Oakville. I want to welcome them to the chamber.

Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka): This is bring-your-son-to-work day today, and I'd like to introduce my son, Winston, who's here taking a day off from grade 8 at Monck Public School. Winston, if you could, stand up. He's over on the other side. Winston, stand up.

CREDIT UNIONS

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): On a point of order, Speaker: It's my understanding that we have unanimous consent by all parties to spend five minutes in recognition of Credit Union Day.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Is there unanimous consent? Agreed. The member for Durham may begin the rotation.

Mr O'Toole: It's my pleasure, on behalf of the Ernie Eves government, to rise in the House today to acknowledge the exceptional role that credit unions play in our communities. I can't help but recognize the important work done by Jonathan Guss and Credit Union Central.

Unlike traditional banks and trust companies, credit unions are owned and operated by their members. In Ontario alone, there are over 700 locations that serve over a million people and manage assets in excess of \$14.5 billion.

In small and rural communities, much like in my riding of Durham, they don't have the large traditional banks. Credit unions are the only option available to residents. I want to thank the credit unions of my riding: the Auto Workers Community Credit Union and Don Nicholls, and board members, including Dave Broadbent; the Oshawa Credit Union, with Lori Gaudette; HEPCOE Credit Union, Iris Rapkiski; and the Goodyear credit union, Del Rudman.

Credit unions also make a tremendous contribution to Ontario's economy. They employ over 5,500 people and they work with small business owners to develop viable business plans.

The Ontario government recognizes the new and important role credit unions and caisses populaires play in the financial service sector. Since 1995, our government has taken a number of steps to help credit unions and caisses populaires to better serve their members and indeed their communities. These improvements include: we've approved a new schedule of deposit insurance premium rates; we've removed the provincial retail sales tax on deposit insurance premiums; we've increased deposit insurance coverage from \$60,000 to \$100,000; we've made deposit insurance fairer and more affordable by charging premiums only on the insured portion of deposits; we've eliminated capital tax for credit unions and caisses populaires; we've reduced red tape to streamline the regulations for credit unions, therefore enhancing their ability to raise capital and deliver a broader range of financial services to their members.

These changes help credit unions become more competitive. The government also recognizes that more can and should be done. To this end we continue to work with credit unions.

Credit unions believe in helping people and communities to improve themselves through co-operation, education and personal development. In my riding of Durham, each Christmas our local credit union actively participates in making sure that the Salvation Army's Angel Tree toy drive is a success. They also host an annual barbecue, along with the Oshawa branch, to raise funds for the Sunrise Youth Group. These are just a few examples of how credit unions contribute to my community and I'm sure to other communities as well. This contribution is not exclusive to Durham. Credit unions, on the whole, give back to the community in countless different ways.

I look forward to meeting with credit union representatives later today with my fellow MPPs from all sides, and I respect the credit unions and the work they do in Ontario. Please join me in thanking the credit unions of Durham and across the province for their dedication and hard work to people and communities.

Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale): I, too, am pleased to rise today and recognize the vital role that credit unions and caisses populaires play in communities across Ontario. Since the latter half of the 1990s, Ontario's credit unions have sought to identify solutions to help them respond to the increasingly com-

petitive financial services marketplace. With over \$16 billion in assets and 1.6 million members, this commitment has never been more important.

In addition to serving their members more effectively and efficiently, credit unions offer consistent customer service and believe in banking with a personal touch. Credit unions also offer financial peace of mind because each credit union account is guaranteed up to \$100,000 by the Deposit Insurance Corp of Ontario, which is even more than banks can offer. In fact, no consumer has ever lost a dime of his or her hard-earned money deposited in a credit union.

When I say that credit unions serve Ontario well, I am not just talking about the full range of financial products and services; I am also talking about the work they do in our communities. Credit unions can be found in Ontario's largest cities and in our smallest towns. In fact, in some small communities, places like Keene and Little Britain, the banks have pulled out, leaving credit unions as the only financial institution.

At a time when talk of bank mergers is back on the agenda, I think it's important to encourage Ontario's ability to provide essential financial services in our smaller communities. Currently the government has initiated the process of selling off another community-based banking service, the Province of Ontario Savings Office. Now, more than ever, we should be ensuring that those agencies that are able and willing to provide banking service in small towns throughout Ontario are encouraged to do so. Credit unions are an important element of Ontario's financial structure.

Because credit unions are locally owned financial co-operatives, they are well positioned to respond to community needs and are committed to improving the quality of life in Ontario. In conjunction with local community groups, credit unions have invested in community projects including construction of sports and recreation facilities; sponsoring various community activities and events; promoting public education programs to encourage a better understanding of financial matters; lending programs for low-income people; investments in affordable housing; and business mentoring programs. Fully 90% of credit union deposits are reinvested back into the communities through mortgages and personal and business loans.

Credit unions also fill an important gap in providing access to capital for small businesses and farm operations that may not be able to qualify otherwise. All of us know and hear too often about the challenges people have in gaining access to capital. Credit unions' commitment to small businesses has grown considerably over the past five years. Today an incredible 45,000 small and medium-sized businesses and farm operations in Ontario are being assisted by a loan from their local credit union.

In addition, over 60 member credit unions participate in Credit Union Central of Ontario's syndicated lending program, which harnesses Central's lending expertise and capital, allowing credit unions to help more underserved customers. These loans also finance local

business development, manufacturing, construction, hospitality and tourism. A significant portion of the syndicated loan portfolio involves the agribusiness sector, a large portion of which is invested in northern Ontario.

On behalf of my leader, Dalton McGuinty, and the Ontario Liberal caucus, I look forward to working to strengthen the credit union system and to joining all of you in the reception later on this afternoon.

1400

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): We in this caucus, on this side of the House, are certainly proud to stand today in recognition of the very vital and viable co-op movement blowing across this country that came out of the co-op movement in western Canada and our partnership in that in the 1960s with the CCF and organized labour to form the New Democratic Party in this country and indeed in this province. Credit unions have become a very important international phenomenon.

I was in Ireland just recently, where I was told a story about a small community just north of the border, Newry, racked with violence for years. A small group of people decided that there needed to be an economic future for them and for their children. They gathered around a kitchen table, as has happened so often across this country, and formed the first credit union. They each threw the change that was in their pocket into the pot, and stood before churches week after week collecting money to build up a critical mass, so that they could then begin to operate as a real credit union. The first loan they gave out was to a widow who needed to consolidate some debt. The second loan was to buy an old, abandoned factory and turn it into a co-op business development organization that today has become the envy of northern Ireland—just one example of the very creative, energetic and exciting activities of credit unions across the world, not to speak of some of the credit unions in Ontario and in my own area.

I recently participated in the cutting of a ribbon for a brand new credit union at the Garden River First Nation, just outside of Sault Ste Marie, where they see it as a vehicle to give them some foothold into the finances that they need to create an economy that will be beneficial for them over the years. In my own community of Sault Ste Marie we have a number of very exciting and viable credit unions: Northern Credit Union, for example, has grown from a meeting in the kitchen of one of the original members of the credit union, a person by the name of Len Strom, into an organization today that literally populates almost every small community in northern and eastern Ontario—a credit union that, when it sees one of the big chartered banks pull out of a small community because they have no more interest in offering services there, moves in and in some instances actually takes over the building of the vacated chartered bank to offer financial services to that community so that the people and the community might be better served. That credit union today has grown to be a regional operation of over \$440 million in assets, with a network

or 22 branches strategically located throughout north-eastern Ontario, and provides excellence in service to over 40,000 members. The most recent merger of the Northern Credit Union, with the Nickel Centre Credit Union, in July 2002 has also made services available to the communities of Coniston, Capreol, Garson and Sudbury, something that would be of interest to my colleague from the Nickel Belt area—

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I'm a member.

Mr Martin: —who is also a member. I would guess that probably all the members of our caucus are members of credit unions in their home communities.

This merger also makes Northern Credit Union the seventh-largest credit union in Ontario. We have the St Mary's Credit Union, and of course the credit union that I belong to and have been served by so ably over the years, the ASCU Community Credit Union. It started out as a small credit union to service the members working at Algoma Steel, driven by the Steelworkers of America, now a very large entity in our community of Sault Ste Marie that supports the people in the community. Their strength and their future are based on community roots, and member involvement, community participation and local knowledge are some of ASCU Community Credit Union's proud, competitive advantages. This credit union now has loans to members in the year ended of some \$157.6 million. That's a lot of money to be managed by this particular entity on behalf of our community. The ASCU Community Credit Union has been in business for more than 50 years in Sault Ste Marie. The membership has grown from the original 20 charter members in 1948 to approximately 13,000 members in the year 2002.

You can be sure that your local credit union actively supports many different local projects as well as initiatives on the provincial and national levels. I would encourage all of you here to take time, if you're not already a member, to call your local credit union to check out the services they have to offer and become a member.

ORAL QUESTIONS

HYDRO RATES

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the Premier. Yesterday we talked about Bluewater Power and their threats to shut off power to those who can't pay the bills you have foisted on to Ontario consumers. You said, "I presume that the ... utility will act in a responsible fashion and the individual's power, indeed, will not be cut off."

I want to tell you the story of Joanne. She's a single mom with an infant and a two-year-old. She's on maternity leave and is only getting \$630 per month. Her hydro bill is \$400. She just recently scraped together \$180 to start paying the bill, but Bluewater Power shut off her power yesterday. The heat in her building is electric. Joanne and her two young children are living

without heat today. It's anticipated that the wind chill factor tonight in Sarnia will be -6C. What are you going to be doing before nightfall to help Joanne and her two young children?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I would be more than pleased to take the details, and I will have my office or the minister's office contact the utility this afternoon and see what we can do.

Mr McGuinty: Premier, am I going to have to bring these individual cases to you here on a daily basis during question period? There are going to be hundreds, if not thousands, of Joannes, people just scraping by, people living hand to mouth, people who can barely afford to pay the old hydro bills, who cannot afford to pay the new hydro bills. Do you want me to bring each and every one of those cases to your attention in this Legislature?

The problem here is that you created a royal mess. You're supposed to look before you leap. You leapt and then you looked. You acted irresponsibly, and Ontarians out there on the front lines of the economy are paying a terrible price. I'm asking you, what specifically are you going to do to help Joanne and likely the thousands more who are no longer able to pay their hydro bills in your Ontario?

Hon Mr Eves: I told the leader of the official opposition what I propose to do with respect to the specific case he's talking about.

The Ontario Energy Board and utilities work co-operatively together to make sure that nobody—

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): They work co-operatively, all right.

Hon Mr Eves: Quite frankly, that's what the Ontario Energy Board is there for. They're there to protect consumers, and they're there to make sure that something exactly like this does not happen.

Mr McGuinty: It's your job to protect Ontario consumers and hydro ratepayers against usurious bills. That's your job. The Ontario Energy Board has not been able to protect consumers from you, Premier. That's what is happening here.

I ask you again, what are those people, the Joannes of Ontario, now supposed to do? They are barely scraping by as it is. They can't afford to pay your new hydro bills. Why don't you stand up here today and tell all Ontario utilities that they cannot shut off power to the Joannes of Ontario and that you will do whatever it takes to make sure that nobody who finds themselves in this predicament is going to be without power, without heat, this winter?

1410

Hon Mr Eves: I indicated in question period yesterday, and I'm indicating again today in question period, that I don't believe it's appropriate for a utility to cut off power to people. I will be happy to take that up with them. This is a directive that the Ontario Energy Board issues to all utilities in the province of Ontario; it tells them that they should be accepting partial payments and

they should not be cutting people's power off because they don't have the ability to pay. We will reinforce that.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): New question.

Mr McGuinty: Premier, if you're not concerned about individual Ontario families, then maybe you'll have some concern for small business, because small businesses are also feeling the effects of your incompetence and mismanagement of the hydro file.

Stamford Delicatessen in St Catharines has been open for 33 years and run by Berndt Triebe. His hydro bill has doubled, from \$1,000 to \$2,000 a month. He says that he can't raise the prices at his deli because his clients are mostly seniors and, not surprisingly, they have their own skyrocketing hydro bills. Mr Triebe says he's going to have to close his shop soon.

Small business, Premier, unless you have forgotten, helps drive our economy. Your incompetence and your complete mismanagement of hydro is not hurting Ontario families alone; it is hurting our economy. Premier, will you admit that when it comes to the Ontario hydro file, yours has been an abysmal failure—that is your experience—and will you now tell us specifically what you are going to do to help Mr Triebe and other owners of small businesses who are not able to cope with your usurious hydro bills?

Hon Mr Eves: The leader of the official opposition is the last person in the Legislature who should be standing up fighting for small business when he's voted against every single tax reduction and break for small business that we have introduced—all 199 of them.

Interjections.

The Speaker: The member for Hamilton East, come to order.

Premier?

Hon Mr Eves: As we—

Interjection.

The Speaker: We're not going to continue with this. I'm going to name the member for Hamilton East and ask him to leave the chamber. I'm not going to keep getting up here. I'm going to have to pick people out. I'm afraid the member for Hamilton East is going to be asked to leave. Two seconds after I tell him to settle down, he's not going to get up and do this. We're not going to continue to do this.

Mr Agostino was escorted from the chamber.

The Speaker: The problem is that there is allowed to be some heckling, but unfortunately everybody in the place does it now. It used to be a few members would do it and we could get away with it. Now everybody just shouts at the other side. We'll just start throwing people out. You can heckle, but we can't have it where the other side can't hear, and if it does get that way, we'll simply remove people.

I apologize to the Premier for the interruption.

Hon Mr Eves: As I indicated yesterday, the average price of hydro for the May-to-October period is up 16% in Ontario in terms of price, 7% in terms of volume, 23% on average for consumers across the province. I understand that for individual months there are people in the

province who are having difficulty. We are going to come up with a plan—you will hear about it very shortly and it will become active immediately—to deal with the price increases for consumers in the province.

But I repeat what I said a few minutes earlier: you are the last person who should be talking about protecting small business when 199 times you voted against small business in this Legislature. And then you have the gall to come in here today and be the big protector and defender of small business when you've dumped all over them for the last seven years.

Mr McGuinty: Premier, with hydro bills going up some 60%, 100%, 150% for small business in Ontario, that is the single biggest tax hike that they've had to grapple with in the last 20 years in the province. If you won't get it, at least Garfield Dunlop does. He said, in today's Orillia Packet and Times, "We know we've made a mistake.... Electricity rates are unacceptable and we must resolve the issue because it is impacting jobs and the economy."

Premier, you failed to do your homework. You failed to listen to the Provincial Auditor about Pickering A, and now it's behind schedule and way over budget. The transmission line with Quebec is on hold. You stopped Beck 3 from getting up and running. The NDP killed our chance to get clean, affordable power from Manitoba. Your ideological blinders are on. You charged ahead, you didn't plan, and Ontarians are paying a terrible price. I ask you again, what specifically are you going to be doing for both businesses and Ontario families?

Hon Mr Eves: We are going to be helping those families, as we've helped them with 199 tax reductions, each one of which you voted against. I presume you'll be against this, too. You'll be against helping people in the province of Ontario. Your record is quite clear; your record is quite consistent. You have voted against every single measure we have introduced to help more modest-income Ontarians.

Over a 40% tax reduction to those modest-income earners: you voted against that. Cutting small business's tax rate in half to the lowest in Canada: you voted against that. Now when you think it's politically expedient, you're trying to make political hay on the backs of those people. Be consistent. Are you going to side with the small people this time, or are you going to bluster yourself up to try to cash in at the political table?

Mr McGuinty: Premier, if you're looking for a consistent record in this House on policies, it is your mismanagement and your incompetence. Once again, you didn't do your homework, and this time consumers are stuck with the hydro bill.

But let's take a look at the record; sadly, we've seen this movie too many times before. You screwed up the education funding formula, you screwed up on tax breaks for pro sports teams, you screwed up on hiking seniors' residences fees, you screwed up on the hydro IPO, you screwed up when you fired thousands of nurses, you screwed up when you sat as Minister of Finance and cut the Ministry of the Environment, which led to the

Walkerton tragedy. You're like the arsonist who keeps setting fires and tries to take credit when he then scrambles to put them out. I'm asking you again, Premier: given this record of mismanagement and incompetence, given your consistent failure to get it right the first time, why should families and businesses believe you're ever going to get this one right?

Hon Mr Eves: Only a Liberal who doesn't think we should be spending \$8 billion a year more on health care in this province could stand up and say we have reduced funding to health care. Only a Liberal who doesn't seem to think there's any consequence to just spending money willy-nilly, even though you had a great part in jacking up the provincial debt to \$115 billion when your party was in power—that didn't seem to bother you. Eight billion dollars more on health care, over \$2 billion more on public education, over half a billion dollars more on public education in-year this year alone, making sure that people in Timiskaming get the same education as people in Toronto. You say one thing when you're in Toronto, and you say another thing when you're in Timiskaming. But people aren't that stupid, Dalton.

Interjections.

The Speaker: OK, we need to proceed now. We've had our fun. The leader of the third party has the floor.

1420

HYDRO DEREGULATION

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Premier, but let me say that if Liberals or Conservatives want to ensure that people don't have their power cut off, they can pass Bill 204, my No Freezing in the Dark private member's bill, and do it today.

Premier, while you and the Liberals want to sell off our hydro system to the Enrons and Brascans of the world, the same corporations that have profiteered from private, deregulated hydro in California, Ontario and elsewhere, the Toronto-Dominion Bank yesterday admitted that deregulated, privatized hydro doesn't work very well. They say that after the Enron fiasco and some of the other private hydro disasters in the United States, the Toronto-Dominion Bank won't be lending any more money to private hydro companies. Why do you and the Liberals want to take Ontario's hydro consumers further down the privatization and deregulation road when even the banks won't go there any more?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): The leader of the third party knows we're not privatizing OPG. He thinks it makes good air time, I guess, to talk about privatization of OPG, but we're not privatizing OPG, and he knows that.

I've heard the honourable member stand up in his place many times and criticize banks, bad-mouth banks, and now when it suits his political purpose, he's quoting banks. Can I expect more of the same in the future, Howard? Everything the Toronto-Dominion Bank says from here on in, you're going to be onside, right?

Mr Hampton: Premier, let's remember what this is about. A woman in Hamilton this past week had her power cut off after she left for work. Her disabled tenant had to ask his parents in Niagara Falls to come and pick him up because the temperature in the house plunged. People like that, people like these folks in Hamilton, don't want a temporary rebate in an attempt to cover up the hydro deregulation problem. They want and need a long-term solution.

The Liberals and yourself say that we should sell off our hydro generating stations and that we should turn to the private sector and entice them to come and build new hydro generating stations. But the Toronto-Dominion Bank is saying they're not going to lend any money to private generating companies. So tell us, how do you and the Liberals intend to provide the power that is needed if private companies can't borrow the money to build from Bay Street banks any more?

Hon Mr Eves: The honourable member will know that Ontario Hydro/OPG produces about 77% or 78% of the power used in the province. He will also know that Bruce produces another 15%. If he cares to add those two numbers together, he will also know that that is in excess of what the average daily usage in Ontario is, and that those two entities combined, both of which are controlled or leased out by the province of Ontario or by OPG, supply more than enough power on an average daily basis in the province.

