



**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)**

Tuesday 19 November 2002

Mardi 19 novembre 2002

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 19 November 2002

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 19 novembre 2002

The House met at 1330.

Prayers.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

PREMIER OF ONTARIO

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): The Premier of this province is going to be making a visit to Sudbury this coming Thursday for the annual PC fundraiser. We welcome him to Sudbury because it's the first time he will have been there since he became Premier. The people of Sudbury are going to want to know from this Premier why he would not meet with the Crash 69 committee to discuss the appalling state of Highway 69; why he won't meet with people like Ron Henderson, who has lost his sister and his twin nephews; why he won't meet with people like Rita Pulici, who lost her son; why he won't meet with people like Mario Grossi, who lost his mother and two cousins.

The people of Sudbury also want to know why the Premier, the Minister of Transportation and the Minister of Northern Development and Mines have not taken advantage of the Canada strategic infrastructure project to make Highway 69 from Sudbury to Parry Sound the number one priority. In fact, if this government thinks that the people of Sudbury will be fooled by their rhetoric, you're sadly mistaken. We want the Premier to come to Sudbury, commit to a start date for Highway 69 four-laning from Sudbury and give us the timeline for the entire project, and then we want him to show Sudburians the letter he sent to the federal minister asking the federal minister to make this project the number one priority of this particular infrastructure program.

ALLISTER JOHNSTON

Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka): I rise today to recognize an extraordinary individual, Allister Johnston, on the occasion of his 94th birthday. Mr Johnston's commitment and dedication to both our province and our country have been unwavering. He served our country proudly, retiring from the Canadian army in 1945 with the distinguished rank of major. During World War II, Major Johnston served as the commander of the north armoured regiment, the Algonquins.

Following his service in the armed forces, Mr Johnston founded an insurance company in South River, which is still operated by his two sons, John and Peter.

Among his many endeavours, Allister Johnston was a municipal councillor, the chairman of the South River school board and a past president of the Canadian Legion.

Mr Johnston was also elected as MPP for Parry Sound in 1948 and served his constituents with dedication and enthusiasm for 24 years. In 1964, Mr Johnston was appointed to the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission. To the railway's employees he was affectionately known as "Major Ally." His many accomplishments include spearheading the expansion of the successful Ontario Northland communications division.

Mr Johnston is predeceased by his wife, Margaret, and together they have three children, John, Lynne and Peter.

Allister Johnston resides with his daughter, Lynne, and remains active in his community. I would like to stand and congratulate Mr Johnston on reaching this significant milestone and express my appreciation for his contributions over the years to his community, our province and the country.

VISUDYNE TREATMENT

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): In May of this year, the Ontario Minister of Health, after months of questioning in this Legislature and horror stories in the media forced him to capitulate to demands to meet the needs of individuals afflicted with macular degeneration, finally announced that funding would be provided from the Ontario government for the treatment known as Visudyne. What the minister neglected to mention in his announcement was that the new policy included strict eligibility criteria that effectively exclude 80% to 90% of the patients who are candidates for the treatment.

A 53-year-old resident of St Catharines who suffers from macular degeneration was informed that she does not qualify for funding from the Ontario government because her affliction is not age-related, even though she will have to endure the same sight loss that someone of a more advanced age would experience.

What the minister left out of his announcement was a stipulation that potential candidates must have 50% membrane loss in order to be eligible for the Visudyne treatment. In effect, this means that patients in Niagara and across the province must suffer from this debilitating disease until their eyesight reaches a so-called acceptable state of disrepair.

I call upon the Minister of Health of Ontario to change his unfair restrictions on macular degeneration patients and allow them to receive treatment in a timely fashion,

and to reimburse those who have received treatment in the past and have had to pay for it from their own pocket.

DOCTOR SHORTAGE

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): The Eves government is directly responsible for the severe doctor shortage that is jeopardizing the lives of people all across Ontario.

Hamilton is one of the largest cities in this province, and our citizens have been especially hard hit. On December 9, two more doctors from the Hamilton area will be retiring. One doctor alone serves more than 1,500 patients. Many patients are seniors with chronic health problems who require the ongoing services of a family physician. They've tried to find a new doctor in Hamilton and they've tried to find a new doctor outside Hamilton, but the reality is that doctors simply aren't accepting new patients.

Incredibly, at the same time as thousands of patients in my community need a doctor, there are 3,000 internationally trained doctors living in Ontario who are willing to work. It is unbelievable that the Eves government has allocated only 10 spots for family medicine and only three out of a possible 10 candidates have been accepted to fast-track into family medicine.

Flu season is upon us, and this winter hundreds of sick kids and frail seniors will be forced into already overcrowded emergency rooms in Hamilton. Your incompetence is pushing an already dangerously overloaded health care system to the breaking point.

Timely, effective medical services are the very heart of our medical system. No one should be without these life-saving services. Stand up today and tell the thousands of seniors and families in Hamilton who need a doctor today how you're going to resolve this crisis.

SAUBLE SANDPIPERS

Mr Bill Murdoch (Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound): I rise in the House today to recognize a long-standing club in my riding, since 1977, the Sauble Sandpipers seniors club. I would like to congratulate president Marjorie Lipka and all the countless volunteers who make up this outstanding organization.

I had the pleasure of attending their 25th anniversary in October. The organization works countless hours to help the different causes in our area and is made up of over 160 members. The committee members and volunteers are to be commended for their hard work and dedication throughout the year in preparation for the various events.

Over the years, the club has generously supported all the area hospitals, as well as many other community groups requesting funding. They have supported the Salvation Army, the daycare centre and recently donated \$6,000 to the local fire department for a new truck.

The Sandpipers hold two large craft shows a year and a smaller Christmas craft show that supports the Sandpipers club and the lawn bowling club.

The association is to be praised for their ongoing contribution and dedication to local initiatives. A project they have recently taken on is offering full support to the new medical clinic in Sauble Beach. They are also hoping to make repairs to the local community centre they use, where they play bridge, shuffleboard and euchre.

This is an excellent, much-needed organization in our area, and I'm proud to be able to partake in their events. Again, I congratulate the Sauble Sandpipers on their 25th anniversary.

1340

SCHOOL BOARDS

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex): The Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board has petitioned the Ministry of Education for \$140,000 in emergency transportation funding to cover unexpected increases. The Greater Essex County District School Board is over-budget on transportation by about \$90,000.

The boards have done everything they can. They've staggered school hours. They've shared all the bus routes possible. Minister of Education, last June's budget stated that your government was committed to "investing an additional \$20 million to assist with student transportation costs and support the development of a new approach to student transportation funding that will ensure school boards work together to provide safe and efficient transportation for their students."

These two school boards, along with the Conseil scolaire de district des écoles catholiques du Sud-Ouest, have been leaders in bus route sharing and creating flexible school hours for optimal bus use. Yet they can't make ends meet. School bus funding has been frozen at 1997 levels despite increasing wages and skyrocketing vehicle, gasoline and insurance costs.

You have to put your money where your mouth is, Minister. I insist that you act today to ensure that no school board in Ontario goes without the funding it needs and that every student who requires a bus ride is able to get to school in a timely manner.

POLICE ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): I rise in the House today to introduce members of the Durham Regional Police Association who are here at Queen's Park visiting members. They are among the many delegates from the Police Association of Ontario attending the sixth annual legislative day. The representatives from Durham region include the association's new president Doug Cavanaugh; vice-president-elect Tom Bell; secretary-treasurer Mark McConkey; and director Rick Walsh.

It's a privilege to once again meet representatives of Ontario's 20,000 front-line police personnel at Queen's Park. Legislative day is an excellent opportunity to discuss specific concerns such as courthouse security recently in Durham.

Some of the general issues of interest to the Police Association of Ontario, I'm sure, include centralized recruitment, the DNA data bank issue, staffing, funding and of course policing standards. The association also supported Bill 191, the Highway Traffic Act amendment regarding the protection of police and other emergency workers stopped at the shoulders of Ontario's highways in the course of their duties.

I understand the association is also urging the federal government to overhaul their prison and parole systems to ensure there are meaningful consequences for offenders and to reinforce public confidence in our criminal justice as well as youth justice system. In other words, they are calling for an end to the so-called Club Fed prison environment. I'm sure we applaud them for their initiative and efforts and the work the association does on behalf of front-line officers and the communities they serve. I have visited the new provincial jail in Lindsay and can assure you it is anything but Club Fed.

I commend Police Association of Ontario president Bob Baltin; chair, Brenda Lawson; administrator, Bruce Miller; and the board members for all they have done in their organization of this legislative day. I recommend all members who attend to meet with their association to respect the work they do for our communities.

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Today I seek unanimous consent to have all members in the House wear the Club Fed pin so that the PAO and all the police forces under that umbrella will clearly know that everyone in this House believes criminals who do a crime should be placed in the appropriate institution to do their time.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): The member has asked if we can wear the pin he referred to today. Is there unanimous consent? Agreed.

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'm asking for the unanimous consent of the Legislature to support a resolution that the Ontario Legislature oppose the federal government's changes to the disability tax credit and support the Canadian Paraplegic Association's request that the former rules governing the tax credit be restored.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent? I'm afraid I heard some noes.

Mr Dave Levac (Brant): I rise in the House today to speak on behalf of Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberals to recognize the Police Association of Ontario day here at Queen's Park. Today the members of the PAO have joined us including President Bob Baltin, Bruce Miller, Brenda Lawson, Jim Mauro, Walter Tomasik and Byron Smith, who met with Dalton and myself earlier today, as well as Len Ellins and Dianne Careswell from my riding of Brant. The three of us grew up in the same neighbourhood in Eagle Place. We welcome them and all PAO members and thank them for joining us today.

We are pleased to have this opportunity to highlight the important work of the Police Association of Ontario. The PAO was formed in 1933 and represented constables

in 25 communities across Ontario. Today, the Police Association of Ontario represents more than 20,000 front-line police officers and civilian members of police services in more than 66 police associations across Ontario. The PAO is the unified voice of front-line police personnel across Ontario and an integral part of policing in our communities.

We just want to stress the importance of our front-line police officers, who put their lives at risk for the safety and security of Ontario families. We want to thank them for their dedication and commitment to policing in Ontario.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank the families of the courageous officers who support them as they carry out their important work in our communities to keep them safe. It is vital that we recognize the value of these officers who work with the police association and work to uphold the honour of the police profession and elevate the standards of policing.

We also recognize the important role our civilian staff play in keeping our police services running smoothly and effectively, especially communication and dispatch personnel.

Once again, on behalf of Dalton and the Liberal caucus, thank you to the PAO for keeping our communities safe and secure.

DIWALI

Mr Bob Wood (London West): I rise today to draw to the attention of the House that over 350 London area Hindus celebrated Diwali on November 16 with a dinner and show. Diwali or Deepawali, the most pan-Indian of all Hindu festivals, is a festival of lights symbolizing the victory of righteousness and the lifting of spiritual darkness. It commemorates Lord Rama's return to his kingdom Ayodhya after completing his 14-year exile. Twinkling oil lamps, or diyas, light up every Hindu home in India, and fireworks displays take place across the country. The Goddess Lakshmi, the symbol of wealth and prosperity, is also worshipped on this occasion.

The festival also marks the start of the Hindu New Year. At this time, most Hindu homes worship Lord Ganesha, the symbol of auspiciousness and wisdom. Spring cleaning and decorative designs for homes are the order of the day. Family members come together to offer prayers, distribute candies and light up their homes.

Diwali's message of the triumph of light over darkness and of good over evil gives hope and encouragement to everyone. I know that all members of this House will join with me in wishing Hindus across Ontario and the world a Happy New Year and a warm "Namaste."

SPECIAL REPORT, ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSIONER OF ONTARIO

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I beg to inform the House that today I have laid upon the table the special

report of the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario, entitled Climate Change: Is the Science Sound?

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

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka): I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on general government and move its adoption.

Clerk at the Table (Ms Lisa Freedman): Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

Bill 177, An Act to amend the Municipal Act, 2001, the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, and other acts consequential to or related to the enactment of the Municipal Act, 2001, and to revise the Territorial Division Act.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed.

The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE AND SOCIAL POLICY

Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant): I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on justice and social policy and move its adoption.

Clerk at the Table (Ms Lisa Freedman): Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

Bill 179, An Act to promote government efficiency and to improve services to taxpayers by amending or repealing certain acts and by enacting one new act.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Shall the report be received and adopted?

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1349 to 1354.

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

Ayes

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

Nays

Agostino, Dominic	Colle, Mike	Kwinter, Monte
Bartolucci, Rick	Cordiano, Joseph	Levac, David
Bisson, Gilles	Crozier, Bruce	Marchese, Rosario
Bountrogianni, Marie	Curling, Alvin	Martin, Tony
Boyer, Claudette	Di Cocco, Caroline	McLeod, Lyn
Bradley, James J.	Dombrowsky, Leona	McMeekin, Ted
Brown, Michael A.	Duncan, Dwight	Patten, Richard
Bryant, Michael	Gerretsen, John	Peters, Steve
Caplan, David	Gravelle, Michael	Phillips, Gerry
Christopherson, David	Hampton, Howard	Prue, Michael
Churley, Marilyn	Hoy, Pat	Pupatello, Sandra
Cleary, John C.	Kormos, Peter	Ramsay, David

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 48; the nays are 36.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Pursuant to the order of the House dated Monday, October 28, 2002, the bill is ordered for third reading.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

MUNICIPALITY OF CHATHAM-KENT ACT, 2002

Mr Beaubien moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr12, An Act respecting the Municipality of Chatham-Kent.

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

Pursuant to the standing order 84, this bill stands referred to the standing committee on regulations and private bills.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'd like to take this opportunity for all members to welcome members of the provincial council of women who are in the member's gallery today. It's their 79th year of bringing their valuable insight to Queen's Park. We all want to say thank you.

MUNICIPAL AMENDMENT ACT (PROHIBITING USE OF PESTICIDES), 2002

LOI DE 2002 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES MUNICIPALITÉS (INTERDICTION D'UTILISER DES PESTICIDES)

Mr Patten moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 208, An Act to amend the Municipal Act, 2001 to permit municipalities to prohibit activities or the use of substances to protect the health, safety and well-being of inhabitants of the municipality / Projet de loi 208, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2001 sur les municipalités pour permettre aux municipalités d'interdire des activités ou

l'utilisation de substances afin de protéger la santé, la sécurité et le bien-être des habitants de la municipalité.

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

The member for a short statement?

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): This bill amends the Municipal Act, 2001, to enable municipalities that wish to pass bylaws to prohibit the non-essential or cosmetic use of pesticides on a precautionary basis if the municipality is of the opinion that there is a threat to the health, safety and well-being of its citizens. There is a growing body of evidence that exposure to pesticides can cause acute or chronic effects on health, with children representing the most vulnerable population. I look forward to the debate on this bill on December 5.

1400

ORAL QUESTIONS

HYDRO DEREGULATION

Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's): My question is for the Premier. The Minister of Energy has been meeting on a regular basis with the chair of Ontario Power Generation. In 1998, Energy Minister Wilson said in the House, "I meet with Mr Farlinger ... every week at a set time, as did my predecessor Norm Sterling, as did my predecessor Brenda Elliott." Your current energy minister confirmed that regular meetings are provided between the energy minister and Mr Farlinger.

I presume that some information is exchanged between the government of Ontario and the chair of Ontario Power Generation. Is it your position, Premier, that at any time the government of Ontario received bad information from Chairman Farlinger?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I'd refer that to the Minister of Energy. I'm sure he'd be happy to answer it.

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Energy, minister responsible for francophone affairs): When I became Minister of Energy in August 2002, the very next day, my first full day on the job, I went to see Pickering A for myself to underline the importance I place on the issue. We are tremendously concerned with the timetable of the project. We're also tremendously concerned with respect to what the anticipated cost was, versus what the actual costs are.

I received an update on that date and asked for more information, which I received in two weeks' time. I asked for more information, and we had a rather prolonged meeting on that issue.

Mr Bryant: Minister, your parliamentary assistant said last week on TVO, "We"—the government—"had bad information from Ontario Power Generation and I think that has directly impacted the whole supply-and-demand equation on which we originally predicated opening the market."

I asked you yesterday whether you had full confidence in Chairman Farlinger, and you certainly did not answer in the affirmative. Published reports are out today suggesting that bad information was provided by Mr Farlinger to the government of Ontario. If that is not true, it needs to be cleared up now. If it is true, why is he remaining the chair of Ontario Power Generation?

Did the energy minister—you, your predecessor or his predecessor—and the government of Ontario receive bad information from Chairman Farlinger with respect to when Pickering A would be refurbished?

Hon Mr Baird: Certainly in my three months on the job I have not. I can indicate to the member opposite that there indeed was bad information with respect to when the project would be up and running. It was initially indicated that the first reactor, reactor number 4 at Pickering A, would be on-line well before it certainly will. That's no secret; it's quite open. It's in OPG's third-quarter statement. Mr Osborne has spoken very clearly with respect to the project and his views on it, and my views would not be dissimilar to those expressed by the president and CEO.

Mr Bryant: Well, here is the problem: energy ministers were meeting with the chair of OPG on a regular basis, week after week after week, before the marketplace opened, and yet Ontario Power Generation had put out in a press release on January 30 that Pickering A was not going to be on-line in May. It wasn't going to be on-line, it says, until the third quarter of 2002. Then another report, also before the market opened, said that "OPG currently expects to return the first unit of Pickering to service in late 2002 and early 2003."

Are you to have us believe that the energy minister didn't raise this with the chair? Are you to have us believe that he didn't read these press releases? You say you received bad information. I say the government of Ontario didn't receive bad information; they received information that they didn't want to hear. You were getting the truth about the Pickering refurbishment and you couldn't handle the truth. As a result of it, you started up the marketplace before supply was ready. My question to you is, when you knew—when the government knew—that in fact Pickering wasn't going to be on-line and on time, why did you open up the marketplace in May?

Hon Mr Baird: The member opposite undoubtedly took grade 13 drama in high school and failed, but I guess they didn't provide an F back in those days either. We're tremendously concerned about the delays that have happened at Pickering A. Obviously the information that had been given when we first embarked on this process in the late 1990s has not come to fruition. I can say that in the three months that I've been the Minister of Energy, I've always received a good amount of information that I've requested from OPG.

I think the member opposite is trying to go down another road, because his own leader has changed policies on his back. If you go to energy on the Liberal Web site—I wanted to find out what their policy on

energy was today and I plugged into the Liberal Web site, and you have here, "Update coming soon," which is really remarkable. When Dalton McGuinty went out and had the scrum of his life, I saw the leader of the NDP standing like a proud father, knowing that Dalton McGuinty is a Howard-come-lately on this issue.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East): I have a question for the Minister of Education. Later today, your appointee is going to reveal a long list of cuts to the Toronto District School Board. Your strategic leaks to the media admit that you're going to be cutting certified supply teachers. Cutting the number of certified supply teachers means that when regular teachers get sick, uncertified people will be teaching kids more often. It means that when a teacher takes maternity leave, more often her students will spend the rest of the year with an uncertified person. The question is simply this: why does your government want more classes taught by uncertified people?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): The member opposite obviously has much more information than we do. If I take a look at what I've been reading in the media, it looks to me like the supervisor has perhaps done the job he was asked to do of balancing the budget, despite all the fearmongering that we heard from you and others in the city of Toronto.

Mr Caplan: You're cutting the number of supply teachers; you know it, I know it and parents and kids know it. Fewer supply teachers means even more unqualified people leading classes. But I can think of a better way to help the Toronto District School Board and other boards of education balance their budgets. Instead of giving half a billion dollars to private schools, invest that money in public education classrooms. You're putting more uncertified people in front of classrooms while you hand out millions of dollars to private schools, and that's wrong. My question for you is simple: will you cancel your private school tax credit and invest that money in our public schools?

