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de l'Ontario

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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Tuesday 10 December 2002

Mardi 10 décembre 2002

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 10 December 2002

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 10 décembre 2002

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): Tonight at a meeting, the hand-picked supervisor of Elizabeth Witmer and Ernie Eves is going to recommend the closure of up to 11 schools in the city of Hamilton. This is in view of the fact that as we speak here today, a report is being released that is going to deal with the funding formula. It is the height of irresponsibility and arrogance for this government and for their hand-picked supervisor to go ahead with school closures while a funding formula that could fundamentally change the way we fund education in Ontario and possibly save those schools—I'm asking the government, through the minister today, to direct her supervisor not to proceed with these school closures until the funding formula has been put in place and the recommendations have been implemented.

Particularly affected, among others, is Lloyd George school in my riding, a small school in an industrial neighbourhood on Beach Road. This is not simply a school where kids go during the day; it's a community centre. It's a place where people meet at night; it's a gathering point. It is the heart of this community. I tell this government that if you close Lloyd George school, you'll rip the heart out of this neighbourhood, a neighbourhood that takes pride in itself. It's a small neighbourhood right in the shadow of the steel mills, but it's a neighbourhood that cares. Kids care about each other. The parents care about each other. It is a school where the community comes together. It will be absolutely disgraceful if this government, through their hand-picked supervisor tonight, recommends the closure of Lloyd George school and the other schools in the city of Hamilton.

You're not closing schools; you're destroying communities. I ask you to wait. Wait until the funding formula is in place and make recommendations based on that. Don't do the irresponsible thing.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr AL McDonald (Nipissing): It is an honour to invite all Ontarians to celebrate International Human

Rights Day. Fifty-four years ago, the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Ontario has a proud record of leadership in protecting human rights. In fact, this year marks the 40th anniversary of the Ontario Human Rights Code, the first of its kind in Canada. The Ontario Human Rights Code mirrors the universal values of equality, dignity, tolerance and non-discrimination. Our respect for human rights underlies Ontario's success as a diverse, peaceful and prosperous society.

Governments have a clear responsibility to protect human rights. But for human rights to flourish, people must accept individual responsibility to uphold human rights in their communities.

This morning, Lieutenant Governor James K. Bartleman awarded the Lincoln M. Alexander Awards for 2002 to two outstanding young people for their leadership in eliminating racial discrimination: Bikramjit Nahal of Dundas and Tamara McDonald of Thunder Bay. It's especially appropriate that this year's recipients be honoured on International Human Rights Day.

The dedication of these two people shows the ideals of human rights advocacy in action. Ontarians support a society where every human being is treated with dignity and respect. Let us continue to work together so that this new century will truly be an age of universal human rights.

HEALTH INSURANCE

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): A major new crisis is beginning to confront the health care field, and that crisis revolves around the skyrocketing costs of insurance and the availability of insurance coverage in certain categories.

A prime example of this problem is being confronted by respite care workers in the Niagara Region, and likely in the rest of the province, who deliver this service in the homes of their clients. Last year, the service providers paid \$52 each in insurance premiums to receive coverage. This year, it has been increasingly difficult for these independent workers to obtain coverage, and if such coverage were to be available, it would likely be at a cost ten times higher than that charged last year. Since those who hold these positions receive only a modest income, huge increases in insurance costs cannot be afforded by the workers.

Since the workers cannot be expected to absorb this dramatic rise in insurance premiums and the clients

cannot sustain an increase in the fees they pay, both are looking to the Ontario Ministry of Health to increase its funding to this service to reflect these additional burdensome costs.

I urge the Ministry of Health to move immediately to provide appropriate funding increases and to work with the Ministry of Consumer and Business Services to enlist insurance coverage at an affordable rate for the workers affected. People in a vulnerable position look to the Ontario government to assist them when the need is great and their own ability to meet this genuine need is beyond their personal reach. I believe they need and deserve this helping hand from their provincial government.

BOWMANVILLE SANTA CLAUSE PARADE

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): I am pleased to rise in the House today to pay tribute to one of Bowmanville's most enduring traditions, our Santa Claus parade. Whether it's a church group, a service club, a marching band, a business or a youth organization, they all come together every year for the parade.

These volunteers from across our community create an event that has delighted generations of children, as well as their parents, grandparents and indeed families throughout the municipality of Clarington in my riding of Durham. I should add that this is a non-commercial parade. You won't find advertising, even on my own float, and banners, because the objective is to create an event that is strictly for the community, with the possible exception of my Liberal federal member. Nevertheless, over 100 businesses are among the strong and proud supporters of the parade.

I can assure you the response each year is tremendous. Well over 10,000 visitors crowd the downtown streets to watch and cheer on their friends and neighbours in the procession. This year, our 41st annual parade was held November 16. It included close to 60 floats, bands and other entries. The theme was "Kids Are Christmas."

I would like to pay tribute to all those who made the event possible either by attending or by participating. Since it wouldn't be possible to name all the people, although I'd like the time, they include Valerie Gardiner, Sharon Smith, Roger Leetooze, Susan St. John, Valerie McCormick, Stacy Belanger, Greg Belanger, Betty Irving, Rob Flynn, Tammy Johnson, Terry Tzikas, Sheri Lusted and Marie Hammond. As usual, they did an outstanding job.

The Bowmanville Santa Claus parade unites our community like no other event. It shows that the community spirit is a very close neighbour of the spirit of Christmas. I'm pleased to say you'll find all of these spirits always in my riding of Durham.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr Gregory S. Sorbara (Vaughan-King-Aurora): As my party's human rights critic, I am pleased and

honoured to be able to rise today to say a few words on this, the 54th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Passed by the United Nations on December 10, 1948, 54 years ago the world gathered together to make a profound commitment to the equality of every human being in the world. This is a living document and is the first pillar of the 20th century's human rights laws and the cornerstone of the universal human rights movement.

1340

For all the changes the world has seen, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights remains at least as relevant and fundamentally important as it was on the day it was adopted 54 years ago. Its principles provide for all governments an ultimate standard, a measure of their legitimacy and their effectiveness in serving the best interests of their citizens.

Let us not think that the battle to protect and enhance human rights in Ontario is over. We have much to do for communities that historically have been on the margin and have suffered the tyranny of the majority in Ontario.

The quest for human rights and justice is a noble cause in its own right. But it is even more, for it embodies all the basic purposes of the United Nations: peace, justice and prosperity for all. I invite all my friends in this Legislature to celebrate our undying commitment to human rights for all.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): Over the last seven years, we've seen how the Tory obsession with tax cuts has steadily eroded the services we most value in our communities. Gutting services to give tax cuts to the wealthy has hurt many of Hamilton's most vulnerable citizens, especially those with developmental disabilities.

Contact Hamilton was created by the Ministry of Community and Social Services as the single point of service access for persons with developmental disabilities. They have over 100 children and adults on wait lists who need developmental services, including accommodation, respite care, vocational services and day supports. When future planning needs are included, the numbers rise to more than 500 people who need these services.

The biggest problem, apart from the lack of services, has been the complete lack of designated beds in Hamilton for those with developmental disabilities. This has hurt individuals like Joey, a young person with developmental disabilities who lives in our community. Back in October, when the government refused to recognize the shortage of educational assistants in Hamilton, Joey's caregivers were forced to try to find a respite bed for him. At that time, there were no respite beds allocated for adults with developmental disabilities, and Joey was bounced around from facility to facility because they could not meet his needs.

Hundreds more children and adults are not getting the help they need. If this government were to spend half the money on community services that it spends on consultants, this rapidly growing crisis would not exist. When will you stop hurting our most vulnerable citizens and allocate adequate funding for more beds and programs? It's time you treated those with developmental disabilities with the respect they deserve and the services they need.

DECORUM IN CHAMBER

Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South): As we approach the end of this session, it is appropriate to reflect on what it means to have the privilege of serving in this House.

In all Parliaments, we will always have different opinions, but we should be able to show consideration for different points of view. Healthy debate is a good thing. In recent weeks, though, there has been an appalling lack of respect for each other in this place. In my 18 years here, I don't recall ever having witnessed such an absence of decorum. Our poor behaviour is an insult to the public who are our guests when our actions go beyond different partisan opinions into personal attacks and poor language.

There are, of course, times when we do put partisan differences aside and come together with a consensus; for instance, on the reports of the alternative fuels and Legislative Assembly committees. When we speak with one voice, our collegiality is heartwarming. For instance, I wish to tell you how much it meant to my husband, Ken, and to me when all members rose last month to recognize our 45th wedding anniversary. May I thank you all for that; it was deeply appreciated.

I truly believe it is a privilege to serve our electorate and to act in a way that makes them proud of us. We should be demonstrating the respect and dignity that this hallowed chamber represents.

I would also like to convey my appreciation to the staff who support us: parking and security, maintenance, the table staff, Hansard, committees, broadcast and interpretation, library and research, administration and information systems, interparliamentary and public relations, and our personal and caucus staff. Without you, we could not do our work. Thank you and may God bless you all this Christmas and throughout the year ahead.

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): I arrived in my office yesterday to find another example of what I call the urban myth that the Conservatives are good managers. Amazingly, here we are almost at the end of the year, and what do we get but the government's business plans delivered to us. Frankly, if it were a company, it would be laughable. Here they are with three weeks to go in the year and they finally deliver the business plans.

Last week, the auditor—if it wasn't so serious, it would be funny—pointed out that many of the consultants they hired haven't even paid their back taxes. Half the corporations in Ontario not only are not paying their taxes, they're not filing their income taxes.

We found that the government laid off 40 people and within days hired them back at twice the rate. There was a consultant paid \$725 a day in April, \$1,800 a day in May and \$2,100 a day in September. In four months, it went from \$725 a day to \$2,100.

The government tabled its economic outlook here. The interest cost right now is \$700 million more than when they took over, in spite of interest rates dropping.

I say to the public of Ontario, another urban myth, that the Conservatives can manage the finances and the economy, is not true. Here we are, the business plans being presented to us virtually weeks before the year ends; the debt going up; the auditor almost laughing at the government, as I say, if it wasn't so serious. Again, it's another urban myth that needs to be dispelled.

BUSINESS AWARDS

Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka): I rise today to highlight a special event held recently in my riding of Parry Sound-Muskoka. On Saturday, November 30, more than 200 people gathered at the Jolly Roger hotel just outside of Parry Sound to celebrate the 105th annual general meeting and gala evening of the Parry Sound and Area Chamber of Commerce.

It was a great honour to participate in the annual business awards ceremony and to be on hand as the Minister of Northern Development and Mines, the Honourable Jim Wilson, delivered the keynote speech.

As a testament to the honour of receiving one of these awards, I would like to point out that there were so many nominations in some categories that the judges decided on a tie.

This was the case with the Entrepreneur of the Year award, which I had the privilege of presenting to two worthy recipients. The first winner of this prestigious award was Murray Orr of Orr's Fine Meats. The second recipients of the Entrepreneur of the Year award were Ted and Jocelyn Shipman, owners of E.A. Shipman Electric.

I would like to recognize all of the businesses that received awards at this year's ceremony. Ms Miranda Chivers received the President's Award for her work on various volunteer committees. The Whitestone Lake Resort owners and operators, George and Joey Deadman and Les and Pauline Love, received the Tourism Award for their outstanding efforts in growing tourism in the Whitestone Lake area. Mr Peter Kropf of Kropf Industrial Inc received the Industry Award for his commitment to the local economy.

I would ask that all members of the House join me in congratulating all the recipients of this year's awards for the dedication and hard work they provide to their communities.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Just before we begin, we have a special guest in the Speaker's gallery. Joining us today is Monsieur Jean-Louis Hérivault, Chef de Poste of the Bureau de Québec in Toronto. Please join me in welcoming our special guest.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE
ON ESTIMATES

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Standing order 62(a) provides that the standing committee on estimates shall present one report with respect to all of the estimates and supplementary estimates considered pursuant to standing orders 59 and 61 no later than the third Thursday in November of each calendar year.

The House not having received a report from the standing committee on estimates for certain ministries on Thursday, November 21, 2002, as required by the standing orders of this House, pursuant to standing order 62(b), the supplementary estimates before the committee of the Ministry of Community, Family and Children's Services, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines, and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities are deemed to be passed by the committee and are deemed to be reported to and received by the House.

1350

M. Gilles Bisson (Timmins-Baie James): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Monsieur le Président, je demanderais le consentement unanime de l'assemblée aujourd'hui pour passer en deuxième et troisième lecture le projet de loi que j'ai intitulé projet de loi 202 sur le traitement partiel des rapports officiels en deux langues. Comme vous le savez, il n'est pas toujours évident que les rapports qui sont écrits par les commissions sont donnés ici en français en même temps. J'aimerais être capable de rectifier ce problème en passant cette loi, et je demanderais le consentement unanime pour être capable de passer cette loi cet après-midi.

The Speaker: The member will know—I believe this is relating to the two languages in committee?

Mr Bisson: Unfortunately, far too often you have to do it in both languages to clearly get people to understand what you're doing. As you know, currently in the province of Ontario this Legislature operates in both official languages when it comes to laws and other documents that we deal with here in the Legislature. The problem we have is that it's not evident when it comes to commissioned reports that those commissioned reports are being tabled at the same time in both French and English. I have a law that I brought here to the Legislature earlier that basically would make it obligatory for commissions and other documents that report in the Legislature to report both French and English at the same

time, and I ask for unanimous consent for that law to be passed here today, this afternoon.

Interjection: It was the wrong bill number.

The Speaker: Je comprends. The problem wasn't with the French; it was with the bill that you asked for. You asked for a bill?

M. Bisson: C'est pour avoir des rapports officiels en deux langues—202.

The Speaker: We're having trouble with that bill. That's the problem, not the language.

M. Bisson: L'habileté d'introduire et passer cette loi cet après midi—c'est bien clair ?

The Speaker: If you're asking for unanimous consent, we need to—

Interjection.

The Speaker: Which bill? Quel numéro ? You don't know the number. Well, we can't very well ask, regardless of the language—

Interjections.

The Speaker: We'll continue; we'll try to work it out. Reports by committees?

STANDING COMMITTEE
ON ESTIMATES

Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough-Rouge River): I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on estimates.

Interjection: What does the report say?

Mr Curling: Dispense.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Dispense. No further action is required.

VISITORS

Hon David Turnbull (Associate Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'm sure all members would like to join me in welcoming the Barrett family, the parents of one of our pages, Michael Barrett, today in the gallery.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): We welcome our guests.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

CONDOMINIUM AMENDMENT ACT
(TRANSIENT TENANCIES), 2002
LOI DE 2002 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LES CONDOMINIUMS
(LOCATIONS TEMPORAIRES)

Mr Smitherman moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 224, An Act to amend the Condominium Act, 1998 to limit the use of condominiums by transient tenants / Projet de loi 224, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1998

sur les condominiums afin de limiter l'usage des condominiums par des locataires de passage.

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

The member for a short statement?

Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale): The lack of clarity by members indicates that I should say this would not affect your right as parliamentarians to lease on a longer-term basis a condominium in downtown Toronto. But this bill does seek to limit a circumstance occurring whereby condominium owners, some of whom are in the gallery today, are living in their condominium units and the unit right next door is being operated with a different person in it every night, just like a hotel. This seeks to limit that practice.

M. Gilles Bisson (Timmins-Baie James): Sur un point d'ordre, monsieur le Président : Pour une raison ou une autre la table n'a pas ramassé la Loi 145, selon ce Feuilleton. So it's Bill 145, as printed in the Orders and Notices paper that is before us now.

The Speaker: The member is asking to proceed for second and third reading of Bill 145, An Act to amend the French Language Services Act to provide for the availability of certain reports in both English and French at the same time.

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

ELECTRICITY AMENDMENT ACT, 2002

LOI DE 2002 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'ÉLECTRICITÉ

Mr Lalonde moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 225, An Act to amend the Electricity Act, 1998 /
Projet de loi 225, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur
l'électricité.

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

The member for a short statement?

Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): This bill amends the Electricity Act, 1998, to give municipal electricity utilities the right to purchase the distribution and retail operations of Hydro One within their municipal boundaries. Municipal corporations are also given the right of first refusal to purchase another municipality's electricity utility if the other municipality decides to dispose of its electricity utility.

Because of recent amalgamations of municipalities in Ontario, many hydro consumers in rural areas such as Ottawa, Hamilton, Sudbury and many others, are faced with higher electricity bills than those in urban areas. This bill will create a fair environment for all hydro consumers.

JAY LAWRENCE AND BART MACKEY MEMORIAL ACT (HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT), 2002 LOI DE 2002 COMMÉMORANT JAY LAWRENCE ET BART MACKEY (MODIFICATION DU CODE DE LA ROUTE)

Mr McDonald moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 226, An Act in memory of Jay Lawrence and Bart Mackey to amend the Highway Traffic Act /
Projet de loi 226, Loi modifiant le Code de la route à la mémoire de Jay Lawrence et Bart Mackey.

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

The member for a short statement?

Mr AL McDonald (Nipissing): I believe this bill will help save our youth from possible injury and death. I look forward to speedy passage of this bill.

FOOD SAFETY AND QUALITY AMENDMENT ACT, 2002 LOI DE 2002 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA QUALITÉ ET LA SALUBRITÉ DES ALIMENTS

Mr Peters moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 227, An Act to amend the Food Safety and Quality Act, 2001 /
Projet de loi 227, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2001 sur la qualité et la salubrité des aliments.

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

The member for a short statement?

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): This amendment to the Food Safety and Quality Act will allow the province to make good on its promise to the dairy farmers of Ontario more than a year ago. The repeal of the Edible Oil Products Act is set to take place in June 2003. Dairy farmers are prepared to accept the act's repeal with an extension to ensure that all regulatory frameworks are in place. The former minister, Mr Coburn, acknowledged the concerns of the dairy farmers regarding the lack of federal safeguards to ensure that products are labelled properly. The minister plans to remove reference to the June 2003 repeal. By moving the repeal deadline to June 2005, all stakeholders in the industry will have the necessary time to collaboratively ensure that regulations are in place that adequately protect not only the dairy industry but consumers as well as stakeholders from the edible oils industry.

Mr Speaker, I seek unanimous consent that this bill be called for second and third reading.

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

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Yesterday it was brought to our attention that the sensitive lists for tax assessments that were made available to us for Toronto and Windsor are

now not available for the other regions in Ontario. We're requesting that the government table those lists today.

The Speaker: That's not a point of order, but I appreciate your help.

MOTIONS

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): I move that notwithstanding the motion passed by the House on Monday, November 18, 2002, pursuant to standing order 9(c)(ii), the House shall meet from 6:45 pm to midnight on Tuesday, December 10, 2002, Wednesday, December 11, 2002, and Thursday, December 12, 2002, for the purpose of considering government business.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Mr Stockwell moves that notwithstanding the motion passed by the House on Monday, November 18, 2002—dispense? No, they want to hear it—pursuant to standing order 9(c)(ii), the House shall meet from 6:45 pm to midnight on Tuesday, December 10, 2002, Wednesday, December 11, 2002, and Thursday, December 12, 2002, for the purpose of considering government business.

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

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 1403 to 1408.

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

Ayes

Agostino, Dominic	Flaherty, Jim	Munro, Julia
Arnott, Ted	Galt, Doug	Mushinski, Marilyn
Baird, John R.	Gerretsen, John	Newman, Dan
Barrett, Toby	Gilchrist, Steve	O'Toole, John
Bartolucci, Rick	Gill, Raminder	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Beaubien, Marcel	Gravelle, Michael	Parsons, Ernie
Bountrogianni, Marie	Guzzo, Garry J.	Peters, Steve
Bradley, James J.	Hardeman, Ernie	Phillips, Gerry
Brown, Michael A.	Hastings, John	Pupatello, Sandra
Bryant, Michael	Hoy, Pat	Ramsay, David
Caplan, David	Hudak, Tim	Runciman, Robert W.
Chudleigh, Ted	Jackson, Cameron	Ruprecht, Tony
Clark, Brad	Johns, Helen	Sampson, Rob
Cleary, John C.	Johnson, Bert	Sergio, Mario
Clement, Tony	Kells, Morley	Sorbara, Greg
Coburn, Brian	Klees, Frank	Spina, Joseph
Colle, Mike	Kwinter, Monte	Sterling, Norman W.
Conway, Sean G.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Stewart, R. Gary
Cordiano, Joseph	Levac, David	Stockwell, Chris
Crozier, Bruce	Marland, Margaret	Tascona, Joseph N.
Cunningham, Dianne	Martiniuk, Gerry	Turnbull, David
Curling, Alvin	Maves, Bart	Wettlaufer, Wayne
DeFaria, Carl	Mazzilli, Frank	Wilson, Jim
Di Cocco, Caroline	McDonald, AL	Witmer, Elizabeth
Dombrowsky, Leona	McLeod, Lyn	Wood, Bob
Duncan, Dwight	McMeekin, Ted	Young, David S.
Ecker, Janet	Miller, Norm	
Elliott, Brenda	Molinari, Tina R.	