I do agree with him that we have to have a plan to encourage people to develop more supply in the province so that we will have an increased supply as we go forward, and you will hear about that in due course.

Mr Hampton: That is the \$64-million question. You and the Liberals both say we should sell off our hydro system to the private sector and rely on private companies, through incentives, to build. Well, Bay Street says they won't lend any money to private hydro companies to build generating stations. Some of the other lobbyists you are listening to, the so-called Stakeholders' Alliance, actually say that the way to provide incentives is to let hydro rates go even higher. It's as if they believe the consumers of Ontario are naughty children who need to be spanked with yet higher hydro rates.

Premier, you and the Liberals have to answer to the people of Ontario. So far the solution that both of you have put forward is to rely upon private companies. Well, the banks aren't going to allow them any more money, so what are you and the Liberals going to do—allow hydro rates to go even higher so you can entice your private sector friends to come in and make bigger profits? Is that the only solution you're offering?

Hon Mr Eves: Absolutely not.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): New question.

Mr Hampton: I'm going to return to that question. Premier, even in the heart of Republican America yesterday, voters—

Applause.

Mr Hampton: —turned thumbs down on hydro deregulation. You should be careful what you clap for. In

Montana, voters yesterday rejected the deregulation of the hydro system by a vote of 60% to 40%. In Las Vegas, where they gamble on almost everything, the voters are saying they're not prepared to gamble on deregulated hydro. They want a regulated hydro system.

Even your own member, Garfield Dunlop, the latest MPP to come out and say that deregulated, privatized hydro was a mistake, even he is out there now.

Premier, when will you admit that deregulated, privatized hydro doesn't work for hydro consumers? Everyone else seems to be figuring it out; when will you?

Hon Mr Eves: I think I indicated to the honourable member yesterday and again today that obviously the member that he refers to is concerned about prices of power in his riding, as every member of the Legislature is in their own constituency, myself included. You will see, in very short order, that we will be assisting the people of the province of Ontario in that endeavour, and that we will be bringing in a plan that will help them as we go forward in the future with respect to prices of power in the province.

Mr Hampton: Premier, I'll say once again: the people of Ontario aren't interested in some kind of just-before-the-election rebate that you and the Liberals continue to talk about.

Another interesting lesson from yesterday: you know California, that your former Minister of Energy used to refer to? Yesterday, the governor of California, who said very clearly that hydro needs to be re-regulated in California, was re-elected. Your Republican friends who want to privatize and deregulate hydro in that state were told, "No, thanks."

Again, Premier, I want to say to you that people elsewhere in the world who've had experience with deregulated hydro are saying, "No, thanks. We want a regulated hydro system; we want a regulated price; we don't want to be vulnerable to the price fixers and the market manipulators." When will you straightforwardly come out and tell the people of this province that you're going to turn away from deregulated hydro and privatized hydro? When?

Hon Mr Eves: The honourable member won't have to wait long to see what the plan is.

RACIAL PROFILING

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question again is to the Premier. We've learned today, and I assume that you're aware of this, that Justice Charles Dubin has withdrawn his involvement from the external review of the Toronto Police Services race relations policies and practices. Yesterday I asked you not to wait for more studies. Instead, I suggested that we strike an implementation task force to put the myriad of studies we already have into action. We have been studying this for the past 25 years. I don't believe that we should put it off one day longer.

I ask you again, but particularly in light of this new fact, Premier, that Mr Justice Charles Dubin is no longer

going to be involved in this matter: will you take action and strike an implementation task force?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): If the leader of the official opposition has read Mr Justice Charles Dubin's letter, he will know that the reason Mr Justice Dubin outlines in his letter to Chief Fantino is that, in light of the fact that a summit is going to be chaired by the Honourable Lincoln Alexander, he feels his presence would be superfluous to what Lincoln Alexander is doing.

I told you yesterday in this House that we've been consulting with the Honourable Lincoln Alexander, that we're interested in meeting with and participating with leaders in the black community to have a meeting and try to resolve this issue. I congratulate the Honourable Lincoln Alexander in taking an initiative in this very important area.

Mr McGuinty: Premier, nobody is disputing that what Lincoln Alexander is about to do—and I hope that his initiative gets underway shortly—is a good, decent and honourable thing. But what I am looking to you for is leadership on this file. There are several studies that have been completed in the past, and I don't believe, sir, that in this case leadership ought to be an option. I think you have to act.

1430

I'm not asking for the world here. I'm simply asking that you strike an implementation task force that will then study those individual reports and come up with a specific plan of action for us to move forward on. Otherwise, what we're doing here in this House is that, once again, you, sir, would be washing your hands of an issue that strikes at the core of social cohesion in the province of Ontario. I've indicated that Alvin Curling, my colleague, is more than ready to prepare and assist in any way in this matter. I ask you again, why could you not strike an implementation task force so that we can move forward on the many recommendations that have been put forward over 25 years?

Hon Mr Eves: I don't know whether he doesn't think the Honourable Lincoln Alexander is capable of doing this or that the summit he has called for is going to be sufficient to deal with the problem. I'm certainly willing to participate in the process and do what we can, in representing the government of Ontario, to make sure that the black community's needs are dealt with and heard. The Honourable Lincoln Alexander has started what I think is a very viable process.

We have, quite frankly, responded. As you'll recall, there was a request for an independent civilian body to look into police complaints in Ontario, and we complied with that in 1997. In fact, that agency has existed—it is a totally civilian body—since 1997. People who are not satisfied with complaints they take to either the OPP or, in this case, the Toronto Police Service complaints commission have the ability to go to this province-wide body, which is totally civilian, and get an independent hearing on any complaint they have. That recommendation has already been acted upon. It was acted upon in 1997.

MUNICIPALITIES

Mr AL McDonald (Nipissing): My question is for the Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing responsible for urban issues. Minister, I understand you're hosting a two-day conference for provincial and territorial ministers of local government this week. You must be very pleased to represent key matters relating to municipal issues in our province to other leaders across our country.

As the past deputy mayor of North Bay and the current member of provincial Parliament for Nipissing, I know how important municipal matters are to this province and to all our ridings. Recently, in the federal throne speech and the Sgro interim report, the federal government indicated they have a new interest in municipalities and municipal issues. Minister, my question for you today is, could you tell the House how you plan to acknowledge the federal government's recognition of municipalities?

Hon Tina R. Molinari (Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I want to thank the member for the question. This is an important issue for municipalities. Not only is it a concern in your riding, but it's a concern throughout the province and the country.

It was evident in the provincial-territorial conference in August that the provinces and territories welcome Ottawa's recognition that it has a significant long-term financial responsibility toward municipalities. We believe that any increased federal interest in municipal issues must respect provincial-territorial jurisdiction and that new federal initiatives like improving infrastructure must build on provincial priorities regarding municipal matters. If we do this, we will be continuing an effort to make our cities the most competitive and livable in the world. In fact, Canadian cities are among the safest, cleanest and most attractive in the business world. They are strong, healthy and vibrant, and we intend to keep them that way.

Mr McDonald: Thank you for your answer. I'm pleased to hear that there is a call for Ottawa to finally recognize their long-term financial responsibilities to local municipalities.

A recent independent study done by the Conference Board of Canada indicates that the federal government needs to address the large growing fiscal imbalance in Canada between themselves and the provinces. This fiscal imbalance leaves the provinces to bear an unfair share of health, education and social service costs.

Minister, could you tell us more about the study and the need for a new dialogue with the federal government on this issue?

Hon Mrs Molinari: Once again, I want to thank the member from Nipissing for his interest. His constituents are certainly very fortunate to have him representing them here in this House.

I would be glad to expand on the findings of the study. The study finds that the federal budget surplus will reach almost \$86 billion by 2020. During that same time period, the aggregate provincial-territorial net debt will rise 54% to \$387 billion. Our government does not

believe that Ottawa should enjoy large revenue surpluses while the provinces have to bear the unfair share.

We have worked hard to make sure that municipalities are economically strong and globally competitive. This week's conference will look at the innovative long-term strategies to help our cities respond to the economic, environmental and social changes. We will continue to work with all levels of government to make sure that we work in a positive and constructive manner.

ONTARIO POWER GENERATION

Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's): The question is for the Premier. This morning, in media scrums, your finance minister and the former energy minister, Mr Wilson, echoed the comments of your energy minister last week; they just had nothing good to say about the performance of Ontario Power Generation. That wasn't the tune that was being sung by your energy minister last June, who said in this House, "OPG is running well. They've done a good job of privatizing. They've done a good job setting up the open market.... I think"—CEO—"Mr Osborne has done a good job, and at ... \$1.7 million a year I suppose that's reasonable."

I know what the position was this morning; I know what the position was in June. What we'd like to know from the Premier is, do you think that Ontario Power Generation is doing a good job?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): First of all, I know the honourable member can foresee all circumstances. I know that he obviously is an expert in building and renovating nuclear power plants in the province of Ontario, so perhaps you could just, you know, pop down to OPG and solve their problem for them in five minutes this afternoon when you're not doing anything.

The reality is, as the member for St Paul's knows, as every other member in this House knows, that this is a very complicated area in terms of nuclear energy. Obviously OPG's estimates that Pickering would be up and running by now were overly optimistic at the least, and obviously nobody's happy that they're not up and running.

Mr Bryant: You say you're not happy, and this government will continue to blow smoke on the performance of Ontario Power Generation, but when it comes to dressing down the management of OPG you continue to refuse to put your money where your mouth is. When will the bad performance of Hydro's hydra, OPG, translate into your hydro heads "getting a pay cut"?

The combined annual salary of your CEO and your chair exceeds \$2 million a year. You say they're not doing a good job. When are you going to put your money where your mouth is and give these folks a pay cut or, even better, sack them altogether?

Hon Mr Eves: I seem to recall that we had a similar issue in this House with respect to Hydro One many months ago, and I seem to recall that the honourable member voted against the bill that would address the problem.

Having said that, the issue about Pickering is obviously not an easy issue. If it were, people would have solved it a long time ago. The reality is it's not up and running today. Obviously, I'm not happy about that. I don't think anybody in the province is happy about that, and the Minister of Energy is looking into the issue and taking it up with OPG.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): My question is to the Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Every member of the House knows how important it is to meet the long-term-care needs of Ontario's growing and aging population throughout the province. This challenge is one that is faced across the province, and it's also faced in my riding of Oxford.

Minister, you will know that in Oxford, in the village of Norwich we have a 60-bed facility, a D facility, Norvilla Nursing Home, where there is a proposal to move the beds to a different facility in Woodstock. Both communities are in my riding, but the citizens of Norwich are very concerned about maintaining a nursing home or a long-term-care facility in their community for their community-type living.

1440

They have expressed some concern, and I want to thank the minister, who last Friday met with the concerned citizens to speak about some of the alternatives that might exist in bringing the facility to an A facility and maintaining it in the village. I was wondering if the minister could update us on that situation and what we're doing about the 60 nursing care beds at Norvilla in the village of Norwich.

Hon Dan Newman (Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I thank the honourable member for Oxford for his question. It is true that he and I have been working on this matter for the past several weeks. I want to let the people of Oxford know how hard their member is working on their behalf.

As the honourable member indicated, I met last Friday with the concerned citizens of Norwich to listen and to discuss the transfer of long-term-care beds to Woodstock. There's no doubt that every person there cares very deeply about providing quality long-term-care services to local residents.

It is true that 60 long-term-care beds at Norvilla Nursing Home in Norwich are proposed to be transferred a short distance away to Woodstock. But the proposal not only states that the beds stay within the honourable member's riding but that they will be located in a re-developed and upgraded facility where even better long-term care will be provided to the residents. This means that quality long-term-care services will continue to be available for the citizens of Norwich and the people of Oxford. A final decision should be expected shortly.

Mr Hardeman: Thank you very much, Mr Minister, for the very informative response. I'm pleased that you took the time to meet with my constituents to talk about

the possibilities for long-term care for the people of Norwich. I know how much even better long-term care means to them. They were very emphatic in the meeting about that. They are very concerned about the quality of long-term care for their citizens.

I'm very proud to be part of a government that's investing the historic \$1.2 billion toward even better long-term-care services in Ontario. I would like to ask the associate minister if he could please update the House on the status of our government's long-term-care bed implementation initiative in the Oxford service area.

Hon Mr Newman: As part of our government's unprecedented \$1.2-billion reinvestment in Ontario's long-term-care sector, five existing facilities in the Oxford service area will be redeveloping a total of 348 beds that don't meet the ministry's legislated structural standards. As well, a total of 21 new beds were awarded in the Oxford service area.

The 348 upgraded long-term-care beds will promote a more home-like environment for residents. The facilities will include comfortable home areas for up to 32 people. Each home area includes bedrooms and washrooms, as well as space for daily living activities such as dining and leisure. As well, bedrooms in each home area will accommodate either one or two residents, and activities and lounge areas in each home area will be close to each resident's room.

I say to the honourable member that these new long-term-care services will mean even better long-term care for the people of Oxford. That's what the Ernie Eves government's \$1.2-billion reinvestment in long-term care is all about.

DÉRÈGLEMENTATION DE L'ÉLECTRICITÉ HYDRO RATES

M. Gilles Bisson (Timmins-Baie James): Ma question s'adresse au premier ministre, s'il voudrait poigner son écouteur. Monsieur le premier ministre, vous savez que depuis que vous avez ouvert le marché au mois de mai, c'est rien qu'un désastre pour les consommateurs en Ontario. On voit des augmentations de 40 %, 60 % et 100 %, dépendamment dans quelle partie de la province on demeure quand ça vient au prix de l'hydro. On regarde ce qui va arriver cet hiver, parce qu'on sait que l'hiver passé c'était à 20 % plus chaud que ce à quoi on s'attend cet hiver, que les augmentations vont continuer à être même pires que vous vous attendez. Justement, M. Claude Briant, à Hearst, a regardé son augmentation du prix de l'hydro passer de 114 \$ l'année passée à 200 \$ cette année.

Ma question est très simple. La déréglementation ne marche pas. L'ouverture du marché ne marche pas. Quand est-ce que vous allez annuler toutes vos initiatives dans cette direction ?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): The honourable member has been here

in question period, I believe, yesterday and today and has heard me talk about the average price of power in the province. Over the May to October period it has gone up 23% on average. I will acknowledge that 16% of that is attributable to an increase in rates; 7% is attributable to an increase in volume. He also acknowledged in the preface to his question that indeed the weather does play a great part in what those rates are.

Having said that, we are going to address the issue surrounding people like the constituent he has just referred to in his question, and he will see in very short order that we will be taking action to reimburse people for monies they have laid out with respect to a price increase. However, people are going to have to realize, of course, that they can't use power in the same volume we have been accustomed to using in the past. I'm sure we all acknowledge that we have to do our part in conservation.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Supplementary?

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): Premier, let me tell you there's a hotbed of hydro hot heads growing in Toronto, and they want the NDP to deliver their message to you, because they know the Liberals support privatization. In my riding, Margaret Frieze's hydro bill went up to \$317 from \$170 despite her best efforts to conserve, which you just mentioned. She and her son often sit in the dark, she cancelled her cable and stopped watching TV, the furnace is well tuned and kept low, but she still cannot afford your deregulated prices. Self-described former Conservatives Justin and Marlene wonder: "Is our only option to live in the dark, cold, heat, throughout the seasons, or would it be more reasonable to get rid of a party that definitely does not meet the interests of common middle-class people?" Premier, you are still not listening to 80% of the people of Toronto and Ontario who want hydro privatization stopped. Stop fiddling while Rome burns. Will you stop hydro privatization now?

Hon Mr Eves: I would appreciate looking at the information the honourable member has, because people who are governed by Toronto Hydro have their prices fixed at a lower rate and Toronto Hydro has in fact been absorbing any increase in the average price since the market became open. I would be interested in seeing the particulars of the case she refers to.

The Speaker: New question. The member for Durham.

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): My question is to the Associate Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation.

Interjections.

The Speaker: I apologize. That was my fault.

New question. The member for Sarnia-Lambton.

HAZARDOUS WASTE

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): My question is to the Minister of the Environment. You know that Ontario is the only jurisdiction in North America that

accepts untreated hazardous waste. I'm sure you have heard of the contaminated tar in Sydney, Nova Scotia, called the Domtar tank. I'd like to ask the minister, do you know that this highly contaminated material, this highly hazardous material will be trucked into Ontario to the CleanHarbors Safety-Kleen site because we are the only jurisdiction that will accept non-treated hazardous waste? Will you allow this hazardous waste to be dumped into Ontario at the end of the month?

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): You know full well that we're changing the regulations as far as transporting hazardous waste in the province of Ontario. It's been a number of years, and it hasn't been changed. We are the government that's moved forward to actually take the initiative to change the allowable levels of hazardous waste to be trucked into Ontario. This decision was taken by the Ministry of the Environment in the last couple of years. They were moving toward a situation that's the same in the United States as well as in neighbouring jurisdictions. If you would like to send me the information you have to see if it fits the criteria or not, I'll be happy to review it.

Ms Di Cocco: I'll be more than pleased to send you the information, because this is a \$3.7-million contract that's been signed and the shipment is going to begin at the end of the month, in a couple of weeks. Ontario is the only jurisdiction that will accept it untreated in such a high, toxic state. We're jeopardizing the environment. We're jeopardizing human health. It's literally going to be dumped into a landfill here in Ontario. We have become the toxic waste haven on this continent, Minister, and you have to change the regulations before something happens, not after the fact. Will you accept this waste in the next couple of weeks when the shipment begins?

1450

Hon Mr Stockwell: The reality is that we did in fact change the regulations. The ministry has harmonized a number of its hazardous waste standards with the US EPA. So they would not be allowed to ship the hazardous waste, simply because it wouldn't meet the same standards of the US EPA. They wouldn't be able to do that.

The truth of the matter is, since we've come to office there's been a 31% decrease in hazardous waste inputs into Ontario, because we agreed this was an unacceptable situation. So we've harmonized our position with that of the neighbouring jurisdiction.

Finally, yes, we are in fact in contact with Safety-Kleen's operations. We have in fact tested, we're on-site and we're negotiating with them as to whether it meets the standards we've changed the regulations to and that we put in place.

I'm really surprised the member opposite didn't know that. Surely you should have known that we—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Surely, you—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. The minister has 10 seconds to wrap up, please.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Surely, after I told you that at estimates committee two weeks ago, I thought it would have sunk in. But apparently, two weeks later, your attention span doesn't last that long. I told you two weeks ago that we've harmonized with the US and it would have to meet—

The Speaker: I'm afraid the minister's time is up. And now the member for Durham.

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): My question is to the Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation. I know yesterday marked a very important day for innovation in this great province of Ontario, with Ontario's Innovation Challenge held right here in Toronto, I might say. A key component of yesterday's summit was the unveiling of the first annual report of the province's Task Force on Competitiveness, Productivity and Economic Process. Minister, can you tell the members of this House, who are keenly interested, and the people of Ontario about the task force and their first annual report card?