Hon Mrs Witmer: This is unbelievable. I don't even know what \$500 million he's talking about. Furthermore, let's go back to the fearmongering. Do you know what Gerard Kennedy said? Schools are going to cut out rec, they're going to cut special-needs programs. Do you know what? It's all been fearmongering. As far as the \$500 million for private schools, it's not here. Do you know what? You're going to have to check your facts and your figures. You've got it all wrong, like you have on Hydro.

1410

Mr Caplan: The minister is right in her answer that she doesn't know what she's talking about. Minister, 3,100 kids are waiting for special education assessments in the Toronto board alone; 36% of kids have no phys ed teacher; 35% of kids in Toronto have no music program. The quality of education in public schools is failing, but

you have half a billion dollars for private schools. Under your government, funding for private schools is going up \$3,500 per student, but for kids in public schools it's going down over \$2,100 per student. That's a betrayal of everything you said you stood for when you were a trustee and when you were the chair of a board of education. Minister, how can you possibly defend handing private schools half a billion dollars when you're cutting public education in Toronto and elsewhere in the province?

Hon Mrs Witmer: This government since 1995 has done more to support students in Ontario in order to ensure that they have the resources, they have the services. We are providing funding in order that our teachers can provide the best education possible. In fact, this year we increased funding by 3%. We are now paying and supporting education to the tune of \$14.26 billion. We are proud of what we've done for students, and we would recommend that you get on board and fight for students too.

HYDRO DEREGULATION

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Premier. You are a former Finance Minister. You're a former Bay Street investment banker. You should know your numbers. Maybe you can help the people of Ontario out with this problem. Tell us, Premier, when it comes to hydroelectricity, who has flip-flopped more, you or Dalton McGuinty?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I will give him this: he is very consistent. He believes that everything should be socialistic, everybody should be—

Interjections.

Hon Mr Eves: Don't confuse him with the facts. His mind is made up. I'm still waiting for the financial part of the question.

Mr Hampton: I realize that's a very tough question. People in the province say, "There's Flip and there's Flop—no, there's Flip and there's Flop."

It's like this, Premier. You've changed your position on hydro so many times it's making people's heads spin. In October 1998 the Conservatives announced you were going to privatize and deregulate Hydro—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Would the leader take his seat. The members for Windsor West and Windsor-St Clair, please come to order. Sorry for the interruption, leader of the third party.

Mr Hampton: I realize that the Liberals' position on hydro causes them great pain, so I'll be gentle here. In October 1998 the Conservatives announce you were going to privatize and deregulate hydro. Then you spend the next three years on propaganda advertising, telling people that this will be good for them, that prices will go down. In December 2001 the Conservatives announce that you were going to privatize Hydro One. On April 30, 2002, you say that maybe you won't sell off Hydro One.

On May 29 you introduce a bill that you say will allow you to sell off Hydro One. On June 12 you say you'll only sell off up to 49% of Hydro One. Then last week, when it becomes painfully obvious to consumers that privatized and deregulated hydro is too expensive for them, you rolled out your scheme to hide the cost.

Premier, with all those flip-flops, why should any person in Ontario trust you with our hydro system?

Hon Mr Eves: We have taken steps to protect the consumer in the province of Ontario. As you know, we have capped the rates at 4.3 cents a kilowatt hour. That is why consumers in the province can trust us. They certainly can't trust a party who in five years increased the public debt in the province by \$63 billion and increased the debt of Hydro \$3 billion on top of that; \$66 billion in five years you increased the debt of Ontario taxpayers. They certainly aren't going to trust you.

Mr Hampton: Premier, I can tell I've struck a nerve. Don't feel bad, because you're not the biggest flip-flopper. In 1998, Dalton McGuinty voted in favour of Hydro privatization and deregulation. For the next three years, the Liberals trolled up and down Bay Street looking for money from investors, and they said, "Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberals have been consistent supporters of the move to open Ontario's electricity market." When Hydro One was put up for sale, Mr McGuinty said, "I am in favour of privatization both in terms of the transmission and the generation." In September, Mr McGuinty said Liberals would close all the coal-fired plants. Yesterday he flip-flopped on that too. Like some others, I went to the Liberal Web site to see what their hydro strategy was, and there is none.

Premier, I repeat my question: why should anyone in Ontario trust you or Dalton with—

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

Hon Mr Eves: I certainly can't answer for Mr McGuinty. His Web site speaks for itself; it's a blank piece of paper.

We indeed do have a nine-point plan that we outlined on November 11 with the people of the province of Ontario which we believe will protect consumers as we go forward and develop a generation free market here in the province. I think our nine-point plan addresses all the issues that you've covered in question period today.

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

Mr Hampton: Premier, I told you and the Liberals over two and a half years ago that hydro deregulation and privatization would be a fiasco; it would drive up the price so that consumers couldn't afford to pay it and it would create electricity supply shortages. Now that this has become evident to both you and the Liberals, you want to endorse a pre-election price cap rebate scheme to cover, to hide, the cost of privatized hydro from the consumers.

Premier, rather than you and the Liberals engaging in a cover-up, a pre-election bribe designed to hide the true cost of privatized hydro from the people of Ontario, why

don't you finally admit that privatized, deregulated hydro always costs more? It cost more in California, in Alberta, in Montana, in Pennsylvania and in Ontario. Why don't you do the right thing? Kill hydro privatization and deregulation now.

Hon Mr Eves: First of all, the leader of the third party knows that hydro is not being privatized. Second, he knows that to ensure a future supply of energy in the province of Ontario, we are going to have to have a competitive marketplace and we're going to have to encourage other players to produce energy in the province of Ontario. That is part of our nine-point plan.

At the same time, we are protecting consumers while we're doing that. We have a plan. You don't have any plan except the plan that you used when you were in office for five years: increasing debt to the people of Ontario by \$66 billion. That's your plan. Do you think the people of Ontario are going to accept your plan in the next provincial election, Howard?

1420

Mr Hampton: Premier, the people of Ontario know that right now you are planning to sell off a major chunk of Hydro One. And who are you talking to? The same highway robbers, SNC-Lavalin, that came in, scooped Highway 407 for pennies, then sold it off at three times that value, and drivers of Ontario are paying prohibitive and exorbitant rates for driving on 407. You want to make the same deal with the same highway robbers. We know from the experience of Highway 407 that those people will want higher and higher hydro rates.

Premier, there is an alternative. Hydro Quebec is following it: public power at cost, public ownership. Manitoba is following it. Saskatchewan is following it. In fact, a number of jurisdictions in the United States have voted to end deregulation.

Instead of trying to cover up the cost with your Liberal friends, instead of a pre-election bribe, admit hydro privatization and deregulation is too expensive for consumers and kill it now.

Hon Mr Eves: You really have gone a step too far now. You're the last party that should be standing in the Legislature talking about Highway 407. Your policy on Highway 407—you were a member of the cabinet that approved this policy—was to privatize Highway 407, saying that if the private sector operator made any money, they got to keep it, and if they lost any money, you would reimburse them through the taxpayers' dollars. What a great NDP socialist scheme that is. That's why you were so successful in the 1999 election, and that's just as successful as you'll be in the next election.

HYDRO ONE

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): My question is to the Minister of Finance, and it has to do with the sale of 49% of Hydro One. A phone call I made late last week to your ministry indicated that the sale is proceeding, I gather, quite quickly, and it's planned to occur over the next several weeks.

I think if there's a message that the government has heard over the last few weeks it's that the public do not want that. It will also be a fire sale designed to get quick cash into the government's pockets before the end of the fiscal year. It sells off part of a very major public crown jewel.

The question is, why in the world are you proceeding with these plans to sell 49% of Hydro One?

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Finance): First of all, I would like to assure him, if he had been paying attention, that there's been no change in the timing of what we're doing with Hydro One. Secondly, we were very clear that what we were looking for were ways to bring market discipline to the day-to-day operation of Hydro One, to make sure that we had private sector investment to help improve the transmission lines. As this government has made very clear, what we are looking for is a partnership that's in the best interests of Ontario consumers, Ontario taxpayers, Ontario electricity consumers, and that will remain this government's bottom line as we decide how to proceed.

Mr Phillips: Well, you are proceeding, I gather, to sell off 49%. It's a dumb idea. You shouldn't do it.

I'm also very concerned about the secret process. It was just two weeks ago, Minister, that you told the public it would be a public process.

We again phoned your ministry. They told us it's all private. It's all done behind closed doors. The request for proposals will not be made public. It's all done behind closed doors. So I say to you again: the public have spoken. They do not want you selling off part of their major crown jewel, this enormous public asset. They don't want you doing it behind closed doors.

Mr Eves made the same mistake when he sold the 407 just before the last election.

Back to the sale of Ontario Hydro, 49%: firstly, you said it would be public; we find out from your ministry it's not. We find that you're now selling it as a fire sale before the election. Why don't you do the right thing and simply cancel the sale of 49% of Hydro One?

Hon Mrs Ecker: The objectives that we laid out for seeking a private sector partner with Hydro One are the same today as they were several months ago. The timing is the same today as it was several months ago. We are publicly accountable for the arrangements they may make, as we were on Highway 407.

The honourable member likes to bring up Highway 407. I'm glad he does. We have a brand new highway in Durham region because of the deal the current Premier, the former finance minister, made. That's a benefit for the consumers in Durham region and across the top of the GTA.

We are looking for an acceptable private sector partner for Hydro One. At the end of the day, it is the best deal we're looking for. If there is no good deal, we do not proceed. We've been very clear about that. Do you know what? There is more public accountability in how we have proceeded with 407 and Hydro One than we have with the Ontario Liberal energy policy. There's nothing

there. We're prepared to be accountable. We table our accounts. We go to public audit committees. Where are they?

KARLA HOMOLKA

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): My question today is for the Attorney General. Many of us in this House have read with serious concern—certainly with great concern in my constituency of Scarborough Centre—the recent media report surrounding a new book written with the participation of Karla Homolka. According to these reports, it seems that she corresponded to the writer and shared some of her own experiences and thoughts.

My specific concern is that her participation in this project may have violated the plea bargain that was agreed to for her role in the infamous Paul Bernardo case. It's an agreement that some have called a deal with the devil.

Minister, can you please inform this House of what actions you will be taking to ensure that these serious concerns are being addressed?

Hon David Young (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): The honourable member has referenced today a very painful chapter in the history of this province and, indeed, of this country. The wounds of the communities and, of course, particularly the families who are so directly involved in this series of great tragedies, haven't yet fully healed. I anticipate they will never fully heal.

In my role as Attorney General, I asked the Niagara regional police force to conduct an investigation into the matter that the honourable member has referenced. I understand they are looking into this matter as we speak, and in due course I will have their report.

Ms Mushinski: Thank you for that answer, Minister. I believe that is indeed the right thing to do to get to the bottom of these concerns. As you have noted, this was an extremely painful chapter for many people in our province. In particular, there were some in my own riding of Scarborough Centre who were very seriously impacted. I feel they deserve no less by your actions.

Can you advise this House when the investigation may be completed and what actions you believe the government should take after that?

Hon Mr Young: I think it's important that we allow the Niagara regional police force to do their job. I think it's important that we allow them to do so without political interference of any sort. I think it's important that we not jump to any conclusions as to what the result of that very important investigation may be.

By the same token, I say to you and the members of this honourable assembly, I don't want to rush this investigation. I want it to be done in a comprehensive manner. I have the utmost confidence that the officers who have been assigned this very important task will do so.

DOCTOR SHORTAGE

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West): My question is for the Premier. I'd like to read a quote of yours in a national paper: "Mr Clement will be making an announcement about foreign-trained physicians in underserviced areas in the next week to 10 days."

You said that at the end of October—October 27. You promised thousands of foreign-trained physicians that you were prepared to help, keeping in mind that you have been the government going on eight long years. Nothing has happened to get rid of barriers for foreign-trained physicians. Nothing has happened to help our own Canadian-born—people who are from Ontario who have studied abroad—to come home, practise and assist the many families in Ontario who do not have a family doctor and where we have communities without many, many specialists. Why are you denying this help to Ontario families?

1430

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): Obviously the honourable member would want the ministry and the Minister of Health to have a full and comprehensive announcement when he makes it, and he will be making it in short order.

To sit here in the House and listen to the honourable member say that it's our fault that foreign-trained physicians are not being recognized—

Interjections.

Hon Mr Eves: Try seven years and five months; you never were very good in math over there. You increased the debt of the province by \$10 billion, not the \$66 billion, I'll admit. You increased the debt of Ontario Hydro by another \$7 billion on top of that. You pretended to balance the books and, after an independent review was done, we found out you were really \$700 million in the hole. So I don't need any lectures from Liberals about economics, you who ran up the debt by \$17 billion when you were in government.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Just before the supplementary, to the member for Kingston and the Islands, this is his last warning. If I have to warn him again, he'll be removed.

Mrs Pupatello: Premier, you do not have a stellar record on debt or on many matters that you're in charge of. You have been the Premier for months and you have been in the government for seven years and five months, and in that time you have done nothing for foreign-trained physicians. We have 122 communities now that are designated underserviced.

This is an unbelievable and very unremarkable record for you, Premier. You have had the opportunity. You were given the report by the task force that you called for. They've had this report since the beginning of October. They have listed many recommendations to remove barriers to have foreign-trained physicians practising in Ontario. Those include people we've accepted as Canadians here and also people who are from Ontario

and trained abroad whom we want to come home to work.

Please don't make excuses and talk about all of these matters. We are talking about the very important work of needing doctors practising in Ontario. We expect barriers to be removed and you've done nothing. What do you have to say about this today?

Hon Mr Eves: The barriers will be removed. We will solve part of the problem that your government created by reducing the number of medical graduates in the province of Ontario when you were in government. We will solve the problem that your federal cousins in Ottawa have created through their immigration policy by not giving foreign-trained physicians a chance in this country. We're going to do it in the province of Ontario, even if your country cousins in Ottawa don't have the guts to do it federally.

Interjections.

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): On a point of order, Speaker: I would like the member from London West to apologize for giving the finger to the opposition.

The Speaker: Would the member take his seat.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Come to order. Member for Eglinton-Lawrence, I didn't see anything. It's impossible. I was looking for the person. I'm sure if the member did anything wrong she, would do the honourable thing.

Interjection.

The Speaker: She's saying she didn't.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Come to order right now, everyone. Order, right now. We've had our little fun. The temperature is starting to rise; it always does on caucus day. Just be warned that we're going to pick people out if it gets carried away, and right now we're at the stage where it isn't one or two persons, it's a group of people. So just rest assured that if I get up again, people will be going out from any side, it doesn't matter whose it is.

I believe the member for Simcoe North had the floor.

Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, minister responsible for women's issues): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: [Inaudible] accused me of doing, I'm very sorry.

The Speaker: I appreciate that, Minister.

The member for London West on a point of order.

Mr Bob Wood (London West): I'm the member for London West. I have no idea what the member is referring to.

The Speaker: I see. I understand from the clarification that he's the member for London West.

The member for Simcoe North has the next question.

HEALTH PROTECTION LEGISLATION

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): My question today is for the Minister of Public Safety and Security. Earlier this afternoon you announced the proclamation of my private member's bill, Bill 105, An Act to amend the Health Protection and Promotion Act. Bill 105 allows

front-line emergency workers, victims of crime and good Samaritans access to a blood test of those who may have deliberately or accidentally exposed them to bodily fluids leading to many communicable diseases such as HIV or hepatitis C. Can you tell the members of this House why this piece of legislation is important to your ministry?

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Minister of Public Safety and Security): I want to thank the member for Simcoe North for his question. I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate the member for his hard work and dedication. The passage and proclamation of this legislation is an outstanding example of how private members can have a real and measurable impact on the lives of our citizens.

Bill 105 is the first of its kind in Canada and perhaps North America. Bill 105 will further protect police officers, firefighters, ambulance workers, correctional officers and the thousands of good Samaritans who come to the aid of others every year in Ontario. It will allow local medical officers of health to order blood samples from individuals who accidentally or deliberately expose front-line emergency service workers, victims of crime or good Samaritans to bodily fluids. It's a sad fact that quite often those who take it upon themselves to help and protect complete strangers are not given every mechanism possible to help and protect themselves in return.

Mr Dunlop: I too am glad that I was able to do my part in our government's efforts to protect those who work to protect others, as well as providing another step toward further enhancing the rights of victims.

In creating this legislation, I heard from many front-line workers and victims of crime who thoroughly supported the legislation. I know there are some obvious concerns surrounding privacy, but I would like to ask the minister if he has heard the same support, because I think the members of this House should know who is really going to benefit from this legislation.

Hon Mr Runciman: I too am glad that the member made this significant contribution. Today, as we all know, members of the Police Association of Ontario are with us, and I know they've been strong advocates of this legislation. Not only will Bill 105 be an important piece of legislation in the lives of Ontario's police officers and other front-line emergency workers, but today we're also joined by Natalie Hiltz and her family. Natalie is not only a Peel regional police officer, but she is also a victim of crime who was tied up in mounds of red tape to find out whether she'd been exposed to a life-threatening disease.

I'm proud to support Bill 105 not only for people like Natalie and members of the PAO, but for the thousands of individuals like them who should always have the right to know.

PENSION PLANS

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Premier. Very deep within your latest omnibus budget bill, Bill 198, there is a very nasty surprise for all the hard-working pension contributors

across this province. It amounts to giving employers the capacity to unilaterally take money out of their pension plan when there is an apparent surplus. It amounts to government-sanctioned pension plan robbery. Under your legislation, employers, but not employees, will be allowed to withdraw any apparent surplus from ongoing pension plans. Secondly, employers will be permitted to use any apparent pension surplus to reduce their own contributions.

Premier, this legislation is grossly unfair and is bitterly opposed by employee and pension groups across the province. Will you sever it from Bill 198?

1440

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I think the Minister of Finance can explain the legislation to the honourable member.

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Finance): I appreciate that the honourable member, based on what he's obviously been told, and it's not accurate information, is concerned. This is not providing employers with an opportunity to raid pension funds. As a matter of fact, it's quite the contrary. It says that where an employer has clear entitlement, they must apply to the regulator in terms of whether they can have any surplus. The regulator's priority concern is the viability of the pension plan, because in this day of reduced investment income we have to make sure that pension plans stay viable.

Secondly, it also clearly entitles the majority of employees. It gives them an additional right to say whether an employer should be able to do anything with surplus on windups. So it is actually giving employees additional rights. It's making the pension plan legislation consistent with other provinces. At the end of the day, it does nothing to interfere with the earned benefits of any pensioner; it does everything to protect the financial viability of our pension plans. I would think the honourable member would be very supportive of initiatives that protect the pension benefits of workers out there.

Mr Hampton: In short, balderdash. The Minister of Finance knows that the law in Ontario, as it now stands, says that where there is a surplus in the windup of a pension plan there must be a negotiation between the employer and the potential pension recipients, that there is no unilateral authority for the employer to appeal to a pension board and say, "I want all of the surplus."

You'll also know that as the law stands now, when an ongoing pension plan has an apparent surplus for a period of time, employers have no authority to unilaterally take that apparent surplus for themselves or to have a holiday by themselves without the employees at the same time being able to share in that apparent surplus. What you're saying is that wherever there is an apparent surplus in a pension plan, it all goes to the employer, it all goes to your corporate friends.

This is grossly unfair, Minister. I'm asking you and the Premier to withdraw it before you create a real war out there in workplaces across Ontario. Do the right thing. Recognize how grossly unfair this is. Recognize it amounts to pension robbery. Sever this from Bill 198.

Hon Mrs Ecker: With all due respect to the honourable member, this has been consulted on, this has been publicly available.

Mr Hampton: No, it hasn't.