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

Nays

Bisson, Gilles	Martel, Shelley	Prue, Michael
Kormos, Peter	Martin, Tony	

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): They ayes are 82; the nays are 5.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

CONSIDERATION OF BILL Pr17

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I think I have consent to send this to committee.

I move that standing order 87 respecting notice of committee hearing be suspended for consideration of Bill Pr17, An Act respecting the Reena Foundation, by the standing committee on regulations and private bills on Wednesday, December 11, 2002.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): The minister is asking for unanimous consent. Agreed.

VISITORS

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would like recognize Mr Remple's grade 10 class from Bowmanville High School who are visiting with us today.

Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'd like to welcome Mr Myrvold and Ms Hope, the principal and vice-principal of Adam Scott school, who are the principal and vice-principal of Lauren Van Leeuwen, our page. Welcome.

DEFERRED VOTES

SUSTAINABLE WATER AND SEWAGE SYSTEMS ACT, 2002

LOI DE 2002 SUR LA DURABILITÉ DES RÉSEAUX D'EAU ET D'ÉGOUTS

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of Bill 175, An Act respecting the cost of water and waste water services / Projet de loi 175, Loi concernant le coût des services d'approvisionnement en eau et des services relatifs aux eaux usées.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Call in the members; this will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1412 to 1417.

The Speaker: All those in favour will please rise 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	Hudak, Tim	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Beaubien, Marcel	Jackson, Cameron	Runciman, Robert W.
Chudleigh, Ted	Johns, Helen	Sampson, Rob
Clark, Brad	Johnson, Bert	Spina, Joseph
Clement, Tony	Kells, Morley	Sterling, Norman W.
Coburn, Brian	Klees, Frank	Stewart, R. Gary
Cunningham, Dianne	Marland, Margaret	Stockwell, Chris
DeFaria, Carl	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tascona, Joseph N.
Ecker, Janet	Maves, Bart	Turnbull, David
Elliott, Brenda	Mazzilli, Frank	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Flaherty, Jim	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.	Mushinski, Marilyn	

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

Nays

Agostino, Dominic	Crozier, Bruce	McLeod, Lyn
Bartolucci, Rick	Curling, Alvin	McMeekin, Ted
Bisson, Gilles	Di Cocco, Caroline	Parsons, Ernie
Bountrogianni, Marie	Dombrowsky, Leona	Peters, Steve
Bradley, James J.	Duncan, Dwight	Phillips, Gerry
Brown, Michael A.	Gerretsen, John	Prue, Michael
Bryant, Michael	Gravelle, Michael	Pupatello, Sandra
Caplan, David	Hoy, Pat	Ramsay, David
Christopherson, David	Kormos, Peter	Ruprecht, Tony
Churley, Marilyn	Kwinter, Monte	Sergio, Mario
Cleary, John C.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Smitherman, George
Colle, Mike	Levac, David	Sorbara, Greg
Conway, Sean G.	Martel, Shelley	
Cordiano, Joseph	Martin, Tony	

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 50; the nays are 40.

The Speaker: I declare the motion.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

MEMBER'S BIRTHDAY

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I just want the House and those watching to acknowledge that this a great day for my colleague from Hamilton Mountain, Marie Bountrogianni, her 29th birthday. She keeps holding there. Congratulations and best wishes.

**CONSUMER PROTECTION STATUTE
LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2002****LOI DE 2002 MODIFIANT DES LOIS
EN CE QUI CONCERNE
LA PROTECTION DU CONSOMMATEUR**

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of Bill 180, An Act to enact, amend or revise various Acts related to consumer protection / Projet de loi 180, Loi édictant, modifiant ou révisant diverses lois portant sur la protection du consommateur.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells range from 1421 to 1422.

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

Ayes

Agostino, Dominic	Elliott, Brenda	Miller, Norm
Arnott, Ted	Flaherty, Jim	Molinari, Tina R.
Baird, John R.	Galt, Doug	Munro, Julia
Barrett, Toby	Gerretsen, John	Mushinski, Marilyn
Bartolucci, Rick	Gilchrist, Steve	Newman, Dan
Beaubien, Marcel	Gill, Raminder	O'Toole, John
Bisson, Gilles	Gravelle, Michael	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Bountrogianni, Marie	Guzzo, Garry J.	Parsons, Ernie
Bradley, James J.	Hardeman, Ernie	Peters, Steve
Brown, Michael A.	Hastings, John	Phillips, Gerry
Bryant, Michael	Hoy, Pat	Prue, Michael
Caplan, David	Hudak, Tim	Pupatello, Sandra
Christopherson, David	Jackson, Cameron	Ramsay, David
Chudleigh, Ted	Johns, Helen	Runciman, Robert W.
Churley, Marilyn	Johnson, Bert	Ruprecht, Tony
Clark, Brad	Kells, Morley	Sampson, Rob
Cleary, John C.	Klees, Frank	Sergio, Mario
Clement, Tony	Kormos, Peter	Smitherman, George
Coburn, Brian	Kwinter, Monte	Sorbara, Greg
Colle, Mike	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Spina, Joseph
Conway, Sean G.	Levac, David	Sterling, Norman W.
Cordiano, Joseph	Marland, Margaret	Stewart, R. Gary
Crozier, Bruce	Martel, Shelley	Stockwell, Chris
Cunningham, Dianne	Martin, Tony	Tascona, Joseph N.
Curling, Alvin	Martiniuk, Gerry	Turnbull, David
DeFaria, Carl	Maves, Bart	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Di Cocco, Caroline	Mazzilli, Frank	Wilson, Jim
Dombrowsky, Leona	McDonald, AL	Witmer, Elizabeth
Duncan, Dwight	McLeod, Lyn	Wood, Bob
Ecker, Janet	McMeekin, Ted	Young, David

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 90; the nays are 0.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

SAFE DRINKING WATER ACT, 2002**LOI DE 2002 SUR LA SALUBRITÉ
DE L'EAU POTABLE**

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of Bill 195, An Act respecting safe drinking water / Projet de loi 195, Loi ayant trait à la salubrité de l'eau potable.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): Same vote.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Same vote? Agreed? Agreed.

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 90; the nays are 0.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

FUNERAL, BURIAL AND
CREMATION SERVICES ACT, 2002

LOI DE 2002 SUR LES SERVICES
FUNÉRAIRES ET LES SERVICES
D'ENTERREMENT ET DE CRÉMATION

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of Bill 209, An Act respecting funerals, burials, cremations and related services and providing for the amendment of other statutes / Projet de loi 209, Loi traitant des funéraires, des enterrements, des crémations et des services connexes et prévoyant la modification d'autres lois.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1426 to 1427.

The Speaker: All those in favour will please rise 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	Hudak, Tim	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Beaubien, Marcel	Jackson, Cameron	Runciman, Robert W.
Chudleigh, Ted	Johns, Helen	Sampson, Rob
Clark, Brad	Johnson, Bert	Spina, Joseph
Clement, Tony	Kells, Morley	Sterling, Norman W.
Coburn, Brian	Klees, Frank	Stewart, R. Gary
Cunningham, Dianne	Marland, Margaret	Stockwell, Chris
DeFaria, Carl	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tascaona, Joseph N.
Ecker, Janet	Maves, Bart	Turnbull, David
Elliott, Brenda	Mazzilli, Frank	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Flaherty, Jim	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.	Mushinski, Marilyn	

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

Nays

Agostino, Dominic	Crozier, Bruce	McLeod, Lyn
Bartolucci, Rick	Curling, Alvin	McMeekin, Ted
Bisson, Gilles	Di Cocco, Caroline	Parsons, Ernie
Bountrogianni, Marie	Dombrowsky, Leona	Peters, Steve
Bradley, James J.	Duncan, Dwight	Phillips, Gerry
Brown, Michael A.	Gerretsen, John	Prue, Michael
Bryant, Michael	Gravelle, Michael	Pupatello, Sandra
Caplan, David	Hoy, Pat	Ramsay, David
Christopherson, David	Kormos, Peter	Ruprecht, Tony
Churley, Marilyn	Kwinter, Monte	Sergio, Mario
Cleary, John C.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Smitherman, George
Colle, Mike	Levac, David	Sorbara, Greg
Conway, Sean G.	Martel, Shelley	
Cordiano, Joseph	Martin, Tony	

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 50; the nays are 40.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

2010 COMMONWEALTH GAMES

Hon Frank Klees (Minister of Tourism and Recreation): I seek unanimous consent move a motion relating to the 2010 Commonwealth Games.

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

Hon Mr Klees: This motion is seconded by the member from Hamilton East and the member from Hamilton West, I believe. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the Hamilton bid for the 2010 Commonwealth Games has received the support of the Premier of Ontario, the Minister of Tourism and Recreation, the leader of the official opposition, the leader of the third party, and all Hamilton MPPs;

"Therefore, let it be resolved that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario endorse and support the city of Hamilton's bid for the 2010 Commonwealth Games."

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

VISITORS

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Energy, minister responsible for francophone affairs): I know that all members of the House will want to join me in welcoming our visitor in the gallery, the former mayor of Ottawa, Jim Watson.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): I am pleased to welcome the members of ONEIA, the Ontario Environment Industry Association, to Queen's Park. I would also like to inform everyone that today is Environment Industry Day, and we are invited to a reception they are hosting between 5 and 7 today in rooms 228 and 230. I thank you for coming and I welcome you to Queen's Park.

ORAL QUESTIONS

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain): My question is for the Attorney General. Minister, you are no doubt familiar with the case of Gillian Hadley, the Pickering woman shot dead by her estranged husband, who was in violation of his bail conditions. An inquest into her death came back with some very specific recommendations. You have ignored most of them.

The jury specifically told you to keep those who are accused of violating their bail or probation conditions behind bars until trial. Today we learned that in more than half the cases, 58% of the time in Toronto alone, you are letting these men out to roam freely and potentially stalk, abuse and kill their partners.

Minister, spousal homicides in Ontario are on the rise. Instead of getting tough on these violent offenders, you are letting them walk away with a slap on the wrist. Why have you ignored most of the Hadley inquest jury recom-

mendations and why have you abandoned victims of domestic violence?

Hon David Young (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): I thank the member opposite for raising this important issue. Let me begin by saying that our hearts and our thoughts go out to the victims of these terrible crimes, and of course to the families, who continue to suffer each day.

We find ourselves in a situation, when these occurrences take place, where we do understand that we must do more. Indeed, what occurs when these terrible tragedies take place is that our resolve strengthens. We are very proud of the fact that as a government we have done more than our predecessors in Ontario and indeed we've done more than any other provincial government. But the fact that we are spending \$145 million each and every year isn't enough. We understand that there have to be some changes made, and that's why we've called on our federal colleagues, the Liberals in Ottawa, to amend the Criminal Code to ensure that if an individual breaches their bail in a domestic violence case, they go to jail. I hope you will join us in calling on the federal Liberals to make that change.

Mrs Bountrogianni: We are the provincial government and we have responsibilities for the province of Ontario. If your definition of strengthening your resolve is cutting funding to second-stage housing, that's not much of a resolve, Minister.

Your record on domestic violence is one of abandonment and neglect. A study by the Women Abuse Council of Toronto shows just how little you care about standing up for victims for crime. Of those convicted of domestic abuse, 37% got conditional discharges, 25% had their sentences suspended and another 7% got off with some house arrest. Under your watch, only 20% of abusers serve any time in jail. That's your record on crime: 20% in jail. The rest just walk away.

We know from the Provincial Auditor's report that when criminals are let loose on the streets in Ontario you don't keep track of them. You don't enforce court orders. You just turn the other way. Minister, stand up and tell the women who are terrified for their lives why you refuse to protect them and put their abusers behind bars.

Hon Mr Young: Let me just comment on the questioner's statement that this is a provincial issue. When it comes to matters that are provincial issues, we're prepared to do whatever we can. The member's quite right to be asking questions about this serious issue, but by the same token, she must acknowledge that there are some issues that are within the provincial domain and some within the federal domain. She knows that when it comes to amending the Criminal Code, that is something that only the federal government can do. Instead of being partisan on this issue, she should join with us in asking the federal government to amend the Criminal Code in the way I suggested. That's the only point.

Now, in terms of provincial initiatives, I'm very proud of the fact that as a government we have implemented or are in the process of implementing in excess of 90% of

the recommendations that came from the May-Iles inquest. We heard what the jury had to say. We are thankful for their assistance in this regard, and we are acting.

Mrs Bountrogianni: Minister, with all due respect, involving the federal government is not the only point.

With respect to the Hadley recommendations, a search on the Web site doesn't show anything in your women's directorate about any Hadley recommendations. All you talk won't protect a single woman from being abused. That will take real action. You've abandoned victims of crime in Ontario. You stand by and do nothing while convicted criminals roam our streets.

One way to protect women who have fled abuse is through second-stage housing, but you eliminated all of the funding for counselling and support services in second-stage housing that abused women relied on. You abandon the victims and take away their programs and you side with the criminals and let them roam free.

Dalton McGuinty has a plan to get tough on crime. He'll restore funding to second-stage housing and he'll make sure abusers stay where they belong, behind bars. We have a real plan to protect women across Ontario. If you won't stand up for victims of crime, then get out of the way and let Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberals do the job.

Hon Mr Young: Rather than try and treat this very important issue as a political football, I would suggest that the member opposite work with us and try to encourage all involved in the system to do better. That's what we're doing, and we are listening to what the Hadley inquest and the jury recommended.

We have acted, Mr Speaker, and with your permission I'll review, cite the particular recommendation number. We have enhanced bail training for crown attorneys in matters related to domestic violence; that was recommendation number 8. Recommendation number 50 was for local domestic violence coordinating committees to be established; we have acted in that regard. We have acted in relation to recommendation number 10: we have asked the federal Minister of Justice to amend the Criminal Code so that there is a reverse onus in place for domestic violence cases where there is a breach of bail. We've acted in relation to recommendation 38; that relates to a \$5-million enhancement to safety and security and accountability when it comes to shelters for abused women and children. We've acted in relation to recommendations 46 and 47, which is a \$5-million dollar allocation for a public—

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

LOBBYISTS

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): I have a question for the Minister of Energy. This morning the Premier told reporters that anyone doing business with the government was required to disclose to the government "anything that even resembles a potential conflict."

Minister, was your government aware that Hugh Mackenzie's company was lobbying on behalf of Direct Energy and National Grid when it was paying the same company \$600,000 to work with the Ministry of Energy on electricity restructuring?

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Energy, minister responsible for francophone affairs): It was this government that brought in legislation with respect to the Lobbyists Registration Act. It was this government that brought in practices that require conflict-of-interest rules for all contracts. We did that back in 1997. Those things were the right things to do.

At no time did Enterprise Canada, with respect to the numbers you've talked about, engage in any public policy work for the government of Ontario. You said, in a letter released yesterday, "A consultant should not be allowed to lobby the very ministry they are consulting for." I agree.

1440

Mr Duncan: My question wasn't answered. I want to go back to the minister on the question of standards of integrity. There were flaws in the bill you passed in this House. We felt at the time it didn't go far enough.

Your government paid a company whose president is a good friend and trusted campaign adviser over \$3 million. At the same time, the same firm was getting paid by private interests to lobby you and your government. On several occasions, they were lobbying the same ministries they were advising.

The Premier has asked you and the Minister of Health to investigate the government's dealings with Enterprise Canada. We on this side of the House don't believe that's good enough. We believe you ought to release the contracts—all of the contracts. You need to disclose exactly what they were paid \$3 million to do. Anything less, Minister, would not provide this House with an accurate and adequate accounting. Will you, on behalf of your ministry, on behalf of other ministries that are affected, commit today to release all those contracts to the members of this assembly?

Hon Mr Baird: Of course all government documents are available for public examination. There is a process to do that and we certainly would respect any part of that process. Enterprise Canada is a vendor of record. They had gone through a public process back in the year 2000 to deal with communications. The type of work they did for my ministry included a public education strategy with respect to the market opening, with respect to research, with respect to news conferences, with respect to stakeholder management, town hall logistics, and putting together pamphlets and various advertising programs. All the work they did at our ministry was about public policy decisions that had already been taken. I think the member opposite should be careful not to besmirch the reputation of good, hard-working people in Ontario.

Mr Duncan: What's at stake here is the reputation of a government. I'd like to know, Minister: yesterday you confirmed, and you just reconfirmed, that Enterprise Canada was hired specifically to help with, and I quote

from you yesterday, "electricity restructuring." That's the very issue Direct Energy and National Grid hired them to lobby your government on. In our view, it gets worse. According to you again, one of the specific things that company was hired by the Ministry of Energy to do was to organize town hall meetings. The filing with the lobby registry is also clear. While they were organizing town hall meetings for you, Direct Energy paid them to organize grassroots communications on energy restructuring with your government. You also confirmed that in addition to setting up these meetings, taxpayers paid Enterprise Canada to research and sell electricity restructuring.

Again, Minister, will you release the contracts? Will you release the rules they were operating under, or are you simply going to let this thing hang out there without an adequate opportunity to discuss and see—

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

Hon Mr Baird: In the province of Ontario we have an open process with respect to awarding contracts. We have additional measures that allow these documents to be made public and will certainly respect all those rules. The Provincial Auditor, a good friend of the taxpayer, brought forward some concerns with respect to the use of consultants in the province. The Premier immediately said he wanted to adopt that and even directed the Chair of Management Board and the secretary of cabinet on a process that would go even farther than the Provincial Auditor raised.

PRIVATE HEALTH CARE SERVICES

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a question to the Deputy Premier. This spring we asked the Premier if his decision to introduce for-profit MRIs had anything to do with ties of his staff to for-profit health care companies. He said, "I don't have any ties to private sector for-profit health care clinics."

We reminded him about a company called Endopisis Medical Inc, and that prior to being hired as his chief of staff, Steve Pengelly was a paid lobbyist for that company. We have obtained a confidential document outlining the proposal by this same company to provide MRIs and CAT scans across the province. It reveals that the company began meeting with the Ministry of Health about this matter as early as May, 2001. We know that the Premier's chief of staff was representing the company at this time. Deputy Premier, you must understand how bad this looks. Will you now cancel this RFP process and put the brakes on for-profit health care?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): I would just remind the member opposite of the fact that it was our government which actually undertook to introduce, in 1997, some very strong, government-wide conflict-of-interest rules for all contracts. In fact, we were the very first government to do that, and I can tell you that prior to 1997 the rules were very inconsistent and there was no government standard for

each ministry. As you know, these contracts explicitly banned conflicts of interest and every firm is required to declare their conflict.

Ms Martel: Deputy Premier, I asked you if you would cancel this RFP process because it's not just the conflict of interest that concerns us. The deadline for the proposals for this process is December 24 at noon. To date, over 500 questions have been submitted about this RFP process; many involve conflict-of-interest guidelines. Ministry staff have been unable to tell those who have written the questions when they will respond to them.

Secondly, we also know that the College of Physicians and Surgeons is setting the standards for these new MRI and CT clinics. We also know that as late as yesterday afternoon a college committee was still meeting and making major changes to those standards. The version attached to the RFP is only a draft.

Deputy Premier, you're moving forward with this plan before the necessary standards are even in place. What is motivating your government to rush for-profit MRI clinics?

Hon Mrs Witmer: All of the contracts were chosen through the government's competitive selection process with regard to the issue of the bidding process for clinics to run MRIs and CT scanners. The accusation that Enterprise is lobbying this government is completely false. The RFP process prohibits interaction between minister and ministry staff. As you know, the only communication allowed is questions requiring answering by the potential bidder and these are sent to an RFP coordinator.

We have, as I said before, the highest standards possible in place to ensure that there is a competitive bidding process. The RFP is completely fair, it is above-board and it is transparent.

Ms Martel: Deputy Premier, the question was: what's motivating you to rush this for-profit MRI process? You see, I think this process is tainted by the appearance of conflict of interest. It is also tainted by your drive to proceed even though adequate standards are not in place. It is further tainted by the hundreds of questions, serious questions, that have been raised that remain unanswered. Further, you should know that at the ministry information session that was held two weeks ago behind closed doors Ministry of Health officials let it slip that the minister has already given approval for two for-profit, mobile MRI units even though radiologists have expressed serious concerns about patient safety when these carefully calibrated machines are out on the road.