Hon David Turnbull (Associate Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation): I thank the member for Durham for this important question, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank the task force, chaired by Roger Martin, the Dean of the U of T's Rotman School of Business, for its work.

The findings confirm that Ontario is an extremely strong economy built on a solid foundation. Here's the important thing, and perhaps the Liberals might want to listen to this: outside of certain US states, Ontario is today the most powerful economy in the whole world. Per capita GDP has increased steadily since 1995, and among substantially sized countries, if Ontario were treated as a separate country, it would rank second in the world after the US.

However, there is still work to be done. We must work to close the prosperity gap—

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

Mr O'Toole: I'd like to thank you for that, Minister, and I'd like to thank Minister Flaherty as well, and also extend thanks to the members of the task force. Could you give us some details on other measures and how you're gauging the very important performance of Ontario's economy—as we all know, a strong economy allows us to provide all the other wonderful benefits of our quality of life—and expand on some of the key points in the report issued yesterday?

Hon Mr Turnbull: Ontario outperforms Europe's so-called Four Motors, which are Baden-Württemberg, Rhône-Alpes, Catalonia and Lombardy. The report finds that Ontario has many advantages. We have a very beneficial mix of industry clusters, we have very strong participation in the labour market and we have a good demographic profile. In fact, Ontario ranks as doing very well on the creativity index. Toronto has one of North America's strongest creative classes.

The report cites tax rates as a significant factor in attracting innovation. This government has reduced taxes almost 200 times. This is something the members opposite have voted against every single time. We can take great pride in the work our government has done in creating a culture of innovation and prosperity. Our accomplishments reflect the findings of the report.

DEFERRAL OF OMB APPEALS

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Minister, 21 days ago you intervened in a local democratic process in Ottawa, a process dealing with a change toward boundaries which had been planned to be in place prior to the next municipal elections. In fact, you brought the entire process to a screeching halt.

I have here a copy of the notice of deferral signed by you, as Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, where you give notice to the OMB that the appeals before it are to be deferred. My question is simply this: were you fully briefed on this file before you attached your signature to this document?

Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): Of course. I have an Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs, Minister Coburn, who is from Ottawa, who is in charge of this file. If you have a supplemental, I'm sure Brian would like to answer it.

Mr McGuinty: Minister, given that you now have made public that you were in fact fully briefed, I think the people of Ottawa are entitled to know the reasons behind your putting this whole matter on ice. Don't you think that is fair? You're the minister, it's your notice of deferral, it is your signature. You now confirm that you yourself were fully briefed. I think you owe it to the people of Ottawa to tell us exactly why, give us your reasons as to why you put this matter on ice.

Hon Mr Hodgson: This is a precedent that he's setting for if he's ever able to win an election and become the Premier: that he wouldn't have any cabinet ministers, that he wouldn't have any associate ministers, that he would have everything delegated to the Minister of Finance, who signs the cheques. For the Minister of Health, there are long-term care ministers who have handled issues capably, who communicate with stakeholders directly. There's a reason for that. We have a large province, we're trying to give more focus to municipal affairs and municipal issues, and the former Minister of Rural Affairs is in charge of this file: he fully briefs me and we brief the cabinet. As far as communicating it, I think he has done an admirable job. He has talked to all the media in Ottawa, and he continues to talk to the residents of the Ottawa area and the council.

ROAD SAFETY

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): My question is for the Minister of Transportation. Whether we like it or not, winter is just around the corner. In fact, some regions have already had a taste of

winter cold, snowfall, sleet and slush. These conditions, along with reduced visibility, from time to time mean treacherous travel across the province, particularly when we're not expecting those winter storms. Can you please inform this House and the constituents of my great riding of Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale if your ministry is ready to respond to winter storms, and tell us what you will be doing to keep our roads safe for winter driving.

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Transportation): I appreciate the member's question. Winter has hit early in many parts of Ontario. I want to tell each and every one of the members here that our maintenance equipment and staffing levels are all at full complement and ready to respond. In fact, our winter maintenance standards and practices are among the best in North America. This means that we respond quickly and effectively to winter weather conditions.

In addition to those high standards, my ministry is using leading-edge technology to deal with winter weather: we're predicting through advanced weather forecasting; we're preventing through pre-treating roads with liquid anti-icing agents; we're patrolling on a continual basis and monitoring highway conditions so prompt dispatch of equipment can be made when needed; fleets of sand and salt spreaders and snowplows are ready to go when they get the call.

Our maintenance crews, our patrollers of the highways, do a tremendous job for the people of Ontario during the winter period.

Mr Gill: I want to thank the minister for his response. While I am impressed with the number of innovative things your ministry is doing to keep roads safe for winter driving, I also feel it is important that motorists have access to timely road and weather conditions information so that they can plan their trips appropriately. After all, avoiding dangerous conditions is the best protection one can have.

Minister, can you tell us how your ministry intends to inform the travelling public of the road and weather conditions across this province?

1500

Hon Mr Sterling: I understand that information is very, very important. We have important connects with various different TV stations, 24-hour, seven-day stations. We have a well-informed situation with regard to the conditions on a 24-hour, seven-day basis. We have an info line, 1-800-268-4686, which is continuously updated, to provide reports on current road conditions. We have a Web site, www.mto.gov.on.ca, which is another example of up-to-date information on a 24-hour, seven-day basis.

By keeping the public well informed about up-to-date conditions of our roads, the public can show better judgment and take better routes in order to avoid slippery and hazardous conditions.

HYDRO RATES

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a question to the Premier. Premier, you really need to listen to those

people who are writing and calling to express their serious concerns about hydro costs.

Thomas Grylls of Chelmsford has seen his bill go up by over 33% in the last three months. He wrote, "Ontario Hydro should have remained as Ontario Hydro."

Leonard Nieberg of Barrie is a sole-support parent with two disabled children in receipt of social assistance. His bill has gone up by \$80 a month. Leonard said, "The increase in hydro has pushed my budget over the top making it impossible for me to provide for the basic needs of my children."

In Hastings county the director of social services says that while the county is weeks away from official winter, they are "already bailing people out" through an emergency fund to help pay hydro bills.

Premier, when will you listen to these and many other people and cancel hydro deregulation and privatization?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): The honourable member has obviously listened to the debate in question period yesterday and today and would know the answer to her question already. I understand that rates, on average, for the period of May to October have gone up by some 23%. She's picked the last three months; of course, the market has been open since May 1.

I don't dispute the fact that people's hydro bills have gone up. We have said that we will respond. For those people who are on social assistance, they can ask for extra assistance to deal with bills if they have extraordinary circumstances.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Supplementary.

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): Premier, we're listening to you very carefully, and the majority of people want and say that public power is the only way to go. I know you don't listen to us, but you've got to listen to the people who write to us. And here's what they're saying.

The Uruski family, who used to vote for you guys, by the way, saw their bill increase by \$150 a month. They say you're driving more people on to social assistance to support their families.

Joseph Koziol saw his bill increase by \$325 a month. He asks you to remember California and, "Reverse the privatization of hydro and return hydro to government hands."

Gail Patterson says, "Hydro, like clean air and clean water, should not depend on the fluctuation of the market."

Premier, I know that Premier Klein probably told you, "Bribe people with their own money. Give them the rebate and it probably will work." You know very well that rebates are not going to solve your mess. The message is clear: end deregulation and your sell-off of Ontario Hydro and return to publicly owned hydro.

Hon Mr Eves: First of all, the honourable member knows full well that OPG has not been privatized, so to even suggest that in a question is not being accurate, to say the least.

With respect to his issue with respect to prices, he knows that we are going to respond to prices. Is he saying that now he doesn't want us to address this issue in a rebate program? He seems to be saying, "Don't come up with a rebate program." We are going to come up with a program—he will hear about it in due course—to deal with the increase in the prices of power that people have had to deal with from May to October, and we are going to come up with a long-term solution.

DEFERRAL OF OMB APPEALS

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): I want to return to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Minister, you told me a moment ago in response to my question as to whether you were fully briefed that you were, and yet you won't give us any accounting of the reasons behind your signing this document which put a democratic process in Ottawa on hold.

My questions for you right now are threefold and very simple: when were you briefed, Minister, who briefed you, and how long did the briefing last?

Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I know the Minister of Municipal Affairs would want to give you all the details on that.

Hon Brian Coburn (Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): This is an issue that I've been monitoring since it started. Because the city has now appealed their decision to the OMB, we're in a position where I'm not able to comment any further on this specific issue.

Mr McGuinty: You know, it's funny that the minister himself had no reservations whatsoever about interfering in a process that was before the OMB. This notice of deferral shut the whole damn thing down.

Do you know what I think happened, Minister? I think this was another walk-around. I think you attached your signature to a document without any real appreciation whatsoever for the consequences of interfering in a local democratic process.

I ask you again, Minister, on behalf of the people of Ottawa: you tell us you were fully briefed. When were you briefed, who briefed you, and how long did the briefing last?

Hon Mr Coburn: In municipal affairs and especially in the rural sector, I have a concern for all the residents who live in rural Ontario. With respect to this particular issue, now because there is an appeal with respect to the decision in front of the OMB, unfortunately I'm not able to discuss it in any great detail.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): There is time. The member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound was up.

BIOSOLID MANAGEMENT

Mr Bill Murdoch (Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound): I believe there is time for one question, and my question is to the Minister of Agriculture.

Interjections.

Mr Murdoch: I got it right today. Anyway—

Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East): Ask him about hydro, Bill.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Please, let the member ask the question. I know we're having some fun, but it is annoying when people are yelling at you. The member has the floor.

Mr Murdoch: I'm only going to get one question; I'm not even going to get a supplementary out of this one.

Madam Minister, in a brochure that you have—it's an environmental brochure signed by the OFA and many of the other farm organizations—on page 14, I believe it's 7.2.3, it says that manure will not be able to be spread on snow-covered ground. I suggest that today, probably north of the 401 where it may be snowing, there may be numerous farmers right now who, if that regulation was passed, would be breaking the law.

I understand that if the ground's frozen, it's a different thing, but in this regulation it does say just if it's snow-covered. I have some concerns with that, because at this time of year, that would almost mean that no one would be able to spread solid manure from November to spring. That would put a lot of farmers in an unwanted position because they'd have too much of the manure to do.

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Northern Development and Mines): Pile it up.

Mr Murdoch: Yes, pile it up.

Interjections.

Mr Murdoch: Well, I've got all the time there is, you see, because there's no clock now.

Madam Minister, would you be willing to look at this regulation, sit down and have some consultation again with the OFA and some farmers from my area?

Hon Helen Johns (Minister of Agriculture and Food): I'd like to thank the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound. As you know, we share Bruce together, so we always have challenging times.

Let me say that the Minister of the Environment, myself and the people within the ministries are working on regulations for Bill 81. The member is speaking about potential regulations dealing with manure management and the application in snow-covered areas.

I have been consulting with the farm groups across the province to be able to come up with something the agricultural community can live with. Obviously, we haven't come to any conclusions yet. We continue to work with the farms groups. I still continue to hear from farmers, like Mr Murdoch himself, who have an interest in ensuring that the agricultural community is protected and taken care of in the province. We, of course, will do our best to balance, as we have all the way along, the environment and the sustainability of agriculture in the province of Ontario. Both are very important to all of us in this House.

VISITOR

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): On a point of order, Speaker: Along with a number of my colleagues

who I know are participating in Take Our Kids to Work Day, I'm pleased to introduce to my colleagues my great-nephew from the town of Cobourg, Steven Race, who's joining us to see a little bit about what we do here at Queen's Park.

1510

PETITIONS

HYDRO RATES

Mr John C. Cleary (Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh): I have another hydro petition. It's 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 premium prices, driving the prices up; 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 Ontario Hydro 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 Hydro'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 Ontarians have fair and reasonable prices for the necessary commodity of electricity in Ontario and that the Harris-Eves government and ... Ernie Eves call a general election on the instability of the energy market so that Ontarians may have a voice on the issue.”

The signatures on this petition are from my riding and Prescott-Russell. I've also signed the petition.

ADOPTION DISCLOSURE

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): I have more petitions, this time from the area of Aurora. It's on Bill 77, the adoption disclosure act. It reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Bill 77 passed second reading on June 28, 2001; and

“Whereas Bill 77, the Adoption Disclosure Statute Law Amendment Act, received committee hearings in November 2001; and

“Whereas Bill 77 addresses privacy concerns for those who wish to delay or avoid contact; and

“Whereas adoptees are dying from genetic diseases in the absence of their family medical history; and

“Whereas birth mothers were never promised confidentiality;

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

“Immediately call Bill 77, the Adoption Disclosure Statute Law Amendment Act, for third reading and final vote.”

I will affix my signature to this petition because I, of course, fully support it.

ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES

Mr John O’Toole (Durham): I’m pleased to have the page Alexander from Sault Ste Marie take this petition to the table.

“Whereas Elections Canada has proposed a change of boundaries for the current Durham riding; and

“Whereas the proposed new riding of Clarington-Northumberland would encompass two different levels of local government, namely Durham region and Northumberland county, and a combination of communities both inside and outside the greater Toronto area (GTA); and

“Whereas Clarington and Northumberland have differing interests with respect to the association with the GTA and Durham region; and

“Whereas the proposed Clarington-Northumberland population of 113,396 exceeds the provincial quotient by more than 5% and is likely to grow even larger as the high-growth communities within the area expand;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, respectfully request that the electoral boundaries be reconsidered to reflect the above concerns and that consideration be given to establish boundaries indicated on the attached map”—which I know isn’t appropriate.

I’m pleased to present this petition on behalf of my constituents in the riding of Durham.

HIGHWAY 69

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): This is the continuing petition about multi-laning Highway 69. It’s to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“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 along that stretch of highway; and

“Whereas, so far this year, 10 people have died tragically along that stretch of highway between Sudbury and Parry Sound; and

“Whereas the Minister of Transportation has not acknowledged the danger on that highway; and

“Whereas the government has withheld two feasibility studies concerning Highway 69 from the public; 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;

“Be it resolved that we, the undersigned, 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 affix my signature and give it to our page Maureen to bring to the table.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): I’ve got a petition signed by hundreds of citizens.

“To the Ontario Legislature:

“Whereas the government has cut over \$2 billion from public education over the past seven years;

“Whereas the provincial funding formula does not provide sufficient funds for local district school board trustees to meet the needs of students;

“Whereas district school boards around the province have had to cut needed programs and services including library, music, physical education and special education;

“Whereas the district school boards in Hamilton-Wentworth, Ottawa-Carleton and Toronto refused to make further cuts and were summarily replaced with government-appointed supervisors;

“Whereas these supervisors are undermining classroom education for hundreds of thousands of children;

“We, the undersigned elected leaders of the Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario, call on the government to restore local democracy by removing the supervisors in the Hamilton-Wentworth, Ottawa-Carleton and Toronto district school boards.”

I support them and I will sign this petition.

HYDRO RATES

Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington): I have a petition that’s signed by a considerable number of constituents from the Oakville riding, and I’m sure, Mr Speaker, you’ll be acquainted and familiar with the text of this petition. It reads as follows:

“Whereas the province has stated its commitment to ensuring affordable hydro rates for the citizens of Ontario;

“Whereas the province’s recent move to deregulate hydro rates and place them within the competitive context of the open market has resulted in actual and high

rate increases, including retroactive ones, for Ontarians, summer heat waves notwithstanding;

“Whereas these hydro rate increases, above and beyond what citizens have paid before deregulation, present a great burden to many young families and those who are on fixed incomes;

“Whereas the province itself admits that a review of hydro rates is necessary and has inaugurated one, albeit one with an overly lengthy mandate;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

“That the province be directed to freeze hydro rates to last year’s levels immediately during its current review of its deregulation policy and move forward to protect citizens of Ontario against such exorbitant rate hikes.”

I am presenting this petition on behalf of my friend and colleague the Honourable Gary Carr.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I thank the member. Further petitions? Who didn’t have one yesterday? I think the member for York West didn’t have one yesterday.

Mr Mario Sergio (York West): I have another petition addressed 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 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 on 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 and that the Harris-Eves government and its leader Ernie Eves call a general election on the instability of the energy market so that Ontarians may have a voice on this issue.”

I concur with the content of the petition and those who have signed it, and I’m glad to affix my signature as well.

1520

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): I have hundreds of signatures from people who are concerned about international language weekend classes. They read:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Progressive Conservative government promised in 1995 not to cut classroom spending, but has already cut at least \$1 billion from our schools and is now closing many classrooms completely; and

“Whereas international language weekend classes are a needed part of learning for many students in our area; and

“Whereas the Education Act, specifically regulation 285(5), mandates provision of these programs where demand exists; and

“Whereas the Conservative government funding formula is forcing the Toronto District School Board to cancel these Saturday classes for groups who want this programming;

“Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to instruct the Minister of Education to restore meaningful and flexible funding to the Toronto school boards, to ensure that they are able to continue to accommodate these Saturday international languages classes.”

I will affix my signature to this petition because I fully support it.

HYDRO RATES

Mr John O’Toole (Durham): It’s my pleasure to respond to my constituents in the riding of Durham in the following manner, first by presenting this petition:

“Whereas the province of Ontario has experienced record levels of electrical consumption this summer, along with higher than expected generating capacity shortages to meet the demand; and

“Whereas this has resulted in higher electrical bills for Ontario consumers; and

“Whereas short-term spikes in the cost of power are a particular hardship to persons on fixed incomes and a detriment to business in Ontario;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, request that the government of Ontario act immediately to develop a plan for protecting consumers against excessive short-term increases in the cost of electricity. We further request that the government of Ontario also review the impact of charges other than the wholesale electrical rates, including the” dreaded “goods and services tax (GST) and the debt reduction charges appearing on electricity bills of Ontario consumers.”

I’m pleased to present this on behalf of my constituents in the riding of Durham, and present it to Lauren, one of the pages here in the Legislature of Ontario.

COMPETITIVE ELECTRICITY MARKET

Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the Harris-Eves government deregulated electricity on May 1, 2002, in the province of Ontario without it being in their election platform in either 1995 or 1999 and without the mandate of the people of Ontario; and

“Whereas the price of the commodity of electricity has reached outrageous levels, having risen at times over 100% since May 1, 2002, causing Ontarians great financial hardship; and

“Whereas the Ontario Power Generation (owned by the Ontario government) has applied to the Ontario Energy Board for a 20% reduction in the promised rebate to Ontarians if the commodity price of electricity rose above 3.8 cents per kilowatt hour; and

“Whereas competition in the electricity market has been scared off by the uncertainty of the Harris-Eves government’s attempts to sell off a portion of Hydro One, leaving electricity commodity prices high; and

“Whereas the Harris-Eves government authorized exorbitant salaries and bonuses in the amount of \$2.2 million per annum be paid to the former president of Hydro One, and in excess of \$1.6 million per annum to the vice-president of Ontario Power Generation;

“Therefore be it resolved that we, the undersigned, demand that the Ernie Eves government take immediate action to ensure that Ontarians have fair prices for the necessary commodity of electricity in Ontario, and that the Conservative government and its leader, Ernie Eves, call a general election on the instability of the energy market so that Ontarians may have a voice on this issue.”