Hon Mrs Ecker: The honourable member is saying, "No, it hasn't." Do you know what? Then whose people for the Ontario Federation of Labour and the unions were sitting in the room—

Mr Hampton: That's a bunch of crap.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. Minister, take your seat. I'm going to ask the leader of the third party to withdraw that comment.

Mr Hampton: I withdraw, Speaker.

Hon Mrs Ecker: There has been consultation on this, as there should be. Secondly, we will be meeting with all the stakeholders on the development of the regulations to make sure the appropriate checks and balances are there, as they should be. But this in no way is allowing anyone to walk away with surpluses, because the protection of pension rights for workers out there, the protection of the financial viability of pension plans, is foremost in our minds.

CHILD CARE

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): My question is for the Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services. For nearly two years your government has received additional money from the federal early child development accord for the purposes of supporting programs for children and their families. One area specifically highlighted for support was child care, yet your government has not spent one additional penny of that money on child care. Today in the *Globe and Mail*, Jane Stewart, the federal human resources minister, was critical of this inaction by your government. She indicated that most provinces did invest in child care and that the Eves government's resistance to improving access to child care is making it difficult for federal and provincial ministers to agree on a national child care policy.

Minister, will you commit today that your government will direct a portion of this year's allocation from the federal early child development accord to increase your support in the area of child care in Ontario?

Hon Brenda Elliott (Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services): I thank my colleague across the way for the question. First of all let's be very clear: this government thinks that good child care is important to the people of Ontario. That's why we have made a very significant investment in child care; in fact, over \$700 million. We have a particular program, the Ontario child care supplement for working families. This is a tax credit program where \$215 million is directed exclusively to low- and modest-income families for child care.

Having said that, I referenced the document that talks about the federal and provincial agreement on early childhood development. I want to be very clear on what was said, and I will quote this: "Quality early childhood

development, learning and care have been shown to promote physical, language and motor skills; social, emotional and cognitive development." We completely agree. "This priority includes supports that promote healthy development, provide opportunities for interaction and play, help prepare children for school and respond to diverse and changing needs of families. Possible examples include"—and of course in that is child care.

We have more than made huge investments—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): The minister's time is up.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Minister, when it comes to child care, your government has been called the ABC government, anything but child care. If you look at your own government estimates for this year, you are spending less on child care than when you came to office in 1995. Dalton McGuinty has a plan. Our Best Start plan will support 300,000 children with child care costs. We believe this is an investment in our future and sound economic policy, and so do Charlie Coffey and Margaret McCain. It is shameful that Ontario is seen to be blocking the national child care agenda.

Minister, will you work with the federal government, and will you commit today to use some of the accord dollars to invest additional money in child care in the province of Ontario?

Hon Mrs Elliott: I thank my colleague for the question. I would ask her what program she would like us not to deliver with the money we've invested. How about autism or infant development; children's mental health; or learning, earning and parenting programs? What about the Early Years centres we've invested in? How about the early literacy programs? Are those programs she would like us to cut because we choose to put it in child care? I am glad she is beginning to talk about a number of programs, but I would reference one of her very own letters where she says to me, "I urge you to include additional resources for children with autistic spectrum disorder." Nowhere in your letter do you reference child care.

But more importantly, if the federal government is interested in putting together a national child care program, we will wait until we see the details. This is a program they have talked about for 10 years, and I say "talked about" only. We'll wait for some action, because clearly here in Ontario we know what it is to create programs, fund them and, more importantly, deliver. Yesterday I added an additional \$58 million to—

The Speaker: The minister's time is up.

1450

SCHOOL ACCOMMODATION

Mr AL McDonald (Nipissing): My question is for the Deputy Premier and Minister of Education. In recent weeks there has been coverage in the media and from our friends in the opposition regarding the overcrowded schools and the need for new schools. Every student in Ontario deserves a quality education, which includes

effective and safe accommodation. Could you tell us what this government is doing and has done to accommodate the growing number of students in this province?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): Our government recognized that it was important to fund new student places because we do have a growing population and many of our students were in portables. So there is now the flexibility and the ability to build schools where and when they are needed throughout the province of Ontario. I am very pleased to say that our funding has actually supported the construction of approximately \$3.6 billion in new projects, which means that since 1998 school boards have built 183 new schools and 247 additions or major renovations.

Mr McDonald: Minister, that's great news. I know, for instance, in my riding of Nipissing there have been new construction and renovations taking place in a number of boards. In fact, I've heard from constituents commenting on the new construction. I just want to know what your experience is. Have you heard from local schools on this issue?

Hon Mrs Witmer: There certainly has been a tremendous amount of opening of new schools in recent months and years, and major renovations, and I can tell the member from Nipissing that parents are grateful, trustees are grateful and teachers are grateful. In fact, all of the stakeholders appreciate the fact that we are building new schools.

Last week I participated in the opening of a new school in Waterloo, the Lester B. Pearson school. Recently I was down to Strathroy. They have a very unique arrangement between Thames Valley District School Board and London District Catholic School Board. They actually have a joint facility between Strathroy District Collegiate Institute and Holy Cross Secondary School. I can tell you, it's good news. People in the province are happy with the funding they have to build schools when and where they're needed.

ONTARIO SUPERBUILD CORP

Mr Joseph Cordiano (York South-Weston): I have a question for the minister responsible for SuperBuild. According to this SuperBuild document, \$13.2 billion has been committed to projects as of September 2002. Three years and \$13.2 billion later, and still you have failed to produce an audited financial statement as you are legally required to do by the Development Corporations Act. Minister, I raised this question four months ago and still you have failed to comply with the law. As a result, you are failing the public by not being accountable for these huge sums of taxpayer dollars.

My question to you is this: of the \$13.2 billion committed to date by SuperBuild, how much of that has been actually contributed by the private sector?

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Finance): We are quite prepared and do on a regular basis—we're audited.

Ministries put their information out about what plans are going forward for capital plans. We announce publicly when there are public-private partnerships. We list on a Web site the projects that are out there, that are going on under the greatest capital infrastructure investment this province has ever seen, under this government, where we are actually putting new investments—whether it's roads, whether it's sewers, whether it's hospitals—important infrastructure investments that not only improve the quality of life in our province but also help us keep economic prosperity.

Mr Cordiano: She hasn't answered the question. I asked how much has come from the private sector. We know that of the \$13.2 billion, \$11 billion has come from public sources—federal, provincial and municipal governments—and only \$2.2 billion has come from the private sector.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): Only?

Mr Cordiano: That's right, only \$2.2 billion.

Minister, when SuperBuild was announced three years ago, you stated—with great fanfare, I might add—that \$10 billion was to come from the public sector and another \$10 billion was to be leveraged from the private sector. Only \$2.2 billion has come from the private sector. That means you are \$7.8 billion short of your stated \$10-billion target that was to come from the private sector.

My question is this: would you not agree that after almost three years and 3,000 projects, SuperBuild has failed to attract enough private sector funding and that SuperBuild is a super bust?

Hon Mrs Ecker: Only the Liberals would think that 3,000 projects is not successful. Only the Liberals would think that the new construction at our hospitals, at our schools, on our highways, on our sewage and water plants and on our post-secondary institutions is not a success.

The capital investments of this government are duly accounted for. We have numbers in the budget; we have a Web site that lays it out. We are publicly accountable for this, as we should be, and we will continue under SuperBuild, with the co-operation and the working of all the different ministries, to make new investments in important economic infrastructure in this province, as we promised we would do.

LONG-TERM-CARE FACILITIES

Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant): My question is for the Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. I know how hard the associate minister and our government are working to make sure that the high standards of our province's long-term-care facilities are met. That's why I want to ask the associate minister about the current situation of Royal Crest Lifecare Group. I understand that Ernst and Young has currently been appointed interim receiver of Royal Crest Lifecare

Group as trustee in bankruptcy for all of Royal Crest's nursing and retirement facilities in southern Ontario.

One of these facilities, Norcliffe Lifecare Centre, is located in my riding of Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant, in Hagersville. For the benefit of my constituents who are residents at Norcliffe, as well as for the benefit of their families, could you please provide an update on the facilities formerly operated?

Hon Dan Newman (Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I'm pleased to respond to the honourable member for Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant. I want the people of his riding to know how hard my colleague works on their behalf at Queen's Park and just what an effective member he is.

The financial creditors of Royal Crest Lifecare Group have received approval from the court to appoint an interim receiver—in this case, Ernst and Young—to operate the long-term-care facilities and retirement homes owned by Royal Crest. During this period of transition, the ministry's role hasn't changed at all. Our role as government, and my job as minister, is to ensure that the safety and well-being of the over 61,000 residents receiving care in long-term-care facilities in Ontario continue. Regardless of who owns a long-term-care facility, we will ensure our regulations and our strict standards for resident care are met or exceeded. That's exactly what we do each and every day of the year, and that's what we're doing in this situation.

Mr Barrett: I certainly thank the associate minister for his response. I'm very pleased to hear the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care is keeping the health and well-being of facility residents as their number one priority. I know the residents of Norcliffe and their family members are very pleased to hear this as well.

I would like to ask the associate minister if he could provide some additional detail as to how the ministry has monitored and will in the future be monitoring these facilities once owned by Royal Crest to make sure the residents receive the care they deserve. I know my constituents would like to know that.

Hon Mr Newman: I'd like to inform my colleague, and indeed this House, that Ernst and Young has advised the ministry that it has chosen Extencare (Canada) Inc to assume responsibility for the day-to-day management of their homes as agent of the interim receiver. We're working very closely with Extencare to ensure that residents receive the care they need. I want to reassure the residents and their families that we have every confidence our strict standards will be met or exceeded. The ministry has enhanced our monitoring at all long-term-care facilities owned by Royal Crest. Our staff has been in every one of the 11 affected facilities, and monitoring will continue throughout this transition period.

I would also like to thank the ministry staff, and especially Paul Tuttle, the director of the ministry's long-term-care branch, who have been putting in the extra hours required during this challenging time. They are true professionals.

1500

WOMEN'S SHELTERS

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): I have a question for the Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services. Demand for women's shelters is soaring, yet we hear that in Thunder Bay you are going to shut the Community Residence Women's Shelter, the biggest shelter in town. Police, city council and the community are demanding with one voice, "Don't close that shelter." I'm demanding, "Don't close that shelter." Promise today that you will not close that shelter.

Hon Brenda Elliott (Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services): It's very important to us that facilities are available for women who find themselves in a crisis situation and need a safe refuge at a terrible time in their lives. We've made a tremendous commitment to women's shelters across this province, adding new ones this year.

My understanding of what is occurring is that my ministry's northern region is working with the city of Thunder Bay and the Community Residence Women's Shelter to explore options that will best meet long-term needs. It's my understanding that, yes, there is a plan that's being discussed as to what will happen with the shelter beds in the city of Thunder Bay. It's my understanding that a consultant has actually been hired by the city of Thunder Bay. It's my understanding that conversations are occurring as to what is in the best interests of the region and that no decisions have been made at this time.

Ms Churley: Let me tell you the plan: shut the shelter and ship women and their children three and a half hours away to another shelter, where you're shutting eight out of 10 beds, while occupancy jumped 42% in 2002. Minister, that's the plan. Murders of women by their spouses are up 25% in Ontario in only one year. Mothers, daughters, sisters and their children need protection, and you're throwing them on the street and playing with their lives. Stop. Listen to the police, city council, the community, and listen to me today: withdraw the plan to close the Thunder Bay women's shelter now.

Hon Mrs Elliott: Let me try again. This is not our plan. A community plan is being devised as to what would be the best way to place these shelter beds within the community so that it works for the community. It's a decision to be made by the community, in the best interests of the women who need help.

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'd like to correct the record with regard to my question on federal dollars for child care in which I have asked the minister to commit. I did put that in a letter to the minister. I think the minister indicated otherwise in her remarks that in fact my letter suggested—

The Speaker: You can correct your own record. You can't correct somebody else's record.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Just before we begin petitions, we have a new group of pages that I'd like to introduce.

We have Michael Barrett from Don Valley West, Theresa Bernard from Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge, Nicole Black from Prince Edward-Hastings, Anthony Boland from Oshawa, Ian Bradley-Perrin from Oakville, Nicholas Butte from Ottawa-Orléans, Olaniyi Dawodu from Windsor West, Sarah Donaldson from Perth-Middlesex, Brian Farrenkopf from Sarnia-Lambton, Annelise Hawrylak from Kenora-Rainy River, Evan Holt from Etobicoke-Lakeshore, Adriana Mazzone from Thornhill, Victoria Miller from Toronto Centre-Rosedale, Alka Sara Mohan from Toronto-Danforth, Garnet Paton from Ottawa Centre, Jared Paty from Whitby-Ajax, Sarah Penney from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, Michael Schonberger from Sudbury, Lauren Van Leeuwen from Peterborough and Molly Willats from Trinity-Spadina.

Please welcome our new group of pages.

PETITIONS

HIGHWAY 69

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): This is the continuing petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario regarding the multi-laning of Highway 69 from Sudbury to Parry Sound.

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

"Whereas the stretch of Highway 69 from Sudbury south to Parry Sound is a 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 died needlessly along that stretch of highway; and

"Whereas so far this year, 10 people have died on that stretch of highway between Sudbury and Parry Sound; 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 the Premier of this province is going to Sudbury this Thursday for a fundraiser; and

Whereas the people of the community of Sudbury and northeastern Ontario want the Premier to announce a start date for the four-laning of Highway 69 from Sudbury to Parry Sound; and

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

"Be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to urge the Eves

government to begin construction immediately and four-lane Highway 69 between Sudbury and Parry Sound so that the carnage on Death Road North will cease."

Of course, I affix my signature, and give it to our new page Evan to take to the table.

CHARITABLE GAMING

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas charitable organizations are now being required to obtain licenses for small in-house raffles, such as 50/50 draws; and

"Whereas the small amount of revenue charities are allowed to retain to cover necessary expenses is arbitrarily defined by government officials; and

"Whereas increased competition from the provincial casinos and commercial gaming establishments for local money is constricting the ability of local charities to raise funds vital to the life of the local community;

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

"(1) Immediately direct responsible officials to meet with affected charities to work out a mutually accepted agreement which permits the charities to accomplish the charitable objects of the organization and defines reasonable and necessary expenses allowable in the management and conduct of a lottery;

"(2) Conduct a review of the impact of large casinos and commercial gaming and lotteries on small, non-profit charitable organizations dependant on charitable gaming for their existence;

"(3) Review the criteria used to define reasonable and necessary expenses allowable for the operation of fundraising events by small, charitable organizations;

"(4) Develop new policies to guide the licensing system that recognizes local needs, particularly those of small, charitable organizations."

This is signed by 200 of my community residents over a period of two days, and I sign it as well and send it down with Garnet this afternoon.

NATURAL GAS RATES

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): Despite the government's mess on hydro, we still have the problem with the retroactive delivery charge with Union Gas. I want to continue to read petitions related to that.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario Energy Board has consented to allow Union Gas to retroactively charge \$40 per month for a three-month period to recover additional system operation costs that occurred during the winter of 2000-01 totalling approximately \$150 million; and

"Whereas Union Gas will recover accrued costs over the peak heating season, causing undue hardship; and

"Whereas this retroactive charge will affect all customers who receive Union Gas, including new homeowners and new customers to Union Gas;

"Therefore, we demand that the Ernie Eves government issue a policy directive under section 27.1 of the Ontario Energy Board Act disallowing the retroactive rate hike granted to Union Gas, and we further demand that the Legislature examine the Ontario Energy Board, its processes and its resources, and make changes that will protect consumers from further retroactive rate increases."

I am in full agreement with this petition and I sign my name to the petition.

SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex): "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas some motorists are recklessly endangering the lives of children by not obeying the highway traffic law requiring them to stop for school buses with their warning lights activated;

"Whereas the current law has no teeth to protect the children who ride the school buses of Ontario, and who are at risk and their safety is in jeopardy;

"Whereas the current school bus law is difficult to enforce since not only is a licence plate number required, but positive identification of the driver and the vehicle as well, which makes it extremely difficult to obtain a conviction;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the measures contained in private member's Bill 112, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act to protect children while on school buses, presented by Pat Hoy, MPP, Chatham-Kent-Essex, be immediately enacted. Bill 112 received the unanimous all-party support of the Ontario Legislature at second reading on June 13, 2002.

"Bill 112 imposed liability on the owner of a vehicle that fails to stop for a school bus that has its overhead red signal lights flashing...."

We ask for the support of all members of this Legislature, and I too have signed this petition.

1510

ONTARIO TEACHER QUALIFYING TEST

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

"Whereas the Ontario government in accordance with the teacher qualifying test (OTQT) sets out to standardize the teaching profession, we the teacher candidates feel that the OTQT is part of an ongoing attack on public education and would like to take this opportunity to make our voices heard. We believe that there are some fundamental problems with the OTQT established by the Ontario government and the Educational Testing Service (EST); and

"Whereas the Ministry of Education has failed to be accountable in providing consistent and equitable access to information regarding the registration, content, format and evaluation of the Ontario teacher qualifying test to all teacher candidates; and

"Whereas the Ministry of Education has failed to subject the OTQT to sufficient assessments of validity and reliability; and

"Whereas the Ontario College of Teachers that oversees the profession standards, development and accreditation of all its members has not been involved in the development of the test; and

"Whereas a strong body of research demonstrates that standardized testing such as the OTQT program is an inadequate indicator of ability and performance and does not keep with the principles of equity and social justice; and

"Whereas the Educational Testing Service (ETS), the company contracted to develop the OTQT on behalf of the Ministry of Education, has predetermined 'correct' choices that may be subject to discriminatory practices;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario as follows:

"Teacher candidates implore the Legislature of Ontario to make the Ontario teacher qualifying test a pilot test and for it not to be considered a requirement for certification by the Ontario College of Teachers."

As you will see, this has been signed by a large number of people training to be teachers in Ontario, and I affix my signature in agreement with their concerns.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have a petition that's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and it reads as follows:

"Whereas the Eves government has increased the fees paid for by seniors and the most vulnerable living in long-term-care facilities by 15% over three years or \$3.02 per diem in the first year and \$2 in the second year and \$2 in the third year, effective September 1, 2002; and

"Whereas this fee increase will cost seniors and our most vulnerable more than \$200 a month after three years; and

"Whereas this increase is above the rent increase guidelines for tenants in the province of Ontario for the year 2002; and

"Whereas according to the government's own funded study, Ontario will still rank last among comparable jurisdictions in the amount of time provided to a resident for nursing and personal care; and

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

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

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

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

“Demand that Premier Eves reduce the 15% increase over three years in accommodation costs to no more than the cost-of-living increase annually and that the provincial government provide adequate funding for nursing and personal care to a level that is at least at the average standard for nursing and personal care in those 10 jurisdictions included in the government’s own study.”

I affix my signature. I’m in complete agreement with the sentiments expressed in this petition.

HIGHWAY 69

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): I continue to submit petitions to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario dealing with the four-laning of Highway 69 between Sudbury and Parry Sound.

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

“Whereas the stretch of Highway 69 from Sudbury south to Parry Sound is a 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 needlessly lost their lives on that stretch of highway; and

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

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

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

Whereas the Premier of this province, Ernie Eves, is going to Sudbury on Thursday for a fundraiser; and

Whereas the people of the community of Sudbury in northeastern Ontario want the Premier of this province to announce a start date and an action plan for the four-laning of Highway 69 from Sudbury south to Parry Sound; and

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

“Therefore, 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 to the petition and again give it Evan, our new page, to take to the table.