Minister, your government can't guarantee patient safety when you can't even put an RFP together. Put the brakes on this tainted process and put patient care ahead of profits. Will you do that?

Hon Mrs Witmer: Speaker, I'll refer that to the minister for the—

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): The honourable member wants to know what is motivating the government of Ontario. I'll tell you what's motivating the government of Ontario: accessibility for the patients of Ontario, better health

care, more health care, more accessibility to diagnostics, better patient care, better health care for the people of Ontario. That's what's motivating this side of the House. We are proud to be on the side of the people of Ontario. Better access to diagnostics: that's what it's all about. We will continue to fight for the patients of Ontario, because that's what a good government does.

1450

FOREST INDUSTRY

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): We know what motivates this government, and that's helping its friends on Bay Street, not the patients.

My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources. Yesterday my colleague from Sault Ste Marie asked you about the closing of the Domtar mill in Sault Ste Marie. In response, you told him you are going to let Domtar continue harvesting wood off their licence and send it anywhere they want in Ontario for processing, to the detriment of the community of Sault Ste Marie.

Let's be clear: when the sustainable forestry development act was passed by this Parliament, under the leadership of Howard Hampton, it was the intent of that legislation that the licence was tied to the mill and that the mill was there for the benefit of the community. What you are announcing is a clear reversal of that policy.

I'm saying, Minister, that it's clear where you're going with this whole thing. Your intent is on clear-cutting communities across northern Ontario rather than protecting them and the jobs in those communities. Will you reverse your policy and go back to what we put in place, which was the protection of those communities when it came to those licences?

Hon Jerry J. Ouellette (Minister of Natural Resources): First of all, I find it interesting that the member from Sault Ste Marie can't even ask the same question on behalf of his community; he has to have somebody else speak about it.

Not only that, but when you talk about communities such as Temagami and the other mills up in Kenogami, what happened up there? The mayor came down and specifically asked us to keep those workers working in that community. What the member is asking me to do is shut down all the work in that mill in Sault Ste Marie. We intend to keep as many people as possible employed in the forest industry in Ontario.

Mr Bisson: First of all, you're full of it. I'm the critic for MNR, and I'm working along with my colleague Tony Martin and any other northern member across this province who is seeing their community devastated by what you're doing.

The issue here is clear: we have allowed amalgamation and we have allowed companies across northern Ontario such as Domtar and Tembec to group together under one banner. What they're saying is, "These are our licences; we can do what we want," to the detriment of Kirkland Lake, of Sault Ste Marie and of Sturgeon Falls.

What I'm calling on you to do is something real simple: honour the legislation we put in place in this province, which says the licence is tied to those mills and those communities. Will you reverse your policy, or will you see every worker in those communities put at risk?

Hon Mr Ouellette: Very clearly, what the member is asking for is to make sure those workers who are in the forest in northern Ontario are not working. I will make sure that when the mayors come forward, whether it's Kirkland Lake or Sault Ste Marie, if we can keep people employed in the north, we will do so, and the fibre will remain in the province of Ontario, as much as the Ministry of Natural Resources can accommodate.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): New question, the member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke.

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): Any time you want to go head-to-head, let me know.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. I would ask all members' cooperation. The member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke has the floor.

Interjections.

The Speaker: The Minister of Transportation is out and the member for Sault Ste Marie is out as well. I name both of you. I ask Mr Sterling to leave, and I ask the member for Sault Ste Marie to leave as well. Carry on outside. If you want to yell at each other, do it all afternoon if you like. Congratulations to all of you. I think we've now hit 40.

Mr Sterling and Mr Martin were escorted from the chamber.

The Speaker: The member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke has the floor.

PROVINCE OF ONTARIO SAVINGS OFFICE

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke): My question is to the Minister of Finance. In last week's Economic Outlook and Fiscal Review which you presented to the province, you make plain that in the next couple of months you and your government are going to have to get busy with the sale of assets or rental of government properties, because, according to your fiscal plan, you're going to require something in the neighbourhood of \$2 billion in the sale or rental of government assets and properties to make your budget numbers add up.

Against that backdrop, I'd like to ask you the following question: can you confirm that your government is now just days away from finalizing the sale of the Province of Ontario Savings Office, and can you further explain to this Legislature how the sale of the Province of Ontario Savings Office is going to serve the broad public interest in Ontario?

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Finance): First of all, as the honourable member will know, this spring we laid out a budget plan. We had revenue forecasts and expenditure forecasts, as is the normal course of things. We

provided flexibility for in-year changes, which happen from time to time as governments seek to be responsive to the needs of their people. That is as it has been for every budget and we are following that plan.

As it comes to referring to POSO, the Province of Ontario Savings Office, as the honourable member should know, we announced over a year ago that the government would be seeking a financial institution better qualified to run a bank than the government is, and we are following through with that process.

Mr Conway: Well, in communities like Pembroke, Woodstock, Owen Sound, Aylmer, St Marys and many others across the province, many communities that are not particularly well served by the traditional financial services sector, the very reason that 80 years ago the government of Ontario established the Province of Ontario Savings Office, in communities like Pembroke and Seaforth and St Marys tens of thousands of Ontarians who have made something like \$3 billion available to Her Majesty's provincial government on deposit—those depositors, to say nothing of the hard-working men and women who provide such excellent service in this provincial savings office, want to know two things: how is your sale of this valuable public asset, about to be announced in the next very few days, going to protect and enhance the public interest, and perhaps even more importantly, how is it going to protect and serve the interests of those very happy Ontarians who for decades, in communities like Pembroke and St Marys and Seaforth, have been well served by the Province of Ontario Savings Office and almost to a person do not want that savings office closed down in their community or sold off?

Hon Mrs Ecker: I'm sure the honourable member would agree that the appropriate organization to be providing banking services to citizens is not the government for a small little group of citizens; it should be a regulated financial institution with the knowledge, the qualifications, the financial backup to have expanded services for folks who need those services in communities. I agree that many of those POSO operations are in smaller communities. That's one of the reasons—and I'm surprised the honourable member is not aware of this—that we have put in the request for bids specific restrictions on staffing, on locations, on trying to maintain or expand service hours for communities, because we think that's an appropriate thing to do for the residents in those communities.

AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): My question is for the Minister of Agriculture and Food. Minister, you've visited my riding of Durham a number of times. You know it's a rich, diversified and very successful part of Ontario agriculture. Last week I was surprised when the member for Elgin-Middlesex-London, Mr Peters, issued a news release regarding our government's commitment to supply management. Minister, could you provide not just me and the farmers in the riding of Durham but

indeed all Ontario with a clear explanation of our government's position on the important future of this issue?

1500

Hon Helen Johns (Minister of Agriculture and Food):

I was at the federal-provincial-territorial meeting last week, and when I came back I was surprised to see that the member from Elgin-Middlesex-London had sent out a press release saying that this government had a qualified and hesitant support of supply management. I want to quote to you the letter I had sent out:

"I assure you that the Ontario government, including the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food, continues to strongly support supply management. Supply management has worked well for the dairy, egg, broiler hatching egg, chicken, turkey and flue-cured tobacco industries in the province." Does that sound like qualified support? I've got to say, I was pretty surprised.

Furthermore, the member is somewhat dismayed that I have said, "It is important that supply-managed commodities continue to evolve in order to respond to the changing environment in which they operate."

I'd like to refer everyone to the Web site of the Dairy Farmers of Ontario, where they state, "Working with farmers across Canada, DFO is positioned to respond to new trade rules and the realities of a changing market"—exactly the same thing. I think the member opposite was making a mountain—

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

Mr O'Toole: I know agribusiness in my sector is ready to meet change and the challenge of change, and certainly I know you're working closely with them. I'm almost embarrassed to admit that the member from London-Middlesex should apologize to you.

Minister, you mentioned the importance of systems and programs that work well for Ontario farmers. There is no doubt that our government has compiled an outstanding record of consulting with farmers on their priority issues and acting, I might say, decisively to address those issues. Can you further describe how our government has relentlessly addressed some of the important agricultural policy areas, as opposed to the Liberals' reaction to such events as you've described?

Hon Mrs Johns: I would like to thank the member from Durham for his question. I would also like to say that he has worked very hard with his agricultural community and I am most impressed with the record he has.

I'd like to say that we have conducted a series of public consultations. One that the Liberals would be most interested in is the passage of the Agricultural Employees Protection Act. We heard from farmers that they needed protection from potentially devastating labour disputes at harvest or planting, and to our surprise, right after the Liberals voted for this bill, the party president, the member for Vaughan-King-Aurora, suggested that ultimately they would repeal the legislation, a remark made right after they voted. So you have to wonder about the

logic and the consultation that's going on on the other side.

I also have to say that we've been consulting on regulations under the Nutrient Management Act. Our meetings are all across the province in the months of December and January. So on this side of the House, the members will be working very hard—

The Speaker: The minister's time is up.

WORKPLACE SAFETY AND INSURANCE APPEALS TRIBUNAL

Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming-Cochrane): I have a question to the Minister of Labour. I want to talk to you today about your incompetent management of the injured worker system in Ontario.

As you know, the Workplace Safety and Insurance Appeals Tribunal is the final level of appeal for injured workers and employers in this province. Workers' lives are in suspension while these cases are being deliberated. Minister, you and your predecessors have made \$90,000-a-year appointments that are inappropriate and costly. Case in point: Ken Dechert, brother of Bob Dechert, friend of Mike Harris, first appointed in June 1997 and reappointed in August 2000. In 2000, assignments decided by each of the other vice-chairs on the tribunal averaged around 80 cases in that year. The assignments decided by Ken Dechert were zero in that year. That's \$90,000 for nothing. There is also a 120-day rule to make decisions after hearing work is completed. For the 18-month period ending July of this year, his average decision time was 608 days.

Minister, injured workers and employers are waiting for these decisions. Dollars are being wasted and lives are on hold. Stop playing politics with workers' lives. Why don't you ensure that the appointments to this tribunal are appropriate so that employers, who pay for this, get value and injured workers get timely justice?

Hon Brad Clark (Minister of Labour): First of all, I would like to thank the member for the question. We can state very unequivocally here that we have improved the WSIB and WSIAT significantly since we took office in 1995. We're down to \$5 billion in the unfunded liability. Injuries in the workplace have dropped 30%, which is significant. We have increased inspections by 25%. We have had significant increases in terms of fines.

As for the approval rating for the WSIB—staggering: 70% for the employers and 68% for the employees. So when you consider all of that, clearly WSIAT and the WSIB are doing the job. They're doing more work than ever before and they're getting the job done.

Mr Ramsay: Minister, another example of appointment recklessness was the appointment of John Koutoulakis, a car salesman with no legal or medical expertise, as a part-time vice-chair by then-minister and good friend Chris Stockwell. Mr Koutoulakis also struggled in his job. Shortly after being appointed Minister of the Environment, Mr Stockwell rescued his friend and appointed him as a special assistant. But reversing this inappropriate

appointment meant that 20 cases Koutoulakis was working on were suspended until the parties could agree on how to proceed. Again, 20 lives were put on hold and thousands of dollars wasted while reckless political appointments were being made.

Minister, when are you going to clean up this system and ensure that for these important decisions, for important positions such as these, you appoint qualified and competent people?

Hon Mr Clark: When you consider the record of the government and when you consider the decisions that have been made at WSIAT, the backlogs have been virtually cleared. If the member wants to point out specific anomalies here or there, the reality is that overall the program is working extremely well. We're appointing people to the boards who have the experience and the ability to do the job. It's based on merit, not partisan politics.

Laughter.

Hon Mr Clark: They can laugh. I could pull out numerous records from when you guys were in office and made partisan appointments. The list is extremely long. But on this side, when I took the position I took, I made it abundantly clear that we were going to have unbiased, impartial, unprejudiced members on all our arbitrations, all our tribunals, to ensure they're doing the right thing based on the facts that are presented to them. That's what we're doing. If they're not doing the job, then they'll be removed from the position. We want, very clearly, people who understand the job and are doing the job.

RESEARCH STUDY

Mr Cameron Jackson (Burlington): My question is for the Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services. A McMaster University research team has been granted access to private children's aid society files in search of underaged girls whose background is that of personal abuse. They wish to subject them to a series of stressful research tests on depression.

These vulnerable crown wards have no parents to protect their privacy rights, and yet three children's aid societies agreed to subject them to a series of on-going stressful tests without any follow-up treatment should they require it. To be fair, the CAS actually rejected a more invasive protocol involving injections and blood samples that was approved by the university's research ethics board. Minister, can you advise us when you first learned this research team was reviewing confidential CAS files of abused children in Hamilton and Halton?

Hon Brenda Elliott (Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services): I want to thank my colleague from Burlington for this question. My colleague has brought up a very complex issue. I want to be very clear that as a government we take our job very seriously to protect all children in Ontario, but we feel we have a special obligation particularly to those children who are crown wards through the children's aid. I recently learned of this study. I am informed it's been going on

for about two and a half years. In this case, I'm informed the girls are asked to listen to the beginning of a story and finish it, but it is part of a study to study the effects of stress.

I will say to my colleague that when this was brought to my attention, it did raise some issues of concern for me. I think we would all agree there is no way we want children to be allowed to be exploited in any way, but we also don't want to deprive children who may have special needs who could benefit from certain kinds of studies. So I say to my colleague, I've instructed my staff to look into this matter, to give me advice on how we think we should proceed on this, and of course with our first and foremost interest to protect the needs of our children.

Mr Jackson: Minister, the Child and Family Services Act that governs the children's aid society is there to protect crown wards and their confidential records. However, it has come to my attention that part VIII of that bill, the section dealing with disclosure on confidentiality and access to records, was never proclaimed when it was gazetted in October 1985. It would appear, therefore, that access to confidential CAS files is being given by children's aid societies without the legal protection of the act.

Minister, I have serious concerns about this issue generally, and specifically about this oversight and the growing practice of recruiting vulnerable people as research subjects. These people are not mice in a maze. These are our most vulnerable people in Ontario. They are persons with developmental disabilities, the elderly, child victims of abuse and persons in psychiatric care.

Minister, will you undertake a full review of all and any research projects that are currently occurring in our province that have access to confidential files, and will you investigate why the sections of this act were never proclaimed?

1510

Hon Mrs Elliott: I thank my colleague again for bringing this matter to my attention and to the attention of the House. The interests of the children, particularly those who are crown wards in the province of Ontario, are very important to me. I have asked my staff to come forward to give me advice. I will take all the notes that my colleague offers as additional suggestions into account as we look at this particular topic.

I think it's important that whatever standards we have, they are very clear and very high, with the first and foremost objective to protect the interests of the children. I invite advice on this matter from any of my colleagues here in the Legislature, and particularly from the member for Burlington. I intend to speak to the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies, as well as consult with the privacy commissioner on this particular topic.

Again, to my colleagues, I seek your advice on this matter. I will be looking into this with the interests of the children at heart, first and foremost.

BORDER CROSSING AT WINDSOR

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): My question is for the Deputy Premier. For decades, the people of Windsor have suffered traffic, noise, congestion and all that's related to that at the border crossings. Earlier this year there was a glimmer of hope. Your government and the government of Canada said they were willing to spend some \$300 million to look at the problem of cross-border traffic and congestion. However, after some 60 days of study and no public consultation, a secret report has now been developed that no one has seen, particularly the people of Windsor. They have had absolutely no input to that report.

Madam Deputy Premier, will you give a commitment to sit down with the people of Windsor and find out what they want before you release the results of that secret report, and actually consult with them on what is best for their community?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): If the member opposite is asking if there will be further consultation, I can certainly say that our government has always indicated its willingness to work with the city of Windsor and the federal government and make sure that whatever action is taken is responsive to the needs of that particular community.

Mr Prue: The problem is that there has not been any consultation in the first 60 days of this secret report. What is worse is not only that there's no consultation, but the recommendations remain secret. What is being hidden here? What are you and the federal Liberals trying to hide? Why is this report still a secret? Why has no one seen it? When will you go public and involve the people and work with them to find a solution to what has been ongoing in their neighbourhoods that is acceptable to the people of Windsor?

Hon Mrs Witmer: I would just repeat what I said to the member opposite. We have always said we want to work with and make sure we consult with the federal government and the people of Windsor. I can assure you that as actions are taken, as planning starts to proceed, there will be ample opportunity for further discussion and consultation.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): My question is for the Minister of Health. The auditor's report that was released last week contains a damning indictment of your government's lack of concern for people suffering from mental illness. The auditor tells us there has been no increase in base funding to mental health agencies in the last 10 years. He notes that over the last years there have been cuts in services to those with serious mental illnesses because of this lack of funding. These cuts happened after your government claimed it was absolutely committed to providing community mental health services. You have been quick to decide to shut down beds in psychiatric hospitals, and

you are ready to pass a law making it easier to force people into treatment. But you have done virtually nothing to make that treatment available. In fact, Minister, in the last two years you underspent the budget for community mental health by millions of dollars, despite the acute needs that you knew were there.

After starving community mental health services for the seven years of your government, after underspending the community mental health budget last year and the year before, will you now finally keep your commitment to community mental health and provide more funding in the next budget?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I would like to thank the honourable member for her question. I hope she shares my and this government's commitment to better mental health services, particularly community mental health services. The fact of the matter is that when you factor in all the new services that we as a government have funded since 1995, we have increased spending in the whole area by about 27%; we've invested more than \$380 million in new dollars since 1995.

The issue is, of course, that we want to start focusing that money, as she so rightly put it, on community mental health. I'm waiting with as much patience as I can muster for the mental health implementation task forces. They will be a way to guide us to the best way to make public investments in community mental health because that's what we want to do as a government and that's what society needs as well.

Mrs McLeod: Facts, not words: no increase in base budgets to community mental health agencies for the past 10 years. It's \$14 million underspent in the current year's budget for community mental health, and \$57 million underspent in the year before that for community mental health. The auditor tells us you have no idea what the needs are. He says your ministry doesn't know how many people are waiting for treatment or how long they are waiting. He says you have no standards for community mental health and you have no idea what level of services are needed. The Community Mental Health Association estimates that 50% of people with mental illness who need help are not getting it. What we know, fact, is that more and more people with mental illness are in jail because there is no other place for them to go.

Last weekend, Leslie Ann Trussler died in a fire in London, Ontario. Leslie Ann was the 38-year-old mother of a five-year-old daughter. She had been released into the community from a Sault Ste Marie hospital on a community treatment order, but the supports that should have been in place weren't there. In Leslie's name, I ask: this time, will you do more than talk about your commitment to community mental health?

Hon Mr Clement: With the greatest of respect to the honourable member, there are some inaccuracies in what she's saying. The fact of the matter is we've added \$45 million for supportive housing for those with mental illness; \$8 million for 30 children's mental health beds in Toronto alone; 56 assertive community treatment teams

delivering community-based mental health services; and \$15.8 million announced just last year for the first stage of implementing Brian's Law, a law of which we are particularly proud. I want to put those on the record so that honourable members know we have been there.

The fact of the matter is, though, that we should wait for the mental health implementation task forces. I think the honourable member would be the first to criticize us if we acted before we heard from the consultation, if we made decisions before we heard from the mental health community, both mental health survivors as well as those who are active in the community. That's exactly what we're doing. That should not be seen as a lack of commitment to mental health; in fact, it should be seen as an absolute commitment to better mental health in our province.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): My question is for the Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Of course I'm talking about the energetic, hard-working, committed Daniel Newman, representing Scarborough Southwest.

Interjections.

Mr Johnson: Every member of the House knows how important it is to meet the long-term care needs of Ontario's growing and aging population, especially in Windsor. You should listen and hear. This will help you in Windsor as well. This challenge is faced across the province, including my great riding of Perth-Middlesex. According to the census, Perth-Middlesex has an overabundance of mature citizens. I'm proud to be part of a government that's meeting the challenge and providing even better care for Ontario's seniors.

As of 2002, and as it's coming to a close, I'd like to ask the associate minister if he could provide an update in this House to my constituents on the status of long-term care in this province.

Hon Dan Newman (Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I thank the honourable member for his question. It's always my pleasure to respond to the energetic, hard-working and committed member for Perth-Middlesex.

I am very pleased to say that long-term-care services in Ontario are in excellent shape as the year draws to a close, far better shape than they were in when we were first elected in 1995.