I affix my signature with pleasure.

ADOPTION DISCLOSURE

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): I have more petitions on Bill 77. This one reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas in Ontario, adopted adults are denied a right available to non-adoptees, that is, the unrestricted right to identifying information concerning their family of origin;

“Whereas Canada has ratified standards of civil and human rights in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the UN Declaration of Human Rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child;

“Whereas these rights are denied to persons affected by the secrecy provisions in the adoption sections of the Child and Family Services Act and other acts of the province of Ontario;

“Whereas research in other jurisdictions has demonstrated that disclosure does not cause harm, that access to such information is beneficial to adult adoptees, adoptive parents and birth parents, and that birth parents rarely requested or were promised anonymity;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario to enact revision of the Child and Family Services Act and other acts to permit adult adoptees unrestricted

access to full personal identifying birth information; permit birth parents, grandparents and siblings access to the adopted person’s amended birth certificate when the adopted person reaches age 18; permit adoptive parents unrestricted access to identifying birth information of their minor children; allow adopted persons and birth relatives to file a contact veto restricting contact by the searching party; replace mandatory reunion counselling with optional counselling.”

I will affix my signature to this petition.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

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 195, An Act respecting safe drinking water, when Bill 195 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—I repeat, 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—

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): You should be able to read it by heart—every day.

Hon Mr Stockwell: That's not my fault; that's your House leader's fault—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 61. The minister.

Hon Mr Stockwell: The long preamble basically deals with Bill 195, An Act respecting safe drinking water. I spent some time, I think, dealing with the opposition critics, Mr Bradley for St Catharines and Ms Churley for Toronto-Danforth, trying to find an agreement about how and where and when we deal with this bill in a proper and timely way. Having said that, there was no consensus, to say the least.

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): How come?

Hon Mr Stockwell: There are many reasons why there was no consensus, but I think mine is correct.

Mr Marchese: Tell us. Tell us about that.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I'm in the hands of the Legislature here. I don't mind reviewing the—I'll tell you, I didn't have a lot of problems with Ms Churley, the member for Toronto-Danforth. I think we were on the same page in trying to find a common theme in how we would get the bill out to committee and as far as public hearings. I know the Liberals did suggest that we have four meetings—one in the northwest, one in the northeast, one in the east, one in the west—and then one in Toronto. Beyond that, I didn't hear a lot from the NDP about what they wanted to see on travelling and the bill and so on.

1530

Ultimately, after three days' debate and with no clear consensus emerging, which means no position from the House leader for the third party, I had to make a decision. I tried to make the fairest decision possible. I hope the member for Toronto-Danforth understands that. I've allowed six days of committee, which the committee can determine how they use. If they prefer to travel on four days or five days, they can. I'm only saying that there must be one day of clause-by-clause.

It also dovetails nicely with Bill 175, which we just referred out the other day, which again is a water bill that probably has a lot of the same stakeholders, and a lot of the same deputants would appear. On that bill I also agreed to six days of committee hearings, and I've referred them both to the standing committee on general government in order that, again, we can dovetail the two bills and probably work out some program where we can

double up on the public hearings if that's what the choice is.

I have no fear of the public hearings on this bill. I think these are both good bills. As I said during the debate on Bill 195 and Bill 175, I think there may be disagreements on the nuances and there may be disagreements on the amount in the bills, but I don't think there's a tremendous amount of disagreement on the bill itself. I don't know anyone who's going to oppose—I can't say that. I'll be surprised, frankly, if any party opposes Bill 195. I think it's a good bill—safe drinking water. As my friend from St Catharines says, he looked for hostages in the bills and he could find none, because we built the bill in order to satisfy the concerns of Justice O'Connor's Walkerton report.

Having said that, the one criticism I've heard is the fact that we don't have our process for developing water management within the source protection part of the bill. It's a criticism that I've buffered, I suppose, by suggesting that if I'd waited for that part of the bill to be ready, then I couldn't have introduced nutrient management, I could not have introduced Bill 175, I could not have introduced Bill 195, because that part of the bill will not be ready until early next year. I think, in the best interests of the people of this good province, all parties would think that adopting nutrient management, adopting Bill 175 and adopting Bill 195—it's probably more important to get those in play rather than wait for the source protection bill that would have followed in the spring.

I was clear and up front with that with respect to—I see the member for St Catharines is back, and the member for Toronto-Danforth. I was clear and up front about that. That was the particular predicament I was in. I didn't want to wait; I wanted to get this on the table. I wanted to hear your concerns.

Also, by providing the committee hearing time, I wanted to hear about your amendments. I've heard some talk of amendments; I haven't seen them. I'm interested in seeing them. I know the member for St Catharines has made a lot of noises about providing amendments to the committee. I can only presume he's beavering away on these late into the night, and I will see a flurry of amendments coming forward.

Mr Dave Levac (Brant): Beaverings?

Hon Mr Stockwell: Beaverings—that's just another way of saying he's working hard. I don't think anyone would allege that the member for St Catharines doesn't appear to work hard.

I want to just say that this is a great opportunity for the members opposite, if they do truthfully have amendments, to put them forward.

The criticism of the bill—and I listened carefully to the member for Toronto-Danforth and I listened carefully to the member for St Catharines. They were speaking extemporaneously very often in their comments, but when they focused in on the bill itself, I didn't hear a lot of specific recommendations—

Ms Churley: I gave specifics.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Yes, let me finish—outside of the groundwater protection stuff.

Ms Churley: No, I did.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Now, listen, the member for Toronto-Danforth—and I don't want to challenge your thinking, OK? I will review the notes again and see if we have specifics. I'm going to be very interested in seeing the amendments offered up by the member for Toronto-Danforth. I'm going to be viewing those with a critical eye, because I do want to accept amendments that I think can make the bill better. I don't want to have you file 50 amendments and know that 27 or 28 are so politically motivated that there's no value to them.

I am truthfully being apolitical on this one. I want to try to make the bill better.

Interjection.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I know the member for Sault Ste Marie guffaws, but I will add that the entire buildup to this bill—I say to the member for Sault Ste Marie, we did consult with the member for Toronto-Danforth; we did provide her with an advance copy of the bill. We did talk to her. The staff at the Ministry of the Environment did sit down and talk to her and then briefed her and explained things about the bill and gave her advance notice of the bill. I did my best to try to brief the two members opposite during the briefing process beforehand.

In my opinion, excluding the source protection bit they spoke of, I don't think you're going to vote against this bill. You look fine, Marilyn; what are you doing that for? You don't need to, in my opinion. Besides the source protection part, I don't think there's any particularly difficult parts of this bill that you couldn't support. I say to the member—it used to be Fort York. Where's he from now?

Mr Marchese: Trinity-Spadina. Chris, how could you forget?

Hon Mr Stockwell: Trinity-Spadina. I know, I have a short memory.

I say to the member for Trinity-Spadina and to the member for Sault Ste Marie as well, if you seriously have some legitimate concerns about this legislation, bring them on, bring them forward. I will note that it wasn't as rancorous and difficult a debate through this House as I expected. In fact, we didn't even use the full three days in debate. I'm not casting aspersions on anyone, but I think it's probably because I'm not sure there is this vehement opposition to the bill that I think they thought could have been there had this bill not been drafted in the way it was drafted.

I reviewed the notes on the speech made by the member for St Catharines and he tended to wander somewhat in some of his comments. He spoke about many issues where I'm not sure how they related to safe drinking water, but invariably he had the Speaker's very clear attention and he somehow wove a lot of these conversations back to safe drinking water, which he can do so ably and many members of this House can't. That's a compliment, I might add, because I've never seen anyone who has the ability to actually talk about health care, policing and all kinds of things.

Mr Marchese: Because he knows.

Hon Mr Stockwell: He knows. He gets it all right back to safe drinking water, which is really quite astounding. I think all members in this House will agree with me, with what they say: "When the member for St Catharines gets up to speak, everybody listens." It may be a small crowd, but everybody listens. I'll be curious to see—I'm not sure if Mr Bradley will be speaking to this time allocation motion today, but I don't want to pretend I will be shocked if he does.

Mr Marchese: He's ignoring you.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I noticed. He does that when I speak, but he wants my enraptured attention any time he's up talking about anything to do with water.

Mr Levac: He's beaverishly working away.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Beaverishly.

Not to put too fine a point on it and to create a sense of camaraderie, of collegiality in this Legislature, I think we all agree that as to the Walkerton disaster, the terrible events that led to Walkerton, what grew out of that was Justice O'Connor's recommendations. I have done my best, as a good member of this House, as an honourable member, as all members are, to try to follow chapter and verse the recommendations put forward by Justice O'Connor. I can accept some criticism that I haven't worked fast enough, but I've worked as fast as I can and delivered bills that I think tend to be somewhat complicated in a very short period of time.

When you consider the fact that it was sometime in May—or June, I forget exactly—that we received Justice O'Connor's second report and had 93 separate recommendations, that we have now delivered a bill to this Legislature that adopts and puts into place 50 of the 93 recommendations, that another eight or nine are actually in the hopper being done—we didn't need legislative authority to do so—and that we're planning on delivering the rest of them in the spring, I think everyone would agree that is what you would classify as a fairly quick tempo to deal with the very comprehensive report Justice O'Connor did.

I know there are members of my caucus who would like to speak to this and I don't want to steal too much of their time, but in closing, I will listen very carefully to the comments made by the members opposite. I'm sorry this has to be a time allocation. I, candidly, am very sorry it's a time allocation.

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex): Then don't do it.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I know the member opposite says, "Don't do it." There's a pragmatic reality I have to deal with. Unless I'm prepared to move a time allocation motion on this bill, I don't think I'll be able to pass this bill before December 12. I can't believe anyone would think not passing the Safe Drinking Water Act would be to the benefit of the people of Ontario. Ultimately, I did my best to try and negotiate an agreement between all three parties. I did my best. At the last meeting I said to the House leaders of both parties, "What do you want? Tell me what you want with respect to committee hearings on this bill. Tell me what you want. I'll agree to it." They wouldn't tell me.

Mr Crozier: They?

1540

Hon Mr Stockwell: Well, I shouldn't say "they." I don't want to name names, but one of them wouldn't tell me. So unless I can get some consent motion to deal with the bill through committee and back to the House, I am left with no alternative than to time-allocate a very important bill like safe drinking water.

Mr Levac: You had a choice.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Member for Brant, I can only say to you that you should take some time and read the standing orders—I'm not lecturing; I'm just saying—and if you can find any mechanism in the standing orders that would have provided passage of this bill by December 12 without co-operation from both parties, then I'm open to hearing your suggestions. But I don't know of it, and I've spent some time in this place—12 years. I spent three years as the Speaker. I've spent a number of years as House leader for the government side. I have a fairly good working knowledge of the standing orders.

Mr Levac: Change them.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Listen, I don't even want to go toward changing the standing orders. My good friend Bradley would blow a gasket, I'm sure, if there was any talk of changing the standing orders. He would implode right in this House and his jacket buttons would turn into projectiles, I'm certain. So I have no interest at all in commenting on changing the standing orders. And even if I wanted to change the standing orders, I couldn't possibly get the standing orders changed in time to get this bill passed.

I'm not throwing myself on the mercy of the Legislature, but I'm asking for some reasoned and thoughtful understanding and debate of this. And I appeal to my friends in the third party. I would ask the member for Toronto-Danforth to stand up, and if these don't jibe with her position on what took place, then I ask her to stand up and say, "He's not telling the facts." But I've tried my best. I did not want to time-allocate this bill whatsoever.

Mr Garry J. Guzzo (Ottawa West-Nepean): Let's sit around the clock. It worked last time.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Apparently the judge wants to sit around the clock. I'm not sure there's many who would, Judge, but we can always think about that.

I didn't want to time-allocate this bill. So here we are in a situation where I'm being forced to time-allocate it, and the only reason this time allocation motion is before us is that I can't believe anyone doesn't think this bill should be in place by the end of this session. And if there is someone who thinks we should take more time and not pass this bill by December 12, then I would ask them to stand up and say that. If the member for Brant believes we shouldn't be passing this bill before December 12 and not have a Safe Drinking Water Act, then that's your power as a member. Stand up and say so. If it isn't, then I think we have a responsibility to the taxpayers of this province and to our own parties to try to collectively negotiate an agreement that processes this bill through the House in a collegial way, that gets it passed by

December 12 and satisfies the concerns of the members opposite.

And if a truly draconian time allocation motion was before this House today, I say to the member for Brant and others, and to the member for St Catharines, who's listening intently, I say to the members opposite, why would we have six days of committee hearings? Why would Bill 175 have six days of committee hearings? Why would I be passing a time allocation motion that asks the committee to decide on how they want to travel and how they want to deal with this bill? I say it's not a draconian time allocation motion; it's a time allocation motion that has been moved in this House out of absolute necessity, and the necessity is that we can no longer get an agreement from the three parties, who collectively probably agree with this bill, to dispose of the bill. Nothing can work if that can't happen.

To the member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, I was reading through a few Hansards in the past when he was House leader for the government, at the time the Liberal Party. I was reading about the give and take and the difficulties he was having as House leader. Do you know that practically on every bill he dealt with as House leader, as rancorous and cantankerous and difficult as I'm sure he thought it was, he got agreement? There was agreement to deal with and dispose of legislation. Much of that legislation's agreement was internal to that sitting. So they would introduce bills in that sitting, have a rancorous discussion between the House leaders about how that stuff should be disposed of, and they agreed, "OK, we'll have seven days of debate, we'll go three days to committee and we'll pass the bill." I can only sadly say, as House leader for this government in the past number of months, I can never remember getting agreement on anything—nothing.

Mr Levac: Whose fault?

Hon Mr Stockwell: Well, there's the rub. Whose fault is it? How do you square the circle?—I've said this before. Whose fault is it? I'm going to take some time and give you my take on whose fault it is.

Can it be the government's fault? Ultimately, you're going to go out and say—and, you know, the public frankly is just totally unenlightened about this. You can go out till the cows come home and tell them, "Oh, do you know this terrible government has moved 15 time allocation motions?" and they'll all go, "Jeez, those Conservatives, they moved 15 time allocation motions?" and you're going to say, "Yeah," and they're going to look at you and say, "What the hell's a time allocation motion?" That's what they're going to say to you because they have no idea what a time allocation motion is.

It's a notch in your belt. If that's the game plan, well, you've won. I say to the members opposite, you've won. But if you think this is going to bring a government down or prop it up or be an issue at the doorstep, I can only talk for those members who have been elected more than one time. I say to my friends from Fort York and Trinity-Spadina and the member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, you know what the issues are. There are about

two or three, and I can't ever remember the number of time allocation motions being a campaign issue that swung five votes. I just can't remember it.

Mr Crozier: It's going to be.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Well, OK, it's going to. Maybe times will change and there'll be a huge hue and cry from the public out there that time allocations are the bane of the democratic process. I just don't see it. I think hydro may be an issue, education, health care, finances, deficits, but that's just one man's opinion from Etobicoke.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): Time allocation will be a big issue.

Hon Mr Stockwell: That's right. The member from St Catharines will make it the big issue. He'll spend his entire campaign budget on advertising our time allocation motions.

So I say, whose fault is it? Ultimately, we order the business of the House. But here's a good example, I say to the member from Brant. Here's a bill that I honestly believe we're all going to vote in favour of. I'm guessing, but I think we will. Here's a bill where I went to the House leaders' meetings and said, "Whatever you want, tell me, I'll give it to you," and here's a bill that I have to time-allocate because apparently that offer wasn't good enough.

When you go to a House leaders' meeting and say to the two other House leaders, "Whatever you want, I will give you," I'm not really sure how you can sweeten the pot. There's my dilemma: how do you sweeten the pot better than, "Whatever you want, I'll give you"? They didn't tell me. Well, I've got to be honest. The House leader for the Liberals told me what he wanted. I never really got a response from the NDP. They took notes.

Interjection.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I think it's too bad for the electorate because I think we could have worked something out. Then what happens is a unilateral decision made by the House leader for the government side about what I think you want, and that's what time allocation is. If I leave it to be debated ad nauseam, then I guarantee myself one thing: the Safe Drinking Water Act will not be in place by year's end. There isn't anyone in this province who would like to see the Safe Drinking Water Act not be in place by year's end.

We're at counter purposes here. We all agree the act's good. We all agree. The craziness about this thing is we all agree that the act is good, it should be put in place and we should have some debate, but we can't get from here to there, which is so frustrating for me personally because I walk into a meeting and say, "What do you want? Whatever you want, I'll give you." I think now you may have a better understanding of the dilemma I face as House leader.

This is not the only bill. I did, with some feverishness, like Phineas T. Bluster, as the member for St Catharines often says, try to announce the same kind of difficulties with emergency preparedness, which we all voted in favour of, but we couldn't get through the House because I had to time-allocate it. Who's opposed to emergency

preparedness? No, I don't want to be prepared in case there's an emergency? Nobody. We all voted in favour, but the same thing: I had to time-allocate that bill.

The funniest one of all of course is the bill that I think I saw the member for Brant speak to one night in the House, the one where if you see a cop on the side of the road giving somebody a ticket or something, you should slow down and pull a little bit to the left. Who's opposed to that? What is your amendment? No, speed up and go to the right so you hit the cop? What possible amendment could you have? I felt so bad for the member for Brant because he had to speak to this bill for about half an hour. I heard him and it was difficult, I know, to find anything to talk about that was remotely critical of the bill. He spent time talking about other issues, but on the bill itself, the number one point he came off on, the first thing he spoke about, was that the bill should be titled the other way around. Rather than talking about the police car first, you should talk about the person first. I would make that amendment in a heartbeat if we could have blown that through the House. But that's a good—

Mr Levac: Green lights?

Hon Mr Stockwell: Or green lights, whatever. But here's an example. It's a bill that we could just process through the House. Today, we're going to spend another sessional day debating time allocation on a bill where the offer to the opposition was, "However you want to handle this bill, I'm agreeable, but I'm time-allocating it." What a waste of a sessional day.

So, yes, I feel somewhat frustrated. I think this place has become less and less—

Interjection.

1550

Hon Mr Stockwell: Yes. And as I talk to members opposite, the member for Brant says, "You can change it," or you're going to go out on a time allocation motion and claim it's our fault. I think now you can understand in a smaller way what I'm up against. Maybe it isn't our fault all the time, if we can at least come to that. Maybe it is our fault lots of times but maybe it isn't sometimes. Maybe we can actually come together and reach agreement on bills that we have a mutual agreement about.

I did read with some interest Ian Urquhart's column today on the budget bill, suggesting there was a large package of initiatives in there that he felt was important that we review.

Mr Bradley: Hostages.

Hon Mr Stockwell: The member for St Catharines says, "Hostages." That's his choice of words, not mine. I don't agree with him, but that's the beauty of democracy. When you have a bill that you actually don't agree on, then you could spend a significant number of days debating it. We could take six, seven, eight, nine days debating that bill. Sure, we could, but why can't we? Do you know why we can't? Because we have three bills that everyone agrees with and we take 12 days debating them. So there's no time left over to actually have a meaningful debate on bills and legislation that we don't agree with. This isn't rocket science. Any five-year-old—

grade 5 kid could figure this one out. You only have so many days you can be in the House.