HYDRO RATES

Mr Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge): I have a petition signed by 720 good citizens of Cambridge which reads:

“A petition to the Parliament of Ontario:

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

“Whereas the past summer’s unusual demand for hydro and the failure to bring all plants up to operating capacity has resulted in a significant increase in hydro rates;

“Whereas these hydro rate increases present a great burden to many young families, seniors and those on fixed incomes;

“Whereas the province still owns Ontario Power Generation that produces most of” Ontario’s “electricity and it has stated that a review of hydro rates and its regulating agency, the Ontario Energy Board, is necessary;

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

“That the province be directed to immediately freeze hydro rates to last year’s levels during its current review of the Ontario Energy Board’s mandate, that the province work with the federal government to eliminate the GST on Hydro One’s debt retirement charges and that the province ensure stronger consumer protection for all citizens of Ontario against such hydro rate increases.”

I sign my name thereto.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION FUNDING

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This is a concern of hundreds and hundreds of students attending Lakehead University in Thunder Bay.

I affix my signature in full agreement with their concerns.

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): I want to read a similar petition to my colleague from Thunder Bay-Atikokan.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario

“From the Lakehead University Student Union, Local 32, Canadian Federation of Students:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

As my colleague said, we have hundreds and hundreds of names on these petitions. I'm happy to add my name to the petition.

HIGHWAY 69

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): These are some more petitions with regard to the four-laning of Highway 69.

“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 died needlessly along that stretch of highway between Sudbury and Parry Sound; and

“Whereas so far this year 10 people have been tragically killed in motor vehicle accidents between Sudbury and Parry Sound on Highway 69; and

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

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

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

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

I, of course, affix my signature to this petition and give it to Jared to bring to the table.

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ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon Tim Hudak (Minister of Consumer and Business Services): I move that, pursuant to standing order 46, and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 180, An Act to enact, amend or revise various Acts related to consumer protection, when Bill 180 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 finance and economic affairs; and

That the standing committee on finance and economic affairs shall be authorized to meet for one day at its next scheduled meeting time for the purpose of consideration of the bill; and

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

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

That, upon receiving the report of the standing committee on finance and economic affairs, 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 votes on second and 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 Hudak has moved government notice of motion 63. The minister.

Hon Mr Hudak: I'm very pleased to speak to Bill 180 and the motion that's before the House today. In fact, I have enjoyed the debate to date on Bill 180. To refresh those watching at home, Bill 180 is the consumer protection for the 21st century legislation, CP21 for short. This is groundbreaking legislation to help bring into modern times our consumer protection legislation in the province of Ontario.

The last time this legislation was overhauled in any fundamental way, the time when many of these bills were brought forward, was a time, in the 1960s and 1970s, when computers were the size of transport trucks, when the only people who had computers were NASA scientists and the Internet was simply the figment of a science fiction writer's imagination. In today's day and age, 2002, we have come a long way in terms of the way we do business in the province, the way contracts are signed and the tools we use to communicate, to research and therefore, through e-commerce, to purchase goods and services as well.

CP21, the consumer protection for the 21st century legislation, addresses those areas. It makes sure that our laws are up to date so that consumers, whether they be a senior citizen or a student away at the University of Western Ontario for the first time, will have protection if they're targeted by unscrupulous business operators.

I think every member of the House probably feels the same way as I do. I said in my remarks that I believe the vast majority of these businesses that practise in these fields are honest operators with legitimate practices, and they are careful to make sure that their product is described accurately. They try to maintain good relationships with their customers. After all, they would like their friend or neighbour or fellow student or somebody else in the senior's complex to similarly buy their product. Unfortunately, in many areas we do have unscrupulous operators who target the vulnerable, try to take advantage of them and often abscond with the money and set up a scam operation somewhere else.

In fact the ministry, every year, puts out its list of top consumer complaints. This year our top five scams in the province of Ontario to help to alert consumers about some of the issues out there that they should be aware of—the first lesson is always to exercise common sense. If something sounds too good to be true, it probably is too good to be true. Secondly, you should always read the fine print. I think, always in dealing with areas where you are making a significant purchase—a house, auto repairs, buying a new car—it is important to ask a lot of questions and look for advice from people who are in the consumer industry, your friends, your neighbours, somebody whom you trust to make sure you are dealing

with an operator who has a good reputation in the community. But, of course, those types of precautions don't always work.

That's why we need laws like CP21. If passed by the House, it will help protect consumers in vulnerable situations. I have had the pleasure of being here through, I think, the vast majority of the debate, through second reading on this bill. It seems to me that I have heard significantly a weight on behalf of supporting the bill. I know that the opposition parties, as well as the government, of course, voted in support on first reading. I hope we'll have similar support across the floor on second and third readings as well. In fact, when I have listened to the debate when I have been sitting here in the afternoon or evening House sittings on Bill 180, I tend to hear general support from across the floor. I know a lot of my government members and colleagues have spoken in favour of this legislation. Many of the ideas, quite frankly, they have brought up in caucus. They've encountered senior citizens, for example, who are targeted by an unscrupulous driveway paving operation that does a shoddy job and takes off with the money and leaves the senior citizen in the lurch, or a telemarketing operation that calls a student saying, "We can get you a loan at a very low rate, below the bank rate. We have some patient money that is coming in from overseas. Only if you give me \$1,000 up front, if you write me a cheque, I'll get you this low-interest loan." You write the cheque, the money disappears and there is no loan as a result. I know many members of the assembly have encountered this on the part of their constituents and have done their best to try stamp out these operators.

Our legislation, if passed, will help us do an even better job of prosecuting and tracking these people down and putting these illegitimate businesses out of business. I've been pleased with the support that I have heard from the government members and from those across the floor.

I look forward to an opportunity, as the motion reads, to take this to committee for consideration. There have been some issues that have been brought up—some that I'll address here today, others that I believe will be addressed through the committee process and then put to a vote for second and third reading. Certainly, as the minister responsible in this area, with the work of my predecessors, particularly Minister Sterling, who did a lot of work in this area—Tsubouchi and Runciman as well—we're all looking forward to seeing this project completed, to be brought to its final fruition and then giving our prosecutors, our investigators, the ability to go out there and do an even better job than they are currently doing to crack down on these operators.

I want to say too, I think we have a very enviable record at the Ministry of Consumer and Business Services, whether it's co-operating with other provinces or states, working with police forces to crack down on these types of scam artists. In fact, as I mentioned in the House yesterday during question period, over \$2 million in the last little while was returned to consumers, over \$1 million in penalties, as well as months and years of jail

time have been assigned by the judges in the cases that our prosecutors have brought forward. In fact, our staff have been recognized with international awards for their work, particularly in shutting down telemarketing scams that may use Ontario as a base and target seniors in other provinces or states. There were many great victories in that area.

Nonetheless, our view here in the Ernie Eves government is you don't rest on your laurels. You try to improve; you try to do a better job on behalf of those who pay the bills, the taxpayers, on behalf of our constituents. Certainly Bill 180, if passed, will allow us to do so.

One area that I know has come up for discussion during debate has to do with the Internet. As I mentioned in my earlier comments, for the first time consumer protection legislation under Bill 180 will take into account the new economy, the new e-commerce, and give consumers the same protections on the Internet that they would receive from regular face-to-face contacts that we customarily associate with consumer protection laws. We will expand consumer protection into e-commerce. We do this in a number of ways. For example, we are bringing in a 30-day delivery rule that says that if you ordered goods, the goods would have to be delivered or the service provided within 30 days of when you were told you would get that good or service. If you don't, you can cancel the contract, no questions asked. That type of rule exists for goods and services. We are now expanding it to the Internet for that type of protection.

1530

Similarly, we are bringing forward rules that allow for contracts through the Internet that will describe the goods accurately and, secondly, are either in e-format or any kind of printable format so the consumer, when making that purchase, will have a permanent record of what he or she had purchased. Just like if they walked into a store and made a purchase, they would have that contract describing the goods; they would have some standing in a court of law or working with the ministry if something had gone wrong.

Thirdly, we ask for a bricks-and-mortar address so that a consumer will know where they can go for face-to-face contact if something has gone awry with a product that they had ordered.

This is all part of a harmonization strategy as well across the various provinces. I think all provinces have signed on to this. Ontario happens to be quite advanced now in the legislative process to actually put the principles into law. But the goal is that, from one ocean to another to a third, we would have similar laws across Canada. So we could work with British Columbia, for example. If there's a scam artist at work in Ontario who uses the Internet to take advantage of somebody in British Columbia, we could work with each other to prosecute that individual and put them out of business. Similarly, we want to work with the States and other jurisdictions in that area.

Obviously, you're not going to solve all the problems overnight. There will be operators at work in other

countries where we don't have these agreements. That's true, and that's why the bricks-and-mortar law is important, so that you know where the business operates from. If the country is far away and it may not have the best reputation for lawfulness, you should probably be cautious in terms of buying a good or service from that country via the Internet.

Nonetheless, this is an important step forward, at least within the North American context, that now is expanding to other parts of the world to help have similar laws and support each other's prosecutions if people have been taken advantage of. I think that will respond to many of the concerns I've heard today. I think it's an important step forward.

Certainly many members have brought up, I think because it was a hot issue at the time, how hydro prices are impacted by this bill. But as I said during debate and I'd remind members today, the previous Bill 58 that was passed by the assembly takes many of the same principles that we have in Bill 180 and puts them into force. That was Bill 58, the Reliable Energy and Consumer Protection Act. Just like Bill 180, it eliminates negative renewal options, taking away negative-option billing, often an odious process that takes money from people for things they didn't order and they didn't want. Bill 180 eliminates that across the board for goods and services, and similarly Bill 58 with respect to energy prices includes that.

We also have in Bill 58, already passed, replacing a 10-day right to cancel with a 30-day period; I had mentioned in our legislation a 30-day delivery rule. People could get out of contracts if not delivered within 30 days of the contracted delivery date.

Bill 58 has a 15-day cooling-off period before a new contract can be reaffirmed. Similarly in this legislation, we expand the cooling-off period. For example, if an individual feels pressured by high-pressure sales tactics—vacation clubs are an example of that—this cooling-off period gives them a chance to rethink, to maybe get in contact with and get some advice from somebody they trust and get out of that contract, no questions asked, if they were the victim of these types of high-pressure sales tactics, which we certainly get complaints about at the Ministry of Consumer and Business Services.

That was one area, the e-commerce, that I think I've responded to. Bill 58 includes similar provisions with respect to the hydro market that are included in Bill 180 for e-commerce for goods and services outside the hydro side.

As well, I want to say that we have made every effort, to some comments from members, to do a broad-based consultation on this piece of legislation, CP21. In fact, this is not something that we did overnight. This is something that came about after several years of work by ministry staff and some of my predecessors. In fact, a blue paper—

Interjection.

Hon Mr Hudak: Well, it was a document with a blue cover. Maybe it's not technically a blue paper, but a document was put out some time ago and dispersed broadly and we had a great deal of response. It was also posted on the Internet and given to all members of the assembly, I understand. Through those consultations, including hearings, I believe, in eight or so different communities, we received over 1,200 different submissions from consumers, from business groups and other interested parties. As I mentioned, these proposals came about because we analyzed 40,000 different sets of information, whether they were complaints, calls, inquiries or other pieces of data, to bring forward our recommendations to the assembly for changing and modernizing the laws.

Let me give you some examples. Here are some third-party quotes: "Having participated in your department's consultations two years ago, we have been eagerly awaiting this legislative initiative." Now Mr Michael Janigan, the executive director of the Public Interest Advocacy Centre, should be happy because the consultations have come forward with a bill that is before the House and to date has received support from all parties.

Another quote from the Public Interest Advocacy Centre: "We are writing to congratulate you on the excellent and much-needed consumer protection law reform initiative Bill 180," CP21, "that you tabled in the Legislature last week." They "are particularly pleased to see that the right to access the publicly funded justice system, in particular via class actions, will be protected" through this legislation.

The Consumers Council of Canada, some folks I had in my office just two weeks ago to discuss consumer issues, are very pleased with this legislation and with progress through the assembly. I'm sure they would like to see it passed into law. Joan Huzar, the president of the Consumers Council of Canada, said, "Our organization has been involved with the development of this proposed legislation to provide better consumer protection since its initiation and applauds the government for its interest in helping promote fairness in the marketplace." So an important constituency group is supportive that has as their sole mandate the protection of consumers and getting information to consumers on how to deal in the economy.

There are some other issues that have been brought forward, one last night. Some may not be best put in a consumer protection piece; they're issues that we all react to, I know, but sometimes they have other homes. My colleague from St Catharines talked about the PSA test last night, the prostate test, which probably, on consideration, wouldn't belong in a consumer protection bill. I think it would belong in the Ministry of Health reviewing what tests work. It is a valid point. I think it's important for us to try to help those who have prostate cancer, obviously, or to help anticipate developments so we can treat them early on. But I think that's something that is best done through the health process rather than CP21. I appreciate the member's input on this important

issue but, upon review, I'm not going to move any changes to the bill with respect to the PSA.

I know there are other members on the government side of the House who are in rapt attention and who want to speak to this bill. I will just finally summarize some of the highlights as we go through this motion and then, hopefully, into votes for second and third reading, some of the major changes that I think will be important to constituents and taxpayers.

The 10% rule in this legislation basically says that if you get an estimate, for example, for a home repair, the final price would have to be within 10% of that estimate. So a situation where you were getting a home repair, for example, for \$2,000 and you get a bill for \$20,000 would not be allowed under this legislation. The maximum price would be \$2,200. Of course if you as the owner, as part of the contract, agree to—say you wanted to add a roof. If you're agreeing to that, then that would allow an increase in the price. But you'd have to agree to consent to that; no more lowballing the price and then coming back with a much higher bill. It's an important consumer protection. It currently exists in the auto repair sector. We're expanding it to other areas. Most importantly, I think, home repair is one area.

I had mentioned the 30-day delivery rule. It's common, currently under door-to-door direct sales, that if you feel intimidated by a salesperson at your door and sign a contract, then you would, as I mentioned, have a cooling-off period and the final good would have to be within, now in the legislation, 30 days of the delivery date. Previously it was two weeks for door-to-door sales; now it's to 30 days and, as I mentioned, for the first time Internet sales are going to 30 days. So regardless of when the contract was agreed to, if a delivery or performance commencement date is missed by 30 days without the consumer's consent in writing, then the consumer has a right to cancel that contract.

Time-sharing is a hot issue that we deal with often in our constituency offices. For example, a couple attends a time-share presentation and is bombarded with all kinds of promises of a glorious location, access any time they want, by a very aggressive salesperson. Exasperated and somewhat exhausted, they agree to buy, sign the contract and make a \$2,000 down payment and commit to a further \$8,000 down the road. But the next day, when they get home and read the contract in greater detail, they realize they will not be getting the location they had wanted or the time entitlement they had been promised based on the sales presentation. When they try to cancel the purchase, the seller refuses to allow the purchase to be cancelled. They hire a lawyer to help them out, but after paying thousands of dollars in legal fees, they can no longer afford to fight that claim.

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Unfortunately, under the current consumer law which I mentioned, most of which was developed in the 1960s and 1970s, this really wasn't anticipated, and as such, no specific concerns can be addressed through that legislation. Time-shares are not defined, and that leads to

confusion in the law, which is not of great benefit to somebody who is scammed in this particular area. Consumers do not have cooling-off rights under current legislation in that situation.

Under the proposed legislation that is before the assembly today, CP21, time-shares would be clearly defined and consumers would gain a 10-day cooling-off period within which they could reconsider their purchase and get out of that contract with no questions asked. Basically, it helps them to escape being victims of high-pressure sales tactics.

Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls): I've been in those sales meetings. They are high-pressure.

Hon Mr Hudak: You've seen that before. The member for Niagara Falls has been in them, but he outwitted them, obviously.

Mr Maves: I just said no.

Hon Mr Hudak: He's a clever fellow. But often people do fall victim to these types of scams, and we try to do our best to help. This legislation, if passed, will go a lot further toward addressing that particular issue.

Finally, as always, the enforcement side is very important. This legislation will help to more than double the fines. Whether it's individuals or a corporation, the fines will at least double. As well, jail times that can be assigned by judges will go up to the provincial maximum of two years less a day. We also bring some consistency to the time periods for prosecution. What often happens is that a consumer will bring a complaint forward about how they have been taken advantage of in some of the areas I've mentioned here before the assembly today, but by the time they take it forward to the complaint level and we begin to investigate, the time period expires to bring forward an effective prosecution. We are advancing and bringing consistency to that time frame to two years. That gives our prosecutors much greater ability to do their investigations and get retribution for the consumers who have been taken advantage of.

Lastly, we deal with three areas that the ministry has had a very strong relationship with, some of the biggest purchases people make in their lives: automobile, home, or a big vacation. This legislation deals with REBBA, the Real Estate and Business Brokers Act, as well as legislation dealing with the Ontario motor vehicles incorporation that helps to set the rules in terms of who can enter into automobile sales and the high standards that must be set to ensure there is confidence in that industry. As well, there are some enhancements to govern the travel industry. After all, if consumers are making large purchases in these areas, we want to make sure they are dealt with in a professional way and that if they are taken advantage of, they will have some sort of retribution, that there are disciplinary possibilities, codes of ethics, in these important areas.

Most importantly, having high standards will reinforce the confidence that people have in these industries. These strong councils, these strong administrative authorities, then will lend their reputation so that consumers will know that if they are going to buy a car or a house and

they don't get what they asked for, they will have some opportunities to get some retribution in those areas, and similarly for vacations. We've enjoyed our relationship with these authorities and we look forward to this legislation passing, strengthening their ability to deal in these areas and strengthening their relationship with the Ministry of Consumer and Business Services and the Ernie Eves government.

My last point in that respect is that this is also good for business. By ensuring that consumers have confidence in businesses and by weeding out those who take advantage and often bring unwanted media attention to an industry, it helps strong, legitimate operators to grow, to prosper and to hire more people. If you have a car dealer who is an unscrupulous operator who keeps selling poor vehicles to consumers, that hurts other dealers in that community and in the whole province. By having high standards, a code of ethics and such, we can help existing businesses, the vast majority of which are strong, legitimate operators, to grow, to flourish and to hire more people.

I hope we will see this motion pass today and it would be nice to see all-party support for Bill 180, CP21, consumer protection for the 21st century. There was a lot of effort, a lot of consultations. It's a good piece of legislation that will take a giant step forward in helping consumers deal with the top five scams in Ontario.

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: To your right, one of the pages sitting down is Michael Schonberger from Sudbury, and I'd like to point out Michael's mother, Mrs Deb Schonberger, who is in the members' gallery today, and welcome her to the Toronto experience.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): That, of course, is not a point of order, but we welcome you.

Further debate.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I was wondering whether the minister would get around to a couple of clippings I saw in the paper. He was quoting third-party commenters on his legislation. There's one, Jacob Ziegel, who is a professor emeritus at the University of Toronto faculty of law. He is not quite so complementary as some of the interventions the minister mentioned before.

Another one, from Bob Aaron, says, "Pointing Out 'Hudak's Folly.'" I don't know how he could come up with that. But he has this final paragraph, probably very unfair. The final paragraph says, "Hudak may go down in Ontario history as the minister who protected consumers from smooth door-to-door renovators, but in the real estate community, his failure to implement meaningful changes to the law is destined to be forever known as 'Hudak's folly.'"

I don't know why he would say that. I'll leave these for other Liberal members, since I know the member and I don't want to insult him personally with these other references. But I knew he had mentioned a couple, so I thought I might share with him a couple of other comments.

As well, since we're talking about a time allocation motion that allows a little bit of flexibility, I was pleased to see the member for Niagara Falls here. I was down at Niagara Falls just this past week when they were announcing the Liberal policy of proceeding with Beck 3. I remember it: I was down with Dalton McGuinty at the edge of the Niagara River. The mayor of Niagara Falls was there at the time. We were saying—once again—that we should proceed with the tunnel project and, ultimately, probably the full project at Beck 3. I want to tell my friend from Perth that government members were dismissing it. They said, "Well, we can't afford to do that; it's not practical at this time," and so on—many negative comments.