1520

The Ernie Eves government is taking the necessary steps to provide even better care to Ontario seniors and those others who require long-term care. In fact, this year we announced \$100 million in new money for better nursing and personal care. Our inspections are on target for this year and we've taken action against facilities that don't comply with our high requirements for residents. Our focus is on providing even better care for residents, and that's exactly what we're doing.

It's coming to the end of 2002, and I'm proud to say that long-term-care services in Ontario are in far better shape than they were in 1995.

Mr Johnson: I'd like to thank the minister for that response. I'm pleased to hear that our government's commitment to long-term care is making a difference in the lives of my constituents and the lives of residents in facilities across Ontario, including my riding of Perth-Middlesex, which, as I said, has a great need for care and long-term services. I'll be sitting on the step of the associate minister to get those services. Indeed, if I were closer to him in this House, I'd probably be at his side every day.

I know that our government's historic \$1.2-billion investment toward even better long-term-care services in Ontario is making a real difference for even better care across the province. I'd like to ask the associate minister if he could please update my constituents and this House on this unprecedented long-term-care initiative.

Hon Mr Newman: I once again thank the honourable member for Perth-Middlesex for his question. I'm very pleased to say that our government is keeping our promise of adding 20,000 new beds and 16,000 redeveloped beds to the long-term-care system though the \$1.2-billion investment that we announced in 1998. This includes 256 redeveloped beds in the honourable member's own riding. The fact is that it was our government that fixed the problems that the Liberals and NDP created when it comes to long-term care in Ontario.

Before our 1998 announcement to add tens of thousands of new and redeveloped beds to the system, no new long-term-care beds had been added since 1988. That's an unbelievable fact. Both the Liberals and the NDP knew that the need for better long-term-care services in our province was inevitable, but they chose not to take action and they put it off until another day. But our government took action and that's why long-term care is far better off today than it was in 1995, when we were first elected by the people of Ontario.

FETAL ALCOHOL SYNDROME

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): My question is to the Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services. As I'm sure you know, fetal alcohol syndrome is the only preventable form of mental retardation. It is caused by a birth mother consuming alcohol during pregnancy. I think it's fair to say that there aren't individuals with FAS; there are families with FAS. FAS greatly reduces an individual's ability to make decisions or to understand consequences for actions. They require a very high degree of supervision and support.

Over 40% of individuals in our jails and in prisons have FAS. Others end up just out on the street. It's ironic that we have no money for shelters for them but we always have \$80,000 to lock them up in a jail or prison. They don't deserve to be locked up; they deserve better than that.

Families need more than the special services at home funding which you provide. They need the ability to do long-term planning for their children. Minister, I would ask that you not answer my question in terms of dollars but in terms of services. What are you doing for families with fetal alcohol syndrome in Ontario?

Hon Brenda Elliott (Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services): I thank my colleague opposite for the question. I think he comes to this House with a very heartfelt concern about funding services for children, which we share on this side of the House. This is a particular form of illness that he asked me for specifics on. We have a number of programs. You've mentioned the special services at home. I would like to have the opportunity to go back and think about the very specific things and give you a much more detailed response on this particular topic.

Mr Parsons: I appreciate that answer. My wife and I have a son with fetal alcohol syndrome. He has made our life more interesting than we ever planned it to be, but we are very proud of him. Not a day goes by that we do not worry about what will happen to him when we're gone. The thought of him being abandoned on the streets is intolerable to us and to thousands of other parents. Studies done indicate that for FAS victims, residence in a specialized group home with special supports enables many, if not all, of them to contribute positively to society.

There is a group in Ontario that has come together provincially to look at long-term solutions for victims of FAS. They are based in Belleville. Minister, they would very much like to meet with you to explore the options. So the question is simple: will you personally meet with this FAS group to explore options that can be developed for victims of FAS?

Hon Mrs Elliott: I thank my colleague across the way. We come to this place very often as parents, and when he says as a good parent that this child makes his life interesting, that's probably a sign of a very good parent who is trying to do his best.

In my own community of Guelph-Wellington I know the organization FASAT, which has been working to help parents and children who struggle with fetal alcohol syndrome. Certainly in my discussions with ministers across the country as Community, Family and Children's Services minister, fetal alcohol syndrome is a serious problem, particularly in the western part of Canada.

I would be more than happy to meet with the colleagues that you would like me to speak with. I'll be pleased to do that at my earliest convenience.

BEREAVEMENT SERVICES

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): My question is for the hard-working Minister of Consumer and Business Services.

Minister, anyone who has lost a loved one knows how difficult the grieving period can be. Add to this the difficulty of arranging a funeral, and a distressing situation

can be made even worse. I know that the vast majority of businesses in this industry are good operators, but there are a few bad operators that aren't completely up front with families and loved ones when they require their services.

Today, Minister, your bereavement legislation passed third reading and is just steps away from becoming the law. Minister, could you please let the people from my great riding of Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale and of Ontario know how this new legislation will improve consumer protection in this industry?

Hon Tim Hudak (Minister of Consumer and Business Services): I appreciate the question from my colleague. He's absolutely right and I'm very pleased that Bills 209 and 180 passed third reading in the Legislature today, part of a package of probably the greatest advancement in consumer protection in the history of this province. As part of this powerful package on behalf of people at a very sensitive time with respect to bereavement services, I'll name five of the consumer protections: full ownership disclosure so you know who you're dealing with; an ability to attack tied selling, a reprehensible practice that limits consumer options; clear price lists that are constant so that you know what you are buying, whether it's a budget or a higher-priced item; an industry-funded compensation fund to protect consumers; and also a code of ethics that goes throughout the bereavement industry, to name but five.

Mr Gill: Thank you, Minister, and keep up the hard work.

It's great to hear that this new legislation will bring in so many comprehensive new protections for individuals going through this difficult time. Clear price lists, cracking down on tied selling and mandatory informational pamphlets will give people the tools to easily make informed decisions.

Having said that, I've heard some criticism during debate that this bill will pose problems for small businesses. Specifically, concerns have been raised that allowing combinations such as cemeteries having funeral homes will push the little guy out of business. But we are the government of small businesses and I know that we wouldn't press forward with any plan that could compromise small businesses in the province.

Minister, how would this legislation affect small businesses?

Hon Mr Hudak: The member is right. We, the Ernie Eves government, are proud to be the government of small businesses to help job growth in that sector. I can say with certainty that while that kind of accusation could be part of the political rhetoric, it is groundless. In fact, currently all other provinces but Ontario and PEI have this type of legislation, and 42 of 50 US states. The small family-run funeral service industry is still very alive and well in those provinces and in the states.

Similarly, it levels the playing field. If a small, family-owned funeral parlour is facing competition from a municipal or a faith-based cemetery and visitation centre

that is tax-free currently, this will level the playing field so that taxes are paid equally.

To quote a couple of small funeral operators, one Laurie Cole of Cole Funeral Services in Carp, Ontario, says, "As you know, the industry has been seeking changes to existing legislation for some time now and, speaking for my own company, supports your efforts entirely." Brent Irvine, of Irvine Funeral Home and Chapel in Brockville, Ontario, says, "This new legislation will pave the way for expanded opportunities for firms such as ours to more effectively serve Ontario consumers."

1530

ASSISTED HOUSING

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): My question is for the Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services.

Minister, yesterday my colleague from Hamilton East asked you a question about subsidized housing for the disabled and mentally ill in Hamilton. We got less than a satisfactory answer.

Lest there be a concern that you think that was a partisan matter, I'm asking the question today also and I want to read something to you by way of this question.

"Hamilton, now \$300,000 over budget in its subsidy program, has had to not only slam on the brakes, but throw it into reverse. Next month, the maximum number of subsidized beds will drop to 869 from 915.

"That's shameful—but the fault is not Hamilton's. Responsibility for a program such as this cannot be thrown onto cities. Smaller municipalities don't offer subsidized housing for mentally ill people. Hamilton, like other large centres, does—not because of a provincial mandate but because it has taken on the role of a centre for mental health services."

Minister, these beds are being cut because you've capped the subsidies. We need you to provide the subsidies so our community can provide these beds, these facilities for people who stand a risk of freezing to death in the dark. Minister, stand—

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

Hon Brenda Elliott (Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services): I thank my colleague across the way for the question.

Yesterday I answered a question from another colleague from the geographic area of Hamilton. It was unclear to me what he was searching for, and I was answering him with regard to the per diems that we have increased for domiciliary hostels over the last little while.

The question is about homes in the Hamilton area. Hamilton has asked the province for one-time increased funding of \$240,000 for the domiciliary hostel program. It's my understanding that the city of Hamilton has actually decided to go forward and offer more homes than we had originally planned. I can say to my col-

leagues across the way that we are looking into this, and certainly we'll be interested in talking to them.

But if my colleague the Minister of Health were answering this question, he would also tell you that we are very interested in finding out the information that will come from the task force on mental health. We believe there's very good—

The Speaker: The minister's time is up.

Mr Christopherson: Minister, the quote I was reading to you didn't come from a Liberal document or an NDP document; that was today's Spectator, a Hamilton editorial.

The fact of the matter is, we're having some trouble getting you to focus on the issue at hand. This is about providing beds for people who have nowhere else to go—nowhere. The city of Hamilton has been doing your job. We've been picking up the extra. That's the \$240,000 you refer to. Because of the other downloading you've done, the city can't continue to do that. But our Hamilton city council doesn't want to say no to people who are on the streets, and I'm assuming you don't either. Therefore we desperately need a commitment from you now that you'll provide the money necessary so that those beds will be there for people when the temperature drops below freezing and lives are at risk. Minister, on behalf of all Hamiltonians, I'm asking you: make the commitment today so that our council and this government can do the right thing for those people in Hamilton who are in need.

Hon Mrs Elliott: I thank my colleague across the way. In my ministry, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Ministry of Health, we have a number of programs all designed to address the issues of housing of various kinds throughout the province. I have committed to you today that I will work further on this to find some solutions. I have indicated that we on this side of the House would like to receive the report from the task force on mental health so that we can make a broader decision on the next steps for future planning.

VISITOR

Mr Cameron Jackson (Burlington): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'd like to welcome this afternoon, in the members' east gallery, the former member for Wentworth North and a graduate of Nelson High School in Burlington, along with myself, Eric Cunningham.

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I seek unanimous consent for second and third reading of the bill I introduced today to amend the Food Safety and Quality Act.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): Mr Peters has asked—I heard a no.

PETITIONS

HIGHWAY 407

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have a petition that reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas motorists using Highway 407 are being gouged with charges that are far beyond what is reasonable and justified;

“Whereas billing errors are forcing motorists to spend hours on the telephone trying to have such errors corrected;

“Whereas some motorists in frustration and exasperation are paying charges they did not incur for the use of Highway 407;

“Whereas the government of Ontario acts as an enforcer for the Highway 407 Corp and is, in our view, complicit in the collection of questionable charges;

“Whereas the Eves-Harris government sold Highway 407 to a buyer who has increased charges well beyond what the government promised;

“We, the undersigned, call upon the Legislative Assembly to condemn the Conservative government of Ontario for selling Highway 407 to private interests and for permitting the Highway 407 Corp to raise charges for the use of the highway and other administrative charges that cannot be justified.”

I affix my signature. I'm in complete agreement with this petition.

CHILD CARE

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have petitions that come to me from McMurrich Sprouts child care centre in Toronto and Jubilee Heritage Family Resources in Sudbury. They read as follows:

“Whereas 70% of Ontario women with children under age 12 are in the paid workforce;

“Whereas high-quality, safe, affordable child care is critical to them and their families;

“Whereas the Early Years Study done for the Conservative government by Dr Fraser Mustard and the Honourable Margaret McCain concluded quality child care enhances early childhood development;

“Whereas this government has cut funding for regulated child care instead of supporting Ontario families by investing in early learning and care;

“Therefore, be it resolved that the Ontario government adopt the NDP's \$10-a-day child care plan and begin implementation by reducing full child care fees to \$10 a day for children aged two to five currently enrolled in regulated child care by providing capital funds to expand existing child care centres and build new ones, by funding proxy pay equity for staff and by creating new \$10-a-day child care spaces in the province.”

I agree with the petitioners. I have affixed my signature to this.

CAT SCANNER

Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

“We, the undersigned, request approval for installation of a CAT scanner at the Woodstock General Hospital. It is an essential piece of equipment for the practice of modern medicine. The arrangements to go to London for a CAT scan are unsatisfactory, cumbersome and cause unnecessary delay. It is standard equipment for a hospital of this size in North America. All counties in south-western Ontario have at least one CAT scanner except Oxford county.”

The petition is signed by many of the residents in and around the city of Woodstock, and I add my signature to the petition as I support it.

NATURAL GAS RATES

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): “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 totaling 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—which they can do—“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.”

This comes to me from Mrs Christina Korotki in Thunder Bay. I'm grateful to her and I will be very happy to sign my name to the petition as well.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): Recently my colleague Marie Bountrogianni from Hamilton Mountain and I attended a news conference sponsored by the Community Coalition for Public Education, a newly formed group co-chaired by Jessica Brennan and Jeff Moore. They gave us 1,200—

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): What we need is for you just to read the petition and not editorialize. Thank you.

Mr Christopherson: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the parents of Hamilton understand that adequate funding for our children's education is the

responsibility of the government of the province of Ontario; and

“Whereas we don’t believe that the current funding benchmarks are reflective of current costs; and

“Whereas we want the education funding gap addressed immediately;

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

“We oppose the serious underfunding of our children’s education and demand that the government of Ontario reinstate adequate funding to the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board so that our children receive the quality education they deserve.”

I have 1,200 postcards to back that up, and add my name.

1540

CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Mrs Julia Munro (York North): My petition is to the Legislature of Ontario:

“Whereas animal abusers are not currently subject to any provincial penalties;

“Whereas it is currently impossible for a judge to ban puppy and kitten mill operators from owning animals for the rest of their lives;

“Whereas Ontario SPCA investigators need to act on instances of cruelty to animals in a more timely fashion, thereby lessening the animals’ suffering;

“Whereas it is currently not an offence to train an animal to fight another animal; and

“Whereas Ontario’s animals are not adequately protected by the current law;

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

“To pass the amendments to the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act developed by a governmental working group (which included the Ontario SPCA) and submitted to the office of the Solicitor General of Ontario in June of 2001, so that the above conditions, among others, will be properly addressed.”

This represents over 200,000 people in the province of Ontario who support this petition.

ALUMINUM SMELTER

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Regarding the cleanup of the abandoned smelter site in Georgina:

“Whereas the abandoned aluminum smelter located on Warden Avenue in the town of Georgina has been deemed to have heavy metals exceeding Ministry of the Environment guidelines; and

“Whereas the site is adjacent to a wetland that leads to the Maskinonge River feeding into Lake Simcoe;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the Ministry of the Environment” to do its job and “conduct a full environmental assess-

ment of this site, followed by a cleanup of” this toxic smelter site in Georgina.

I affix my name to this petition, which I support.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): I have a petition signed by 288 people that reads as follows:

“To the Legislature of Ontario:

“Whereas the city of Toronto, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and other organizations across the nation have recognized that homelessness is a national disaster and called on the federal government to develop and implement a national housing strategy; and

“Whereas communities across Canada are in the midst of an affordable housing crisis and it is important for all levels of government, organizations and communities to work together to provide adequate and affordable housing that will make a real difference in the lives of many men, women and children who require shelter; and

“Whereas thousands of people in Ontario are without housing, the Ontario government needs to match the level of participation of the federal government with regards to the national housing program. Housing is a human right and a basic need;

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

“Commit in full to the agreed-upon action to conclude an affordable housing deal which was set out by the federal government. Ontario needs permanent, affordable housing. Emergency shelters are not permanent solutions.”

I am in agreement and will affix my signature thereto.

PENSION PLANS

Mr John O’Toole (Durham): I’m pleased to present a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the citizens of Ontario are concerned over the implications of part XXV of Bill 198 as it affects pensioners and employees contributing to a pension plan; and

“Whereas we would like to bring this issue to the attention of John O’Toole, our member of provincial Parliament for Durham, and the Legislative Assembly of Ontario;

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

“That the Minister of Finance comprehensively review all sections of Bill 198 dealing with amendments to the Pension Benefits Act to ensure all current and former pension plan members are in no way disadvantaged. And we request that our Durham MPP, Mr John O’Toole, and all members of the Legislature not support any legislation that would reduce pension plan benefits.”

I am pleased to inform the House that part XXV has indeed been removed from that section of the bill, and I support and work with my constituents as always.

POST-SECONDARY
EDUCATION FUNDING

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This is signed by hundreds more students from Lakehead University. I'm pleased to affix my signature, in full agreement with their concerns, and to give it to Michael Schonberger from Sudbury to take to the table.

MEDICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the OHIP schedule of benefits is often unclear about its definitions of good medical practice for many serious medical conditions: general checkups, rechecks, psychotherapy counselling and often major illness care by specialists;

“The medical review committee of the College of Physicians and Surgeons has been aggressively ‘clawing back’ payments to hard-working, conscientious doctors on the basis of these flawed definitions and skewed statistical analyses;

“We, the undersigned, request the Minister of Health to suspend further reviews by the medical review committee, return the monies with its penalties, pending a negotiated agreement of an unambiguous schedule of benefits with representatives of affected practising physicians.”

CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas animal abusers are not currently subject to any provincial penalties;

“Whereas it is currently impossible for a judge to ban puppy and kitten mill operators from owning animals for the rest of their lives; and

“Whereas Ontario SPCA investigators need to act on instances of cruelty to animals in a more timely fashion, thereby lessening the animals’ suffering;

“Whereas it is currently not an offence to train an animal to fight another animal; and

“Whereas Ontario’s animals are not adequately protected by the current law;

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

“To pass the amendments to the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act developed by a governmental working group (which included the Ontario SPCA) and submitted to the office of the Solicitor General of Ontario in June 2001, so that the above conditions, among others, will be properly addressed.”

It is signed by a great number of citizens of Ontario who have great concern for the welfare of the animals in our province.

HAZARDOUS WASTE

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

“Whereas CleanHarbors, the former Safety-Kleen, is trucking in highly toxic sludge from Sydney, Nova Scotia, to Ontario;

“Whereas the CleanHarbors, formerly Safety-Kleen, hazardous landfill and incinerator is the only facility on the North American continent that has a permit to landfill untreated hazardous waste;

“Whereas Ontario has become the dumping ground and haven for toxic hazardous waste;

“Whereas it is not in the best interest of the people of Ontario to import hazardous waste;

“Whereas this CleanHarbors site near Bridgen will have long-term consequences to the environment, to human health and eventually contaminate the groundwater;

“We, the undersigned, petition the government of Ontario to stop the landfilling and disposing of untreated hazardous waste in Ontario and stop the shipment to Ontario from the Domtar tank in Sydney, Nova Scotia.”

There are thousands of signatures, and I affix my signature to this petition. I'm going to ask Brian from Sarnia-Lambton to bring down the petitions.

EDUCATION TAX CREDIT

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): I'm pleased to present a second petition today on behalf of my constituents in Durham.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the province of Ontario has delayed the second phase of the equity in education tax credit for parents who choose to send their children to independent schools; and

“Whereas prior to the introduction of this tax credit, Ontario parents whose children attended independent schools faced a financial burden of paying taxes at home to an education system they did not use, plus tuition for the school of their choice; and

“Whereas the equity in education tax credit supports parental choice in education and makes independent schools more accessible to all Ontario families;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, respectfully request that the government of Ontario reintroduce the second phase of the tax credit forthwith and continue—without delay—the previously announced timetable for the introduction of the tax credit over five years.”

In response to my constituents, I’m pleased to endorse this petition on their behalf.

NOTICES OF DISSATISFACTION

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): I would like to inform the House that pursuant to standing order 37(a), the member for Elgin-Middlesex-London has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing concerning the Edible Oils Act.

Also pursuant to standing order 37(a), the member for Kingston and the Islands has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of Public Safety and Security concerning the Provincial Auditor’s report.

1550

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon Doug Galt (Minister without Portfolio): I move that, pursuant to standing order 46 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 216, An Act respecting access to information, the review of expenses and the accountability of cabinet ministers, opposition leaders and certain other persons, when Bill 216 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; 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 no deferral of the second and third reading votes pursuant to standing order 28(h) shall be permitted; 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 Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): Mr Galt has moved government notice of motion number 84. Debate?

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): I stand in my place again to debate another time allocation motion by this government, a motion that limits, stifles, ends debate and ends the involvement of the people of the province of Ontario in having a say in legislation. Therefore, I, my leader Dalton McGuinty and the rest of my Liberal colleagues will not be supporting this time allocation motion.