Mr Crozier: Five grade 5s?

Hon Mr Stockwell: No, that's wrong—grade 5. Kids in grade 5 could figure that out. But you only have so many days in the House. I know I don't have to tell the member for Trinity-Spadina. He was in the cabinet for the NDP. I know I don't have to tell the member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke or the member for St Catharines. They were part of governments that were in this House. There are only so many days you sit, and the government has an agenda. They want to get so many bills through the House. We all know that. Then it makes sense to me, since we are the government and we're going to get them through anyway, why not actually spend the time debating those bills we don't agree with, rather than spending a whole bunch of time debating bills we're all voting for, and in a kind of calmer, rational way? I was thoroughly frustrated last week. That's what I'm asking for.

The other thing is, we sit at nights all the time. If we actually did have a plan we could put through this place that we could agree on, you wouldn't have to sit at night. We could actually have the debates during the day and be done at 6 o'clock—not that we're frightened to work; I don't think anyone is frightened of work. But the presumption is that unless you're here, you're not working, and we know as politicians that most of your work is done at night anyway, dealing with local constituents, public meetings and so on and so forth. I know there are members of council from the old days and public school trustees and council members on our side here. You know full well all the public hearings and public meetings that you have are at night anyway. Would you rather be out there speaking to the community and the public or would you rather be in here debating a bill that everybody is voting in favour of? It doesn't make a lot of sense to me.

It's not an impassioned plea. I just wanted to put on the record that I feel bad that we have to time-allocate this. I do. It's a shame. I'm not casting aspersions on members opposite, certainly not on the member for Toronto-Danforth, although she came out and dumped all over the bill. I understand: she's in opposition; that's her job. But I think in her quieter moments she will grudgingly admit that we did try our best to see if we could find a way that we could all agree with this bill and move it through the process that would meet the demands you had about this bill and meet the demands we had.

The one demand that we made to the House leaders was that we needed this passed by December 12 and, frankly, I don't think either of you disagreed. You would like to see this passed by December 12. You would like to see these initiatives for inspections, certifications and training and all this stuff be legislated before the year is out. The only demand we made was, "Tell us what you want." That was obviously too much of a demand, because I couldn't get an answer.

The shame of it is that we're here today to time-allocate a bill that we all agree with, or I'm suggesting

that I think we may all agree with. I'm going to send it out to committee. "I"; yes, it's unilateral. That's what happens when you have to time-allocate. I'm going to send it out to general government for six days of public hearings, six days of committee time. It has been fitted together with Bill 175, to go out for six days at that time as well. I've not dictated to the committee how much they have to travel or where or when they have to travel. All I've asked them to do is, "You've got to report this bill back to the House in time to have it passed by December 12."

I can't think of a more reasonable approach to take to this than we have. I'll be interested in hearing the comments. I'll be profoundly disappointed if the comments revolve around, "Time allocation, another draconian act, another government whipsaw that forced the shutdown of democracy," yadda, yadda, yadda. That's an awful shame because, if that's the argument you're going to use, then frankly, I've come to the conclusion that it really doesn't matter what I do. It really doesn't matter what I offer, it really doesn't matter how this place is supposed to work; it makes no whit of difference. All you're doing is trying to play this whole thing as a political end: you want to claim there's time allocation, you want to put a notch in your belt. Really, is that serving the public? I think not. I think this is one bill we could have come to an agreement on. This is one bill where I could have agreed with the member for Toronto-Danforth. If she wanted to go to three or four cities, I could have said, "Not a problem." If the member for St Catharines wanted to go to three or four other cities, "Not a problem. Let's do it."

We all agreed that it should probably be passed by December 12, but we couldn't. So if that's what I hear today, I'm going to be disappointed. I don't think it's us who are the problem on this one; maybe there are lots who are. I'm not claiming to have the moral high ground on this one, but I thought this would be the one bill that we could break the log-jam we've had for the last number of months, which is "three days' debate, time allocation, pass it." In a lot of these bills that are "three days' debate, time allocation, pass it," I think it's silly. I've outlined the bills on which I think it's silly. I would much rather have six, eight, 10 days of debate on the budget, but I am totally and completely frustrated. It's a hopeless endeavour and this is going to be the example that I have to stand up on.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Further debate?

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke): I'm not going to have much of an opportunity to speak to Bill 195, so I'd like to take a few minutes this afternoon in this opportunity to address some concerns I have about Bill 195, An Act respecting safe drinking water, and collaterally, some comments with respect to Bill 175, An Act respecting the cost of water and waste water services.

I will say just in my opening comments that I have, as a former government House leader, a lot of sympathy with the comments made by the government House leader who just spoke. I guess where I will part company

with him is that I personally have come to the conclusion that our so-called parliamentary system is now so diseased that it is irredeemable. I don't think you can fix it. I don't have any option as a solution but I personally, as a member and as a taxpayer, am increasingly reluctant to put money into what is increasingly a charade.

I have to tell you, as a citizen, I would not spend a lot of my time going to the places that are now parliamentary. As well intentioned as they are, I just wouldn't waste my time because I just don't think, all things considered, it's a good use of my time. I would find other ways. And other ways are developing.

The fundraiser has become an extremely active alternative increasingly used by a lot of people. The street is another option for people who may not have or do not want to allocate financial resources. I think we are going to, and perhaps we should, be returning to more active or street politics. But why anybody would come to Parliament any longer to make a submission that might be six or seven minutes long on a subject that is complicated is beyond me. I've been to a number of committees recently—I'm not blaming anybody for this and I've got to tell you, I've no great confidence that changing government is going to do much about that. The Canadian parliamentary culture is in more trouble than I could possibly describe, and I regret it because I came here with some expectation. I actually remember a time when it was otherwise.

But I'm not here to talk about parliamentary problems today. I want to talk about Bill 195. As the government House leader and Minister of the Environment said, it's hard for any fair-minded person to oppose the bill in principle. I'm glad my friend Mr Beaubien, the former mayor from Petrolia, the member for Lambton-Kent-Middlesex, is here, because what I want to say today actually concerns small-town Ontario. The minister, in his remarks, made the comment about committees going to cities. You know, I'm not so sure that's where this committee should spend a lot of its time. There's no question that in cities large and small—I live in a smallish eastern Ontario city, Pembroke, population 15,000. We have a communal and municipally operated water and sewage disposal system, as do a number of other towns and villages in my constituency. Certainly the city in which we find ourselves today, Toronto, has a very elaborate infrastructure in these areas.

I think I read recently in a Statistics Canada report that now something like 80% of all Canadians live in cities of not less than 50,000—I think it was Canada; it may have been an Ontario number. At any rate, the vast majority of people living in Ontario live in cities of more than 50,000. When we think about it, it's not hard to understand how that is the case.

1600

When I look at this bill, I see a number of things that, as my friend Mr Bradley said the other night, I want to support, and I'm not going to repeat what my colleague said in his remarks the other evening. I do want to say a couple of things about small-town Ontario and the

pressures and problems that I think the bill presents for areas like rural, small-town Ottawa Valley and certainly elsewhere. Whether it's rural Oxford or small-town Lambton, Kent or Huron, there are a lot of places in the province where the good intentions of this bill are going to run into some financial realities that I think are going to cause municipal and provincial politicians some angst. But before I get there, let me review just a couple of things about Walkerton.

We were just talking about the importance of this bill. I hope we all remember what brought us here, and I just want to say a couple of things very quickly. I listened to the minister make his remarks on second reading the other night. There was certainly the suggestion, which has been broadcast across the land, that really the problem up in Walkerton was the Koebel brothers, wantonly incompetent local folks who really exposed their community to a deadly threat. I have read all of Mr Justice O'Connor's inquiry, and I read a lot of the evidentiary material presented to it. I want to be very clear: I think the Koebel brothers look very bad, and I deeply regret their ineptitude, incompetence and malfeasance.

I wonder, by the way, if anybody has really had a chat with those people at the town of Walkerton. Did anybody know these characters were as incompetent as they appear to have been? We will all do that. We will all say, "Who knows?" Seven people are dead, hundreds of people were sick. I ask the questions rhetorically, because a really serious transgression, maladministration and tragedy occurred at Walkerton. We now know a lot more about it than we did a couple of years ago. I guess one of the questions I ask is, does anybody bear any responsibilities? What about that town council? I have to say something here today: I'm not so sure I'm happy that I haven't seen a couple of people looking at me from a jail cell.

Mr Marcel Beaubien (Lambton-Kent-Middlesex): What about the public utilities?

Mr Conway: Pardon me? Whatever—the people at the local level who were responsible. I know this is tough to say; I've been to Walkerton many times, a lovely community. I guess one of the questions I have is, are there more Stan and Frank Koebels out there? I hope not, but I wouldn't have believed it possible that that could have happened in such a beautiful Ontario town.

Mr Guzzo: What about tainted blood?

Mr Conway: My friend the judge points out the tainted blood scandal. Absolutely.

It is a real tragedy that occurred there, but it may be a greater tragedy that we have not yet exacted a full measure of accountability from the people who accepted that responsibility as a public trust and may not have discharged it. As I looked at the materials presented to the commission, we as a provincial government did not look very good. And I accept, in ecumenical spirit, that it didn't all begin on June 8, 1995. But looking at the details around the Red Tape Commission, I'm deeply, deeply troubled by what I saw. I must say to my friend

Norm Sterling that I was rather encouraged by the resistance he offered, as one Minister of the Environment, about what the Red Tape Commission—who could be opposed to cleaning up red tape? But when you see that Red Tape Commission under X-ray, as the Walkerton inquiry made plain, that Red Tape Commission under X-ray, that is a scandal. Now nobody cares because we're too busy, worried about some trivia. But there was a time when the Globe and Mail and maybe the Fifth Estate might have cared about what we now know is going on with the Red Tape Commission, particularly around some aspects of regulatory oversight in areas of critically important jurisdiction like water safety.

We have a bill now that seeks to deal with a lot of that, and I certainly support the bill in principle. One of the things I want to say, though, is on behalf of small-town Ontario—I'm going to cite a couple of examples here this afternoon. Again, my problem with these bills is that they are obviously suffused with good intentions, but the devil often is in the details. One of the questions that people like the Association of Municipalities of Ontario have asked is, what about the financial wherewithal to make this work? Let me use a couple of examples in my area.

I have, in south Renfrew county, a town site called Haley which was developed decades ago as an industrial site. About 35 or 40 homes were built on this site several miles from the nearest communities, the town of Renfrew and the village of Cobden. At the time—50, 60, 70 years ago—when the facility was established, the town site was built with what we would call an industrial water system. There are today about 35 or 40 people at the Haley town site. They have now inherited the communal water system. Do you know what their operating costs now are for that communal water system at the Haley town site? Let me just quote from the Cobden Sun, January 30, 2002: "Mainly because of new water testing regulations in the wake of the Walkerton tragedy, the cost of operating the [Haley town site water] system is now \$72,826 per year. The revenue being collected from the homeowners is \$9,808 per year, leaving [an operating] shortfall of \$63,018."

Let me just repeat that. I think there are about 35 or 40 homes in the Haley town site. I will admit this is a special circumstance, but there are several more like it around the province. So we've got a system that has about 35 or 40 people hooked up to it that now has an annual operating cost of \$72,000, and according to Councillor Ron Lowe, chair of the public works committee of Whitewater township, there is about \$130,000 of work to be done on the distribution aspect of that water system.

I don't need to tell you that operating costs of almost \$73,000 spread across 35 or 40 homeowners and capital upgrades of \$100,000 are simply impossible to imagine. We had a meeting the other day in the village of Eganville in the newly amalgamated township of Bonnechere Valley. They are looking at trying to expand their water and sewage systems to include more of the urban area. Do you know what they're looking at? They're looking at hook-up costs per lot of about \$50,000. I can tell you that

in Eganville and hundreds of other communities in Lambton, Oxford, Kent, Renfrew, Grey, Hastings, Haliburton, Leeds, Lanark, Glengarry and countless other of the great Ontario counties and districts, there will be a great expectation that, yes, "Justice O'Connor had it right. Good for the Eves government and that Chris Stockwell for moving forward and accepting the recommendations."

And you know what? The legislation, all things considered, looks pretty good. How, but how, in Bridgen or in Norwich or in Killaloe are we going to make it work?

1610

Mr Beaubien: Killaloe?

Mr Conway: Killaloe. I used the example the other day. In Killaloe, a community of about 700 people, they have a communal water system. There are about 140 or 150 people hooked up to it. The council told me not too many months ago that the new water testing requirements of the last year or two have added an additional \$145, I think it is, roughly, to the individual home or business on an annualized basis. We're talking about just water testing costs that have increased on a per-business or per-household basis in the village of Killaloe by something in the order of \$140 or \$150.

I can tell you what you already know, those of you in rural and small-town Ontario. We are going to have to find a way, at the senior levels of government, provincially and federally, to do a couple of things. When I look at issues like the Haley town site—and I bet you there's at least two or three of those in most Ontario counties—I think what we're going to have to do is find a way to pool those special circumstances into some kind of aggregate provincial pool with local, municipal, provincial and individual or business contributions. I don't know how else you're going to do what you want to do and have to do at the Haley town site.

I know my time is up because, my goodness, I've had about 15 minutes on an issue that is of real importance to people in my rural communities. I will say finally that in communities like Killaloe, Beachburg, Chalk River, Barry's Bay, Bancroft, Marmora, Madoc and so many other places, where we put in communal water and sewage systems by and large 35, 40 years ago, in most cases with provincial and/or federal subsidies on capital of anywhere between about 40% and 80%, we are going to have to, as senior government, find a way to put a financial package together for these smaller towns and villages and hamlets and special cases like the Haley town site. If we don't, we are going to have a great good intention in Bill 195 simply hung up and evidently on ruined ground, because rural folks in small-town settings will simply not be able to do financially what they know they should be doing on an environmental basis.

Ms Churley: It seems that I've been standing in this House lately talking a lot about water bills that have been rammed through the Legislature once again. I'm trying to find in my sheets of paper here a letter—of course I've lost it now—that Peter Kormos, our House leader, wrote on my behalf to the government House leader, which I

was going to read, and if I find it I will, on the process for the debate in this House and particularly around the committee hearings.

I need to set the record straight because of the comments the government House leader, Mr Stockwell, made about this party in particular not putting forward recommendations for committee hearings. In fact, this is what happened. The Premier had promised on a couple of occasions—indeed when he announced that the bill was coming forward, I was there for that announcement that day—that there would be extensive hearings. Mr Stockwell, the Minister of the Environment, had said there would be hearings. And then—of course I'm not in the room where the House leaders' meeting takes place, so I can only tell you my view and my version of what happened and why we are here having this time allocation motion and why, in my view, the amount of hearings we're having is not sufficient.

My House leader came to me and said that Mr Stockwell, the government House leader, wanted to negotiate with the two opposition parties around the hearings for the Safe Drinking Water Act. He wanted us to allow fast passage of some government bills in order to negotiate, to even talk to us, about hearings. So I had our House leader write a very strong letter; again, if I find it I will read it. At the time it was private, but now I'm annoyed enough that I want it on the record. The letter said that I was not pleased to have this bill, the Safe Drinking Water Act, tied up once again in the negotiations, and sometimes silly negotiations, which the public does not care about, around what bills get passed when and fast passage and time allocation; that this bill should not be included in those negotiations; that it's an important issue to the people of Ontario and, once it is passed, it will be with us for a long, long time and it has a lot of cost implications and other amendments that we are going to have to put forward, and I wanted to make sure there was sufficient time for hearings.

The other issue that came up is that—and the minister is now doing this. He wants to bundle the two bills, ie, he wants to bring the Safe Drinking Water Act and the sewer treatment act out together and deal with them at the same time in committee hearings. I was not supportive of that. Although they're both dealing with water, I would prefer to take two distinct aspects of the water issues that are before us. For instance, the sewer and water bill deals with full cost recovery, among many, many other things, but that one in particular, as we've talked a lot about in this House, is going to have a huge impact on municipalities, particularly the smaller ones across the province. They're going to want to be able to speak at length about the implications of that bill to them, and we've got to talk about options: what do we mean by full cost recovery?

So I wanted to have that bill dealt with at committee hearings separately. On the other hand, I had agreed to be reasonable about it, that the Legislature is sitting and it's hard to have full public hearings when we're sitting, and I didn't think it was a good idea to wait till the inter-

session, because I am, like all of us, anxious to get on with getting the Safe Drinking Water Act passed. So I was willing to be reasonable, and indeed, for the record—and I hope Mr Stockwell is listening—the NDP did come up with a list of suggested locations and times for hearings on both those bills, in two different versions: one was, if the minister insisted on bundling them, a way that we could expand the number of days across the province so people could have their say on both; and another version was, if the bills were done separately, how we could do that with the House sitting, maybe in constituency week or whatever. But we did have some options. As I understand it from my House leader, the House leader from hell, as Mr Stockwell likes to call him—I'm just quoting the government House leader here.

The Deputy Speaker: I want to remind you that the member withdrew that comment.

Ms Churley: Oh, OK. I withdraw it, then.

The reality is that my House leader told me that it's true we never presented our options, because the government House leader made it perfectly clear that unless we were willing to negotiate fast passage of other bills in this House, then we could have no say on the length of the committees, where we go or how, in any way, they're conducted. So, as it was told to me, we never did present our options for committee hearings because we weren't given that choice.

When we refused to put it on the negotiating table—which, by the way, happened with my Bill 3. Originally the Premier said that my Bill 3 would be passed with amendments—ie, to improve it—and the same thing happened in the last session. My caucus knows I'm still really angry about that, because Bill 3 got caught up in what I view as very silly and destructive negotiations around, you know, the horse trading that goes on in this place on the last day of the House. Bill 3 should never have been on the negotiating table. At the end of the day, the Minister of the Environment said, "OK, you won't give us what we want so we're not going to do your Bill 3. Forget it. We're just going to do our own." That's what happened with that.

1620

Then I found the same situation here in terms of being asked to come up with options for committee hearings, but then being told, "No, we want to negotiate those around other bills." That just was not on for us and the letter that was written to the House leader made that quite clear. Then the government House leader said to our House leader, "Well, there's nothing to discuss because you won't negotiate on those other bills." I have witnesses to part of this, because Mr Stockwell and I got into a rather loud yelling match up at TVO about this very issue. Mr Bradley was there; I don't know if he was in the room when we had this loud yelling match, but I know Steve Paikin was there. When I was told that the committee hearings for these bills were going to be caught up in negotiations again, I got angry and said straightforwardly to Mr Stockwell, "I don't want to see

that happen. This is too important to the people of Ontario to have it caught up in the shenanigans that go on around here. It shouldn't be caught up in trying to help you achieve your rather mismanaged agenda in terms of getting other bills through that you wanted."