A few weeks later I'm down there and the government is announcing the same policy. I'm glad to see that conversion. The media asked me on that occasion, "Are you annoyed with them? What do you think of all this?" I said, "I'm always pleased to see them take the good ideas from the Liberal opposition and implement those ideas." So I want to compliment them on that particular project.

The Minister of the Environment has reappeared after his conference call on Kyoto that he was just involved in. I hope that in that conference call he was talking about matters of great importance and actually quoting the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario, who today—I know that Minister Hudak, who was purported at one time to be the potential Minister of the Environment and would have taken a different stance from the present Minister of the Environment, would be delighted to hear the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario, Gordon Miller, this morning say that the science is sound. Of course, the implication is that Ontario should be implementing provisions which would help reduce greenhouse gases. I agree—

Interjection.

Mr Bradley: We're in a time allocation motion, in case you're wondering.

I was very pleased as well that the minister extolled some of the virtues of the bill, because what happens is that people from radio stations or newspapers and so on phone us and say, "Isn't there anything the government does that's good that you would agree with?" I always say, "Call Tim Hudak. Call Bart Maves. They will tell you what a good job the government is doing. I'll help you out with the other side of it."

It's not as though we think everything the government does is wrong; it's just that I'm confident the government itself will tell us what a good job it's doing. In fact, Bob Aaron, who was writing this article for the Toronto Star, talked about "Hudak's publicity machine," so there must be something to that. No doubt once this bill is passed, as it will be because the government will rush it through, there will be government advertising to follow to tell everybody what a good job the government is doing. That will be at the taxpayers' expense and add on to over a quarter of a billion dollars that this government has squandered on self-serving, clearly partisan government advertising.

1550

By the way, I attended the other night a meeting in St Catharines of the Council of Canadians with Maud Barlow as guest speaker. Maude, as always, was very good, and there was a suitable, large group of people there who wanted to protect health care in the province. Again, when I think of consumer protection—it's a bit of a stretch, I realize that. The Associate Minister of Health is here at this time, so I can say this. People were concerned that there was going to be even more privatization of the health care system in this province. I hope that those on the government side, though they may be few in number, will counsel against this.

They worried, of course, that instead of providing money to Sunnybrook Hospital, money was provided to a private firm to provide radiation services. We notice that in eastern Ontario it's a private firm providing kidney dialysis services. We notice that the government now wants to have the private sector building and leasing back hospitals, and now the MRI machines and the CAT scan machines. So we're moving, in my view, step-by-step—not one huge leap but step-by-step—into privatization. I would call upon the consumer minister of this province to protect us from this movement toward privatization of the health care system.

I would also hope that there would have been something in this bill—the Toronto members will understand this and the member for Barrie who may take this route from time to time. The gouging that's going on on Highway 407 is something to behold. I looked through the bill carefully and I thought, "Where is the section on Highway 407 preventing the constantly increasing costs of using Highway 407?" I am told by people that it would cost you less in tolls to go from St Catharines, Ontario, to New York City than it would to go across the length of Highway 407.

And then there are the billing practices. I keep paying these bills and I'm wondering, "Didn't I already pay that bill?" They keep sending you a bill and you can never find the last bill. We all know you can never find the last bill. So you pay it, because if you don't pay it they charge you \$30 in addition to that and when it comes time to renew your licence they're using the hammer of the Ontario government on you.

I can tell you that my constituents phone to complain often about the gouging on Highway 407, the billing practices and so on, and I looked completely through this bill to try to find anything to protect the consumer and I can't find it. So I when I visit the member for Barrie and I have to take the 407 to avoid some traffic, I get gouged. Barrie is a wonderful place to visit, I know that and I know he believes that to be the case as well.

Interjection.

Mr Bradley: I say to my friend from Peterborough, I would like to use Highway 401 except it's totally clogged. One of the reasons for that is the lack of public transit that this government is responsible for. You will remember that consumers have to pay a lot more for public transit today because this government withdrew its

support for a number of years from public transit that provides an alternative for people who, not on every occasion, want to use their personal vehicle to get from one place to another. They would like that public transit that would reduce the traffic on the highways, that would stop gridlock and it would of course reduce the need for expenditures for widening such highways.

I note as well other consumers out there are people who are on the Ontario disability support program. Someone in my caucus will correct me, but I know that Mrs Dombrowsky has raised this issue in the House, that there has not been an increase since 1993 in the basic money or pension—whatever you want to call it—the support payments that are provided for people on disability. It's most unfortunate that that's the case, because they are facing all of these increased costs that are not protected in this bill. Though I want to tell the minister there are some good provisions in the bill, there are a number that are absent from this bill.

An increase in the Ontario disability support program is long overdue. I hope the government will announce this in the near future. Indeed, I ask them to announce it in the near future.

I want to note as well that there is a need to protect those who need Visudyne treatment. You will remember that I wrote letters to several Ministers of Health and raised it in questions in the House, in statements and speeches. Finally, the Minister of Health capitulated and said, "We're going to cover Visudyne treatment." This was two years after Health Canada approved it.

I was somewhat delighted on the first day of the announcement until I examined the restrictions that are placed on those who are to receive the treatment. First of all, it has to be age-related or you can't get the treatment. Obviously you can't be covered for that. Eighty per cent to 90% of the people I thought would be covered are not eligible, and you have to have lost 50% of your eyesight before you're eligible. Rather than taking preventive action early on, they wait until a person has lost at least half their eyesight. Those people, from the period of time Health Canada approved that treatment for use to the time the minister announced it, are out of pocket. Many of them had to sell or remortgage their homes. Many had to deplete their personal savings to be able to pay for that. I think the government has an opportunity to correct that. I hope they do.

I mention as well, as I must in every speech in this House, that there's a need in the Niagara Peninsula—and I heard Mrs Papatello, the member for Windsor West, raising the issue on behalf of the Liberal Party once again—and that is the dire need for family physicians and other physicians in the Niagara region at this time. People are retiring. They're departing from the Niagara Peninsula. Sometimes they pass on and are unable to receive treatment from a doctor. We desperately need them. In terms of consumer protection, there are a lot of consumers out there who are not getting the protection of having a family physician available to them. Those young people who have gone abroad to medical schools

and are now coming back, we have to find a way to speed up the process of allowing them to practise in Ontario without causing any problems, without lowering the quality, and I call upon the government to do that.

I now relinquish my time to the New Democratic Party and, I think, my friend from Hamilton West.

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): It's an honour to follow my friend from St Catharines. Indeed, many of the broader issues he speaks of affect our geographical area in this large province, and I'll touch on those.

But let me just say at the outset that this is an awfully big bill to change very little, quite frankly. The proof of that is the fact that you don't hear either one of the two opposition parties clinging from the ceiling, going crazy about the bill. The only time that ever happens is when it's really not that important.

You're making some changes that are positive. Any steps you might take toward consumer protection would, by definition, have to be somewhat popular because supposedly you're protecting the public, but I'm not going to go on at great length because they're not that big; they're not that radical. It's not going to make that big a difference.

As my friend from St Catharines likes to point out, once a member becomes a backbench member of the government, they grow a third arm, and that third arm is of course to pat themselves on the back. I'll leave all of that up to you guys. You've got all the canned speeches and all the talking points for how wonderful you are. I'll leave it at that.

What I want to do in relation to this bill and in relation to the issue of consumer protection is talk about what you're not doing.

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Minister of Public Safety and Security): Come on.

Mr Christopherson: One of the ministers across says, "Come on." What did he expect when the government tables a bill of 162 pages that really doesn't do an awful lot?

I'm going to talk about what you're not doing, because those are the issues that really matter. The number one consumer issue in Ontario is what? It's hydro.

The other day after they made their announcement, I heard one of the other ministers say, when he came into the House and somebody said, "How's it going?" he said, "My phone stopped ringing." That's about the level of concern the government has with regard to consumers.

1600

I want to say a couple of things about your wonderful nine-point program. It should be called a nine-step program. First of all, people do appreciate the fact that the crisis you caused seems to be somewhat abating in that the bill in front of them is now not going to require people to make a choice between paying their hydro bill and food, paying their hydro bill and buying medicine, paying their hydro bill and maybe having any kind of family Christmas.

Do you know what's interesting about this? A couple of things.

First of all, people know that you're not doing them any favours, that this is full-fledged damage control and that you only did this because you had to.

Secondly—and it's an argument that often is difficult to make, my experience has been, but people have got this one, and they got it in one. That is that the cost differential between 4.3 cents and whatever the market dictates is still going to be paid to those private generators. They still get the money. It's not going to show up immediately on the hydro bill until—what?—2006, but people understand fully that that money has got to be paid. You've got private entities—if they aren't private now, you're planning to make them private—who are getting full market price, only it's coming from our general taxation. That money is going to be paid. But one thing you're not going to do is stand up and say, "We're going to deny any private entity making a profit off the backs of any potential suffering by the people of Ontario." You're not going to do that. So rather than make those private entities rich from the monthly bills, you're going to cap it, but that money has got to come from somewhere. People understand that you're either going to go into debt or you're going to have to find the money somewhere.

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): That's where you're wrong.

Mr Christopherson: I hear one of the backbenchers barking that I'm wrong. Well, you may have a chance to speak after me; you stand up and look in the cameras and you tell the people of Ontario how your plan is not going to cost them one dime and that nobody's going to profit by it. I guarantee you, it's not going to happen. The fact of the matter is, that profit margin has to be paid for from somewhere.

Up until now, Ontario Hydro was in the hands of the public. Yes, it ran a debt, and yes, there's enough blame to go around as to where that debt came from and how we got into that position. But do you know what? At the end of the day, the *raison d'être*, the purpose for which that organization exists, is to provide power at cost.

Now, before you say, "It wasn't at cost," I acknowledge that part of that cost is the resulting debt that was there. No question. But the benefits of Ontario Hydro, notwithstanding the changes that needed to be made as time went on and as it got bigger, and one of the reasons that we in Ontario and we specifically who live around the Golden Horseshoe—the reason it's called the Golden Horseshoe and one of the reasons we are so successful and that that part of this province is one of the industrial-economic engines of the entire nation is because of the affordability and the reliability of hydroelectric power, through whatever means it's generated—the generic term of hydro power.

That's when you succumbed to the siren call of those who saw all that money and wanted a piece of it. And do you know what? It's the same kind of folks, because that's the kind of system we have, who are standing out

there in the private world drooling over getting their hands on workers' compensation, because there's billions of dollars there. The same with our health care system. It's still relatively foreign to us—although I have to acknowledge that appears to be changing a bit—that there would be hospitals whose primary responsibility is to make a profit for the shareholders. I mean, we still don't think of hospitals that way.

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford): Bill 180.

Mr Christopherson: Pardon me? Yes, Bill 180. It's called consumer protection, and I'm pointing out why this bill is inadequate. You just don't like what I'm saying. There's a difference between you don't like what I'm saying versus its being out of order. The fact of the matter is, you don't like it. Too bad. It's my time, and I'm going to say what I think needs to be said on behalf of my constituents. That's the way this place works.

Mr Tascona: I'm listening.

Mr Christopherson: Well, that's good. The member now says he's listening. That's good, because a minute ago he wanted to shut me up. Now he's listening. We're making progress. There is hope—not much in this bill, but there is hope.

There are reasons why workers' compensation is within the public domain, why our hospital system and our health care system are within the public domain, and there are reasons why the hydro system has been within the public domain. If you sat back and wrote this story, one could never imagine that at the end of the day, where we are now, there could be an argument at all that this government could give that would in any way attempt to explain what you've done, the damage that you have done to individuals. You scared a lot of my senior citizens, a lot of vulnerable people, virtually everybody. You scared them. And do you know what? They don't have a lot of inherent faith that you get up every day and say, "What can I do for the majority of the citizens of this province?" People don't believe that. They can believe mostly what they know. They know from their hydro bill that you weren't looking out for them.

So while you want to stand up and say Bill 180 is this wonderful consumer protection bill, what people really want to know about is, when are you going to start dealing with the issues that affect people on a day-to-day basis and start protecting them instead of selling out to your corporate interest pals? Because that's what happened. Now there are some of you over there who like the idea so much that you want to do the same thing to our hospitals and our schools and WSIB, workers' compensation.

You don't have to be a raving leftie to accept the fact that it is in the public interest that certain aspects of our society and certain aspects of our economy should be there for the good of the broader public. You did this because your friends saw a chance to make a whole lot of money. It's not the first one. There are plenty of examples. Just take a look at your whole tax cut strategy, if you want to call it that. Now you stand up about how

many people are affected, but you know what? At the end of the day, the wealthier you are, the more money you get from the policies of this government. Only this one blew up in your faces.

The only reason you took any action was because this province was about to be paralyzed if you didn't do something. But you didn't do what really needs to be done, and that is to admit totally that the whole idea was a bad one and that you bungled it from beginning to end, that you've seen the error of your ways and that you are not going to do this—what is it currently? It's 49% you're going to sell, but not 51%, as if that makes some kind of difference at the end of the day. Just by the way, if you happen to be somebody who has a big enough chunk of that 49%, you don't think the Premier of a Tory government is going to be listening really carefully when they say they don't like what's going on? So don't be fooled that only 49% is being sold. The influence will be there; the demand will be there. That 49% will get a lot more than 49% influence.

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Yes, you're capping back to May 1. There's the admission right there: the day you brought it in, the disaster started. Your so-called plan of action goes right back to the day your first plan took effect, and you're still planning to give that excess money to whoever can get the most in the marketplace.

And while we're talking about the magic of the marketplace, let's just really look at what's going on here. This whole concept was based on—and I am talking about consumer protection, because you said the reason you were going to bring in your changes, your deregulation and privatization, was because consumers were going to pay lower rates at the end of the day because there would be more competition and the competition would cause prices to fall, just as if we had The Bay competing with Sears—it was going to be that kind of competitiveness. If you have one place selling a pair of jeans and somebody else that wants to sell you that same pair of jeans, they're going to sell them at a little less because they want your business. If they're willing to take a little less profit on each one, and they do things a little more efficiently, then they can afford to do that and that whole system provides competitive advantages to the consumer. Do you know what? In huge, overwhelming aspects of our economy, that's what happens, and by and large it works.

Here your thinking is that by opening it up to the private sector there's an opportunity for the private sector to come in and make money, and that's where the competition will come from. Let's just think about this. If somebody's going to invest the hundreds of millions, possibly billions, of dollars that it takes to open up a power generation system or plant, then they're going to expect a pretty decent return. I'm not aware of too many financial people who take a billion dollars and say, "We'll put it over there and we don't really now if it'll make any money or not, but we'll just put it there because it's a nice public service." No, they're going to

want a good return. How do they gauge whether they're going to get a good return? The first thing they want to do is take a look and see, "How much do we get for this product we're producing?" What they want to see is higher rates, because if there's higher rates there's more profit; it makes more sense to make the investment. But you said that competition was going to bring in lower rates. If it brought in lower rates, who would want to invest there, especially if they think the rates are going to go down over time? It doesn't work.

Howard Hampton told you two years ago it wouldn't work. You don't need to look any further than our own country, a neighbour province, Alberta, to see what happened there. There are other examples all across the United States where they're all backing up trying to undo the damage, just like you're doing. But you went straight ahead anyway and said, "It's in the interests of the citizens and the consumers." Howard Hampton and the New Democrats said, "That's not going to happen. You're going to hurt people," and that's exactly what you did.

I understand that some of the Enron people were some of the folks that you brought in to give you advice on how to set up this boondoggle—imagine. And they still didn't stop, they still went ahead and did it. What does that tell us? It tells us they thought they could get away with it. You knew prices were going to go up, but you hoped they would only go up a bit, enough that people would swallow, accept the rest of your spin and life could go on the way you wanted it to. But money doesn't work that way.

One thing I learned in the Ministry of Finance when I was there as parliamentary assistant for two years is that money doesn't have a heart or a conscience or a political affiliation. It just goes where more money can be made. That was the game plan here.

Do we need to look too far except the news every day to realize the importance of energy, whether it's hydro or oil, to understand the strength of the entities that have influence in the world on this issue?

Now you want people to believe that the whole thing from beginning to end was meant to be consumer protection, just like your Bill 180, that that's all you were doing. You got caught.

I have to say that I thought it would happen a lot sooner than now, given all the things that you've done. I didn't think it would take seven years for the majority of Ontarians to realize that you're not interested in the day-to-day life of the ordinary Ontarian, the majority of people. You proclaim it, but it doesn't exist in what you've done in policies, it doesn't exist in what you've done with your tax structure and it certainly hasn't shown itself in what you've done to Hydro. You're going to have a really tough time spinning around this one, just like you're going to get an avalanche of forces coming at you if you try to do the same thing to our hospitals or our health care system. You're going to see continuing pressure on you as a result of what you've done to the education system.

I listened to the Minister of Education today and, truly, I wondered what planet is she talking about when she talks about the priority of the government being to worry about our kids in the education system. We've never had so many crises in our education system. The whole point, of course, was to bleed it dry, strangulate it, so that people would say, "You know, the public system isn't working any more. Maybe we should consider the private system."

This isn't rocket science. We know what you're doing. The same thing with the health care system—underfund it to the point where there's absolute crisis and then you stand in your place, just like Ralph Klein did a couple of years ago when he brought in private hospitals in Alberta, and you say, "Well you know, the opposition may think it's OK to have lineups at the emergency ward, but we don't and we're going to do something about it." John Snobelen should have been turfed from cabinet for giving away cabinet secrets when he said, and I'm paraphrasing, "I'm going to create a crisis to justify what I'm going to do."

This time you picked the wrong issue and you got really greedy in terms of taking care of your pals. So you got into a crisis. You've capped things, but everybody understands they're going to have to pay for it in the long run.

I would say to anybody who is watching this debate that as they hear government members talk about the virtues of Bill 180 and how wonderful this bill is and that everyone can go to sleep at night now knowing that the Tory government at Queen's Park is going to take care of all their concerns, they should keep in mind what's happening with hydro as we speak and they should keep in mind that we're at a crossroads with our health care system and that injured workers are still not getting the representation they should get, they're not getting the benefits they should get and that all of these things that are there for the broader public good and not individual gain have to be fought for and defended by every generation. The generation that says, "It's all done, I don't need to worry about it," is the generation that's going to let it go. I can tell you right now, the generation that is currently becoming aware—the younger generation—of the issues, are the ones who are going to lead the charge quite frankly to change the politics of this province. This whole idea that the strongest, the fastest, the richest, the best looking are the ones who get everything, and if you're not in one of those categories or some other artificial category that separates us as human beings, then too bad, you're just left out—that whole attitude, the one you have exploited for seven years, is coming to an end.

Whoever the next government is is going to have to spend an awful lot of time putting things in full reverse to do real consumer protection, because if we want to protect the consumers in Ontario, the best thing to do is reverse almost everything you've done. That would be good consumer protection, assuming of course that the absolute best protection is to guarantee that those smil-

ing, smirking faces over there are on this side of the House, or perhaps not in this House at all. We need a change. Bill 180 and nine-step programs for hydro are not what this province really needs. What this province needs is a change in government.

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Mr Tascona: I'm very pleased to join the debate today. If the public doesn't know, it's Bill 180, the proposed Consumer Protection Statute Law Amendment Act, 2002. This proposed legislation would consolidate and modernize six existing consumer protection laws as well as three sector-specific laws. This would provide clear, consistent rights and obligations for consumers and businesses.

Changes to three sector-specific laws are the Motor Vehicle Dealers Act, the Real Estate and Business Brokers Act and the Travel Industry Act. It would modernize rules about the most significant purchases most consumers ever make: homes, vehicles and travel. It would strengthen the regulation of those professionals who practise in these big-ticket sectors.