Let me talk a little bit and let me bring the people of Ontario up to date on what this government has done during the fall session and how they’ve limited the people of Ontario’s input into good legislation or into bad legislation. Bill 60, the Victim Empowerment Act: time-allocated, no third reading debate. Bill 131, Interjurisdictional Support Orders Act: time-allocated, no third reading debate. Bill 148, Emergency Readiness Act: time-allocated, no third reading debate. Bill 149, Red Light Cameras Pilot Projects Extension Act: time-allocated, no third reading debate. Bill 179, Government Efficiency Act: time-allocated, no third reading debate. Bill 181, Legal Aid Services Amendment Act: time-allocated, no third reading debate. Bill 187, Agricultural Employees Protection Act: time-allocated, no third reading debate. Bill 191, Highway Traffic Amendment Act: time-allocated, no third reading debate. Bill 151, Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation Act: time-allocated, no third reading debate allowed. Bill 175, Sustainable Water and Sewer Systems Act: time-allocated, no third reading debate. Bill 180, Consumer Protection Statute Law Amendment Act: time-allocated, no third reading debate. Bill 195, Safe Drinking Water Act: time-allocated, no third reading debate. Bill 198, Keeping the Promise for a Strong Economy Act: time-allocated, no third reading debate. Bill 209, Funeral, Burial and Cremation Services Act: time-allocated, no committee hearings allowed or third reading debate. Bill 210, Electricity Pricing, Conservation and Supply Act: time-allocated, no committee hearings, no third reading debate.

Today we debate another time allocation motion. I don’t think this government should be proud of how they’ve managed the legislation they’ve introduced. I think it is fundamentally wrong and fundamentally undemocratic to have so limited a debate on significant pieces of legislation. I think it is an insult to the people of Ontario and even to the people who voted for the Harris-Eves government that they do not take bills out to committees so that the people of Ontario can have a say in their legislation.

It is no wonder that the people of Ontario are severely questioning the competency and the sincerity of the Harris-Eves government as it demonstrates time and time again that they feel it is not important for the people of Ontario to have a say in their legislation. It is important for the government across the way to understand that it is not your legislation; it is the legislation of the people of

Ontario as represented by the 103 members here, but more broadly by the people who live all across Ontario.

So I say to the government as this session winds down, you have made a fundamental mistake in thinking that the people of Ontario are not interested in their legislation. They want to feel that they are a part of legislation and the laws of the province of Ontario. You have denied them that opportunity. You have denied them that right. I am confident that when the election is held in April, they will deny you a return mandate.

Mrs Julia Munro (York North): Normally I would stand in this House and suggest how pleased I am to be able to rise to debate this motion, because ordinarily it would be a pleasure for me to do so. However, I have to say I am somewhat disappointed that this motion should even be necessary.

We are looking at Bill 216, the Accountability for Expenses Act (Cabinet Ministers and Opposition Leaders), 2002. It is what I believe to be an extremely important and well-thought-out bill. At long last, I might say, it would bring some clarity and transparency to the issue. This is something that has been lacking for quite some time, and I think it's time that we took the action necessary to address this issue.

We've all heard the debate and we've all heard the reasons and rationale for bringing this forward. This is not to say that they are not important or that there aren't solid reasons for it—far from that. Rather, I would suggest that there are very sound and solid reasons. We know that for too long the rules have been ambiguous and loosely applied. We also know that this has resulted in wide-ranging interpretations. We know also that this has led to some very valid questions about who can buy what, when, where and how much of it.

We also know that it is not a new phenomenon in these hallowed halls. I think the fact that the speaker from Sudbury opposite took the time to discuss the issue of the time allocation motion speaks to the very heart of this discussion today. We have had sessional days devoted to debate on this bill. During that time, opposition speakers have indicated their support. It seems unfortunate, then, in this kind of situation that we are in the position of having to introduce a time allocation motion.

The history is very clear. The history has been that ministers, parliamentary assistants and their staffs have been under guidelines, but these have frequently been vague. They have certainly created problems with regard to questionable definitions. There is ambiguity. Frankly, one of the most important issues from a legislative point of view, the issue of scrutiny, has meant that there is a certain amount of mist, if you like, surrounding the whole issue of scrutiny. So it's very important that we take the time today to make sure that we have this opportunity to make sure that this bill continues on that important process.

1600

We know, for instance, that the members opposite like to say, when we dredge up the record of the Liberals when they were in government, that it was ancient

history. "That was last century," I think I heard someone say in here yesterday evening. Perhaps that's true. But at that time, there were a number of honourable members on the opposition benches now who were members of the government at the time. The member from St Catharines was the Minister of the Environment. The member from Scarborough-Rouge River was the Minister of Housing. The member from York Centre was the Minister of Industry, Trade and Technology, I think it was called at that time. I believe the member from Vaughan-King-Aurora was the Minister of Labour.

Now, I don't plan to go through the entire list here and name off all those on the opposition benches who were also members of the cabinet of the government of the day, although I would be remiss not to also mention the current leader of the third party, the member from Niagara Centre and the member from Hamilton West, who were all part of the NDP cabinet of the 1990s.

It's very clear that it was pretty difficult for people to know the rules, and it was very difficult for anyone to have a clear sense of the kind of accountability that we are suggesting here today. In 1989, the Provincial Auditor told us that the rules regarding ministers' expenses needed to be clarified. In fact, I'll quote for a moment: "Further clarification is required as to what types of expenses are permitted for ministers.... ministers are not required to submit receipts with their request for reimbursement." That's from the 1989 Annual Report of the Provincial Auditor.

So I think it's very important to understand the issue we are looking at today in the context of that history. As I suggested a moment ago, all of this was done with very fuzzy rules and certainly no clarity. One of the functions of the Legislature is to be able to have that level of scrutiny. This particular piece of legislation removes from partisan debate the question of the allowable expenses and provides them with the mechanism for the Integrity Commissioner to be that impartial judge and take away from the lack of clarity that has surrounded this issue.

So to the question, "Why do we have to time-allocate the bill?" the real reason is simply because the opposition has left us with little choice. At every turn, they try to stall, delay and prevent the government from bringing policies into the House that are designed to meet the needs of the people of Ontario. It's all about preventing the government from implementing its plans.

Now, Speaker, I know you're thinking, "That's what the opposition is supposed to do; it is supposed to oppose and make it difficult for the government." To some degree, that is true. Our system, after all, is adversarial and we're not supposed to get along too well in this House with the members opposite—generally speaking, of course. But in my mind, the opposition is supposed to be more than that. They should be bringing forward more than just refusals and rejections. They should be bringing forward ideas that make sense to Ontarians, and they should be bringing forward real, alternative solutions.

So I think that in looking at this bill, it is very clear to me that the members opposite will say that they wanted more time to debate and think about it. Well, it's something that has been in conversation for 15 years, and so I think you would agree with me that they need to have come up with something better than, "This leans a little heavy on us."

We're looking at the opposition, who are trying to hold up this bill, using a time allocation motion to delay. I think we need to be looking at the opportunity to move this bill forward. It does provide for clarity and an end to the confusion that has existed.

As you will know, Mr Speaker, we have all heard before from members on this side of the House that it is time to move on with this, and I couldn't agree more. It's time to get on with the real issues that face the people of this province day in and day out.

I know that people are concerned with how their money is being spent, and they quite rightly should be. After all, it is their money. But I also know that people want their government to do something constructive. They sent us here—all of us—to take care of those very important things in our ridings. They want us to take care of their health care, education, environment and economic growth. Every hour we spend on this is an hour not spent debating other business—either in this House or elsewhere.

I would argue that the opposition members have had their fair opportunity to debate this bill. It's time for the House to move on to other matters. I encourage all members to support this motion.

Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain): I'm pleased to speak about Bill 216. I want to challenge some of the things my colleague from York North said. First of all, on the delay, we, the Liberals, were the ones who brought this to the public: the expenses, the boozing, the steakhouses. We are the ones who brought this to the public. We are the stimulus that has brought this bill. Two years ago, my colleague Rick Bartolucci brought a much stricter bill—mind you, it was focused on ministers and their travel—that went much further than Bill 216. We aren't the ones who are delaying the process; all we're talking about when we protest against time allocation bills in general is the lack of democratic process. But with respect to the actual issue at hand, we are the stimulus for bringing Bill 216 to the Legislature.

With respect to not finding solutions for accountability, again I'd like to challenge my colleague from York North. She was at the public accounts committee when I brought the severance bill, which in the end, after a great deal of heartache, was passed unanimously by the public accounts committee and is on the order paper. I realize it won't pass—it's a private member's bill—but with respect to accountability, the severance bill would have blown the whistle on the Eleanor Clitheroes of the world, would have saved us a lot of money in legal fees now. We on this side of the House are for accountability.

I would have liked very much, for example, if the government would have taken that bill and made it their

own and not made it a private member's bill at all. I would have been very happy as long as accountability was brought.

With respect to fuzzy guidelines—my colleague from York North mentioned that there were fuzzy guidelines and it's about time a government is doing something about the guidelines for expenses—in my mind it's not very fuzzy when you spend \$70,000, as one former cabinet minister did, on booze and steaks, hotel stays and so on. That's not a very fuzzy expense. That's pretty extreme; that's pretty intense. The problem with Bill 216 is that that particular former minister won't be held accountable, because this bill does not cover former ministers. Ironically, it covers former leaders of the opposition and leaders of the third party, but it does not cover former ministers, where we have found, after a year of freedom of information searching, that is where the most spending occurred—in ministers' offices and parliamentary assistants' offices.

And with the parliamentary assistants, I'm happy to see that their expenses will also be made public. However, it's only for those since May 2002. Again we look at the list. I'm a relatively new member. I don't know what's appropriate or not appropriate, but I have a feeling that \$87,000 for a parliamentary assistant is pretty intense and pretty outrageous. And no one who held a parliamentary assistantship before May 2002 will be held to scrutiny.

1610

Again, I agree with the bill in principle. I think it's a good start. However, it is very late.

I challenge the government when they say we are not for accountability. We are definitely for accountability, but we are also for accountability in the democratic process. That is what my colleague from Sudbury was talking about earlier. If this had been done right, it would have been in at least two years ago, when my honourable colleague Rick Bartolucci brought in Bill 2—at least two years ago. Then that bill could have been expanded or even stolen. I'm sure if it had been stolen by the government and expanded upon, my honourable colleague would have been happy. It wouldn't have been the first time. We're always happy, actually, when the government steals our ideas because it is for the good of the public.

I want to reiterate, number one, that we had nothing to do with any delay in this. We're the ones who brought this to the public. We are the stimulus for Bill 216.

Number two, my colleague from Sudbury brought in Bill 2 two years ago, a much stronger piece of legislation which was ignored by the government and which would have really paid a lot of scrutiny to ministers' expenses while they travel.

Number three, we've had a lot of solutions with respect to accountability. My severance bill was one, and there are many others. My colleague from Sarnia had a bill of accountability that would have made all public meetings public. John Gerretsen had a bill as well on public disclosure, and there are many more bills of

accountability on this side of the House that were brought forward that were ignored by the government.

With respect to fuzzy guidelines, I think a 10-year-old will be able to say that \$70,000 on steaks and booze and hotels is extreme and unaccountable. There's nothing fuzzy about what happened in certain ministers' portfolios when they were spending taxpayers' money.

Of course we are going to support Bill 216. We laugh at the insinuation that we are against accountability, because we have been trying for years now to bring accountability to the Legislature and to the province of Ontario in many different areas. We are the ones who brought this very uncomfortable situation of over-spending to the Legislature. It's not comfortable for any of us to stand up and challenge colleagues on their spending. In fact, in some ways, I resent even being put in that position, because we all then get painted with the same brush in the public mind.

With that, I would like to say that we will support bill 216. We need accountability. It's a good start, but when we are the government, we will go much further in winning back the trust of the people of Ontario.

Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka): It's my pleasure to join in the debate today on Bill 216, the Cabinet Ministers' and Opposition Leaders' Expenses Review and Accountability Act, 2002. As my colleagues have pointed out, this is the government's latest accountability measure to bring greater openness and transparency to the way in which MPPs and their staff spend taxpayer dollars.

It is clear to me from watching these proceedings and reading Hansard that there has been a very thorough debate on this issue. I know the debate has, for the most part, been repetitious and predictable. I think that's simply because the bill itself is quite simple and really very difficult for anyone in this House to argue against.

In order to illustrate my point, let me review a little about how the debate has gone so far. The parliamentary assistant to Management Board Secretariat began by telling us how, for decades, governments of all stripes operated under different sets of rules, which were hidden from public view, open to interpretation and inconsistently applied. The member for York North continued by saying that now is the time to take action, to end the uncertainty and speculation and to give taxpayers real assurance that the people who spend their hard-earned money are truly accountable for it.

As debate continued, it became clear that, if carried by this Legislature, this bill would be the first in Canada to bring legislative oversight to the way in which members of parliament handle their expenses, in particular by giving the Integrity Commissioner the power to help establish rules, regularly review them and table an annual report. The bill would give unprecedented transparency and accountability to the entire process. By giving this role to an independent third party, it will provide much-needed impartiality to this process to ensure that it is fair and reasonable.

One of the common themes I saw in the second reading debate was the argument that the appointment of the Integrity Commissioner removes the partisan and adversarial nature of interpreting this issue in the Legislature. As the member from York North put it so well, "This bill would help do that by preventing endless partisan accusations by providing for a mechanism to resolve disputes that might arise, and, for the first time, giving the people of Ontario a glimpse at how the leaders of the opposition spend the taxpayer dollars for which they are responsible." I agree with this and, more importantly, I think the members opposite agree with it too.

This makes it even more clear to me that the debate on this bill has run its course and that it is now time to put this bill to the House for a vote. It is not very often that all members of this House agree on something, but I think, in some part, this is the case with sections of this bill. Specifically, as an impartial officer of the Legislature, it would seem we all agree that the Integrity Commissioner is in an excellent position to impartially judge whether or not an expense was reimbursed according to the rules. This is no small feat, and I think it is further evidence that the parties are not as far apart as one might assume. This is yet more support for calling the question on the bill.

Having said that, we all know the devil is really in the details. In the case of the Integrity Commissioner's involvement, this important detail is the role of the commissioner in the process. At a very simple level, the commissioner's involvement would liken the way in which the Provincial Auditor encourages the responsible use of public funds. By providing a reporting system, the bill would add a level of scrutiny never before seen in Ontario and not seen anywhere else in Canada. The commissioner would be able to provide advice that would be consistent for all parties, regardless of the stripe. It would apply equally to all those included under the bill and would provide much-needed consistency that is lacking under the current system.

I have to say that this debate has not been without its small surprises. Last week I heard the member from Timmins-James Bay and the member from Kingston and the Islands support the notion that there might be situations where it would be appropriate for alcohol to be expensed. In fairness, they were both talking about times when members might be hosting a delegation. I think the member from Timmins-James Bay mentioned that it would seem somewhat odd to a visiting delegation from Holland, I believe it was, to be welcomed but told they couldn't have a drink. I can certainly relate to that because I've got a lot of Dutch relatives. In fact, I was just on the phone a few minutes ago to my wife's father, or Opa, as I call him.

I was very pleased to see that some of the members opposite are in fact prepared to be reasonable on this issue. I think this only points toward more support for us to wind up debate on this bill.

The only area where I have heard any substantive disagreement is in regard to the retroactive application of

the bill. I have heard the opposition parties say that it “leans on them a little too much” and that “it holds the opposition to a higher standard than the government.” We have made it abundantly clear that nothing could be further from the truth. As the members on this side of the House have made clear, we don’t mind the scrutiny. Government brings with it the responsibility and obligation to be held accountable for one’s actions.

However, we also know that a taxpayer is a taxpayer and a tax dollar is a tax dollar, and it is unfair to the people of this province not to be able to request or review the expenses of the Leader of the Opposition and his staff.

Let me repeat some of the comments of my colleague for a moment. There is nothing in this bill that would hold the former leaders of the parties opposite to a higher standard than our former leader and Premier, and the Liberals know it. They know full well that Premier Harris’s records have always been subject to freedom of information legislation and that they have in fact been requested no less than 12 times. They seem to not have had a problem obtaining the records of other cabinet ministers, so I find it somewhat confusing why they think the records of the head of the government would not be subject to an FOI request. This has always been the case, and there is nothing in the current legislation before the House that would change that.

Under the proposed legislation, the numbers for the application to government would not change, and I am hard-pressed to see how the official opposition comes up with the argument that this is an unfair bill. The government would be held to account as we always have been. On the other hand, we would be taking the giant step of increasing those covered under the opposition caucuses to one each. I recognize that to increase those covered under the freedom of information legislation—I should say, to make them covered by it at all—is a giant step in accountability for the members opposite, but I hope they will agree this is a reasonable step.

1620

It has also been said that even when the leaders of the opposition parties are covered by the proposed legislation, they would not be covered nearly to the same extent. These amendments would only allow a person to request or review the records dealing with expense claims. It would only extend freedom of information legislation to deal with those dealing with travel, meals, accommodation and hospitality, and that’s it. Caucus research offices would not be covered and neither would the expense records of the deputy leader of the opposition, nor would their education critic, health critic or any other member of their shadow cabinet be covered.

I believe that despite the fact debate on this bill has been somewhat short, it has been thorough. If you were to look at the Hansard from the three days this has been debated, I think you would find something very interesting, and that is that the comments all seem to be very similar. Since the first speakers debated on the first day, delivering speeches that were only 20 minutes each, there

has been remarkably little new said. In fact, I’ve watched some of the members in the gallery and those staff behind the chair looking around, thinking they had heard the arguments before.

Perhaps even more telling is the fact the members opposite have been so scattered in their approach to this bill. I know that some members on this side of the house firmly believe the only reason we are debating this bill is because the Liberals simply can’t make up their minds on how to vote on this thing or where to land. I’m not totally sure about that, but I think we have seen an approach to this bill from an opposition without a clear idea of where they stand on this bill. I believe that if the opposition had truly presented a coherent policy on expenses, this might have been a more engaging and fulsome debate. Instead, we spent most of yesterday listening to a lecture from the members opposite about consultant contracts and the auditor’s report. While I know these are all important issues in themselves, they do not belong in this debate about expenses.

However, since there is little the government can do to make the opposition debate a matter, it would seem that this motion is the best way to ensure this House does not become paralyzed by an opposition that only wants to delay the bill. I think this is perhaps the strongest argument to carry this motion and proceed with the bill. It makes little to no sense to simply debate a bill to just kill the clock and eat up time. There is simply too much important legislation to be delayed so long for a bill that deals with a matter so far removed from real people. The whole idea of this forum is to voice the legitimate concerns of the people’s representatives, but there seems to be nothing logical that suggests to me that debate should carry on simply for the sake of talking.

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex): Let it be understood completely: the member for Parry Sound-Muskoka just said “so that the opposition can’t delay the bill.” I’ll tell you what: this government has a majority, this government has a House leader and this government has an agenda, and the way they have taken away democracy in this Legislature means there’s little or nothing we can do to delay legislation.

That’s absolutely wrong. They’re the ones in control. If it ain’t working right, it’s because you’re not carrying out the House business in an appropriate manner. I said last night in the few minutes I had on another issue that I kind of liken this government, when it comes to managing—they can’t manage a two-car parade. So if they’re complaining about delays in legislation and something not getting done, you’d better go right to your own House leader.

It’s strange that we have to time-allocate bills on which we agree. The speaker previous to me said he doesn’t know where the Liberals are. Let me tell you, we’re supporting this bill, as weak a bill as it is. I’m one of many in this Legislature who feels there should be full accountability for each member and all their expenses. We have a bill in front of us here that is retroactive. There are past leaders of opposition parties whose ex-

penses are going to be sent to the Integrity Commissioner. That's OK, as long as everybody's are sent to the Integrity Commissioner. And we know, for example, that Mike Harris's are not. It's unfair to the point that not everybody is treated equally, and that's what I have as an objection to this bill—nothing else. Let's get it all on the table. Let's all of us put our expenses out. Let the Integrity Commissioner look at every expense that any one of us has. But let's treat it fairly, for goodness' sake. That's what I object to in this bill.

The other thing is—and we're speaking to a time allocation motion—this government has used time allocation more than any other government in history and, as is the case with this one, all too frequently now. Once the bill is time-allocated there's no further debate, there's no third reading debate, there's no committee meeting. You talk about democracy. The only way they seem to be able to manage this place is to simply take everybody's rights away.