That is just, for the record, what happened. I just want to make it clear that the New Democratic caucus did have a plan for public hearings. We were never able to put those on the table because once Mr Stockwell understood that we were not willing to negotiate away other government bills to get the hearings of our choice, he said, "I'm just going to do it on my own." That indeed is what he told me when we had this argument up at TVO.

So here we are now having a time allocation bill again today. We just had one on the other water bill. I think it's too bad, because these are the kinds of bills where every member who wants to speak to them should have an opportunity to do so, because they are so far reaching and what happened in Walkerton touched all of us and all of our constituents clear across the province in many different ways. All of the members in this House understand that both the bills before us, on sewer and water and the Safe Drinking Water Act, will have huge implications in our community. We want to see those bills passed. Particularly, I want to see the Safe Drinking Water Act passed with amendments that I will put forward.

I want to remind the Minister of the Environment, who was here earlier, and I hope he's listening now—he said the only complaint the opposition made about the bill was that it didn't involve or include source protection, and that is just not a fact. It's very clear that that is the major complaint, and I've already put on the record my feelings about that, how there has to be a legislative link between all of those bills to prevent another Walkerton. Justice O'Connor makes that clear. He talks about a multi-barrier approach. The first thing we need to do in that multi-barrier approach is to protect the water before it goes into the pipe. There has to be that legislative link between nutrient management and the Safe Drinking Water Act, as well as the sewer and water act and any other bills that come before us. If we're not protecting the water at its source and if there isn't that legislative link, then other Walkertons can happen.

Why I am not satisfied with the minister's response on source protection is this, and I've said this before. In 1999, the then Minister of the Environment, Tony Clement, said that they were looking at source protection, and then it appeared as though nothing happened. Walkerton came along and I brought forward my Safe Drinking Water Act, and nothing happened with that for two years. I implored, I asked question after question, I had petitions out all over the communities to get that bill at least up for reading so that, after a second reading, we could get it out to committee—which the government never agreed to. When it did pass second reading in this House, what the government members did was very clever, very cute, like a fox. They supported the bill, because how could they not support a Safe Drinking

Water Act? It was a good bill. So what they did was vote yes to the bill, but then—and this is procedural stuff, so people out there can understand it: once a private member's bill passes in this place, we can stand up and ask for the bill to go to a government committee, which is what I did. I asked for it to go to general government so that we could take it out to public hearings and bring it back into the House after amendments were made. The government then voted that down after voting for the bill and sent it to something called the committee of the whole House. We all know in this place that when a bill—and the government members knew full well what they were doing—is sent to the committee of the whole House, it goes nowhere. It's dead. It's finished. That's what they did to my Bill 3. So we wasted all of this time, in terms of moving on with the Safe Drinking Water Act and the source protection act that the government had said they were working on.

Then, on the day the government introduced the Safe Drinking Water Act, they announced that they're moving forward with source protection but they still are setting up an advisory committee to advise them on how to do it. That's why it's a problem that there is not that legislative link with this bill, and we don't know when it's coming. If they're just setting up an advisory committee now and we don't know who's going to be on it, that is really problematic. Because source protection is far more complicated than the pipes and pumps aspect of the Safe Drinking Water Act. It involves agriculture, land use, urban sprawl, other ministries.

Having said that, I will repeat again, so hopefully the minister will know that I have made some other quite legitimate criticisms of this bill—and I will be making amendments to try to improve the bill. Because what the government said at the time when they were willing to introduce or carry on with my bill was that they would amend it but improve it based on Justice O'Connor's recommendations, and I supported that. I thought that was a good idea because I wrote my bill without the benefit of Justice O'Connor's recommendations. He took a different approach. He recommended that source protection be dealt with under an amendment to the Environmental Protection Act. He dealt with the Safe Drinking Water Act more from the pipes and pumps perspective, the treatment and delivery of water. That's fine. But I also see Justice O'Connor's recommendations as the floor; that if it's possible to improve upon it, we should. We shouldn't take it as a ceiling and say, "Justice O'Connor said do exactly this" and not actually improve it.

So some things are missing from the Safe Drinking Water Act, and Justice O'Connor certainly didn't say, "If you can improve upon it, don't do it. Just follow my recommendations." The public right to know is something I've brought up before, and for the record, I will say again, that's a big piece that's missing from the government's version of the Safe Drinking Water Act. That is a big piece of the American Safe Drinking Water Act, which they've had in place for over 25 years. As we

know, one of the problems out of several that were found which led to the awful situation in Walkerton was that not only was the reporting all messed up because of the privatization of the labs, which happened so quickly, but also the notification to the community was delayed. Part of my bill went into great detail about the public right to know. I've discussed in this House on other occasions and even showed samples of the kind of notification I'm talking about, as well as a registry. That has all been left out of the government's Safe Drinking Water Act. I think that's one of the key things.

Some of the other things that have been left out are—I mentioned the registry. That's an electronic form containing all test results, copies of COAs, accredited labs, bad test notices.

The other one has to do with how people suffering damages may bring court action. I will say again, Justice O'Connor recommended against that; I recognize that. He said the government should stay away from that and bring in a certain standard of care. But I still argue that this bill—there's a compromise here: that people should have that right, and the way to do it would be to bring the whole Safe Drinking Water Act under the Environmental Bill of Rights. Once something comes under the Environmental Bill of Rights, it is subject to investigation if people request it and the Environmental Commissioner deems it is worthy of an investigation and, secondly, people under certain circumstances would have the right to sue. Maybe that's the best compromise. There are certainly other bills that come under the Environmental Bill of Rights, and this would be a good bill, in my view, to put under that.

1630

Another piece that's missing is requiring the minister to conduct research. This is something that was a big piece of many requirements I wanted to see the minister do, and that included dealing with source and ground-water protection, which admittedly, because mine was a private member's bill, needed to be improved and built upon. But that was part of my bill, to have the minister directly deal with source protection.

One of the big pieces that's missing, and I know the minister is not going to put this in the bill but it's absolutely critical, is what I call a safe drinking water fund, which was part of Bill 3, my Safe Drinking Water Act. You can have the best legislation and the best regulations in the world, but if you do not have the resources to have the inspectors, the people to enforce the law, the scientists to do the tests and all of those things, then it's not worth the paper it's written on.

We've seen that already after the massive cuts to the Ministry of the Environment. Justice O'Connor goes into great detail in discussing how that impacted on what happened in Walkerton, and indeed advised the government—it wasn't one of his recommendations because he felt it was not in his mandate, but he made a point of saying he was very concerned about the downloading. He called it restructuring, but I call it downloading to the municipalities, particularly around social services, which

municipalities were scrambling to cover. He suggested the government review that downloading to see what kind of impact it was having on municipalities, particularly in light of calling for full cost recovery of water services.

That has not been touched upon in this bill. It is being dealt with under the other water bill before us, but the minister told me, and I'm sure he's right, that he didn't put it in the Safe Drinking Water Act because we would disagree about the amount and he's hoping to have a bill that we can at least all live with. I understand that. I'm happy to see that safe drinking water fund in the other bill, as long as it's adequate.

But I don't see any signs of the government putting the resources back in the ministry or enough resources back into the whole water area to make this act work. I understand that municipalities are very nervous about these two bills, particularly the smaller ones, many of which have not been able to fulfill the requirements of the new regulations the government brought in after Walkerton happened. I know that not all the money that was supposed to be allocated under SuperBuild has been spent, that some municipalities applied and for whatever reason didn't get it, and that money has now gone back into the consolidated revenue, which I find extremely alarming, given what we're hearing about municipalities that have recently been charged and are before the courts on some of these infractions.

These are some of my concerns about the Safe Drinking Water Act as it's now written. There are other things in the bill that I have concerns with, and they're more technical but could really make a difference. There are parts of the bill that say "a minister may" or "the ministry may" instead of "the ministry shall." It opens it up to too much discretion on the part of the minister or the ministry. Those are the kinds of things we have to look at.

There are a couple of big pieces I would like to see incorporated into the bill, like the purpose of the act, which has been watered down, so to speak. The purpose in my bill is much stronger and really sets the tone for what the bill should accomplish. The public's right to know and the registry are vital. I know I'm not going to get the safe drinking water fund in here, and I still would like to see it here, but I want to see the government in some way put dedicated funding back into our water system. Several other amendments will be more technical in nature around strengthening the bill.

So I would say to Mr Stockwell, the Minister of the Environment, that I have pointed out on many occasions over the past week or so, when I've had the opportunity to speak to those bills at length, and have put on the record and have again today, the concerns I have about the Safe Drinking Water Act.

I've also been fair. I believe the government followed fairly closely Justice O'Connor's recommendations for a safe drinking water bill from his point of view, around looking at it from the pipes and pumps perspective: safe delivery of the water once it comes out of the tap. The

problem is that there are some pieces from my bill that could have improved on that that Justice O'Connor talked about. In fact, he talked quite a bit about the public's right to know. He hasn't recommended, as far as I know, where it should go, but he certainly talked about it as being very important. This is the perfect bill to include that piece in.

I'll wrap up by talking again about source protection. We will be watching the government very closely and holding their heels to the fire on this one, because we know that with this bill and the nutrient management bill but without source protection, another Walkerton could happen. That's just not acceptable.

I understand an awful lot of work still needs to be done, and that's going to mean properly funding the conservation authorities as well, because the government cut, I believe, up to 70% of the conservation authorities. They also, when they came to power, cut the CURB program, the clean up rural beaches program, which the NDP brought in and which dealt directly with keeping manure out of our waterways, working directly with the farmers on that. They also got rid of the green planning act, which of course dealt directly with source protection, because it stipulated where and how developers could build—or not at all—in environmentally sensitive areas. As Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations in the NDP government, I brought in the toughest regulations in North America around leaking underground storage tanks.

There were a lot of things the NDP started to do around source protection. It needed to be improved upon and all brought together, and there was more work to be done. What this government did in fact was to walk in and, of all this work that had been done and put in place, most of it was taken away and resources cut and the ministry cut to the bone. A lot of the work that had taken place was completely stopped in its tracks. Now the government is scrambling to put together a source protection act, which I'm going to tell you right now is going to include a lot of the things that were in that green planning act and the CURB program.

I'm disappointed the minister feels he had to time-allocate this. I know many of my colleagues who haven't had an opportunity to speak on the bill will now not have that opportunity. I'm very disappointed that the government did not allow more time for hearings and disappointed that they've been bundled and we have to do two bills, very important bills, within, I think, the course of a week. I understand it's going to be the week after constituency week, the week after next.

We won't be in the House—I guess we'll get special permission to do that—and we'll be travelling around. I agree we should not be just in larger cities, but particularly we need to be in the rural areas where it's probably going to have the biggest impact.

Thank you for this opportunity. I will leave the rest of the time to my colleagues who are waiting anxiously to have an opportunity to speak to this bill.

Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): I'm pleased to have this opportunity to take part in the debate on the proposed

Safe Drinking Water Act. As you will remember, Mr Speaker, in his presentation the minister did an eloquent job of explaining the closure motion before us, to facilitate the passage of the Safe Drinking Water Act. He spoke about his reluctance to have to do it, but also explained to us all the reasons it had to be done, to facilitate the passing of this bill, so I won't spend a lot of my time on that.

Our government is committed to ensuring that Ontario has and enforces the best and the toughest clean water policies in the world.

In part two of his Report of the Walkerton Inquiry, Commissioner O'Connor was firm about Ontario's need for legislation that would ensure the safety and sustainability of our drinking water.

1640

The proposed bill supports the delivery of 50 of the 93 recommendations in part two of the report. For the purpose of this discussion, I will focus my comments on the compliance and enforcement provisions in the proposed bill. A key priority for this government is to include the public in its decision-making process. To this end our objective is to implement all of the recommendations of the O'Connor report as clear evidence of this commitment. In balance with this consultative approach, however, is our unwavering commitment to set and enforce tough environmental standards. A number of recommendations related to compliance and enforcement are nested within recommendation number 67 of the proposed Safe Drinking Water Act. In addition, Commissioner O'Connor made the following recommendations:

"Recommendation 72: The provincial government should create an office of Chief Inspector—Drinking Water Systems."

"Recommendation 73: Inspectors should be required to have the same or higher" degree of "qualifications as the operators of the systems they inspect and should receive special training in inspections." In other words, we have to be more knowledgeable than those whom we are inspecting.

"Recommendation 74: The Ministry of the Environment should increase its commitment to the use of mandatory abatement."

"Recommendation 75: The Ministry of the Environment should increase its commitment to strict enforcement of all regulations and provisions related to the safety of drinking water."

"Recommendation 76: The Ministry of the Environment should initiate a process whereby the public can require the investigations and enforcement branch to investigate alleged violations of drinking water provisions."

The bill would modernize and strengthen the laws that protect the quality of our environment. We propose to strengthen compliance and enforcement provisions and we will create a new position of chief inspector. We are prepared to take a tough stand and give our chief inspector the tools he or she needs to enforce the proposed Safe Drinking Water Act. The duties of the chief in-

spector for drinking water systems are defined in our proposed act. We believe these duties provide the chief inspector with the level of authority he or she needs to effectively fulfill his or her obligations.

For example, the chief inspector of drinking water shall: provide advice and recommendations to the content of the ministry's inspection policies and be responsible for implementing that policy; be responsible for developing and updating the inspection protocol; be responsible for developing, updating and implementing the inspection training program; monitor the overall frequency and adequacy of inspections; report to the public about the overall performance of Ontario's water supply systems and inspections program; and perform any other duties as may be prescribed by regulation. As time goes on the minister can, by regulation, increase the number of regulations that would empower the inspector.

Specific compliance and enforcement provisions will include the following: systems with deficiencies must have a follow-up inspection within one year—again, that was one of the items in the O'Connor report that suggested there was not enough follow-up after deficiencies were found; the minister will have explicit authority to issue directives on inspection policies and protocols; the Ministry of the Environment will also train inspectors to ensure that they have the same or higher level of qualifications of the systems they inspect. As well, they will receive special training in inspections; and we will also establish clear procedures for addressing requests from the public for the investigation of alleged offences. In addition to being guided by Commissioner O'Connor's report, the proposed compliance and enforcement provisions are already based on a strong foundation.

In the report *Managing the Environment: A Review of Best Practices*, we have outlined a framework for this government to move forward with a vision that will enable the Ministry of the Environment to carry out its core business of environmental protection more effectively. The bill is consistent with the concepts of the *Managing the Environment Report* and is based on the premise that in order to ensure sound environmental stewardship, Ontario must have clear laws, stringent regulations and tough standards in place. It also sets the stage to move beyond what is required by law, and adopt an ethic of continuous improvement.

There are also several compliance and enforcement provisions of the proposed bill that build on the Environmental Protection Act and the Ontario Water Resources Act. These provisions include: inspection powers similar to the powers in the Environmental Protection Act and the Ontario Water Resources Act, such as entry to dwellings, seizures and use of force; new powers for provincial officers to inspect labs that test drinking water; director's and minister's orders to deal with imminent drinking water health hazards; orders to decommission or replace systems; the appointment of an interim operating authority or proven alternative service delivery; and penalties that are consistent with the Environmental

Protection Act and the Ontario Water Resources Act. We did, however, increase the fines for subsequent offences for individuals who cause a drinking water health hazard from \$6 million to \$7 million. This is consistent with the proposed fines in Ms Churley's private member's bill.

As well, the proposed bill includes other powers that are needed for the effective functioning of the bill. These powers are aligned with the Environmental Protection Act and include such key elements as control orders, stop orders, remedial orders, preventive orders and program approvals.

In the past year we've worked hard to ensure that Ontario's drinking water is the best and safest drinking water in Canada. We will continue such programs as Operation Clean Water and move forward on a comprehensive strategy to protect Ontario's groundwater. We will work to increase the amount of waste diverted from landfills and develop a framework for cleaning up contaminated lands.

Through the proposed creation of the new position of chief inspector, this government's vision of strengthened environmental management will take even firmer hold. We will rely on contributions from all Ontarians to support the chief inspector's role in compliance and enforcement.

I urge all members to support the proposed Safe Drinking Water Act and to pass it as quickly as possible to benefit all the people of Ontario.

Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for allowing me a few moments to speak to the bill.

Mr Bradley: As I always do when we're dealing with a time allocation motion, I express my concern that the government has once again resorted to a time allocation motion, which has the effect of choking off debate in the Legislative Assembly.

It would have been my preference to have an extended debate on this matter. I thought the government House leader made a good case in a couple of other bills for shortened debate. I've always believed there are some bills that should pass the House with very little debate because there's a consensus, they are simple bills and so on.

This is one that has some significant ramifications. This is the kind of bill that should have all members of the Legislature who wish to speak to it, speak to its specific provisions. We won't have the time to do so because the bill is being time-allocated and others won't have that chance to bring up, as my colleague from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke did, the instances of the smaller towns. That's one of the concerns I have about this bill that is being time-allocated this afternoon.

For the regional municipality of Niagara or, if you want, the city of St Catharines, it will be onerous because there are new responsibilities that must fall upon the local government, and those responsibilities will cost money. It is likely, however, though it will be somewhat of an imposition, that the larger municipalities, with a larger tax base, will be able to implement the provisions without too much pain to that community, though it is going to have some impact.

Where we will see it is in the kinds of towns, villages and hamlets the member for Pembroke mentioned in his constituency and across the province. What is implied in the recommendations, and they were solid recommendations, in my view, from Justice O'Connor, is that it is going to require, first of all, for the Ministry of the Environment the hiring of a significant number of additional staff, the provision of probably millions of dollars of additional funding, and of course the clout necessary for the ministry to be able to carry out its obligations under this bill. That is where some of the resistance will come.

I think in general people will say, "You know, we need this kind of legislation." I found in the bill some very supportable provisions and I think people would find that. But what you're going to find is that in the smaller municipalities, or where there are exceptional cases where water is supplied to just a small number of people, it is going to be extremely onerous. This is where I think the provincial government must give an undertaking, with the passage of this bill, to be a funding partner along with those local municipalities. I remind you that that cost will not only be a capital cost but it will be an ongoing operating cost for those municipalities.

1650

Second, as I have mentioned previously, I would have preferred that we deal with the source of the contamination in legislation of this kind or in parallel legislation. Let me tell you why I think it perhaps would have been important, I won't say ahead of this piece of legislation but as part of or in partnership with this legislation. If you protect the raw water supply for many of these communities, you will find that all the sophisticated equipment and all the details of this bill would be less relevant. I'm not saying they wouldn't be important enough, but if you deal with the contamination in the raw water supply itself, you go a long way to protecting the drinking water in any specific area. So I have a concern about that.

The bill did not take into account some of the serious and reasonable suggestions of the Canadian Environmental Law Association, which has had a long history of calling for this kind of legislation and of dealing with the details of it. I had a chance to meet with members of CELA, as it's called, to discuss specific aspects of this bill. Although they had not seen the legislation, they did draw to my attention what they felt should be in such legislation. So I find it unfortunate that we will not have members from various communities who will be able to get up and perhaps isolate some provisions of the bill that may be of great significance to their municipalities.