I would like to spend some time discussing our proposed changes to the Motor Vehicle Dealers Act, also known as the MVDA. One of the three statutes will provide consumer protection through the regulation of professional sectors. Changes to the MVDA are proposed with the objective of developing a practical and enforceable legal framework that would, if passed, do two things: (1) protect consumers' interests and (2) provide a level playing field for businesses.

Automotive spending is one of the largest sectors of consumer spending and an important part of the Ontario economy. Changes are also being suggested in the proposed Consumer Protection Act, 2002, also contained in Bill 180, that relate to automobile repairs. Because most of us have taken our cars to the repair shop at some point in our lives, we know what people go through when they don't know what's under the hood. The vast majority of automotive repair businesses are honest and legitimate. Unfortunately, there are people out there who like to take advantage of people, sometimes charging for shoddy, unnecessary or even non-existent work.

The Ministry of Consumer and Business Services received over 2,000 written and verbal complaints about motor vehicle repairs in the year 2001. Victims of these unscrupulous operators can be out hundreds or even thousands of dollars. We've all heard the stories from our constituents: the one who took his car in for an oil change and the shop ended up putting a new engine in without the consumer's consent; the one who took their car in again and again and grew frustrated when nothing ever seemed to get fixed; the one who paid an exorbitant inflated price for the parts they put in their car.

Here's a true example from the ministry's case files. When a consumer took his car into a Toronto area repair shop, he was told by the operator that the car needed a new engine. He was quoted a price that seemed reasonable and was told he would get a one-year warranty upon completion of the work. The consumer

was later told that he also needed a new fuel pump and that the radiator and starter needed to be repaired.

After the work was completed, the consumer did not receive a proper receipt or warranty, as promised. He was also not shown the old parts. When he took the car to another repair facility for an emission test, he was told that the engine had not even been replaced. The man contacted the ministry, and after the ministry investigators intervened, the repairer pled guilty. The consumer was given restitution and the repairer had to pay a \$1,000 fine. Scam artists like this not only hurt consumers, they also harm the reputation of honest, legitimate businesses in the automotive sector.

Some of my constituents who have had a bad experience at an automotive repair shop are quick to say that repair shops are a rip-off. In fact, in the vast majority of cases the opposite is true. But such bad experiences make people hesitant or skeptical in the marketplace—the exact opposite of what we want. We want a safe, thriving marketplace where people feel secure spending their money and businesses are expanding and creating jobs.

I understand the Minister of Consumer and Business Services did an event this summer at a motor vehicle repair shop. He offered tips for consumers to help them avoid scam artists. One of the top tips was to always get a written estimate before any work begins.

Here's another case taken from the consumer files at the Ministry of Consumer and Business Services: A consumer was quoted a price for repairs verbally but when he went to pick up his car the cost was almost \$600 more than the quote. With the help of the ministry, this consumer received restitution and the repair shop was fined \$500. This case shows one of the most common problems: the lack of a written estimate.

In this case the consumer contacted the ministry to complain. But that doesn't always happen. Sometimes consumers don't know where to complain or feel embarrassed about being taken advantage of. Bill 180 would make it mandatory for automotive repair shops to give consumers written estimates before charging for work, whether consumers request them or not.

Through Bill 180, if the shop fails to provide an estimate they would not be able to charge for the repairs done unless the consumer authorized in advance a maximum amount they were willing to pay. This would help prevent deceptive business practices and scams that some unscrupulous repair shops engage in.

Bill 180 contains a 10% estimate rule that would mean a consumer should not be charged more than 10% above the amount estimated in the consumer agreement. This provision already exists for motor vehicle repairs. Bill 180 would expand it to all goods and services. By requiring an estimate for motor vehicle repairs, we are closing the loop so that repair shops must provide an estimate and must honour that estimate within 10%.

Here's a common scenario. A woman takes her car into the shop because it's making a terrible noise. The mechanic tells her she needs a new muffler and gives her

a verbal estimate of \$200. Because the consumer has no idea what it normally costs for a new muffler, she willingly agrees to the price and the mechanic completes the job. But when the consumer gets the final bill, the total is \$450. The unscrupulous mechanic indicates that the extra \$250 is for parts and extra labour because she wanted a rush job.

Under the existing law, the repair shop has to honour the estimate within 10%, but in this case the consumer only had a verbal estimate. Because there was nothing in writing, there is really no proof of a \$200 estimate. Bill 180 would close that loop so that the consumer would automatically receive a written estimate.

This would help families trying to budget for vehicle repairs and other services such as home repairs and renovations. It would help with decisions about whether to buy a new vehicle or repair the old one. For example, if the repair shop estimates that it will cost about \$1,000 to repair your car, you might consider that worth it. But if the bill comes back and it costs \$6,000, you might have made a different decision. Under the proposed bill, however, the estimate would be binding to 10% above the estimate, meaning that the consumer would only be liable for \$1,100.

This rule is also designed to be fair to businesses. If the mechanic begins working on your car and discovers a more costly problem he or she didn't know about before, that wouldn't be included in the 10% estimate rule. The mechanic would have to get the consumer's authorization and provide another estimate before starting the new work. This ensures that the consumer is informed of the work being done and the costs involved, helping to avoid nasty surprises when the bill arrives.

Again, consumers also have the option of authorizing, in advance and in writing, a maximum amount they are willing to pay. That is the only scenario where the estimate and the 10% rule would not come into play.

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The 10% estimate rule is not only good for consumers, it's also good for business. The practice of lowballing quotes makes it very difficult for legitimate businesses to compete on price. The proposed new Consumer Protection Act, 2002, would also provide better protection to the many consumers who lease their vehicles by providing for more information on the final cost of leases. Leases used to be an almost exclusively business-to-business arrangement, but now many consumers lease these items, such as cars and computers. If passed, this bill will provide for regulation-making authority which could be used to ensure that the true cost of leases is disclosed to consumers.

Helping consumers make informed purchase decisions by proposing to provide for more disclosure during any transaction is an important point in Bill 180. Consumers should know what they're paying for. Many unscrupulous operators hide information in the fine print or use ambiguous language that is hard to interpret. The proposed Consumer Protection Act, 2002, would help combat this by requiring that information be disclosed

clearly and prominently, not hidden in fine print. The proposed legislation would also specify that if the language in a contract provided by a business is ambiguous, it would be interpreted in the interests of the consumer.

The proposed Motor Vehicle Dealers Act, 2002, is one of the three pieces of sector legislation that is included in the bill. This act governs individuals and businesses who buy and sell vehicles for a living. The proposed Motor Vehicle Dealers Act, 2002, will provide new protections for consumers buying vehicles. For example, the bill includes a provision to combat curbsiding.

Curbsiders are unregistered car dealers. They are called curbsiders because they often sell vehicles right on the side of the road. When buying from a curbsider, most people think the seller is the owner of the vehicle and they are simply selling a car they don't want or need any more. It's a reasonable assumption, but in fact a curbsider is not the owner of the car. They are often selling cars that have been written off by insurance agencies or mistreated cars that a legitimate dealer would not sell.

Unlike registered car dealers, curbsiders don't pay into the motor vehicle dealers compensation fund, which compensates the consumer in certain circumstances, such as where a dealership goes bankrupt before delivery of the vehicle. Under the proposed act, it would be an offence for a motor vehicle dealer to supply vehicles to a curbsider, and anyone convicted of curbsiding would be subject to a minimum fine of \$2,500.

The proposed Motor Vehicle Dealers Act, 2002, would enhance professionalism by allowing for codes of ethics. Discipline and appeal committees could be developed to deal with breaches in these codes. Registrants found to be in breach of their code of ethics could be fined up to \$25,000.

Bill 180 would also give the ministry greater enforcement powers to shut down scam artists, such as increased maximum fines at least doubled to \$50,000 for individuals and \$250,000 for corporations. Possible jail sentences under the proposed MVDA, 2002, would be doubled. Maximum terms of imprisonment would be set at two years less a day, up from the one-year maximum in the current MVDA and several other pieces of current legislation. The limitation period for commencing a prosecution would be set at two years, up from the one year under the current MVDA. The court would be authorized to order that a convicted person make restitution, and the regulator would have the power to freeze assets and order a business to stop using false or misleading advertising.

The Motor Vehicle Dealers Act is administered by the Ontario Motor Vehicle Industry Council, also known as OMVIC, an administrative authority designated under the Safety and Consumer Statutes Administration Act. OMVIC performs functions delegated to it, including registering motor vehicle dealers and salespersons and investigating any consumer complaints. OMVIC's mandate is to maintain a fair, safe and informed marketplace in Ontario by protecting the rights of consumers, enhancing industry professionalism and ensuring fair,

honest and open competition for registered motor vehicle dealers.

Throughout the development of the proposed new Motor Vehicles Dealers Act, 2002, OMVIC has offered ongoing recommendations and advice, which is very much appreciated by the government. This bill was developed in consultation with consumer groups and the motor vehicle repair sector.

In September and October 2000, the Ministry of Consumer and Business Services circulated a proposed paper on the reform of the Motor Vehicle Dealers Act. The proposed legislation was prepared following public consultation sessions in eight Ontario locations. Submissions from the public, practitioners in the new and used vehicle industry sectors, and a variety of other stakeholders, including the legal community, were reviewed to ensure the right balance was struck.

The proposed legislation was based on the important objectives of fairness and responsiveness to the needs of consumers and businesses, as well as flexibility to adapt to the future needs of the Ontario workplace.

Bill 180 would help prevent people from being taken advantage of by ensuring that consumers have enough information to make informed decisions, giving consumers greater ability to cancel contracts in certain situations and providing clearer laws so consumers and businesses know what their rights and obligations are.

In closing, this bill would update consumer legislation to provide a clear, efficient, flexible, up-to-date set of rules for consumers and businesses alike. As MPPs, we all want to help prevent our constituents from being taken advantage of. We want a safe, secure marketplace as well as a level playing field for businesses. This bill would help provide that.

I am pleased to support it, and I hope my colleagues on the other side of the House will also support it.

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex): I'm not really pleased today to stand and speak to this time allocation bill, because this is becoming all too common in this Legislature. I see now that any of the time allocation motions that come before this Legislature have come with regularity, and not only that; they are worded such that there is no third reading debate. I have come to the conclusion that this must be the most undemocratic Legislature in the Dominion of Canada.

Having said that, I do want to make a few comments about Bill 180, the Consumer Protection Statute Law Amendment Act, and perhaps more explicitly what isn't included in this act. When it comes to consumer protection, there are a number of areas in which we need protection for consumers in this province. For example, in Prince Edward Island they have consumer protection on gasoline pricing—the small province of Prince Edward Island. Yet here in Ontario, almost since the day this government was elected back in 1995, they've spoken and done nothing about protecting consumers from gasoline gouging.

I suggest that as part of this bill it would have been very easy for the minister to have included the main parts

of my private member's Bill 163. Just to remind you and my colleagues in the Legislature today and the folks at home, my Bill 163, introduced on June 26, was An Act to provide information to consumers respecting the price of gasoline and the ownership of gasoline retailers and to require certain additional information from major oil companies. When I mention major oil companies, I can remember when the former Premier, Mike Harris, said, "I'm going to bring those major oil companies to heel." Well, you know what he brought them to heel for: he needed their contributions to their fundraising. That's the only coming to heel there was. They've done nothing about protecting consumers against gasoline gouging in the province of Ontario. I challenge anybody over there during the course of this afternoon's debate to suggest to me one thing they've done to back up all the rhetoric from them about protecting consumers in that area.

This government kicked off one of its fights, as it put it, against high and volatile gasoline prices with the Ontario Gas Prices Review Task Force. What a tidy little title: gas prices review task force. The task force, as a matter of fact, came back with a number of recommendations for the provincial government to act upon for fairer gas prices and for consumers. I remind you that this was a task force of government members, highly publicized when it was first announced. It came back with recommendations, yet three years later, this government has refused to act upon those recommendations. By golly, if I were one of the backbenchers who worked on that task force, who made the recommendations to this government, I'd be some upset that they wouldn't consider the time and the effort and the money that went into that task force. Yet they've declined to act on any of the recommendations.

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Even more to my sorrow is that those members on the task force don't even speak up. I don't know what the effort was all about if they weren't prepared to do anything. As I said, I took that government task force report and prepared Bill 163, the Gasoline Consumer Protection Act, and I urged the government to simply act on its own advice. As yet, the government has refused to do so.

Consumers across the province are paying exorbitant rates for gasoline on some given days. Other days the price is lower, but certainly not as low as it was a year ago. Last fall the average gasoline price was 66.9 cents. It went as low as 57 cents. One year later, prices have risen almost 10 per cent. Recently we've paid as high as 75 cents. Today, perhaps—I haven't been out on the highway since Sunday—I understand, yes, gasoline prices are down in the mid to high 60s. But even in a quick glance across the province you will find that gasoline prices are exorbitantly high. For example, in the north, and as you come along 401, when they feel they have you trapped and when they perhaps feel they have tourists trapped, they charge even higher prices.

I'll get to the recommendations that my Gasoline Consumer Protection Act has in it and that I urge the government—it's not even too late because we are going

to have one day to deal with amendments—to amend the act and include your own recommendations in it. There were a number of recommendations in it, but I think the more important of those included this. It would force retailers to advertise a change in the price of gasoline at least 72 hours before the change takes place. What does this give us an opportunity to do to protect ourselves? Well, we can go and fill up with that 40 to 50 litres of gasoline that we need to get us through the next couple of days. It would give the consumer an opportunity to take advantage of gas prices as they are going to be proposed in the next few days. It would force retailers to indicate their affiliation with major gasoline retailers because, I think, all too often consumers in this province think they're dealing with an independent gasoline retailer. They may want to support an independent against these major oil companies, and yet we find out that the gas station is in fact either owned or controlled by and/or supplied by one of the major oil companies, of course.

An important part of this bill that I would urge the minister to include, if he were really interested in protecting consumers in this province, would be to force large oil companies to disclose their earning reports. They're private companies—many of them have public shares in the companies—but it would require that these major gasoline producers have their earnings published by the various ways that these profits were attained; for example, through the sale of gasoline. Many of the major oil companies, as we know today, have convenience stores with them, so it would also separate that part of their earnings. It would also indicate to the public how much of their profit came from the making of the gasoline. So it would be much more transparent and people would be able to understand where it is, in fact, that they were probably being gouged.

In summary, on the gasoline pricing side for consumer protection, it would go a long way toward protecting consumers from unjustifiably high prices. And I repeat: it would give consumers some confidence in this minister so that they would really feel that he was protecting them in the area of high gasoline prices.

In the minute or two I have left, there's a particular part of the bill that has been pointed out as being faulty. In an article, "Pointing Out 'Hudak's Folly,'" Bob Aaron of the Toronto Star has zeroed in a part of the real estate sales in this province in which the consumer has absolutely no protection. This law, if passed, and I have little doubt that it will be, will "leave buyers of more than \$3.25-billion worth of new homes and condominiums unprotected from sales staff who, by law, are not required to be trained, licensed, insured or supervised."

We all know that real estate agents and real estate brokers have to be licensed, educated, bonded and/or they have to have errors and omissions insurance, all of this to protect the homebuyer. But what happens in the case of three and a quarter billion dollars' worth of new home sales in this province? There's absolutely no protection. Those selling these homes don't have to be educated about real estate; they don't have to carry

insurance to protect the buyer if, for example, they are not totally honest with the buyers. We think, on this side, that's an area of sales in this province that should be protected. We have real estate brokers and agents who go out of their way to serve the public and, in their business, and to protect the public, and yet this minister will write a bill that will let real estate sales take place where there's absolutely no protection. I don't think that's fair, certainly to the consumer, and I think if this minister were serious, he'd propose some amendments that would protect against that.

Hon Mr Hudak: Oh, come on, Bruce.

Mr Crozier: If the minister isn't serious, because he says, "Oh, come on, Bruce"—if you don't want to protect them, we do. So I'll propose some amendments, and I certainly hope that the minister will look at those amendments with some serious thought.

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): I'm happy to have this opportunity to speak, even on strangulation motions, those motions that come forward to choke off debate. Even on those I'm happy to be here to debate.

I want to tell you, Tim, I've got some concerns around this bill, but not the same ones that others have talked about. Yes, people have talked about cable companies, hydro, gas, banking, real estate and on and on. I want to say to you: it's a good step, Tim. No complaints about that, really. We can always find other areas of omissions that should be included, for sure. Peter Kormos spoke to those and the previous speaker spoke to some of those, and others, for sure.

I've got one little complaint that I want to speak to you about. That little complaint is that you've got to deal with that typeface. You know that small print stuff? Two years ago I started wearing glasses, and then I realized how age is just passing me by. I'm getting older. I've got to tell you, Tim, I don't like it. When you start wearing glasses, you realize in what bad shape you are or could be, and when you've got to read the small print that even with glasses you can't see, you're in real trouble. I've got to tell you, when those contracts come to the door—whatever it is, whether it's for some loan from some bank or some insurance or some deal when you're buying a car or some real estate when you're buying a house—do you notice how small the print is in some of those contracts? Tim, do you notice how small that print is?

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Hon Mr Hudak: Yes.

Mr Marchese: It's really small. You've got to deal with that. Don't you hate it? I really hate it; I really do. When I see those contracts and that small print is really this tiny, I get nervous and I get upset. Don't you get upset? I'm sure you do, Tim. A lot of consumers out there, when they get that stuff, what do they do? They probably throw it away. If they don't throw it away, they probably put it in some drawer. Why? Because you could never read those contracts. So unbeknownst to most consumers, there is a heck of a lot of substance in that little print that nobody ever gets to read—no one. I'm convinced, Tim—I'm not alone—a whole lot of con-

sumers and citizens and taxpayers watching this program today probably say, "Yeah, right on." We've got to deal with the type. It's got to be bigger so that those of us who are having a hell of a time reading it can read it, or at least begin to read it or at least not be discouraged from reading it because the type is too small. Do you agree?

Hon Mr Hudak: It's in the bill.

Mr Marchese: It's in the bill? You deal with the font, the small print? Come on. Make the reference, help me out. This is a big bill, right? I'm sure you've had a chance to read it. I know that some of your colleagues have the time to read it. I know how much your colleagues read.

Mr Maves: Talk about hydro or something.

Mr Marchese: I will, I'll get to hydro, if I can, because I've got so much else to say that is really critical. But, Minister, if you tell me the page that relates to the issue of small print, let me know before my time is up. I've got 20 more minutes. OK?

Hon Mr Hudak: Yes.

Mr Marchese: Thanks a lot. But here's my real beef.

Mr Maves: You've got a lot of beefs.

Mr Marchese: I do have a lot of beefs, it's true. But one of the most important concerns that I have and consumers have is that you are shifting the responsibility of a remedy when you have been either abused or mistreated or fooled or deceived or tricked. You're on your own. You are leaving the burden of their own protection on their backs, on their limited abilities to understand the scam; second, once you've understood it, having the capability and the resources to follow through. So citizens, consumers, are effectively on their own.

What the minister urges, in effect, is that they educate themselves about their rights and to take up their own causes in the all too frequent cases where they have been taken advantage of. You are asked, citizens who are watching this program, to educate yourselves in order to protect yourselves. How is it that even those who have a good education, have degrees, are professionals, get scammed as well as those who have little education, little by way of being able to read through these thousands and thousands of pages that you get at the door, or even a couple of pages that you get at the door? How would you ever be able to sort out what's good and bad, what's right and wrong, what's deceit and not deceit, whether you're being taken advantage of or not? How are you ever to know? But that's what the minister is asking you to do. He's saying to you, "Educate yourselves, because that's your best protection."