That's changed a lot in the short nine years I've been here. This place has changed from one where you could come and represent your constituents and speak freely and know that you were going to have the opportunity to speak on important issues, to one where you, number one, have to fight to get on the list of speakers because we know that this government's going to choke off debate, that we're not going to get the opportunity to speak on behalf of our constituents.

Interjection.

Mr Crozier: The member across says, "What about your whip?" What I'm talking about is time. The whip does everything they can when, because of time allocation, we get the opportunity to speak so little. That's the problem that has become just the rule of the day in this House. We want, when we form the government, to change those rules so that members will have an opportunity to represent and speak on behalf of their constituents. But you know how I'm inclined to feel? I'm inclined to feel that if we're a government, you stick it right to 'em the way you guys have stuck it to us.

Hon Dan Newman (Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): Oh, no. Don't say that.

Mr Crozier: Well, I'm more benevolent than that, but you get that feeling every once in awhile. So here we are today talking about time allocation. The debate's going to be done on all of this and the fact of the matter is that we're passing a bill that's unfair, that treats some past members differently than others. That's blatantly unfair, but as some have said: one small step might be a step in the right direction, so I will be supporting this bill, but I'll be doing it rather reluctantly because it's not treating everybody fairly. Mike Harris's expenses should be right on the table along with everybody else's.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): I'm going to be sharing my time this afternoon in this debate with my good friend Mr Christopherson from Hamilton West. I want to, on this particular debate, raise a couple of issues. First of all I want to deal with the time allocation

motion; then I want to deal substantially with what's inside the bill.

First of all, on the time allocation motion, I think people should take heed of the comments that were just made by my good friend the member from Essex, who raises the issue of what's been happening in this House over a period of years. I've been here now for my third Parliament, and the member before me has been here at least two Parliaments. This place, quite frankly, has digressed. We've gotten to, under Mike Harris's Ontario, now carried over by Ernie Eves, to a system of Parliament that basically says that the government will introduce a bill on Monday. We'll have debate on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday for second reading debate. On Thursday they bring in a time allocation motion, and Monday morning the thing is voted on. In fact, with evening sittings now, you would be able to pass this and have it all done in one calendar week. I think that is a really big disservice to the public of Ontario.

What really bothers me even more is the extent that different groups of Conservatives in the Tory caucus don't get it. Those members who were first elected here in government and have never sat in opposition say it's only right. I look at my good friend Mr Raminder Gill and others; they think this is perfectly OK. It's wonderful. Government should have all the power it needs to exercise its right to rule in the province of Ontario. They don't understand that the basic rule of Parliament and how it works is the right for the opposition to be able, when we legitimately feel it's the right time, to raise issues, to, yes, prolong debate at times. At the end of the day, we in opposition understand that the government will get its way, but there has to be proper debate and there has to be an opportunity for the public to be heard.

1630

Members like Raminder Gill and others who are first-trippers into the Legislature, who have never sat in opposition, just don't get it. They don't understand that this is supposed to be a democratic system; that, number one, once we introduce a bill in this House there should be, where necessary, ample time to debate the issues; number two, there should be ample committee time so that the public are able to come before the standing committees of this Legislature and say why they support a bill or why they don't and why they think it needs to be amended, withdrawn or passed. At the end of the committee process, there should again be ample debate at third reading in order to reflect on what the public has told us.

In Mike Harris's Ontario, since 1995, this government has basically stripped the rules of democracy and has said, "We're the government. We decide what happens in Ontario." Nobody has a word to say about it except for a measly couple of days of debate at second reading.

If you take a look at this government's record when it comes to just two things—one, the number of times it has used time allocation to pass a bill is shameful. This Parliament no longer passes bills by way of regular debates

in this House. We almost invariably deal with a time allocation motion. I think that's wrong.

Number two is the amount of time that we don't use our committees. I think committees are the best place for us to do our work as parliamentarians. Properly done, committees can work really well, not only for the legislators but also for the public. Committee is an opportunity, if we do it properly, for members to delve, to get into issues that are of interest to them or their constituents and then to allow the public to participate by way of presenting to our committees so that they're able to tell us how they feel about issues, pro or con, and what they think we should be doing with particular pieces of legislation.

As I said, the second thing this government has done wrong, in my view, is limit the amount of time we spend in committee. Now we see, almost as a rule, legislation go through this House with little or no committee time whatsoever. For this government, it's considered to be a long period of time for a bill to go to committee for three or four days. I go to House leaders' meetings as the chief whip for our party, and the House leader says, "Well, I'm giving you guys three days at committee." Somehow we're supposed to be excited about that.

I came to this Legislature in 1990. A bill would go to committee and it would spend an entire session there. You had an opportunity to have the public present as long as it was necessary. I remember sitting on subcommittee meetings where we would say, "OK, we're giving a bill about five or 10 days." We'd go off on committee and all of a sudden there would be a huge amount of interest. The subcommittee would meet with the committee and say, "Ah, we need to extend the amount of time we're at committee." As a regular course of business, we would extend the time of the committee to deal with the issue. So the legislative process under the Rae government, under the Peterson government and under the Davis government before that was that you went into second reading and you had a full debate.

When I came to this place, a member could stand up and speak for as long as he or she wanted at one particular reading of the debate, either second or third. Normally debates where there were issues of substance went on for as much as five, six, 10 days. Then, when that was over, it went off to committee. Basically, in the fall we would have second reading. We would finish second reading in the fall. We would introduce the bill to committee later on in the fall and into the intersession of winter, and then by the next spring we came back for third reading and the bill was passed. So the way the legislative process worked was that you introduced it in the fall session, you did committee work in the intersession of winter and you passed the bill in the spring. If you introduced a bill for second reading in the spring, you would do second reading in the spring, you'd do committee in the summer and you'd come back in the fall and pass the bill. This government introduces a bill on Monday and by Thursday it's done. I think that's wrong.

Now, how do we fix this mess? I believe there are only a couple of ways we can fix it. One way is that as New Democrats, if we're elected as a majority government, we're committing that there are a number of changes we would institute in the right of democracy. There's everything from electoral reform, how we elect people, to how this place operates. We believe that members of this assembly have to have an ability to vote according to their conscience and deal with what is important to their constituents. So we believe that there has to be a little bit more flexibility for members to exercise their rights as individual members of this assembly, no matter what their political affiliation is or what party they belong to.

Number two, we believe there needs to be a system of rule changes in this House that balances the need of the government to pass legislation with the right of the opposition to scrutinize the work of the government. At the end of the day, I understand as an opposition member that the government must always have the ability to carry a bill. I don't argue as an opposition member that I should have the ability of rules to say to the government, "You're not passing your bill." At the end of the day, the government has to have the right to pass the bill. That's how Parliament works. But you have to give the opposition the right to scrutinize and question the government on what it's doing or to strengthen a bill where we agree that a bill is needed and going in the right direction.

The other change that we believe would have to happen is democratic reform, which is how we elect people. We think this Legislature doesn't work when we have majorities in here. We have just heard the member for Essex, Mr Crozier, say, "If we Liberals are elected as a majority in this House, we're going to stick it to the Tories and we're not going to change the rules." I believe that's true. To an extent I don't think that's too far from where things are going to end up, because when a majority government gets there, they're emboldened by being elected as a majority and they say, "Man, we sat under the tyranny of the Conservative government for seven years. Boy, are we going to stick it to them now that we've got the chance." At the end of the day we're just back where we started. You end up, if it was the Liberals or us who come in, with the opposition being unhappy. That's why we as New Democrats believe you have to change the way you elect people in here.

Our Legislature should work like most other democratic Legislatures in the free world, that being on a system of proportional representation. We elect people, and at the end of the day the number of members who sit in this Legislature is equal to the proportion of popular vote that their parties have got in a general election.

There are number of ways you could do that. You've heard me speak on this before. I tend to prefer the mixed proportional system they have in Germany, where you have a system that says you have 103 ridings, as we do now. You elect people first past the post, just as we do. You elect your local member because it's important to have a constituency person there to represent the con-

stituency. But at the end of election night, when we look at the numbers, if we were to look at the 1999 election, the idea would be, Conservatives got 43% of the vote but they've now ended up with 65% of the members by way of first past the post. You would have a system that says that the number of MPPs the Tories have gotten with first past the post would equal 43% of the seats of the House. The two opposition parties would then be adjusted according to the proportion of vote that they got in the general election to make sure that the proportional vote is equal to what they got. So the idea would be that if the Tories got 43%, the Liberals would have got 30-some-odd per cent and we would have got about 12% or 13%, whatever it was, in the last election. In that way, the government wouldn't have a complete majority to do what it wants.

Let me just explain how preposterous your system is. If you look at really big issues like hydro privatization and deregulation, under proportional representation this government, in order to pass such legislation, would have had to convince either the Liberals or the New Democrats to vote with them, or a combination of members for a majority to support privatization. I can tell you that we as New Democrats would have voted against it, just as we have now. But it would have allowed the Liberals to do what they thought was right, and I don't begrudge that. If the Liberals believe, as the Tories do, that we should privatize hydro and deregulate, then let them stand with the government, vote with them and have the Tories rely on them for their vote.

That would do a couple of things. It would make sure that we represent our constituencies and that we're more accountable as members. Quite frankly, it would help the public better discern whom it is they want as their elected representative and whom they want as a government, because parties would be made more responsible in the Legislature in how they vote.

I say to the government members across the way, you're really missing the point here with time allocation motions. At the end of the day, you might be thinking that you're helping yourselves as far as your short-term agenda of being able to deal with the issue of passing your legislation through the House, but in the longer term you're really hurting yourself when it comes to what democracy should look like in Ontario.

Now to the second matter at hand. We are here today voting on a time allocation motion on this bill. I want to deal with the bill itself. I said at second reading, and it's a bit of a risky thing for an MPP to do but I'll say again, that this is nothing more than a tit-for-tat bill.

1640

Let's explain how we got here. The government was embarrassed by the expenses of certain cabinet ministers. We had some cabinet ministers who had to resign under a cloud of shame because of what they spent when they were acting as ministers of the crown. You had other cabinet ministers and parliamentary assistants who had to repay money because they had improperly charged for things they should not have charged for in the line of

duty. The government got caught—I understand that—and the government was embarrassed.

The opposition, mainly the Liberals in this case, came to the Legislature and pointed the finger at the government and said, "Ah, look at you guys. You're spending a bunch of money and you're incompetent. You guys are not doing things right. We're better and we're smarter." That's basically what the intent of the debate was.

The government said, "Oh, man, we're not going to take this lying down. We're going to introduce a bill to put the leaders of the opposition under the same scrutiny." So all this is an attempt by the Conservative government to deflect attention from their cabinet ministers and, quite frankly, engage in a tit-for-tat debate. That's all this is.

That's a little bit too bad, because in the end we're all painting ourselves with the same brush. When one member of this assembly gets up and starts to point the finger across the aisle to either the opposition or the government and says, "We're better than you. We would never do" whatever. "We're more appropriate with our expenses than you," and starts accusing the government or the opposition of somehow being crooked with their expenses, I think it paints us all with the same brush.

To me, the debate we should be having is not a tit-for-tat debate. We should be talking about how we develop a better system of accountability so that members' expenses, cabinet ministers' expenses and those of leaders of the opposition are more able to stand up to public scrutiny.

Now, I don't believe that any member—hardly a member of this assembly will knowingly go out and defraud the government, the taxpayers, for expenses. I want to believe that most members in this House, 99% of them, are honest individuals, from both the government side and the opposition side. To me, the issue is not an issue of tit-for-tat; what we should be engaging in is how we establish rules that treat all members fairly and treat, more importantly, the public fairly when it comes to the accountability for those funds.

For example, it was suggested through this debate that some ministers have spent too much money, let's say on alcohol, when it came to entertaining some of the guests they were responsible for entertaining. I would submit that if I were in the private sector, that would be seen as a normal thing to do in business. If you're taking out a client and trying to sell them a contract of some type, you bring them out for lunch and the person has a beer or two or a glass of wine, whatever. It's not seen as a bad thing, because it's private sector. If we're worried about what it looks like, what we should be having a debate in this Legislature about is how we set up rules to make that transparent. I would argue that one way to do it is to give members a—I forget what it's called again. Not an allocation. Help me out here. A per diem. Give members a per diem and give members who are having to travel because of business a per diem.

For example, when I worked at the Ontario Federation of Labour and I had to travel for my employer, or I

worked for the United Steelworkers of America or I worked for Northern Cable or I worked for Pamour Mines, it was always the same: when I travelled, I got a per diem. The employer would pay my airplane ticket to where I was going. They would pay and reimburse my hotel room once I had bought it. Then they would give me a per diem, and back then it was about 35 bucks a day, to be able to have my breakfast, dinner and supper while on the road. The employer understood: "I'm sending my employee on the road, so therefore I've got to be able to defer their expense of having been on the road for me as an employer." How I spent my 35 bucks was up to me. If I wanted to have it all on breakfast, all on dinner, all on supper, or I wanted to have supper with a bottle of beer, that was up to me, but I was not in any way, shape or form able to charge more than a set amount.

So I would argue that for members it probably makes some sense, since we're allowed 12 trips per year to travel anywhere within the province of Ontario on assembly business, that you give people a per diem and you say to them, "You're allowed to travel 12. You can get 12 airline tickets per year," or 24, whatever the number is now, "to travel and do assembly business. We allow you X number of hotel rooms." I think six hotel rooms a year is what we're allowed when we travel. I see nods of six. So we're allowed to stay on the road six nights per year as private members dealing with assembly business.

I would say that rather than having a system where I can receipt for my breakfast, dinner and supper, give me a per diem—that's the way you deal with it—and make the per diem reasonable. Don't make the per diem so rich that I'm going to make money on it; make it so that it basically covers the cost. So if it costs, on average, let's say, \$8 for breakfast, \$12 for lunch and \$25 for supper, then the person gets \$45, and how you spend that money is up to you. We'd save a lot of money, as an assembly, because I would argue that receipts are probably more expensive for the Legislature, but it's fairly clear, and how I deal with that is my business.

For cabinet ministers I think the rule has to be a bit different. I accept that cabinet has to entertain the people we deal with in government. For example, the Minister of Tourism, the Minister of Northern Development and Mines and the Minister of Industry, Trade and Technology all have to meet with people around the world to deal with trying to promote Ontario as a place to do business. I don't want to see my cabinet minister responsible for tourism so worried about submitting the expense of a business person he or she might be meeting with, who is looking at doing business in Ontario, that they're afraid to even take them out. I don't think we're helping them out in that way. So I would argue that we have to have a set of rules for cabinet ministers that is clear, that says, "We accept that you have to travel on behalf of the province, we accept that every now and then you're going to have to spring for the meals of people you're trying to do business with," and there has to be a

reasonable amount of money that cabinet ministers should be allowed to spend to do that.

For us to get into this thing of tit-for-tat and pointing fingers I don't think does us any good. I want our Minister of Tourism, I want my Minister of Northern Development and Mines to have the ability to do their jobs. I don't care if they're Conservatives, New Democrats or Liberals; let's not scare people to the point that they're afraid to represent the province of Ontario at events that are important for us to be at. I think that's the kind of cloud we're creating by these debates and the kinds of questions that were raised in this House.

The question is, how do you make it accountable to the taxpayer? I don't think there's one cabinet minister in the current cabinet who wouldn't argue that it has to be transparent. They're honourable people. I don't agree with their policies, I don't agree with where the Conservative government is going on most issues, but I accept that they're honest individuals trying to do their job. So let's talk about accountability for cabinet ministers and let's say, "What's the rule?" For example, we can look at cabinet ministers and say, "All right, you have a system currently that works, where if you spend more than X amount of dollars, it gets reported. If you spend under a certain ceiling, those expenses are not reported and if you expend over a certain ceiling, all the expenses are reported."

I would argue that a simple rule when it comes to cabinet ministers—it would be hard to put them on a per diem, I would argue as a member; I'm travelling alone and I'm not expected to entertain on behalf of the province of Ontario—is a system that allows them to do what they need to do as far as their job, but limit it to the amount of—you can do it in a couple of ways. You can limit it by the number of people they have, the total amount they would charge, or you have a complete system of transparency. I think that would be fair.

For the opposition leaders, I would argue it's the same. I accept that my leader, Howard Hampton, or the leader of the official opposition, or Mike Harris, when he was leader of the third party, is going to go out and do things on behalf of the province of Ontario. They are going to do things in their jobs as leaders. We get contacted all the time in the opposition by the same people who are lobbying the government to deal with a certain issue, and at times we end up getting stuck with picking up the bill. As it stands now, we pay it out of our pockets, because I can't expense that kind of money. It's not allowed in the current rules.

I would say that we need to treat the leader of the opposition and the leader of the third party, or any recognized party, the same as you would treat a cabinet minister or the Premier. Have the same kind of rules: a clear system of transparency that says, "We accept that you have to do your job as the leader of the opposition; we accept that you've got to do your job as a cabinet minister or Premier, that there are going to be some expenses incurred in being able to do that when you're meeting with people, from Bay Street to union halls to

church basements to the activist groups across this province, and at times you're going to incur an expense." Allow them to receipt that expense, but make the system transparent.

I think in that way it allows both things to happen: it allows members of cabinet and leaders of the opposition to do their jobs but at the same time provides for clear accountability for the taxpayer. At the end of the day, we need to make sure that the taxpayers, the people who foot the bill for this democracy of ours, are comfortable with what has been done.

I just want to end by saying I really feel it's unfortunate that we get into these kinds of debates. It's not that we don't need better systems of accountability—I agree with that and I'm going to vote in favour of the bill—but I really think it's a disservice to all of us when we sit here in the Legislature and point fingers at each other about how holier than thou we are compared to the others. There's an old saying about glass houses, and that might actually come out to be true. If you start throwing enough rocks around a glass house, you'll be surprised what may happen.

1650

With that, I know that my good friend Mr Christopherson wanted to keep some time on this debate, and I look forward to what he has to say.

Again, for the record, I want to be very clear: we will be voting in favour of this legislation. It's not the kind of legislation I would like to have seen. I would like to have a system that covers all members of the assembly, that deals with a transparent system, so that people are comfortable about how we expend their money, but at the end of the day I will vote for it because at least it's a step in the right direction.

But I will vote against the time allocation on the basis that I believe we have utilized time allocation to the point that it's become a norm in here, and I don't think we're helping democracy in any way.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): Another time allocation motion, of course, and I don't speak in favour nor vote in favour of time allocation motions, for obvious reasons.

Unfortunately, what most of the population of Ontario—I would say probably over 99%—doesn't realize is that this government is railroading a number of bills through this Legislature. Since it's not a topical thing to cover in the mass media, it's not going to get the kind of coverage it should and, generally speaking, people in the population don't follow procedural affairs very much. But it is actually disconcerting to watch the way this government is ramming through legislation.

Some members on the government side—and I don't expect them to stand up and say anything about this—I know would share my concerns. We were in the committee the other day dealing with amendments to two bills dealing with water in this province. The amendments were simply placed and there was a vote taking place on each one. In other words, there was no discussion on any of the amendments. We essentially didn't

know how to vote on the government amendments because there was no explanation of them. There was no discussion, no input; it was simply railroaded through the House.

You feel particularly bad about this as an opposition member, but I suspect a lot of government members just thought they were being robots there, having to vote for one amendment after another or against one amendment after another. I'm not saying all the amendments the opposition proposed would have been necessarily worthy of support by the government and, conversely, I wouldn't say all the government amendments would have been worthy of support by the opposition, but I think explanations of the amendments and due consideration of them would have been a much healthier process. It just means that the Legislature becomes more and more irrelevant.

This is about a bill which deals with expenses of certain people within this House. There's no question in my mind that this is a bill of revenge. The opposition raised issues related to the expenses of people on the government side. The government decided it would get some revenge and crafted a bill which is basically unfair.

I think most of the bill is probably supportable. I think there was a need for redefining what are legitimate expenses and what are not on the part of ministers and opposition leaders and so on—I don't quarrel with that—but there isn't anybody in this House who doesn't know the government has rigged this bill so that former Premier Mike Harris does not have his expenses looked at but former leaders of the opposition—Bob Rae and Lyn McLeod—do. Also, ministers who served in the past do not have their expenses looked at, but the leaders of the two opposition parties—the official opposition and the third party—will have their expenses analyzed.

Some people may smile at that and say, "Isn't this clever of us? Look what we've done." The problem is—and I think the member for Timmins-James Bay mentioned this—there is not motivation for a subsequent government to change legislation of this kind, just like rules of the House. If I'm elected and I happen to be part of the government side, I would still be campaigning to make the legislation fair, but I don't think I would get much of a receptive audience in that regard. So when we make legislation of this kind, I think it's important that it be fair. To exempt former Premier Mike Harris, to exempt former cabinet ministers back to 1995 but not to exempt the leaders of the opposition parties back to 1995, is unfair. I think it mentions parliamentary assistants as well, that if they're not presently a parliamentary assistant, they would not be subject. I say, either all of them or none of them, but you can't pick and choose like this without it being seen as simply revenge.