I know as well that those who are involved with conservation authorities and those who in the past have worked for the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Ministry of the Environment and have had their jobs chopped will be able to tell us how important it is going to be to restore that staff. I mention the Ministry of Natural Resources, because a lot of people don't recognize that they are also involved in water quality issues themselves and through their association with conservation authorities across Ontario.

I also have a concern about municipalities selling their operation to the private sector, although I must say the concern may be greater in the companion bill, Bill 175, dealing with full cost accounting. I would hope the government would include as its own amendment, if not accepting an opposition amendment, a provision in both these bills that would call for the retention in public ownership of water systems in this province. I don't have a problem with OCWA, the Ontario Clean Water Agency, which provides some of these services and indeed came to the rescue in Walkerton at a key time. It is a quasi-governmental or crown corporation type of operation in which I think a lot of people have some considerable trust. I do have a problem, though, when municipalities faced with these new obligations feel compelled to completely sell and relinquish the ownership of their water systems because, again, I feel that's something that should remain in the public domain. There are a lot of things that I believe should remain in the public domain, and there are some that of course should be in the private sector.

There are going to be hearings. I listened with some interest again to the member for Pembroke, who suggested that we usually go with these hearings to the major metropolitan or urban areas in the province. I think there was a suggestion on his part that perhaps we, as a committee, might want to visit some of the other smaller communities that will be impacted by this, or if we are in larger metropolitan or urban areas, at least ensure they're close enough that people from smaller municipalities can make their views known.

We will also want to hear from the environmental community, which has studied this problem and had a great interest in this problem over the years. We will want to hear from experts in the field of the protection of water supplies and the treatment of water in the province, because there are new methods. I recall—it wasn't that long ago—a report that came out saying that some 20 or 30 municipalities of some considerable size did not have water filtration systems. North Bay was one of them, at the time; I was quite surprised by that. They did chlorinate the water, because you have to ensure you're killing the bacteria that can be a problem. However, there was not a filtration system that would catch a problem such as cryptosporidium, which has had an impact and made a number of people ill in some communities. So I want to see that happen, those new systems implemented. I think, partially as a result of one bill, the other bill and some public pressure, we will see those kinds of systems implemented. I wish we didn't have to. A lot of people said, "Wouldn't it be nice if we just drew our water from a spring and drink the water the way they used to in the old days?" Well, that's simply not the way we can do it today, particularly—and I see the Minister of Agriculture and Food here today—when we have much larger farming operations in the province, which have an impact on water supplies.

There are some who say that the people who are going to be most resistant to the Nutrient Management Act or

most resistant to this kind of legislation are going to be members of the farming community. Wrong. These are people who themselves rely so very often on ground-water or well water, and not on the so-called sophisticated treatment systems that large urban areas have. So they have a vested interest in protecting the water supplies of the province. It is something we must do, something we must assist our rural municipalities with. I know the Minister of Agriculture and Food will be advocating within the government for substantial funding to assist those smaller communities that have to meet the justifiably onerous obligations that are found within this particular bill.

I also have a bit of concern, and I will wander a bit from this bill, but since we're in a time allocation situation, I guess I can do it.

Hon Helen Johns (Minister of Agriculture and Food):

What else is new?

Mr Bradley: The Minister of Agriculture and Food says, "What else is new," but in this case the wandering will be a very short distance away.

It's what is happening to fixed-income and lower-income people in the province. The problem with theory of full cost accounting and of people paying exactly what it costs for all costs that are associated with providing drinking water and dealing with the sewage is that a lot of low-income and fixed-income people are confronted with—and you know what I'm going to say now—huge, spiralling increases in charges for power and for insurance premiums. People are finding, as they get their premium notices, that insurance premiums are going up. The last I looked, the cost of natural gas wasn't going downward; it was going upward. When they go to the pump to buy gasoline for their vehicle, that cost is up considerably if you look at two or three years ago and what it is today. All these basic costs that people have to meet are going up.

If you said the cost of cigarettes is going up or the cost of booze is going up or the cost of some other things that are not considered to be essentials of life is going up, some people would say, "Well, the cost is going up. That's a frill." But when you're dealing with these costs, and then someone says you're going to be hit with huge increases in your water bill, one says, "Let's have the provincial government as a funding partner in this regard. Let's have them help out; there's a larger tax base." Or even within municipalities, there may be some funds that could be derived from the tax base to assist in meeting this cost. Of course, we want conservation to be an important component, and we hope conservation will emerge with these two bills.

1700

An interesting thing happens, though, that makes people a bit suspicious of this, and maybe a bit cynical; I've seen it happen from time to time. They'll say, "If only you reduce your consumption of water, your bill will go down." But then the unit cost tends to go up to maintain the operation of all the equipment. So you can reduce, say by 10%, the amount of water you're using,

and the amount of sewage that you produce as a result, because the water is going down the drain. But on the other hand, the municipality may turn around and say, "We need these funds, by the way, so we're going to increase by 10% the cost per unit"—per gallon or per litre or whatever we use today. That tends to make people a bit suspicious and cynical and it's a bit worrisome.

I wish we could have had more time in the House for individual members to talk about this legislation.

Interjection.

Mr Bradley: No, I cannot do that.

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr Bradley: But I do want to say that I hope in the committee hearings we're able to hear from a broad spectrum of people of Ontario to look at the ramifications of the bill, because I know that on the government benches there is not unanimity on this bill either. That's to be expected, with the large number of people there.

I look forward to what is coming. I will vote against it, as I do vote against every time allocation motion that comes before this House. But I do so knowing at least that there are going to be some public hearings, and I wish that we would see some considerable third reading debate as well.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Marchese: Thank you, speaker. I took the tie off. It was getting too stuffy in here.

Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East): Kormos is having an effect on you.

Mr Marchese: It liberates you from time to time. Do you notice how free you feel, a "free at last" kind of thing?

I'm happy to have this opportunity to speak to the bill, but happier to speak to the closure part of this bill, reminding you that the Minister of the Environment spent literally half an hour to talk mostly on, "Wouldn't it be nice to be able to work together? Why don't we come together? Why can't we agree on stuff that we agree so that we can facilitate things and just move them along? Why is it that these things can't happen?"

He was very sincere, which is an unusual stance for Stockwell, the Minister of the Environment, because I do remember Chris when he was just about here in opposition. If you had heard him then, Speaker, and you weren't here at that time, you would say that he is a reformed man, that he has seen the light and he has changed and is urging the rest of the members to do the same. Why, when he was here, he wouldn't let anything pass. When he was here he would be ringing bells day in and day out. If someone would say to Chris, "Chris, would you mind if I just step out for a moment? I've got something to do. Please don't call for the bells," Chris Stockwell would be here, as soon as you stepped out those doors, to ring the bells. That was Chris then. Chris would use every opportunity to stall, to be an obstacle wherever possible to the then NDP government, because as he saw it, that was his job. His job was to be the opposition.

The member for St Catharines knows that our job as opposition members is to oppose. It's unusual to hear members from this assembly, and in particular the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, say that the political system is diseased, I believe—yes, I think that's what he said—is diseased, irremediably so, he argues—a frank discussion, a frank point of view that we're never going to be able to debate in this place. It's sad because it could be easier. We could make the parliamentary process a little easier. But you see, because so many of these Conservative members who are here—there are seven. Only one of them was here in the reign of the New Democrats and only he, Mr Turnbull, would remember the role they played in opposition: to obstruct the then NDP government. The sad thing is that when you get into government you forget, Monsieur Beaubien. The sad thing is that Mr Turnbull forgot the way he used to behave as an opposition member, because he's now in government and his job now, of course, is to speed things along efficiently as best you can. The sad thing is he forgot what he did then, which makes it very difficult for the opposition to do differently from the way they behaved at the time.

Mr Rae, our former Premier, recalls that he made some mistakes in opposition. He regretted the manner in which he behaved on a number of occasions. The sad thing is that we regret it when we get into government. Then we get into opposition and we do the same. Then they get into government and they do the same. It will be fascinating, should the Liberals be in government, to see some of these members, who could potentially become ministers, use—

Interjection: That's not where you're putting your money, is it?

Mr Marchese: No, that's not the point I'm making. Because some of the Liberals are new at it and they're haranguing you guys day in and day out—as we do, to be fair—they make it appear that should they get into government, they will solve all the problems. We know that many cannot be solved, but when they get into government, if they do, the opposition will get the quotes from Mr Agostino and so many others, and say, “But Dominic, you used to say this when you were in government. Now you appear to be doing the same. Why, Dominic?” The poor man hasn't been in government, is in opposition, and the cycle of government and opposition continues. That is why it's so difficult. Monsieur Beaubien, c'est très difficile, you know, to reform the system. It's sad. I've got to admit, I am saddened.

I do support the frank views from the member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, who is urging change but doesn't envision any change. I think he's right. What we witnessed at the federal level just the other day—and yes, there are political reasons—where 50 Liberal members voted with the Alliance so they can nominate and select their own chairs of their committees is an incredible event. It is historical in nature.

Yes, it is dumb, because Martin is in competition with Chrétien and it's a sad, pitiful kind of display that one sees, but it doesn't matter. The point is, through that

bickering and division between Chrétien and Monsieur Martin, we're getting some reform. My suspicion is that if Martin gets elected as Prime Minister or appointed Prime Minister by his own members, he will not make any more changes, other than the one we just witnessed the other day, which is a very useful, parliamentary reform where committee members will actually get to choose their chairperson. It is true that the governing members will always have the majority to elect whom they want, but they would be a little more empowered not to listen to the Prime Minister or, in this case, should we be doing it here, to the Premier. It's a beautiful, liberating thing. This kind of reform is good for the system, but we're not capable of it.

I have to remind some of the Conservative members that after I was out of cabinet and went into some committee meetings, I recall saying to some of my staff, “I'm in agreement with some of what the opposition is saying” with respect to some bill that we were debating—

Interjection.

Mr Marchese: Not in your time; in my time. One of the staff couldn't believe that I said I wanted to support an amendment supported by the opposition parties because it seemed to me reasonable. He was in shock. He was in shock that I would propose it. You see, we are all trained that when you are in government, you support your minister and your government at all costs. It's wrong. We become automatons.

I've witnessed these members from the Conservative Party in all the committee meetings vote in tandem, vote en bloc each and every time. New Democrats did it, Conservatives do it, Liberals did it, and it's sad. It's a pitiful display of sheepish behaviour that doesn't become parliamentarians at all, but we repeat the problem over and over again.

1710

Yes, wouldn't it be nice to be able to say, “We support this bill,” the Safe Drinking Water Act, and speed it through as best as we can? It would be nice to be able to do that. But we are not accustomed, because of the history we share in this place, to facilitate the work of government. It is not our job to facilitate the work of government. Yes, we could, if we reformed ourselves in a way that where there's agreement things could speed up a little better, but sadly, it's just not possible. It is impossible and I'm afraid, like the member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, that the job of reforming ourselves and our culture is, quite frankly, very complicated.

We could play this role. You see, I've got this letter here that our House leader, Peter Kormos, wrote to Stockwell:

“Further to this morning's House leaders' meeting, I have spoken to Ms Churley, NDP critic for the environment, about your proposed trade-off between quick passage for three government bills in exchange for committee hearings on Bill 175, An Act respecting the cost of water and waste water services, and the yet-to-be introduced clean water bill.

“Ms Churley and I agree that committee hearings on the two bills from your ministry should in no way be

compromised by other items on your House leader's agenda. You not only assured Ms Churley that extensive public hearings would occur, but indeed, you made the same commitment to the entire environmental community. Interested stakeholders are demanding to be heard, and we want to ensure that they get that opportunity.

"We are committed to participating in the full committee process on these important legislative matters, and would be pleased to work out a reasonable schedule for both public hearings and clause-by-clause consideration of the bills.

"We look forward to working out the committee schedule at the earliest possible opportunity," says our House leader to the House leader of the Conservative Party.

So here you have the problem: Chris Stockwell, the Minister of the Environment, stands up here today and says, "The NDP is just opposed to what we're doing." Yet we have a letter here that I just read and an understanding that Mr Stockwell, the Minister of the Environment, was not interested in discussing committee time until we agreed to quick passage of three government bills. Do you see the game? So when the Minister of the Environment stands up and appears to be so sincere that one is tempted to say, "Good God, we should be working with the man. He's trying his best to get this through. We're all in agreement. Why don't we work with him?" but as I read the letter—

Hon Tina R. Molinari (Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): Why didn't you? You're right. You should.

Mr Marchese: But as I read the letter, Mlle Molinari, this letter I just read on the record said that Chris Stockwell had conditions attached to this discussion. He said that if we passed three other bills quickly, we then could deal with this other issue in a different way or more expeditiously or—

Hon Mrs Molinari: It sounds like a good plan.

Mr Marchese: But he didn't say that, you see. He bundled the discussion in a way that makes it very difficult for our party to agree. The point I'm making is that here we have the supposed sincerity of the Minister of the Environment making it appear to the public watching that he is trying desperately hard, in all sincerity, to get a three-party agreement to move this thing along, but one party disagrees, and what can he do when he's desperately trying to bring us together to pass this Safe Drinking Water Act that is so good, the best in the world, and why would anybody impede the process of speeding up this bill that is so good?

It is sad, I say to those of you watching this parliamentary channel, that the parliamentary process is complicated, if not diseased, not permitting us to work together from time to time on bills we can agree on. Dear listeners all, we are all responsible here. We are all at fault. We have all done it in government and out of government. I wish it were different and maybe some day you, the public, will demand it, and maybe some day we

might get a different kind of voting system that will make it impossible to have majority governments that will do what they want to do because they have a majority. Often we argue, and some say and defend, that minority governments are the best thing that could happen to any province, any country, because in a minority government you are very careful how you behave as a government, because you desperately rely on another political party for your survival, and therefore are cautious and more responsible and fair in your presentation of bills.

I think people need to address those issues, need to look at that. Majority governments often do not respond well to the majority of people in this province and in this country.

People should reflect on that as they come close to elections in terms of who they want to represent their constituency, whether or not they want majority governments or whether or not, as New Democrats propose, we move to a different kind of proportional representation system that guarantees that no vote is ever wasted, that no matter where you are and whoever you vote for, that vote will count. If we select a proportional representation system where we can agree that a portion of the seats is allotted on the basis of how much popular support a political party gets, then no vote is ever wasted. Your vote will count. More and more of you are likely to participate and get involved in elections and vote because that vote will matter. A proportional representation system will almost guarantee that we will not have majority governments, and that's something most of you could argue for and defend and urge your political parties to move to.

These are the kinds of suggestions I wanted to make on this suffocation motion. That's what closure motions are: the desire to end debate on any discussion before us. I'm happy to know this will go to committee hearings where a number of people will be able to have their say, to identify areas of weakness of the bill, hopefully where government will listen and improvements will be made.

Mr Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge): I'm pleased to take part in the time allocation motion during the second reading debate on the proposed Safe Drinking Water Act, introduced on October 29, 2002, by the Honourable Chris Stockwell, Ontario's Minister of the Environment.

The development of this proposed bill was guided by 50 recommendations put forward by part two of the report of the Walkerton inquiry. In his report, Commissioner O'Connor envisioned that a Safe Drinking Water Act would gather in one place all the legislation and regulations relating to the treatment and distribution of drinking water.

To quote Commissioner O'Connor, recommendation 67 states, "The provincial government should enact a Safe Drinking Water Act to deal with matters related to the treatment and distribution of drinking water." The proposed Safe Drinking Water Act brings these recommendations together in one proposed bill.

My comments today will focus on those merits of the bill so far not covered by other members. Let me begin

with the purpose of the proposed Safe Drinking Water Act, which is twofold: (1) to recognize that the people of Ontario are entitled to expect their drinking water to be safe; (2) to provide for the protection of human health through the regulation of drinking water systems and drinking water testing.

Some of the standard provisions of the proposed Safe Drinking Water Act have been replicated or transferred from the Environmental Protection Act and the Ontario Water Resources Act. These provisions provide authority to establish standard appeals processes to deal with the new requirements around licensing and approvals, and authority to establish regulations and provide for fees.

But there are also a number of new provisions in the proposed act. Under the proposed act, the Minister of the Environment is required to submit an annual State of Ontario's Drinking Water report to the Legislature. It is the intent to include in this report the status of drinking water quality standards and the quality of the drinking water in Ontario; the quality of raw water supplies and a review of source protection initiatives; drinking water standards, including discussions of new and emerging information on the pathogens; the results—that is to say, the pass-failure rates—of inspections and accreditation audits; a summary of enforcement activities; and any other matter prescribed by regulation.

1720

Another new provision is a clear statement regarding the Ministry of the Environment's responsibility as the lead ministry for drinking water policy. The proposed Safe Drinking Water Act will also take precedence, meaning that the prescribed drinking water quality standards within the proposed act will apply to all other acts, regulations or bylaws.

Another important element of the proposed act is its emphasis on ensuring the public's access to information. The proposed Safe Drinking Water Act calls for an annual report to the Legislature, an annual report by the chief inspector, an annual report by the accreditation bodies, and public access to the contents of the operational plan and the results of laboratory audits and operating authority audits.

The Ministry of the Environment will continue to find ways to keep the public informed about water quality, including the use of electronic systems such as the ministry's Web site, which currently includes up-to-date information on adverse water quality on a site-by-site basis across Ontario.

An extension of the proposed act's focus on public information are its provisions for notifying the public if and when adverse drinking water test results occur. The proposed act requires an operating authority, an owner and a laboratory to immediately report all adverse test results for drinking water to the Ministry of the Environment and the medical officer of health. Where an adverse test result is reported and the local medical officer of health determines that there is a health risk, the officer is responsible for issuing a "boil water" advisory which notifies the public of the problem. Failure to notify

the public of an adverse test result is a serious offence under the proposed act and subject to heavy fines and jail terms.

If passed into law, the proposed Safe Drinking Water Act will set a benchmark and provide an even stronger foundation for safe drinking water. It is an integral part of this government's commitment to its clean water strategy.

Operation Clean Water is the most comprehensive strategy ever undertaken in Ontario to ensure that our drinking water is clean and safe. Launched in August 2000, it focuses province-wide efforts to improve water quality and delivery in Ontario. Over the next two years this government will invest more than half a billion dollars 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.

And while there is still work to be done, this government continues to make significant progress on several other goals of its clean water strategy. For example, earlier this fall the government began consultations with key stakeholders on watershed-based planning issues. Other clean water commitments include conducting groundwater studies to support the development of source water plans. These are just two examples, both of which also fall under the government's Smart Growth umbrella.

Smart Growth is the government's overreaching vision for promoting and planning for growth that we're expecting over the next 20 and 30 years. It's a vision for creating a strong economy, building vibrant communities and promoting a healthy environment. It's as relevant to rural areas and remote communities as it is to urban centres.

The proposed bill is a reflection of the extensive consultation process that began last August when the Premier and Minister of the Environment announced the government's commitment to work with stakeholders to shape the development of a Safe Drinking Water Act.