OK. I don't disagree with the minister. The fact of the matter is, for a variety of reasons, whether you have little education, whether you don't have the time to sort through things as often as you should—and yes, maybe you should spend the time. But for whatever reason, whether it's education or lack of time or whatever other problem prevents so many of us from reading through that fine detail, we're on our own. As we are in so many other issues that we face, often we are on our own.

My point to Tim Hudak, the Minister of Consumer and Business Services, a ministry that I suspect thousands and thousands of people in this province have no clue about—dare I say, I suspect millions of people don't even know this ministry exists. They don't have a clue on how to even reach them, to be able to say, "Minister, what we need is a consumer watchdog to help us out." This minister—not him alone, but any minister really; I shouldn't have said "this minister." What the minister should be doing is helping with the educational process about how you could be undone, what the possible scams are in any field, what you can do to protect yourselves. Here are the remedies, and here is my ministry doing that because we care and we want to protect you.

They do no education. And it isn't just this ministry; it's most ministries, to be fair. When you're dealing with consumer issues, where scamming is getting bigger and bigger and wider and wider, the ministry, this one, called the Ministry of Consumer and Business Services, ought to be spending a couple of bucks, at least a couple of bucks, to say to the public, "Here's where we are. This is what we do. By the way, this is what this new bill does. Here are your protections, and here are some examples of how you can be scammed. And if you are being scammed, we are here to help you."

They don't do it. They'll never do it because that's not what it's about. What it's about is releasing a bill that's called An Act to enact, amend or revise various Acts related to consumer protection, basically saying to you, "We're about to protect you," and off you go. Nobody has a clue what they're doing or what they've done except for two pages they sent out to the various media across Ontario. That's the extent of consumer protection. The majority of people don't have a clue what you're doing.

The only remedy that they have is what they can do on their own to protect themselves, and after that they're on their own. We need, Minister Hudak, a consumer watchdog, someone whose job it is to keep an eye on the scams and the scammers so that when consumers are undone, deceived, scammed, they have someone who would be there to defend and protect them and help them to achieve the remedy that they so desperately, in so many cases, need. That's really the focus of what I want to speak about today.

I want to mention another group that deserves mentioning. It is in line with what I'm saying about how consumers need desperately to have someone who defends them because this bill helps in part and does not help in so many other areas which are not covered. To help the consumers in those areas where this bill does help and to help the consumers where this bill does not speak to, if you had a consumer watchdog, that person would be able to genuinely help consumers when they're being scammed.

For the investment that it would take, I think the minister would be well advised to look at it. I'm not sure what the cost would be, but the savings for the consumers would be great. The headaches, the emotional wear and

tear that anyone and everyone who has experienced this, and has gone through the process of trying to defend themselves against a deceitful proposal that has been made to them—they know what it takes to defend one's self, and it isn't easy. In most cases you lose because you're up against people who have money. Most scammers have money—many of them, big corporations; some of them, small-time operators, no doubt. But big scammers often are big corporations with money to defend themselves, and if you are on your own with little time and little money, you ain't gonna make it and the corporate scammers will get away.

1700

I want to speak in defence of a group that's been doing some work for the last 10 years to defend consumers in a society where we have very few watchdogs. This group is called Democracy Watch. I've dealt with them. Many years ago they were part of my Fort York small business working group. This group has been doing tremendous work with so few resources, all because of the work of a couple of individuals who are so dearly committed to the protection of consumers.

"What is a citizen utility board? A citizen utility board (CUB) is an independent, non-profit organization of residential utility ratepayers. CUBs exist in four states in the US, and the first CUB was organized in Wisconsin in 1979. CUBs advocate for fair telephone ... electric, gas and water rates, and sensible energy policies before" regulators, "the government and the courts."

Wouldn't it have been nice, while this government deregulated our hydro rates, to have had a citizen utility board that would have been there to defend the interests of all those individuals who were being scammed by the multiple retailers that were out there selling you their hydro?

So many of you have been scammed. We know, and we have told you, because we have read many of your letters. If we had a citizen utility board, they would have been out there defending your interests against the scammers, against this government that had no regard, that took no measures to anticipate the scams that would be out there, that let the retailers loose on you unsuspecting clients, this government that expects you to educate yourselves while they free themselves of the burden of oversight because it's up to you to protect yourselves, not up to the government. If only we'd had a citizen utility board that would have been there to protect you against the scams of this government and those retailers.

"Individual CUBs can be set up for each utility or one CUB can be set up to advocate for some or all utility ratepayers together." The CUB model can also be used in other industry sectors to set up consumer advocacy groups. Some people have asked, "What is the difference between CUBs and other ratepayer groups?" Here's the answer: "The key to CUBs is the right, by law, to enclose a flyer in utility companies' billing envelopes. This flyer informs consumers about the CUB and invites them to

join for a nominal annual membership” of 10 to 15 bucks.

The member from Niagara Falls is perplexed by the suggestion. If he’s not perplexed, he certainly was in severe consternation. He always enjoys my speeches—I have no doubt of that.

They would be invited to join these citizen utility boards for a nominal fee of 10 to 15 bucks, not a lot, not much to have your interests protected from the scammers. “‘Piggybacking’ the CUB flyer with the utility bills is an ... effective way to reach ratepayers” at little or no cost to governments or utilities. It would be no cost to you, to governments. It would be no cost to utilities. It would be a voluntary cost of 10 to 15 bucks to join. It’s not a lot for the benefit of having an organization such as the citizen utility board defend your interest.

Mr Maves: Ten to 15 bucks a month?

Mr Marchese: It’s an annual membership fee of \$10 to \$15 a year.

Mr Maves: I thought you said a month.

Mr Marchese: Ah, you were concerned about a monthly fee. Very good. It’s not much. You don’t think that’s a lot, do you?

Mr Bill Murdoch (Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound): Get to your point. We’re running out of time.

Mr Marchese: Hold on, Bill. I’ve got seven more minutes; I’ve got a lot to say. Please.

“What does the CUB do?” some people ask. Every year, the utility companies spend millions to advocate for higher utility rates, don’t they, Bill? They do; they want to squeeze you a little every year. Ironically, the cost of the utilities’ advocacy is passed on to consumers through their utility bills. Don’t they do that, Bill? They squeeze us day in and day out.

The citizen utility boards give ratepayers a way to fight back. By pooling their resources, CUB members hire their own professional staff of lawyers, lobbyists and organizers to challenge unfair rate hikes. Doesn’t that strike you as a good idea, as a cheap way to have a board defend your consumer interest? It would be something the Tories would love—a citizen utility board that would protect the interests of the taxpayers. It’s something that I think you would want to gobble up immediately and say, “Here’s an idea. We’re going to take it on.”

But I don’t see Tim Hudak, the Minister of Consumer and Business Services, taking this idea too readily. Maybe other members might; I’m not sure. Who controls—

Mr Maves: Shouldn’t the elected councillors look after that?

Mr Marchese: No, not city councillors. This is a provincial responsibility, something that falls on our provincial shoulders. I’m telling you, member from Niagara Falls, it isn’t something that would cost you a penny. It wouldn’t cost anyone a cent, except those people who want to voluntarily join for 10 or 15 bucks a year to protect their interests. You’d like that; I’d like that. Ten or 15 bucks.

Who controls the citizen utility boards? Ratepayers who join a CUB control the group through the election of regional delegates and its board of directors. The board hires the CUB’s professional staff and determines the group’s policies. CUBs are democratic organizations.

How are CUBs funded? Again, for those who missed it the first time, CUBs are funded by voluntary contributions from the ratepayers. CUBS, the citizen utility boards, do not receive any ongoing funding from government or utilities—again, no cost.

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): Who’s going to voluntarily give money to them?

Mr Marchese: Mr Gerretsen asks who’s going to voluntarily give money to them. You may have missed the first part: they have it in four states in the US and they voluntarily give money so that they can protect themselves. The problem is, unless you as a former lawyer—if you ever get on the other side, as a lawmaker then, you’d be able, by law or through some other measure, to force the utilities to send out these forms in the utility bills, and you as an individual decide on your own whether you like the idea or not.

Who’s going to join? The ones who need protection from the ones who scam you. You know, you’ve been arguing about the same thing you and I have been talking about. Aren’t you concerned about scams? Who’s going to protect you? You, the government, are going to do this on your own?

I don’t think that on their own the Liberals would find a mechanism to enforce this. I’m saying to the Liberals as well, we need a consumer watchdog, we need a citizen utility board of this kind that can easily flow into this kind of bill to protect you and me—to protect the consumers, to protect the taxpayers, to protect those who don’t like themselves to be seen as taxpayers, to protect you as a citizen, which is the way I love to see people—more as citizens than as taxpayers.

1710

How are CUBs created? CUBs can be created by an act of the Legislature, Mr Gerretsen, or by an order of a utility regulatory commission. It’s not hard to do. Some action by the government is usually needed to allow the CUBs access to the utility’s billing envelopes and to provide funding—a grant or a loan—to print the first flyer. That’s all you’ve got to do. It’s not much; it’s not expensive.

You would think that these 10 Conservative members on the other side would be paying attention to the suggestion, but they’re so busy there. They’re reflecting on so many other problems they’ve got, they can’t even think about taking a suggestion that would even help them. It would be good for them, because their taxpayers would love it. If Ted is next on the list, if he’s got his prepared speech, he can re-route his comments a little bit and speak to the citizen utility boards. Ted, if you’re up, please, throw away that speech and say what you want to say. Just throw away the speeches; I’m sick of them.

Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington): I appreciate your advice.

Mr Marchese: I give you advice as often as I can.

Where have CUBs been established, Mr Gerretsen, is a question you might—

Mr Gerretsen: I can't answer that.

Mr Marchese: I'm going to answer for you. There are now CUBs in full operation in Wisconsin, Illinois, Oregon, and a local CUB called UCAN in San Diego. The Wisconsin and Illinois CUBs were established by the state Legislature in 1979 and 1983, respectively. State Legislatures—you can do it too. The Oregon CUB was approved in a binding referendum in November 1984. San Diego's UCAN was set up by the order of the state public utilities commission in 1983.

What is the track record, you might ask, of CUBs? CUBs have been very successful. Their membership and savings to consumers are as follows: Wisconsin: 60,000 members and savings of over 100 million bucks. Not bad. Illinois CUB: 170,000 members and over \$4 billion in savings. Tim, think about it. Oregon CUB: 10,000 members and \$124 million in savings. Tim, are you listening?

Hon Mr Hudak: I heard that.

Mr Marchese: UCAN: 24,000 members and \$265 million in savings. Mr Gerretsen, are you listening? Do you see all the savings we can have by merely instituting citizens' utility boards? Consumer watchdogs is what they are. They're designed and they're there to protect the interests of the consumers.

I congratulate Democracy Watch for all the work they're doing with such a small staff. They've been doing so much on their own.

I plead with you citizens who are watching: this is one area where you can press this government and say, "We need real consumer protection. We need a consumer watchdog. We need a citizens' utility board type of watchdog that will protect our interests," because I've got to tell you that Tim Hudak and his government are not going to protect you; you are on your own.

Hon Mr Hudak: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The member just asked for me to get back to him on his speech with respect to the fine print. I would refer him to part II—

The Acting Speaker: That is not a point of order. Further debate?

Mrs Julia Munro (York North): It's my pleasure to speak in support of Bill 180, the proposed Consumer Protection Statute Law Amendment Act, 2002.

We've heard in the House over the past few weeks about how important this bill is in order to update the province's consumer protection laws to ensure continued consumer and business confidence in Ontario.

One of the things we have talked about is how important it is to give consumers the tools they need to protect themselves against scams. Scams can cost consumers hundreds or even thousands of dollars, and I understand the Ministry of Consumer and Business Services gets over 40,000 complaints a year.

I know the minister has said many times that it's important for people to read the fine print. Some un-

ethical business people hide important details of their transactions in the fine print and these details, such as a processing fee or a delivery charge, can be very costly for the consumer.

Other scam artists simply don't provide information. For example, a consumer who orders a product over the Internet but never receives it may discover that the Web site does not provide a business address, and the consumer never receives a contract or a receipt of the transaction, so the consumer has no idea how to reach the company. Also, they have no written proof that they've paid for the purchase.

Sometimes a lack of information isn't meant to deceive or defraud a consumer, but it can cause problems. For example, a consumer might assume a price is listed in Canadian dollars, only to get a shock when the bill arrives and learn that it was in American currency. The bottom line is that we want to ensure that consumers have clear, complete information so that they know what they are getting into and make informed decisions. This will result in greater consumer confidence, which is good for business.

Bill 180 would require that information be disclosed clearly and prominently, not hidden in fine print. I'd like to take a couple of minutes today to talk about these new disclosure requirements, particularly as they pertain to Internet purchases, and also in other types of contracts. With the Internet disclosure requirements, the province has worked together with the federal Competition Bureau, Industry Canada, as well as the government of Alberta, the government of Quebec and 13 major national business and consumer groups.

The Ministry of Consumer and Business Services formed a working group on electronic commerce and consumers. The group developed a national framework on consumer protection for electronic commerce. The principles are intended to guide the actions of businesses, consumers and governments in developing consumer protection for electronic commerce over open networks, including the Internet.

All of these principles are embraced by the government of Ontario, and those that are most appropriately dealt with in provincial law have been incorporated into the proposed Consumer Protection Statute Law Amendment Act, 2002. They include provisions that would permit a consumer who buys on-line to cancel a contract within seven days if that person has not received the full disclosure the business is required to make to the consumer. The federal-provincial-territorial agreement on Internet sales sets out what must be disclosed with respect to Internet sales. The details of the required disclosure would be set out in the regulations under the proposed Consumer Protection Statute Law Amendment Act, 2002.

Let me tell you about it. Disclosure, under this agreement, means the supplier is required to give the consumer some very specific information before a consumer enters into an Internet sales contract. This information would require the supplier's name to be included and, if it were

different, the name under which the supplier carries on business would be included. It would also require the supplier to provide a business address, telephone number and e-mail address. A full disclosure would require the supplier to provide a fair and accurate description of the goods or services being sold. The bottom line is that it requires the supplier to provide appropriate financial information, including an itemized price list of the goods or services being sold to the consumer; a description of any additional charges that could apply to the contract; the total amount of the contract or the amount of any periodic payments; and the currency in which amounts are payable. This last point must seem self-evident, but it is astounding how many people have reported buying goods they thought were sold in Canadian dollars, then getting a shock when they found that their credit card had been debited the equivalent in US funds. The proposed Consumer Protection Statute Law Amendment Act, 2002, represents Ontario's first steps in implementing the national harmonization agreement just described.

In August of this year the Ministry of Consumer and Business Services announced the result of a surf-and-sweep operation. Staff at the ministry searched the Internet, looking for any Web sites they believed to be misleading, deceptive or fraudulent. The results were very interesting. As in other areas, there are not a lot of Internet scam artists operating in Canada—current estimates say about 3% of the world total—but those that do exist are known to go for rapidly expanding pieces of the consumer pie.

Ministry investigators located 18 Canadian sites they thought looked as though they may contain information that was misleading or deceptive. They found that nine of the sites were based in other parts of Canada and the US. These files were forwarded to the appropriate agencies for investigation. Of the remaining nine, six files were found worthy of further investigation by the ministry. At the end of this three-day, surf-and-sweep blitz, three businesses agreed to pay restitution to consumers, and in one case the ministry laid charges under the Business Practices Act.

1720

We know that many of the consumer scams operating on-line have to do with financial industries. The Internet sweep shows that one of the most common on-line scams is related to credit repair, particularly businesses that claim they can fix a bad credit rating for an upfront fee. Others include advance fee loan scams in which the consumer pays an upfront fee in order to get a loan which never materializes. It is illegal to charge a fee in advance of providing a loan.

This gives a sense of the kind of information that is being provided through those kinds of legislative initiatives in Bill 180.

I would just like to take a moment to respond to some of the concerns that have been raised with regard to the issue around new homes. Here I think it's important to recognize that the proposed Real Estate and Business Brokers Act, 2002, does not cover the sale of new homes

by developers. That's because it is not intended to address developers selling new homes, which account for less than 1% of the complaints received by the ministry.

Issues related to new home sales are addressed by the Ontario New Home Warranty Program. The ministry has been actively working with the Ontario New Home Warranty Program and its stakeholders to ensure that the program and the legislation it administers provide the necessary protections to new homebuyers in today's evolving marketplace. The Ontario New Home Warranties Plan has broad criteria for registration to ensure the builder acts with honesty and integrity. I think it's important to make sure there is not continuing confusion over that issue.

Finally, I'd like to speak for a brief moment on the area of enforcement of this act. To date, enforcement powers vary among the six core consumer statutes being consolidated under this proposed Consumer Protection Statute Law Amendment Act, 2002. The government is proposing that enforcement powers in six existing core consumer protection statutes be consistent. The consolidated list of enforcement powers under the bill includes investigation, including the power to make application for search warrants, compliance orders and orders to freeze assets and cease false advertising.

Another key area of consistency in the bill is the creation of a single limitation period where charges can be laid. For example, under the current Motor Vehicle Repair Act, a prosecution cannot be commenced more than six months after the date on which the alleged offence was committed. Under the current Business Practices Act, the limitation is no more than two years. Under this proposed bill, the limitation period would be standardized at two years from the time the ministry becomes aware of a specific matter.

I think you can see from this that the proposed legislation would also provide the courts with the ability to require offenders to give consumers restitution.

With the new disclosure rules proposed, consumers will be better equipped to enter contracts, whether on the Internet or in traditional modes of commerce, with their eyes wide open.

If Bill 180 is passed, both businesses and consumers will have a clear sense of their rights and obligations, leading to fewer scams and fewer misunderstandings. I am pleased—

The Acting Speaker: Thank you. Further debate?

Mr Joseph Cordiano (York South-Weston): I am actually very disappointed that this amendment act, the Consumer Protection—

Mr Murdoch: You are not.

Mr Cordiano: I am disappointed. I am very disappointed because, frankly, I thought the minister was going to include the bill I brought forward protecting consumers with respect to credit reporting agencies. That bill was passed in private members' hour by this assembly, unanimously, I might add, and supported by all three parties. I introduced my bill over a year ago and I thought perhaps there might have been an opportunity for

the minister to include some protection for consumers when it comes to information that is terribly critical to them, and that is their creditworthiness.

With regard to that, the bill I proposed sought to ensure that there was greater accountability with respect to credit reporting agencies to disclose information promptly and to rectify any errors that were made in a consumer's report regarding their credit. It would have given better protection to consumers, providing greater access to information that was used in the determination of their credit scores. Furthermore, it would have educated consumers by ensuring that credit reporting agencies made available to consumers access to their own agents by a 1-800 number so that they could be better informed about how credit scores are arrived at.

Finally, it would also ensure that consumers were not penalized, that the credit score was not downgraded each and every time a consumer shopped around for better credit status or better rates with respect to a mortgage or in the application of a credit card. Obviously, today people shop around, so this is very, very important. Creditworthiness is not something we should take for granted, particularly those who are starting off: younger people, students getting a student loan, for example. They may have had one during their time at college or university. Then they go out and work for a living and apply for a mortgage. It might be the first mortgage; it might be the first loan to buy a car etc. Credit history is absolutely critical to their success or failure in life, I would argue.

Let's talk about entrepreneurs, for example, someone starting off a new business. Creditworthiness is something you cannot take lightly. It needs to be at the highest level to ensure that you have access to credit and loans you need when you're starting a business. Tenants, for example, absolutely have to have a good credit rating when they're applying for a good place to live, a rental unit. A landlord will check the credit rating, the creditworthiness of the applicant. If there's an error in one of these reports—as I pointed out many times in this assembly when I introduced this bill, these errors occur all too frequently. Therefore it is absolutely critical that these credit reporting agencies keep their records up to date.