I understand on the government side that it's difficult when the opposition raises these issues in the media. I'm not unsympathetic in many cases when that happens, because there are facts and figures that come out that on their bare facts and figures sound much worse than they might be. In other cases, they are legitimately bad instances, but in some cases they're not. So I understand

it. But this legislation is most unfair and I find it unfortunate that the government would proceed with this.

I think I am allocated—what?—five minutes, so somebody can help me out with that in my caucus.

Not covered by the automatic review, it says, are all former cabinet ministers, parliamentary assistants and appointments before May 2000 and any caucus member who is not an opposition leader, parliamentary assistant or cabinet minister. So this has a lot of loopholes in it, and it is crafted in a very unfair fashion. If we had a Parliament where the opposition could actually have some influence, if the rules were such that the opposition could have some genuine influence in the ultimate composition of legislation, then I think we'd see a different bill.

Is there a need to introduce such legislation? I think there is. Is a lot of the provision contained within this bill reasonable? I think it is. But I think there are some very great flaws in this legislation, and I find it most unfortunate.

I find it most unfortunate as well that this bill will be rammed through with what we call a time allocation motion or what is known as closing off debate. If nobody cares about this, governments will continue to do it. No matter what those governments are, they will continue to do it. It's not healthy for the democratic system. It relegates individual members of the Legislature to the status of robots, and that's most unfortunate.

Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough-Rouge River): I've got just a few minutes to make some comments on this. Again, it's rather unfortunate that an important bill like this is being allocated a limited time in which to discuss it. As a matter of fact, we're not even discussing the bill; we're going to have to discuss time allocation.

There's a hypocrisy about this place sometimes about how things are being run. It's a democratic society in which we are elected by the people to bring the issues and debate the issues of the day. But then the government of the day and the rules themselves have made it impossible for us to do so. I think somehow something will have to be done in order to make sure that the people's voices and concerns are being heard.

I was listening very carefully today to the previous speakers, and one that jumps out at me is the member for Parry Sound-Muskoka. He said a rather profound thing. He said, "The devil is in the details." What he is saying to us is, "I'm not going to give you any chance at all to debate the legislation because you won't be seeing what we are going to do in the regulations and the details of it all, and we will limit you from discussing it." So the devil really lies within the details—the devil of the details of this very undemocratic, Harris-Eves government which has continued to be so undemocratic the whole time.

You may recall, Mr Speaker, that this didn't happen overnight. You may recall, from the first legislation, the first bill they put through the House, how democratic they were. Myself and many of my colleagues had to make sure that the public understood that this government had no intention of being democratic about this process.

Here we are now, and we are forced not to talk about the bill itself but to talk about time allocation and why the government is putting forward such an act. But we know why: they don't want us to discuss the details of all this.

1700

This is a very important piece of legislation, an extremely important piece of legislation. As a matter of fact, this came about because of the vigilant aspect of the opposition, of my party, who from time to time had to reveal some of the unscrupulous ways in which things were being done over there by the government. I know it's rather embarrassing when we had to say to one of our colleagues in the House that the way he's spending his money, taxpayers' money, is so awful. Then, after being questioned a couple of times, he had to resign his seat because it had not only become embarrassing to him or to his party, but the way they were spending taxpayers' money was completely embarrassing to the government.

The way this government has been spending people's money is just completely disgraceful. Actually, they talk about giving back money to those who can't afford it, and it's all a tax rebate. The way they went about, as I said, the utter abuse of the poor people, those who need some support in our society—and that's what government is all about—when they cut the support for the people who needed money from the welfare system and cut it off with lots of laughter—as a matter of fact one of the ministers had to say, "They can go and eat dented tuna, if they want."

In the meantime, they have expense accounts where people are lavishly giving \$120 tips for one day, yet the poor people out there who need the support of their own taxpayers' money were being exploited in this manner.

It's no wonder, of course, that they want to really rush this bill through without any full debate. My colleague from Sudbury pointed out a number of bills that have gone through here with closure aspects and no way of debating these bills. It is disgraceful and awful. We would like, in the short minutes that we have, to tell the people outside, the people whom we represent, that this government that is so unaccountable to anyone—they're only accountable to their own selves in how they spend the taxpayers' money in the sense of blowing it to the extreme with their extreme wantonness—when we often want to debate this issue, none would like to do that. They want to rush it through the night with great expenditure and big packages coming to us, and then tell us to review it overnight.

I'm saying that this is disgraceful. The people will remember, very much so, the way this government has rammed it through in the nights to make sure that we cannot debate this. We hope somehow, when the day comes that they call the election, people will be reminded of the atrocious, undemocratic way this government has carried out its duties.

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): I think the tragedy in this is that we have to speak to a bill such as this. Sometimes the reality is that common sense

isn't very common. We have spent quite a bit of time in this Legislature looking at expense claims. By and large, I think the sense is that one, two or three individuals have poisoned it for others.

I've had an opportunity to look at some expense claims myself, and we see claims in there for meals and to entertain groups. I have no trouble with that. In fact, some of them are kind of funny. There is one in there where an individual first of all claimed for some rye, following that claimed for some steak and then, following that, claimed for a bottle of Aspirin. I suspect there's probably a story behind it that we're not going to be interested in or pursue.

It is a bill that is unfair. It is unfair in the sense that it has been specifically and intentionally developed to exempt some government members—to wit, the former Premier Harris—and yet to reach back in time and claw forward from previous governments individuals who were leaders. It's done for revenge, and I think it demeans the parliamentary process when that's the motive for it. It's done just to get even for the opposition having uncovered some of these expense claims.

I think it is a grave error for a number of reasons: first of all, it is a grave error because, although the government may think they've won, they've exempted their former leader but they've been able to force the other leaders to open up their claims, so I don't think they will be particularly startling when they are revealed.

The people of Ontario are not stupid. The people of Ontario who are our employers, the people of Ontario who have sent us here, not to lord it over them but rather to be their servants at Queen's Park—the people of Ontario know the game being played, and they don't like the game. My fear is that when they don't like the game, they absent themselves from the process of democracy. So when they see this, it's wrong.

It was the opposition who asked for these expense claims. I make no apology for that. I make no apology. In each and every one of our ridings, we have constituents who are struggling financially but who have sent us here. It may be impossible for some on the government side to understand that although it is kind of funny that a cabinet minister claimed a bottle of Aspirin, there are families in this province who struggle to buy a bottle of Aspirin for their ill children. That may seem funny to you, but that is a reality. There are too many families in this province who run out of money before they run out of month.

In a way, what these claims said to me was not the dollar amounts; how much was paid for a flight to Sudbury doesn't matter, because that has to happen. But it's an attitude, when a member can't pick up the money for the cost of a bottle of Aspirin. It's not a free ride here. None of us came here for a free ride. I don't care which party or which side of the House; I truly believe that every member here came to, in their way, make a difference.

Unfortunately, this bill follows the pattern of virtually every other bill, which is time allocation: stifle the discussion, stifle debate. That's frustrating for the opposi-

tion. It's got to be frustrating to be a government member on the back bench, to be given scripts to read, to have to follow the line given by it. I have a great deal of sympathy for you at times, because there's no way you can believe what you're saying, no way you can believe that. I'm sorry you have to pretend to defend it. Maybe after, when we're having coffee somewhere, you can say, "Boy, I wish this government hadn't rammed this other bill through." You have to stick to the line, and I understand that, but you ought to know that you have our sympathy from this side. On this side, we can do what has to be done, which is the right thing. We will vote against this bill, not because it is wrong to have a limitation on the expenses, but because it is wrong to use time allocation and ram through every piece of legislation.

Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls): I'm really happy to have gotten up to speak following the last comment the previous speaker made. He said, "We're going to do the right thing because we're opposed to time allocation motions in the Legislature."

One of the things that is continually frustrating for our House leader and for the government on this side of the House is the House leaders opposite refusing to allow smooth passage of legislation through the Legislature. Time and time again, the opposition parties have refused to let pieces of legislation that they support go through.

I remember that early on in the session there was the red light camera bill. This was a bill to extend a pilot project to five municipalities so they could keep using red light cameras for another two years to experiment to see if those were appropriate and would improve safety in their communities. Everyone in the facility agreed on it. We debated it, I think, for five sessions. Why? Because the opposition was being obstructionist. In fact, they voted for the bill.

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Today we had two more bills that the members opposite—we brought in a time allocation motion for the consumer protection bill because the opposition didn't want to let it go through. When we brought it in, they stood up and said, "Oh, what an affront to democracy. Here they are again with another time allocation. Isn't this awful?" Well, do you know what? Today we voted 90 to zero. All three parties agreed with it, yet the hue and cry and the time allocation and, "Oh, my gosh, this is a bad bill."

Another bill today—it wasn't just the consumer protection bill—was the water protection bill brought in by the Minister of the Environment, and it was the same thing. We had debates about that in this Legislature day after day after day. Finally, the minister said, "Look, you guys agree with this bill. Why are you holding it up? Let's get on with it." "We'll do the right thing," the gentleman opposite just said. Well, you agree with the bill. It's about water protection for people. Let it go through. But no, so our House leader filed another time allocation motion. Oh, you'd think the world was falling apart: "Democracy is over with. Isn't this a terrible thing, another time allocation motion?" Well, today the water

protection bill comes up, and what's the vote on that one? Ninety in favour, zero against.

Don't tell us that time allocation is awful and we're trying to stop democracy. That's nonsense. The people at home don't really know how this place works, the inner workings, but they should know that any time you guys get up and complain about time allocation motions, it's a lark. Believe it, folks at home.

I'm going to talk to my good friend from Kingston and the Islands, Mr Gerretsen, because I've been around when he has debated this bill and I want to speak to some of the things he has said in the debate on this. You know, one of the things the member for Kingston and the Islands has said in the past, as did the member opposite who just spoke, from Prince Edward-Hastings, is, "Wow, they're just mad because we revealed a few bad apples out there who had too many expenses. There's just a couple of cabinet ministers. They're embarrassed, so they're mad."

Give me a break. The Liberals filed 75 or 100 freedom of information act requests for cabinet ministers' and parliamentary assistants' expenses over the past four years. We may find out that they were advised to do this by some American consultants, perhaps by Mr Kinsella, who's now advising them but used to advise the federal Liberals—a noted, nasty, dirty-politics politico. As soon as they got in with this band, all of a sudden these freedom of information act requests started; we all started assembling our receipts and sending them in over the years. You know, it wasn't a few bad apples they were concerned about. I remember I had 24 cents on a bill that was PST for alcohol. I didn't see it; it got through and I paid for it. It wasn't a few bad apples with thousands and thousands of dollars of expenses—24 cents PST alcohol and there was a press release to my riding: "Isn't this guy a rotten guy?" So just save that, because we all know better on both sides of the aisle.

It's been difficult. I remember, as a newly elected member, I became a parliamentary assistant in 1997 to the Minister of Labour. They give you this government credit card. I came into this position and my idea was to save money. I was tired of hearing stories of waste and so on. So I got a government credit card and I said, "I really don't want one. What do I need that for?" They said, "Well, as a parliamentary assistant to labour, you are going to be asked to travel around the province, make speeches to different groups, meet with stakeholders, meet with individuals who have concerns with the Ministry of Labour. Those are expenses that you can expense and should expense to the government of Ontario because they are expenses you incurred where you had to travel doing your job."

I was extremely hesitant to use that card. I started using that card when my wife started beating me up at home all the time because I was expensing a lot of things on my own, just paying them out of my salary. She said, "You know, the problem with that, Bart, is that first of all no one is ever going to thank you for it or even notice you've done it. Second of all, you're taking money out of

your own kids' mouths." Reluctantly, I started to use these credit cards. And by the way, we use the credit cards for these expenses and then pay the bills ourselves. We submit that receipt, and then it gets reimbursed back to us.

But I'll tell you, there was a great deal of ambiguity about what was considered a legitimate expense. Rules have had different interpretations in different offices, and this has ultimately meant a loose set of standards without a clear authority to judge complaints. These vague rules, widely interpreted, have only led to confusion among ministers, parliamentary assistants and their staff about what was allowed and what was not. I want to add that what was confusing was process. I go off and use my credit card and bring receipts and put them in this pocket and put them in that pocket and one wallet or another. I come back and go to my staff, the people on my staff in charge of paying receipts, and I give them all these receipts. I say, "Take care of these. File for my expenses form." My staff does the job of going through the expenses. If there's anything there that's supposed to be omitted, they omit that expense. Then we fill out a form, sign it up and send it off to the ministry.

In some ministries, they have a double-check, where the ministry will actually take it, look at the receipt, look at what you filed, and if they find something that was inadvertently receipted that shouldn't have been, they'll call you up and say, "Mr Maves, this was something that shouldn't have been receipted." You look at it and say, "Gee, you're right. I apologize. Take it off." Some ministries didn't do that.

This was an odd situation. I should be my first check, my staff person who submits receipts is the second check and the ministry is the third check. In many cases, the ministry wasn't the third check and that's how some of these things inadvertently got through.

There's one thing that's a little bit irritating about this whole debate when you have your integrity impugned because, as I said before, you inadvertently expensed over the past seven years something that shouldn't have been expensed and rightly reimbursed the taxpayers for that. One of the things that's irritating to me is that in this Legislature in 1995, and I'll bet you 95% of the people in Ontario don't realize this, we eliminated our tax-free allowances as MPPs. No other governing body, municipally or federally, has done that, that I'm aware of, in this country.

We also got rid of a gold-plated pension plan. Do you know right now, today, after having been here for eight years, if I lost the next election or decided not to run again in the next election, I would be eligible to start, as a 38-year-old man, with about a \$35,000-a-year pension, adjusted for inflation, for the rest of my life? I know MPPs right now who have a pension, who served 15 years in this place, who make more money on their pension than I make as an active MPP. We said that gold-plated pension plan was unfair, and it was. We repealed it and we replaced it with an RRSP contribution plan. I now get \$4,000 a year put into an RRSP contribution plan.

You know what? There are people who wonder why we did that. The reason pension plans were there in the first place was because people gave up their careers. You could have been a lawyer, you could have had a huge stable of clients and then you left for four, eight or 12 years to go into the Legislature, and when you came back to your law firm, you had to start over. That's why originally these pension plans were put in place. Well, we eliminated it.

I know that a lot of members opposite feel the exact same way. It's very frustrating to have done the right thing, maybe even gone too far. Quite often, in the hallways, we have conversations about whether we went too far, eliminating that pension plan and replacing it with an RRSP contribution plan. But the point of the matter is that the pension plan was too rich and we dealt with it. What's really irritating is that I had some of my best friends, my neighbours, say to me after the last election, "The good thing is you've got your pension for the rest of your life." No.

So we have had a great deal of integrity on this side of the aisle. The member from Erie-Lincoln, who's younger than I am, under that old pension plan, had he decided to retire after this mandate in office, probably would have been eligible for about \$2 million in his lifetime. He voted away \$2 million. I did that too. I think that's a huge sacrifice. I think that shows a great deal of integrity on the part of members of this government. We introduced that bill. We were the ones who got rid of the pension plan. When other people nail you for inadvertent expenses over a seven-year period, they're right, it was the wrong thing to file and it got through the process, but come on, the member for Erie-Lincoln voted away \$2 million.

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Mr Frank Mazzilli (London-Fanshawe): He bought a fishing license.

Mr Maves: He bought a fishing license one day when he was with northern development. He was also the Minister of Mines, I recall, and he did a great job there.

It's hard when the members opposite get on their soap box and want to talk about integrity. I recall, I'm going to go back to the Hansard—oh, believe me I will—Mr Smitherman—

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): You can't name names.

Mr Maves: Toronto Centre-Rosedale. You're right, I can't name names. I apologize, Speaker. I withdraw that. The member from Toronto Centre-Rosedale, after some of these expenses came out, and some of them were large for some members, several days in a row got up on his high horse and talked about how the only ethical member in this Legislature, the only man with any integrity was Dalton McGuinty.

The media said, "Hey, Dalton. How about letting us see some of your expenses? You're beating up on the members opposite. You're beating up on the Minister of Tourism, someone who travels all over the province. The parliamentary assistant for the Ministry of Tourism

travels all over the province and has flights as expenses and so on. You're beating up pretty hard on him." The media said, "Why don't you release your expenses?" He said, "All copies, all receipts of mine, I assume this is done by the other two leaders as well, have been submitted to the Board of Internal Economy. What I have here is a summary of my expenses and I'm quite prepared to make those public.

I remember the time—it was for the previous year. Mr McGuinty submitted something like \$34,000. I sat there, "It's \$34,000? Wait a second." Of course, the media write in the paper, "Mr McGuinty's expenses were \$34,000." Just go to the individual members' expenditures, which are filed on all of us. We all have individual expenditures. Mr McGuinty, in three years, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002: \$249,290 in a three-year period. It's all right here. That's all public. But when he said, "Oh, here's my expenses, 34 grand," I guess he forgot about all the other stuff he filed here.

Really, \$250,000. You could check John Baird's expenses, another Ottawa member, Mr Sterling or Mr Guzzo—nowhere near that amount. It's frustrating for members on this side of the aisle.

We needed to introduce this bill so that we could clarify this. It's important we go to the Integrity Commissioner. It's good to have members go to the Integrity Commissioner every year. We show him all our investments and we show him our wives' investments. I have to show him any investments my kids have. He looks over those investments to make sure I don't have any conflicts. I think everyone in this Legislature thinks that's a fairly valuable process.

If someone calls them and offers them something or wants to go to dinner with them or go to a game or something with them, some of the members are like, "I don't know if I should do this. Am I allowed to accept this?" They pick up the phone and call the Integrity Commissioner. The Integrity Commissioner has a chat with you and tells you whether you should accept it or not. This is a similar process, where we're asking the Integrity Commissioner to become involved in the receipt process.

They did a press release about me for a small amount of PST on liquor that was inadvertently submitted over a seven-year period, bashing me over the head with that and challenging my integrity. Then I hear, the other night, my good friend from Kingston and the Islands say, and I quote from Hansard, "I, by the way, don't have a particular problem with, for example, people who may want to do business in Canada, from which we can all benefit in Ontario, being wined and dined to a certain reasonable extent so that we can get their business here. I've got no problem with that at all, because I know that sometimes you have to spend a dollar in order to make \$10 and in order make our economy grow."

If you have no problem with that at all, why all the press releases in everybody's riding for, in some cases, the smallest of amounts of errors? I think the gentleman from Kingston and the Islands is such. I know he didn't

have anything to do with some of those press releases. In fact, I'm willing to bet that when those American advisers and Mr Kinsella and others started to advise the provincial Liberals about dirty tactics, dirty tricks and attacking people's integrity, there were some of the members over there who said, "Don't go there. Let's not do this. This is problematic. We should be above this." I think for several weeks in a row, over the last couple of months, they've probably even had that debate several times in their caucus. That's what I think.

So there are some members, perhaps members who decided that they wanted to use the government Purolator service for their friends, who said, "Pshaw, we're going to go there," and they went there. And now we're here and we have a bill. Mr Eves says, "Look, let's get this all out on the table. Let's clarify how this should all work." That's the bill we have in front of us today, and I'm going to vote in favour of it. The Liberals have spoken in favour of it on several occasions. Let's see how they vote. Let's see really who has integrity.

Mr Gerretsen: Let me first of all say I stand by everything I said in that Hansard, and I will say it again. It's all a question of reasonableness. What would you do if you were spending your own money? That to me is the ultimate test. Quite frankly, I don't remember saying in this House at all what anybody else's expenses were, because I assume that we're all honourable until proven otherwise. So that's one point.

The other point that I very quickly wanted to make is that of course what we're really dealing with here is a time allocation motion. It's interesting. There has been a total of 19 bills that are coming to a conclusion during this session. Seventeen of them have been time-allocated, which means there were only two bills that were not time-allocated. Let's take a look at those two bills that weren't time-allocated.

One of them was the Back to School Act (Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board), and I think there was unanimous agreement among everyone here that that situation should be settled.

The other bill, and I have a great problem with the way in which this bill was handled, was last Thursday, the Justice Statute Law Amendment Act. The House leaders decided, after most of us had already left town, at about 3:30 or 4 o'clock that afternoon, to call that bill for final reading. You may recall that the vote was 53 to 0, because 50 members had already taken off for their ridings, which was a highly unusual move. I think the move that was perpetrated at that time didn't speak well to the democratic actions that a place like this should take.