As members are aware, there was a 30-day public posting of the proposed components of the bill on the Environmental Bill of Rights registry. In addition, this government has recently held several public consultation sessions in London, Ottawa and Thunder Bay. As well, ongoing meetings are continuing between Ministry of the Environment staff and key stakeholders. Some 78 comments were received in response to the posting on the Environmental Bill of Rights registry. Those comments were given careful consideration as the government finalized this bill.

As I mentioned in my opening remarks, by bringing together 50 of Commissioner O'Connor's part two recommendations into one proposed bill, we have adopted a holistic approach, an approach that recognizes that the whole is greater than the sum of the individual parts.

The proposed bill before you today is a bill with clarity and a bill with clout. Most important, it is a demonstration of this government's unwavering commitment to ensure that Ontario residents have the safest, cleanest drinking water in the world.

The momentum is strong, and we are moving forward to complete full implementation of Commissioner O'Connor's recommendations. I urge all members to support this proposed bill.

Hon Carl DeFaria (Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I ask this House to welcome a delegation from Azores, Portugal, led by Dr Victor Cruz, leader of the Social Democratic Party of the regional government of the Azores, and Mr Laurentino Esteves, an MP of the government of Portugal, plus members of the Casa dos Açores here in Toronto. I would ask the House to recognize their presence here.

The Deputy Speaker: That is not a point of order, but we welcome you to our Legislature.

Mr Levac: On the same point of order, Mr Speaker: I'm absolutely convinced that the members on the other side would accept Tony Ruprecht's greetings to the delegation as well. Thank you very much.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. Further debate?

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): Here we go again: another time allocation bill. I hesitate in some ways to mention it, because it seems to produce all kinds of interest and shouting on the other side, but I think if I sat on the government side I wouldn't want someone to talk about time allocation either.

If again—and I'm going to report daily—it almost is a daily event to give a report card, I would remind the members who are here and perhaps weren't here yesterday that during the Davis-Miller era, three out of 292 bills were passed using time allocation. During the David Peterson minority government, one out of 129 bills had time allocation. During the majority government of David Peterson, three out of 183 bills had time allocation. Under the Harris-Eves era, we have now hit 100 bills exactly out of 226. So it's an anniversary of some sort that roughly 100 times in the past seven years we've had democracy suspended in order to get the bill forward.

1730

Again, this is a bill that I think would have been an ideal one for more consultation with municipalities, but instead, time allocation provides an opportunity for the whiz kids in the backroom—the people whom nobody voted for but this is a great, interesting experiment for them—to have their way on getting a bill through. I fervently believe that all legislation should be drafted and done by individuals who have to knock on doors and be elected and be accountable to their citizens. Time allocation suspends the opportunity for the democracy to take place.

So we're now at exactly 100 time-allocated bills. No one on the government side of the House should be very proud of it.

Bill 195, the Safe Drinking Water Act, an act that took two years to come forward to address, quite frankly, the

horrible situation that arose at Walkerton—Justice O'Connor made a number of key recommendations, some of which are included in this bill, some of which are not. I would note that he made it very clear. Judge O'Connor states, "Protecting our drinking water sources must be a key part of the system for ensuring the safety of Ontario's drinking water." Protection for water sources in here doesn't exist, and yet it's a significant issue. It does not make sense to me to have to put together a system to extract metals or to extract chemicals from a water system if we could have prevented them going into the ground. There is lots and lots of that happening.

The member for Sarnia shared with this Legislature earlier today the issue of the hazardous waste that's going into Sarnia. Now, the waste going into Sarnia is not a Sarnia issue. It is an Ontario issue and perhaps even a North American issue. That pollution that goes into that groundwater, particularly near a large body of water—when we allow the pollution to go into the ground, we don't know exactly where it will show up or exactly even what's going in, unfortunately. Our environmental laws have become a disgrace in Ontario.

We had a similar situation with the Richmond landfill site in my community, the Greater Napanee area but coming into Hastings county, where this government is trying to expedite getting the garbage into the ground. I sense, at times, that the government is a voice for industry rather than a voice for the people. There is something fundamentally wrong when a large company can come forward and say, "We want to bury hundreds of thousands of tonnes of garbage a year in this site," and the onus seems to be on the community that will be affected to prove it wrong. The company has all kinds of money to put forward their case and to hire all kinds of experts. The people who drink the water in the vicinity of that dump—and that dump, by the way, is near Lake Ontario. The vicinity of the dump is everything downstream through Ontario, Quebec and the Maritimes. Whatever goes into the St Lawrence River profoundly affects it. But if it goes into the ground in Tyendinaga township or in the Mohawk-Bay of Quinte reserve or in Deseronto or in Napanee, it can't be removed easily. For people on well systems, there is no easy solution to doing it.

Here we have the people who are concerned about their drinking water and their children's and their grandchildren's drinking water, and they have to have yard sales and fundraisers to try to mount a defence and try to hire some experts to testify against a multi-million dollar company. The government has that responsibility. The government has the responsibility to diminish the amount of garbage going into the groundwater.

The recycling program in Ontario is not well supported by this provincial government; it was at one time, but it is not now. It is perceived by some people as cheaper to simply take the garbage and bury it. But that buried garbage is a ticking time bomb, and it is cheaper to not have to deal with it later. Deal with it now. In fact, I will point to Walkerton, where in order for the Ministry

of Environment to save money, they cut water inspection, they cut people, they cut the tests. We see the damage that has been done to Walkerton purely from a property viewpoint is about \$65 million. That doesn't count the tragedy of the deaths and the 2,000 people who now have permanent medical problems, but is strictly in terms of dollars: \$65 million in devalued property, bringing in bottled water etc. It has been said by many that this government knows the cost of everything but the value of nothing. We have to protect groundwater at source.

There is also an argument made in this bill that all the direct water costs should go right to the individual user. There are economies of scale that come into that theory. When you've got a large urban area, there isn't a big difference in the cost whether you're going to serve 200,000 people or 400,000 people. You're going to have the same testing at the labs, and you're going to have the same number of people working in the plant that's doing the treatment and so forth. But in my community, which is typical of communities all over Ontario, we have hamlets and little villages and towns like Ameliasburg, Bayside, Wellington and Batawa, where there are maybe only 30 or 35 homes on a system. If they have to pay full cost, the system will not be able to operate. What will happen in those communities?

We don't make the user pay everything directly for hospitals, thank goodness, although I hesitate to mention it because the government will say, "Maybe that's the way we're moving." We have a universal health care system that we value. We had a universal electricity system, but things have severely deteriorated on that in the last few months.

There used to be an expression, "The lights are on but nobody's home." The expression now is, "The lights are off but somebody's home." People are turning off their lights and living in the dark because, as I'm sure the member for Brant will concur, they can't afford to turn the lights on. So the joke has become the reality in Ontario. We don't have universal electricity as we used to. Clean air: we don't require everyone to pay to clean up pollution.

If we've got a little hamlet like Ameliasburg and we've allowed a company 200 miles away to put garbage into a dump that got into the groundwater and filtered through—and this isn't the case with Ameliasburg—I don't believe it's fair that the residents in that little hamlet would have to pay to clean up water that the provincial government allowed to be polluted in a distant spot. We're all in this together. We're not a divided Ontario, from the viewpoint of Dalton McGuinty and the Liberal Party. We're all equal citizens in this together, and we will look after each other.

We also face the reality that not everyone in Ontario has an expense account and there are people who are struggling. I've mentioned in the past people on the Ontario disability support program who at the very peak receive about \$11,600 a year, \$7,000 below the poverty level. Is water going to become a luxury for them? That's unfathomable in this province. We need to realize and remember that we have a responsibility as a province to

ensure that all our citizens have access to affordable, clean water.

Privatization is put forward as the solution to every problem. History over the last year or two has shown that's clearly not the solution to everything. Perhaps there's a role for privatization in these water plants, but ultimately I believe strongly, and the Ontario Liberals believe, that the municipality has to have the ultimate responsibility for it. As we're learning, if the municipality has the responsibility and the ratepayer has a concern, they can contact their councillor, their reeve, their mayor or someone involved in the operation of it and there's accountability for it from that municipal council.

No municipal council, school board or elected body likes to put up taxes. They do like to provide clean water, but they don't like to put up taxes. They know there will be questions and concerns to them if they increase taxes. On the other hand, when you have a private company owning, operating and totally responsible for a water system, their only accountability is to their shareholders. They have no concern about what the general public thinks or wants. If we want to think about what it would be like to have a private company owning and operating the water system, I would suggest that you think about what it would be like to have Enron operating our public water system in Ontario. We're going to see artificially created shortages; we're going to see shortcuts. The answer is, water is such a fundamental human need and right that we need to maintain the responsibility through municipal government.

1740

There's also the other interesting aspect of privatization: if a private company owns a water system and all of the works associated with it, is there anything to prevent them from taking and selling the water out of country, out of province? Absolutely nothing. It will be the anything-for-a-buck water company. And there is a day coming when I believe that water will be more valuable than gasoline in our society.

Mr Levac: It already is.

Mr Parsons: It already is; that's right. Much as I don't like paying 70-some cents a litre for gasoline—and I'm not convinced it's worth 70 cents a litre—I do notice in the corner stores where a litre of water is \$1.49. So water is more valuable, and as much as I'd hate to get along without gasoline, I could do it, but I can't get along without water. This is a fundamental resource that the Ontario Liberals do not believe should be totally in the control of a private company—and there's no assurance that it would be an Ontario company, or even a Canadian company.

We would like to see in this bill—I know we have time allocation, and I know they're not interested in really making any changes to it—but we strongly, strongly believe that public water has to remain in public hands. This bill doesn't do it.

It's interesting that in the draft the government left the responsibility for the water with the municipality. When the draft went around the province, and everyone said,

“You know, they’re on the right track; this is a good thing. At least we’re going to know that we maintained public control,” but when the bill came to the Legislature, that was yanked out of it, gone, in this “private industry always does things better.” We simply don’t have the track record, whether it be WorldCom, Enron or any number of companies, to say that private industry necessarily does it better, whether it’s health care, highways—again, Highway 407 that we sold off is now a joke, for the cost to drive it. It’s very good for some private—

Mr Levac: Big profits.

Mr Parsons: Big profits for people in other provinces and in other countries, while the Ontario taxpayer is being ripped off.

If you sell the waterworks of a municipality, a private company can pay any price they want. They can pay four, five or 10 times what it’s worth because they can simply recoup the money by putting on exorbitant prices for the water. And are you going to have a choice if you want that water to come out your tap or not? No. We’re watching now, with electricity, where the companies are moving very, very quickly to cut off people’s electricity; they’re not giving them any latitude or discussion.

The part in here dealing with the Safe Drinking Water Act that they have included is, by and large, commendable. I wish I could support it, but I and the Ontario Liberals will not support time allocation that stifles the voice of the people in our community, the experts that are out on the streets.

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): You’re an expert, Ernie; you’re an engineer.

Mr Parsons: I’m an individual who believes in democracy, and when democracy is being removed, as is being done regularly—maybe democracy isn’t efficient. Probably the cheapest form of government is dictatorship—

Mr Levac: Benevolent dictatorship.

Mr Parsons: Benevolent dictatorship. That’s not what we have, though. A dictatorship is fundamentally wrong. We need democracy.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): I want to say to the members in the chamber here this afternoon, to the folks out there and members across the way that they want to be wary when they listen to the House leader and Minister of the Environment when he gets up in this place and says to them, “It’s really very simple. All we have to do is pass this bill. Don’t get in the way; let’s make it happen. All of a sudden all the water across Ontario is going to be protected and we’ll all be all right and we won’t have to worry any more.”

I remind everybody that this is the government that brought you Walkerton in the first place. This is the government that’s delivering to you, as we speak here in this place, the hydro debacle. So when they get up on their high horse in this place and complain and criticize the opposition for simply doing their job, I would say to people, think twice about that, because it’s never as simple as they would present it.

The first question, and probably the most important question, that the people of Ontario have to put to this government for the protection and provision of clean water is why we got ourselves into this mess in the first place, how we find ourselves here today having to deal with this kind of legislation.

If you remember back, it wasn’t long into their mandate when the government of Ontario in 1995 began to cut services, began to cut personnel in government, because they didn’t think government was necessary to protect the kinds of very vital resources we all depend on, such as water. We in Canada and Ontario took it for granted that our water would always be safe, that we could just walk into the kitchen and turn on the tap, put a glass under it, fill it up and have a drink and that it would be fine. In fact, we probably had grounds upon which to be thinking that, given the resources that were put in time after time by government after government at provincial and federal levels to make sure the water we had to drink, from the source to the plants that purified that water to the delivery of that water to our houses, was in fact the best that was possible given the technology of the day at that particular point in time.

Alas, in 1995 all that began to fall apart. The resources just weren’t there any more. The government of the day decided that government had no business being involved in that business, that if they simply turned more of it over to the private sector and got rid of a lot of problematic bureaucrats who simply drove around in their trucks wasting gas and public money, we would all be better protected.

To suggest for a second that now, after Walkerton and after the downsizing we’ve seen in government services and the debacle we’re experiencing under hydro, we somehow pass this bill today and tomorrow we’re all safe again in fact belies the truth.

This government is sorely short of resources. The big question that communities are beginning to ask out there as they look at what’s being presented to them by way of what they need to do to protect the water their citizens drink is, who’s going to pay for it? I would suggest the government needs to be talking about that, needs to be clear and upfront about exactly who’s going to be expected to pay for all of the infrastructure and the oversight that’s going to be necessary so that all of us here in this place who support legislation to protect the water, clean drinking water, in this province—so that in fact it is indeed going to happen. The big question everybody out there needs to be asking this government is, where is the money and, ultimately, who’s going to pay?

The Deputy Speaker: Mr Stockwell has moved government notice of motion number 61. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say “aye.”

All those opposed, 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 1749 to 1759.

The Deputy Speaker: Please let me interrupt your conversations.

All those in favour will please rise one at a time and be recognized 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.
Chudleigh, Ted	Johns, Helen	Spina, Joseph
Clark, Brad	Kells, Morley	Sterling, Norman W.
Clement, Tony	Klees, Frank	Stockwell, Chris
Coburn, Brian	Marland, Margaret	Tascona, Joseph N.
DeFaria, Carl	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tsubouchi, David H.
Dunlop, Garfield	Maves, Bart	Turnbull, David
Ecker, Janet	Mazzilli, Frank	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Elliott, Brenda	McDonald, AL	Wilson, Jim
Galt, Doug	Miller, Norm	Witmer, Elizabeth
Gilchrist, Steve	Molinari, Tina R.	Wood, Bob
Gill, Raminder	Munro, Julia	
Guzzo, Garry J.	Murdoch, Bill	

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

Nays

Bartolucci, Rick	Dombrowsky, Leona	Martel, Shelley
Bisson, Gilles	Duncan, Dwight	Martin, Tony
Bountrogianni, Marie	Gerretsen, John	McMeekin, Ted
Bradley, James J.	Gravelle, Michael	Parsons, Ernie
Brown, Michael A.	Hampton, Howard	Peters, Steve
Caplan, David	Kennedy, Gerard	Phillips, Gerry
Churley, Marilyn	Kormos, Peter	Prue, Michael
Cleary, John C.	Kwinter, Monte	Ramsay, David
Conway, Sean G.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Ruprecht, Tony
Cordiano, Joseph	Levac, David	Sergio, Mario
Crozier, Bruce	Marchese, Rosario	Smitherman, George

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 46; the nays are 33.

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

It being after 6 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until 6:45 this evening.

The House adjourned at 1801.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

**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: Joseph Spina
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

CONTENTS

Wednesday 6 November 2002

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Highway 69	
Mr Bartolucci.....	2855
Take Our Kids to Work Day	
Mr Sampson.....	2855
Hydro rates	
Mrs Dombrowsky.....	2855
Mr Ramsay.....	2856
Panorama of Lights	
Mr Barrett.....	2856
Beck 3 generating facility	
Mr Bradley.....	2856
Ramadan	
Mr Wood.....	2856
School boards	
Ms Churley.....	2857
Agnes Jacks	
Mr McDonald.....	2857

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

Standing committee on government agencies	
The Speaker.....	2857
Report deemed adopted.....	2857

FIRST READINGS

Retail Sales Tax Relief for Amateur Youth Sports Act, 2002, Bill 207, Mr Sampson	
Agreed to.....	2858
Mr Sampson.....	2858
Mr Duncan.....	2858
The Speaker.....	2858

ORAL QUESTIONS

Hydro rates	
Mr McGuinty.....	2860, 2861
Mr Eves.....	2861, 2866, 2869
Ms Churley.....	2866
Ms Martel.....	2868
Mr Marchese.....	2869
Hydro deregulation	
Mr Hampton.....	2862, 2863
Mr Eves.....	2862, 2863
Racial profiling	
Mr McGuinty.....	2863
Mr Eves.....	2864
Municipalities	
Mr McDonald.....	2864
Mrs Molinari.....	2864

Ontario Power Generation

Mr Bryant.....	2865
Mr Eves.....	2865
Long-term care	
Mr Hardeman.....	2865
Mr Newman.....	2865
Hazardous waste	
Ms Di Cocco.....	2866
Mr Stockwell.....	2867
Ontario economy	
Mr O'Toole.....	2867
Mr Turnbull.....	2867
Deferral of OMB appeals	
Mr McGuinty.....	2868, 2869
Mr Hodgson.....	2868, 2869
Road safety	
Mr Gill.....	2868
Mr Sterling.....	2868
Biosolid management	
Mr Murdoch.....	2869
Mrs Johns.....	2870

PETITIONS

Hydro rates	
Mr Cleary.....	2870
Mr Arnott.....	2871
Mr Sergio.....	2872
Mr O'Toole.....	2872
Adoption disclosure	
Ms Churley.....	2870, 2873
Electoral boundaries	
Mr O'Toole.....	2871
Highway 69	
Mr Bartolucci.....	2871
Education funding	
Mr Marchese.....	2871
Ms Churley.....	2872
Competitive electricity market	
Mr Lalonde.....	2873

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Time allocation, government notice of motion number 61, Mr Stockwell	
Mr Stockwell.....	2873
Mr Conway.....	2878
Ms Churley.....	2880
Mr Hardeman.....	2884
Mr Bradley.....	2885
Mr Marchese.....	2887
Mr Martiniuk.....	2889
Mr Parsons.....	2891
Mr Martin.....	2893
Agreed to.....	2894

OTHER BUSINESS

Visitors

The Speaker.....	2857
Mr Ruprecht.....	2858
Mr Marchese.....	2858
Mr Hodgson.....	2858
Mr Flaherty.....	2858
Mrs Witmer.....	2858
Mr Colle.....	2858
Mr Martin.....	2858
Mr Miller.....	2858
Mr Gilchrist.....	2870

Credit unions

Mr O'Toole.....	2858
Mr Smitherman.....	2859
Mr Martin.....	2860

TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Mercredi 6 novembre 2002

PREMIÈRE LECTURE

Loi de 2002 visant à alléger la taxe de vente au détail en matière de sport amateur pour la jeunesse, projet de loi 207, M. Sampson	
Adoptée.....	2858

QUESTIONS ORALES

Déréglementation de l'électricité	
M. Bisson.....	2866