This isn't happening, as I've pointed out. In 2001, the registrar for credit reporting agencies recorded a total of 2,174 complaints regarding credit reporting agencies, a huge number of complaints by consumers regarding their own credit histories. The registrar saw fit to investigate only one of these complaints—2,174 complaints, and yet there was only one audit conducted, and that was for the past three years.

I am disappointed with this bill because it doesn't go far enough in dealing with what I think is absolutely critical for consumers these days, and that is maintaining a good credit rating. Our society has become largely dependent on credit. Our very economic lives depend on it. The economy is not going to function without credit being extended. We have become credit-driven in terms

of our economy and its viability. Sadly to say, people use credit probably far too often, more often than they should. We are indebted, as a society, to a far greater extent than perhaps our parents and our grandparents. Certainly that is the case today.

1730

But that being the case, the reality is that we need to ensure that invaluable information, or information that is critical, is being kept up to date so that when a credit check is done, people aren't penalized because of inaccurate information. That is absolutely important to people, as I pointed out repeatedly. The stories are numerous in terms of the number of mistakes that are made, the errors, the omissions. I believe that this is an area that the government must look at, and I would hope that the minister is listening with respect to this area and would take this into account.

Perhaps there could be changes made to my bill that I haven't considered. Let's talk about it. I understood that the bill would be going to committee. I look forward to the opportunity to go through the bill thoroughly with members on the governing side. The minister perhaps could send his parliamentary assistant. We could examine that.

I honestly believe that this is an area that the government has overlooked. It's a great big oversight. I'm willing to say that perhaps there's still an opportunity here. Let's look at it in committee and let's examine it fully and thoroughly, because as I say, the economy depends on credit. It drives consumer spending in our economy; it's largely dependent on consumers. In fact, the economy is being sustained by consumers going out and making purchases. A lot of stock has been put into whether consumers are going to be spending this holiday season or not and whether our economy stays afloat as a result of it. Business isn't spending. The capital expenditures that were taking place years ago when the Internet was all the rage and the stock market was going up—well, that isn't happening any more. It's consumers who are keeping the economy going.

So we have to be absolutely concerned about what happens with credit, because consumers largely depend on credit. Most people have a credit card. They use credit cards like you use ID. In fact, very little can be done without a credit card these days. I should put it another way. You need a credit card to do a lot of things these days: make a hotel reservation, buy something over the Internet, make a purchase on the phone. You're always using a credit card. So it's indispensable for consumers.

I can't stress strongly enough how I believe this bill is inadequate because it does not address one of the most important areas, and that is keeping vital information on creditworthiness with respect to consumers up to date and putting the onus back on credit reporting agencies, where the onus should be. It's not currently there.

I'd like to make a couple of other comments with respect to what this bill fails to do. My colleague talked about gas prices earlier, the review task force. Members of the government were on that task force. They made

recommendations. The government completely ignored those recommendations. It hasn't done anything about gas prices. There, I would argue, is another critical and vital commodity that people many, many times would depend on. It's not something that we can take for granted. Gasoline prices are an integral part of our economy. In fact, the Bank of Canada governor, David Dodge, the other day was talking about how the price of gasoline has increased the rate of inflation in the country and is bumping it up to the bank's highest point, where it is now concerned about inflation as a result. So the price of gasoline is driving inflation higher in our economy. That is a concern, and there is no protection for consumers.

I honestly think—and it was pointed out that PEI has done something about this—we should be looking at that more seriously. I think that this government is not doing enough with respect to that area. We've raised this matter on a number of occasions.

I think what we have seen in the last number of years under this government's administration is that, more and more, the citizens of this province are being viewed as consumers. We're no longer citizens. No longer do we have an interest in what happens in the broader public sector or the broader public interest. We've now become consumers for almost every service the government is providing.

Just look at what happened with the 407. It is now a privatized highway. There's no protection for consumers when it comes to increases in toll rates on the 407. My God, we've had three toll increases since the 407 was sold to private sector interests. It is just unbelievable how much tolls have gone up on the 407. People in the 905 region depend on the 407 to get around. It's vital transportation. There's no rapid transit system to speak of. People depend on the 407 for transportation around the 905 region. So it's vital.

When it comes to a number of other services, this government is now moving to privatize everything. We're getting private hospitals on the horizon. That's the new initiative by this government. Private school funding—

Interjection.

Mr Cordiano: Well, more and more, we're turning people into consumers of government services, so we need better protection for them.

Anyway, I will turn the remaining time over to my colleague.

Mr Gerretsen: I'm very pleased to join this debate. Let me say at the outset that the likelihood of my colleague Mr Cordiano's very excellent bill in which he basically wants to deal with credit companies and the information they have on file with respect to people and how to rectify errors in that—they are very, very unlikely to be dealt with in this bill. Because of course what I think he should know—and I know he knows—but what the people out there should know is that this is once again another time-allocated bill. This is once again another situation where the government is imposing closure on the debate in this House.

As I've mentioned before in this House, it gets even worse than that, because the time allocation motion or the closure motion says that the committee it's referred to will only meet for one day, which presumably means about a two- or three-hour period, during which time all of the various amendments that may be introduced to the bill are to be dealt with, so it leaves very little time for debate or anything else.

Then it gets even worse than that. When it comes back here on third reading, you would normally expect some level of debate on the final version of the bill with all the various amendments. But do you know what the time allocation motion says? It says that when the order for third reading is called, in other words, when the third reading of the bill is called in this House, "the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the ... stage of the bill without further debate or amendment."

So this is really the last time that we in this House can debate this bill at all, without our ever seeing any of the amendments—and I can guarantee you that this bill is going to be amended. It's a bill that's 162 pages long. We know the government's record in this area. Whenever any kind of omnibus bill, which is what this is, is put before us, there are always all sorts of amendments that the government itself brings forward. It finds errors in the bill about one thing or another or things that they haven't thought about.

So we know, first of all, why it's going to committee: to basically correct the government's own errors in the bill. We also know why they only allow about two hours of discussion there for the amendments to be moved and why they don't want any debate on third reading: because this government no longer believes in what I regard as the democratic process, and that is for a bill to be discussed as fully and completely as possible.

We've had nine bills that have come to some sort of resolution in this House since we came back in mid-September. Out of those nine bills, six have been time-allocated; in six cases, closure on those bills has been invoked.

1740

We know the record of this government in that regard. I won't bother you with going back to the record of what it was like to work in a democratic parliamentary system back in the 1970s and 1980s when it was almost unheard of to have closure invoked in this House, and how often it has been invoked by the Harris government, going back to 1995, other than to say that closure/time allocation has been the norm in this House. I think it's a shame. I don't think that's the way we should be operating.

I would once again strongly suggest to the House leaders of all parties, including my own party, to get together so that we can come up with a systematic way for, let's say, a two-week running period of time, over what bills will be discussed during that period of time and at what length. Some bills on which there is agreement can be discussed for a very short period of time. Perhaps some other bills, such as a bill that deals

with some major revisions, like this one, should be discussed for a much longer period of time.

Closure is not the way a democratically elected Parliament should operate. At one time, it was something that the media used to comment on, that was highly denounced in the press, but now nobody seems to care any more. It's a real tragedy that that's happened.

Let me talk to you about some of the good things in the bill. There are some good things in the bill; no question about it. I like the notion that, for example, when somebody gets involved in buying a time-share there is a 10-day cooling-off period. People always say, "You people in the opposition always talk about the negative aspects." I would say, "OK, that's a good idea. We've all heard about time-share sales where this wasn't the case, and I think that's a good deal. Or where there are direct agreements, or credit repairs, or loan brokering—that there are 10 days for fitness services as well. There's a cooling-off period of time. I think that's a good, good bill.

I also like the part of the bill that deals with motor vehicles; that repairs are deemed to warrant parts and labour for a minimum of 90 days or 5,000 kilometres, whichever comes first, when a vehicle is repaired. That's a good, positive move. But, Minister, you could have made it so much better. Why didn't you deal with your own gas-busters' recommendations that have been out there for the last three, four, five years? Your own gas-busters came up with a report. It needed some bit of legislation to deal with the gasoline prices in this province, and you ignored this totally. This would have been the perfect opportunity to do something about it.

I don't know whether or not the fact that my colleague Bruce Crozier has a private member's bill in this area, Bill 163, is the reason why you didn't include it in here, because you don't want anybody else to take any credit at all for that idea. I have no idea. But this would have been the perfect opportunity to do something about it.

Also, you could have done something with the Union Gas situation. We all know the Union Gas situation in which, in effect, Union Gas applied for the ability to charge customers an extra \$120 on top of their normal bills for a retroactive rate increase. To my way of thinking, that's unacceptable. It's something you could have done something about in this particular bill, but you chose not to do that.

I don't want to be totally negative, because there are some good things in this bill, but there's another issue dealing with the sale of new homes, as to whether it should be dealt with by licensed real estate brokers or whether salespeople who are not licensed real estate brokers could be dealing with that.

I thought there was a very good article this morning in the Toronto Star by Bob Aaron—"Pointing Out 'Hudak's Folly,'" as a matter of fact. It asked why the Real Estate and Business Brokers Act wasn't amended to deal with situations outlawing salespeople who are not licensed brokers to deal with the sale of new homes. According to the article, he states that "homes worth \$3.3 billion out of

a total \$16-billion market are sold without the involvement of real estate professionals." That's a rather startling statistic. I'm not for a moment suggesting that all the individual salespeople out there are out to get the public as such—I'm not suggesting that at all—but I think that when you're dealing with a substantial value of real estate, it's very important for the consumer's own protection that a registered real estate salesperson or broker is involved in that transaction. This would have been the perfect opportunity to do something about that.

There are also some suggestions with respect to the travel industry that I'm just trying to look for here and can't find right now.

There's another good point in the bill where they talk about how goods and services must be delivered or commenced within 30 days or the consumer may cancel the contract. I think that's a good idea, because we've all heard of situations where people pay for items and goods and they're not delivered within the right period of time.

Having said that, let me just get back to the original motion that we're actually dealing with, and that is that we're dealing here with time allocation, with closure. The governing party, because of the majority of members it has here, is in effect saying, "We no longer want to debate this bill. We're cutting it off for debate and the heck with the opposition." You and I know, Speaker, that is against all the parliamentary traditions, practices and procedures that are out there. At one time, I believe there was even a federal government back in the 1950s that basically lost an election because it had invoked closure in a famous pipeline debate. It was something that the general public got extremely excited about or extremely disturbed about because they did not feel that the democratic will of the parliamentary system should be overridden by closure.

Nowadays it's done on a standard basis, just about on a daily basis in here. This is something very regrettable. I would hope that if the media take no interest in it, at least the people of Ontario will take an interest in it and will put a stop to a government that in effect wants to impose its will continually on the will of the people, which is expressed here by the 103 representatives that we have from the various ridings. I'm not saying for a moment that the government shouldn't say, at some point in time, "We've had enough," but surely to goodness it should not be on every single bill. That's what seems to be happening, and that eventually, in my opinion, will be the downfall of a democracy. So I say to the government, try to work something out with the opposition House leaders so that this kind of a situation that we have here today will not repeat itself in the future.

The Acting Speaker: This completes the time for debate.

Mr Hudak has moved government notice of motion 63. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will 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 1748 to 1758.

The Acting Speaker: All those in favour will please stand one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

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

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

Nays

Agostino, Dominic	Conway, Sean G.	Levac, David
Bartolucci, Rick	Cordiano, Joseph	Marchese, Rosario
Bisson, Gilles	Crozier, Bruce	Martin, Tony
Bountrogianni, Marie	Di Cocco, Caroline	McLeod, Lyn
Boyer, Claudette	Dombrowsky, Leona	McMeekin, Ted
Bradley, James J.	Duncan, Dwight	Peters, Steve
Bryant, Michael	Gerretsen, John	Phillips, Gerry
Caplan, David	Gravelle, Michael	Prue, Michael
Christopherson, David	Hoy, Pat	Pupatello, Sandra
Cleary, John C.	Kormos, Peter	Ramsay, David
Colle, Mike	Kwinter, Monte	

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 50; the nays are 32.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

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

The House adjourned at 1802.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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

Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Gary Carr

Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers

Deputy Clerk / sous-greffière: Deborah Deller

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

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

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Algoma-Manitoulin	Brown, Michael A. (L)	Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant	Barrett, Toby (PC)
Ancaster-Dundas- Flamborough-Aldershot	McMeekin, Ted (L)	Haliburton-Victoria-Brock	Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC) Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford	Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)		
Beaches-East York	Prue, Michael (ND)	Halton	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)
Bramalea-Gore-Malton- Springdale	Gill, Raminder (PC)	Hamilton East / -Est	Agostino, Dominic (L)
Brampton Centre / -Centre	Spina, Joseph (PC)	Hamilton Mountain	Bountrogianni, Marie (L)
Brampton West-Mississauga / Brampton-Ouest-Mississauga	Clement, Hon / L'hon Tony (PC) Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée	Hamilton West / -Ouest	Christopherson, David (ND)
Brant	Levac, Dave (L)	Hastings-Frontenac- Lennox and Addington	Dombrowsky, Leona (L)
Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Huron-Bruce	Johns, Hon / L'hon Helen (PC) Minister of Agriculture and Food / ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation
Burlington	Jackson, Cameron (PC)		
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Kenora-Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Chatham-Kent Essex	Hoy, Pat (L)		Gerretsen, John (L)
Davenport	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	
Don Valley East / -Est	Caplan, David (L)	Kitchener Centre / -Centre	Wetlaufer, Wayne (PC)
Don Valley West / -Ouest	Turnbull, Hon / L'hon David (PC) Associate Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation / ministre associé de l'Entreprise, des Débouchés et de l'Innovation	Kitchener-Waterloo	Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth (PC) Deputy Premier, Minister of Education / vice-première ministre, ministre de l'Éducation
Dufferin-Peel- Wellington-Grey	Eves, Hon / L'hon Ernie (PC) Premier and President of the Executive Council, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif, ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	Beaubien, Marcel (PC)
Durham	O'Toole, John R. (PC)	Lanark-Carleton	Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W. (PC) Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Eglinton-Lawrence	Colle, Mike (L)		
Elgin-Middlesex-London	Peters, Steve (L)	Leeds-Grenville	Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W. (PC) Minister of Public Safety and Security / ministre de la Sécurité et de la Sécurité publique
Erie-Lincoln	Hudak, Hon / L'hon Tim (PC) Minister of Consumer and Business Services / ministre des Services aux consommateurs et aux entreprises	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne (PC) Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Essex	Crozier, Bruce (L)		
Etobicoke Centre / -Centre	Stockwell, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC) Minister of the Environment, government House leader / ministre de l'Environnement, leader parlementaire du gouvernement	London West / -Ouest	Wood, Bob (PC)
Etobicoke North / -Nord	Hastings, John (PC)	London-Fanshawe	Mazzilli, Frank (PC)
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Kells, Morley (PC)	Markham	Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H. (PC) Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Culture / président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement, ministre de la Culture
Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)		
Guelph-Wellington	Elliott, Hon / L'hon Brenda (PC) Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services / ministre des Services à la collectivité, à la famille et à l'enfance	Mississauga Centre / -Centre	Sampson, Rob (PC)

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Mississauga East / -Est	DeFaria, Hon / L'hon Carl (PC) Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors / ministre des Affaires civiques, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées	Scarborough Centre / -Centre	Mushinski, Marilyn (PC)
Mississauga South / -Sud	Marland, Margaret (PC)	Scarborough East / -Est	Gilchrist, Steve (PC)
Mississauga West / -Ouest	Snobelen, John (PC)	Scarborough Southwest / -Sud-Ouest	Newman, Hon / L'hon Dan (PC) Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre associé de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Nepean-Carleton	Baird, Hon / L'hon John R. (PC) Minister of Energy, Minister responsible for francophone affairs, deputy House leader / ministre de l'Énergie, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones, leader parlementaire adjoint	Scarborough-Agincourt	Phillips, Gerry (L)
Niagara Centre / -Centre	Kormos, Peter (ND)	Scarborough-Rouge River	Curling, Alvin (L)
Niagara Falls	Maves, Bart (PC)	Simcoe North / -Nord	Dunlop, Garfield (PC)
Nickel Belt	Martel, Shelley (ND)	Simcoe-Grey	Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC) Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Nipissing	McDonald, AL (PC)	St Catharines	Bradley, James J. (L)
Northumberland	Galt, Hon / L'hon Doug (PC) Minister without Portfolio, chief government whip / Ministre sans portefeuille, whip en chef du gouvernement	St Paul's	Bryant, Michael (L)
Oak Ridges	Klees, Hon / L'hon Frank (PC) Minister of Tourism and Recreation / ministre du Tourisme et des Loisirs	Stoney Creek	Clark, Hon / L'hon Brad (PC) Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
Oakville	Carr, Hon / L'hon Gary (PC) Speaker / Président	Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh	Cleary, John C. (L)
Oshawa	Ouellette, Hon / L'hon Jerry J. (PC) Minister of Natural Resources / ministre des Richesses naturelles	Sudbury	Bartolucci, Rick (L)
Ottawa Centre / -Centre	Patten, Richard (L)	Thornhill	Molinari, Hon / L'hon Tina R. (PC) Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre associée des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Ottawa-Orléans	Coburn, Hon / L'hon Brian (PC) Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre associé des Affaires municipales et du Logement	Thunder Bay-Atikokan	McLeod, Lyn (L)
Ottawa South / -Sud	McGuinty, Dalton (L) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition	Thunder Bay-Superior North / -Nord	Gravelle, Michael (L)
Ottawa West-Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest-Nepean	Guzzo, Garry J. (PC)	Timiskaming-Cochrane	Ramsay, David (L)
Ottawa-Vanier	Boyer, Claudette (Ind)	Timmins-James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	Bisson, Gilles (ND)
Oxford	Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Toronto Centre-Rosedale / Toronto-Centre-Rosedale	Smitherman, George (L)
Parkdale-High Park	Kennedy, Gerard (L)	Toronto-Danforth	Churley, Marilyn (ND)
Parry Sound-Muskoka	Miller, Norm (PC)	Trinity-Spadina	Marchese, Rosario (ND)
Perth-Middlesex	Johnson, Bert (PC)	Vaughan-King-Aurora	Sorbara, Greg (L)
Peterborough	Stewart, R. Gary (PC)	Waterloo-Wellington	Arnott, Ted (PC)
Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge	Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet (PC) Minister of Finance / ministre des Finances	Whitby-Ajax	Flaherty, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC) Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation / ministre de l'Entreprise, des Débouchés et de l'Innovation
Prince Edward-Hastings	Parsons, Ernie (L)	Willowdale	Young, Hon / L'hon David (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke	Conway, Sean G. (L)	Windsor West / -Ouest	Pupatello, Sandra (L)
Sarnia-Lambton	Di Cocco, Caroline (L)	Windsor-St Clair	Duncan, Dwight (L)
Sault Ste Marie	Martin, Tony (ND)	York Centre / -Centre	Kwinter, Monte (L)
		York North / -Nord	Munro, Julia (PC)
		York South-Weston / York-Sud-Weston	Cordiano, Joseph (L)
		York West / -Ouest	Sergio, Mario (L)

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.

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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**

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David Christopherson, Monte Kwinter,
John O'Toole, Gerry Phillips,
Rob Sampson, Joseph Spina
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Chair / Président: Steve Gilchrist
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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Michael Gravelle
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Bert Johnson, Tony Martin, Frank Mazzilli,
Wayne Wettlaufer, Bob Wood
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Garry J. Guzzo, Ernie Hardeman,
Peter Kormos, AL McDonald, Lyn McLeod
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Margaret Marland, Bart Maves,
Julia Munro, Marilyn Mushinski,
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Bruce Crozier, John Gerretsen,
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Règlements et projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

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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

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