I totally believe that everyone should be covered in the act that we're dealing with here today, Speaker. Nobody should be excluded who has had anything to do with this place going back to 1995, or whatever date you want to pick. But do not allow us to pass an act which excludes specific individuals, whether they're former Premiers or former cabinet ministers, and yet include former leaders of the opposition. That's all I want to say about that.

If you want to have some real accountability—I will go back to this, and I know Mr Maves will agree with me, because he had a similar bill to my Bill 5, which is the Audit Amendment Act. If you want to get some real accountability into the entire system as to how we spend public money, go to your House leader and ask him to bring that bill forward and let's have an open debate in exactly the same way that we had an open debate here last night about the double-hatter situation. If there are some members in this House who don't like the Audit Amendment Act, let them vote against it. This is an act that has had unanimous second reading in this House. It went to committee. It was unanimously approved at the committee, with all the amendments thereto, and for some strange reason only known to the government House leader, it's not being called for third reading.

What will the act do? The act will allow the auditor to basically follow the money. Two thirds of the money that we spend in this place, almost \$40 billion out of the \$60 billion annually, goes to grant recipients: the hospitals, the universities, the colleges, the school boards, some of it to municipalities etc, and there is absolutely no internal accountability system for that. What my act with its amendments will do is give the auditor the power to go after the money. Will he do it in every case? Of course he won't; he simply doesn't have the human resources to be able to do that.

It's interesting that the Minister of Finance in 1996, a certain Mr Eves, who is now the Premier, said that he was going to bring in amendments to the Audit Act. It was again stated in 1999 by the then Minister of Finance, Mr Flaherty, that he was going to bring amendments to the Audit Act to allow the auditor to follow the money. The Public Sector Accountability Act, which was trumpeted by this government as giving real accountability, of course was never proceeded with.

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The only conclusion that I can come to as an individual member is that this government talks a great line about accountability and yet it really doesn't want to see any accountability. There should be accountability for every dollar we spend in this place, whether it relates to our expenses, to the money that we give out to the various institutions out there or to the dollars that are spent by government programs themselves. That's what the system is about.

So I would ask the members opposite, if you really want to see accountability, call Bill 5 back on the order paper. Let's pass it and give the individual who after all is an officer of this assembly the true ability to follow the money.

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): It's interesting that Bill 216—and it almost pains me to say this, but the reality is that this is political payback. That's what's going on.

Hon Mrs Johns: Yes, it is.

Mr Christopherson: One of the ministers across the way has confirmed it is. I won't say that minister's name, but it's that apparent that a minister would be prepared

do say that, albeit in a heckle. But at least she would say something publicly. It is payback and it's a shame.

Mr Mazzilli: We don't get mad; we get even.

Mr Christopherson: Now I hear from one of the backbenchers, "We don't get mad; we get even." Here we go with the macho stuff. Look, this is really not getting us or the people of Ontario anywhere. It really is a shame we got to this point. I understand the politics of it, like virtually everyone else in this place. The Libs went through the expenses of the cabinet ministers with a fine-toothed comb and found something on the member for Burlington, who was then the Minister of Tourism, and ultimately that minister was asked to step down or stepped down of his own accord. Now we've got payback.

Mr Mazzilli: No.

Mr Christopherson: Now it's "no" from the same member who was doing the macho thing a minute ago.

Mr Mazzilli: Fishing licences. Where does it end?

Mr Christopherson: The member is saying to me, "Where does it end?" There we can agree, because it's almost becoming like Spy vs Spy. You go through the magazine far enough and it becomes Spy vs Spy vs Spy vs Spy, ad nauseam.

I will say this to the government, especially those who weren't here from 1990 to 1995: before you get too offended about what was done with your expenses and everything else, you might want to talk to some of your veteran colleagues about what your party's approach was to our ministers. To some degree, when you're in government and in power and you get the perks and the privileges and the authority of being in power, there are certain things that come with it. One of them is incredible scrutiny.

So I think there's enough blame, if you will, to go all round. I'm not trying to stand here and say the NDP is blameless but, again, even the government acknowledges this wasn't about us; this was going after the official opposition.

As for the bill itself, some of you should be having a great deal of difficulty explaining away parts of it, especially when you want to get up, as some have done today and at other times, and try to take the moral high ground. Give me a break. What does this bill say about who has to submit receipts under this new law and who doesn't? It says in sections 13 and 16 that the people this affects, whose expenses are going to be reviewed, are cabinet ministers or parliamentary assistants who held office on November 28, 2002. That was the day of the first reading. That's when this bill was introduced.

So if you were a parliamentary assistant or a cabinet minister on November 28, 2002—and forward, I would assume, obviously—then your expenses are to be subjected to this bill and the scrutiny this bill provides. However, they then have a different deadline for the two opposition leaders. Come on. For the opposition and their staff, it's June 26, 1995. Now, one might ask, why would that be? Why would there be a difference? Well, the difference is that by picking June 26, 1995, which if

memory serves me correctly was the exact day that the new cabinet of the new government was sworn in, the date of the formal transition of power, what it does is, it captures not just the current leader of the official opposition but the previous leader.

Fair enough. You want to get even? You're going to cast your net as wide as you can. So fair enough. If that's your motivation, then obviously you want to do it as thoroughly as possible and in a way that you think is going to catch, what, the biggest fish you can. Fair enough. But how come it doesn't apply to cabinet ministers and Premiers and parliamentary assistants back to June 26, 1995? Why would that be? Why would the cabinet, members of the executive council, be treated differently than the opposition leaders and their staff?

It might suggest that you want it both ways. You want the ability to go back because you think if you go back far enough, you can not only trip up the current leader of the official opposition but also his predecessor. But by doing it this way, of course, former Premier Harris is protected. Come on. I'm just surprised that you weren't so embarrassed that you just said in caucus and in cabinet, "We can't do this. Come on. How can we expect to get away with this? It's so obvious. We'll be so embarrassed to bring this in. Can you just imagine the opposition members standing up and waving the bill around and saying, 'But look at the date difference?'"

I see cabinet ministers laughing. I suspect I'm not that far off the mark in terms of the debate. And yet, here we are. The government backbenchers are duly getting up and doing their job and defending the bill as best they can, but here is this blatant, transparent, obvious, dare I say almost juvenile attack on the official opposition, and you protect Mike Harris.

I always thought Mike Harris presented himself as a guy who didn't need anybody to fight his fights. I always thought Mike Harris presented himself as a tough guy who was prepared to stand up and say, "Hey, I'm the guy who brought in the Common Sense Revolution. I do what I say I'm going to do, and I'm not afraid of anybody, and all of you, come on," and that whole big, huge, macho routine. Is that not a lot of the persona that former Premier Harris offered of himself and, by extension, the government? Yet here we are with his successor, Premier Ernie Eves, protecting Mike Harris?

I wonder how Mike Harris feels about that. I suppose on the one hand, if he had something to hide, he's probably very relieved, and I guess he should be thanking Premier Eves. Rather than being upset with throwing overboard his own personal agenda, perhaps I guess now it's time to call up and say, "Thank you, Ernie. Thank you so much for covering me and taking care of me, because without you, Ernie, I would be in so much trouble. They would have found out about these inappropriate expenses, and you protected me. Thank you, Ernie. You're a real buddy."

But I am surprised that Mike Harris would want that to happen, unless that's the case. It would be more consistent with the Mike Harris that I knew in this place

for almost 13 years, for him to phone up and say, "Please go into committee of the whole and make the change. I'm not afraid. I'm prepared to stand up to the same scrutiny as Ernie Eves. I'm prepared to stand up and face the same scrutiny as the leader of the official opposition and the leader of the third party." That's the Mike Harris that used to be in this place, not the one that I can only assume is somewhere in Toronto or North Bay, cowering in the corner, hoping that the Ernie Eves Protect Mike Harris bill gets passed, because the Mike Harris that I remember, if he didn't have anything to hide, would want to stand on that principle. Isn't that the sort of person he portrayed and presented himself as to the people of Ontario: a stand-up guy, not afraid; he didn't do anything wrong, so why should he be afraid? Instead, he's going to allow Ernie Eves to protect him because he's afraid?

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That's all I can conclude, because it is just so blatant. Think about it. I'm going to read the exact words because it's so almost unbelievable that one needs to have it read word for word so people can appreciate the fact that this is real: this transparent, unfair attack on the two opposition leaders as well as the protection for the frightened Mike Harris. Here's what it says. This is in the explanatory note of Bill 216, An Act respecting access to information—except Mike—for the review of expenses—except Mike—and the accountability of Cabinet ministers—except Mike—opposition leaders and certain other persons. What does it say?

"Sections 13 to 16 provide for a transitional review by the Integrity Commissioner of specified reviewable expenses of people who hold office as cabinet ministers or parliamentary assistants on November 28, 2002 and their staff and people who have held office as opposition leader anytime on or after June 26, 1995 and their staff."

If you're going to do something like this, at least have the guts to do it in an honourable way. There are honourable ways to battle each other. I don't have a problem with that phrase, by the way. I'd much rather see us battle here than out on some battlefield. All you can lose here is a political career, rather than some mother's son's life. So fair enough. There are going to be battles, and it's like war. Fair enough. But do you know what? Even honour among thieves has a certain currency with most people. Where is the honesty here? I'm looking right at one particular member who portrays himself, I would say, for the most part, for very good reason—I've got to throw in that little covering—but really, an honourable member who probably has a lengthy career here, who has stood out as a fine example of a parliamentarian. There is nothing honourable about this.

Mr Gerretsen: Who is he talking about? Name names.

Mr Christopherson: I was talking about the member from Niagara, Niagara Centre—Niagara Falls. We won't go there. We shan't go there, given the season. No, I was talking about the member for Niagara Falls, who spoke not that long ago, and that's who I was looking at when I

just spoke. I consider him a man of integrity. I'm surprised that he feels comfortable with a bill like this, because there is nothing honourable about this.

Notwithstanding the motivation and the time we're wasting doing all this so you can get even with the Liberals, it is so dishonourable to have one deadline for your ministers and your parliamentary assistants and a different deadline for the opposition parties. There is probably some kind of charter challenge here. Where is the equity? Where is the fairness? Where are your guts? If you're prepared to stand by what the Integrity Commissioner uncovers, or you certainly expect the opposition leaders to stand by what the Integrity Commissioner finds, why aren't you prepared to live by the same rules?

Hon Helen Johns (Minister of Agriculture and Food): We are.

Mr Christopherson: I hear a cabinet minister saying, "We are," but you aren't, because the predecessor to the official opposition is subject to this bill but your predecessor as Premier is not.

Hon Mrs Johns: You can FOI me all you want.

Mr Christopherson: Don't give me that about FOI. Not everything is FOIable. The fact of the matter is that there are two deadlines in here for a very specific reason: either Mike Harris has something to hide and you're protecting him or you fear he may have something to hide and you're protecting him.

I've got to tell you, it's a wonderful image. I'd love to see a cartoonist do a picture of Lyn McLeod, who's the predecessor to Dalton McGuinty as the official opposition leader, standing in a corner in a ring, if you will, prepared to do battle with anybody that wants to come at her. She's prepared to defend her expenses. Then in the same picture, in the other corner, cowering and shaking and hiding behind the new legislation, is Mike Harris. Because that's what this does. Lyn McLeod, Dalton McGuinty, Howard Hampton: all prepared to stand behind what the Integrity Commissioner finds.

The current Premier obviously is prepared too. But not Mike Harris; Mike Harris is protected. So either he has something to be afraid of and he owes Ernie big time or Ernie is worried that Mike might have something to worry about, in which case Ernie is taking care of Ernie.

Either way, Speaker, in my opinion, it really taints what otherwise is something that is in the best interests of the people of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker: This completes the time allocated for debate.

Mr Galt has moved government notice of motion number 84. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All in favour will say "aye."

All 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 1747 to 1757.

The Acting 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	Hudak, Tim	Runciman, Robert W.
Chudleigh, Ted	Jackson, Cameron	Sampson, Rob
Clark, Brad	Johns, Helen	Spina, Joseph
Clement, Tony	Johnson, Bert	Stewart, R. Gary
Coburn, Brian	Kells, Morley	Stockwell, Chris
Cunningham, Dianne	Klees, Frank	Tascona, Joseph N.
DeFaria, Carl	Marland, Margaret	Tsubouchi, David H.
Dunlop, Garfield	Martiniuk, Gerry	Turnbull, David
Ecker, Janet	Maves, Bart	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Elliott, Brenda	Mazzilli, Frank	Wilson, Jim
Flaherty, Jim	McDonald, AL	Witmer, Elizabeth
Galt, Doug	Miller, Norm	Wood, Bob
Gilchrist, Steve	Molinari, Tina R.	Young, David
Gill, Raminder	Munro, Julia	

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

Nays

Agostino, Dominic	Curling, Alvin	Martel, Shelley
Bartolucci, Rick	Dombrowsky, Leona	McLeod, Lyn
Bisson, Gilles	Duncan, Dwight	McMeekin, Ted
Bountrogianni, Marie	Gerretsen, John	Parsons, Ernie
Bradley, James J.	Gravelle, Michael	Patten, Richard
Caplan, David	Hampton, Howard	Peters, Steve
Christopherson, David	Hoy, Pat	Phillips, Gerry
Churley, Marilyn	Kennedy, Gerard	Prue, Michael
Cleary, John C.	Kormos, Peter	Pupatello, Sandra
Colle, Mike	Kwinter, Monte	Ruprecht, Tony
Conway, Sean G.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Smitherman, George
Crozier, Bruce	Levac, David	

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 50; the nays are 35.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Pursuant to standing order 37, the motion to adjourn is deemed to have been made.

We'll take a few seconds while the chamber clears.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE**DAIRY INDUSTRY**

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): Pursuant to standing order 37(a), the member for Elgin-Middlesex-London has given notice of his dissatisfaction with an answer to the question given by the Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing concerning the edible oils act. The member for Elgin-Middlesex-London has five minutes.

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): I open by making the statement that I find it very disturbing that on the day I asked the question of the Premier of this province, December 4, 2002, he chose not to answer this question. If the Premier meant half of what he said on the election trail, or if he's remotely interested in what he talked about at his much-touted round table, he wouldn't have sloughed this question off to another minister.

I would contend that the Premier didn't really have a grasp or understanding of what I was talking about when

I asked the question. The Premier looked around, sloughed the question off, and then acted in a totally disinterested manner on the question. I think that's irresponsible on behalf of the Premier. The Premier should be concerned about the second-largest industry in this province.

I referred to a December 4, 2001, letter that the former Minister of Agriculture, Mr Coburn, wrote to Gord Coukell, the chair of the Dairy Farmers of Ontario. I'm going to read again, for the record, the pertinent sections of this letter:

"One piece of Bill 87 is the repeal of the Edible Oil Products Act. I have heard your concerns about the lack of federal safeguards to ensure products are labeled properly. I can tell you that Ontario believes the federal government needs to ensure its regulatory processes are adequate to protect consumers and industry interests. We will call on the federal government to amend its food labelling legislation to ensure that blended products are labeled properly on store shelves.

"I, the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, am willing to submit to you today that in order to ensure the proper safeguards are in place, it is my intention to amend Bill 87 at the earliest possible date to remove reference to the June 2003 repeal of the Edible Oil Products Act in order to ensure that the federal government has time to do its work."

I think the minister at the time was very clear and very straightforward. The minister acknowledged that June 2003 was too soon to ensure the necessary safeguards and regulations were in place. The minister promised in that letter that it would be dealt with as soon as possible. But here we are, over one year after that letter was written to the Dairy Farmers of Ontario, and we still have no resolution in front of us, before this Legislature.

I contend that in discussions with the dairy farmers, the Dairy Farmers of Ontario accept the future repeal of the Edible Oil Products Act. They're not debating this issue. What they are concerned about is that there are jurisdictions surrounding Ontario that have regulations and safeguards in place for blended products. The Dairy Farmers of Ontario have come to the table. They're willing to compromise and to negotiate. What the Dairy Farmers of Ontario demand and deserve, though, is a level playing field with our neighbours to the south. When we look to the south, we see that level playing field being put in place by American legislation called the Filled Milk Act. You can't justify, and you can't just pull the rug out from underneath an industry.

The minister acknowledged a problem, the minister made a commitment and now we're asking what the government is going to do and when you are going to deal with this.

I introduced a private member's bill today that gave, I thought, a reasonable amount of time to deal with the issue, to appropriately deal with the outstanding issues. All stakeholders, though, during the discussions need to be at the table.

The minister last year made the commitment that he would call on the federal government to ensure that blended products are labelled properly. But we have not heard, and the dairy farmers have not heard, this government calling on the federal government to act. This government has sat on this issue, and it's crunch time; it's the crucial time that the government deal with this.

I asked for unanimous consent today, twice, to put a deadline in place. That unanimous consent was denied by the government.

Repeal the act and repeal it responsibly.

I want to deal just quickly with the whole issue of supply management, because I asked you specifically about this government's commitment to supply management. I quoted from a letter from the Minister of Agriculture, but nonetheless the phrase she used in there doesn't show this government's unequivocal support for agriculture. The federal government has shown its unequivocal support for supply management. The Liberal Party has given its unequivocal support for supply management. We've yet to see that unequivocal support for supply management from this government.

Hon Brian Coburn (Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I'm pleased to address the question of the member opposite this evening.

First off, I want to address his first comment. The Premier of Ontario certainly understands the importance of agriculture in this province and the important role it plays in the economic activity in Ontario. He has made that statement on many, many occasions.

Our government has certainly displayed that support time and again in the length of time that I've been here, since 1999. We have an outstanding record with respect to consulting with our agricultural entities to strengthen and build on the successes they've had over the years so that we're better able to compete and meet some of the challenges we have today in the marketplace. This particular issue is another one of those challenges.

The member opposite questioned our support for supply management. Well, Minister Johns addressed that today in her response to a question. Maybe I'll just read her comment again today. This is Minister Johns: "I assure you that the Ontario government, including the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food, continues to strongly support supply management. Supply management has worked well for the dairy, egg, broiler hatching egg, chicken, turkey and flue-cured tobacco industries."

The minister went on to say, "It is important that supply-managed commodities continue to evolve in order to respond to the changing environment in which they operate."

That comment is certainly supported by the Web site that the dairy farmers have, where they claim, "Working with farmers across Canada, DFO"—the Dairy Farmers of Ontario—"is positioned to respond to new trade rules and the realities of a changing market."

The realities of a changing market are some of the most important things we have to deal with on a daily basis to make sure that our industries, our commodities

do have an opportunity to expand and grow and build on the successes they've enjoyed over the years.

Agriculture in this province, the second-largest industry, plays an important role in the economic setting of this province and will continue to do so, certainly under the support this government has provided them in the past and will continue to do in the future.

In terms of our consultation and working with our stakeholders, the Dairy Farmers of Ontario, there was extensive consultation on the Food Safety and Quality Act. Certainly when I was ag minister, that relationship was very close, where we worked to be able to address the concerns of the Dairy Farmers of Ontario, no different from any other stakeholders in agriculture.

I make reference to the Nutrient Management Act. There's been extensive consultation there as well. One of the most recent ones is the Agricultural Employees Protection Act, where we worked to address some of the real concerns that farmers had, family farms and the agricultural community in general, with respect to the workplace on their farms on a daily basis, where they felt threatened.

The Liberals on the other side certainly aren't too sure where they stand on agricultural issues. The member opposite made a statement today and it may even change tomorrow. For example, they abstained from the first reading vote on Bill 187 and then voted for it in the end. Then in a short time the leader of the official opposition wants to change the legislation and allow some agricultural workers the right to form a union. Furthermore, the member for Vaughan-King-Aurora and the president of the Ontario Liberal Party says he wants to repeal Bill 187.

So you have to question really what the position is on the other side. It's nice that the member opposite has raised this issue, but the unequivocal support that we've given in the past to agriculture and to the dairy farmers is something we'll continue to do in the future. The minister has this issue well in hand, is consulting with the dairy farmers of Ontario and will resolve this issue in a timely fashion to the satisfaction of the dairy farmers of Ontario, as we do with all of the issues, so that as this industry moves ahead, progresses and builds on its successes, it can be a major force in the economic portfolio of this province.

1810

MINISTER'S COMMENTS

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): Pursuant to standing order 37(a), the member for Kingston and the Islands has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of Public Safety and Security concerning the Provincial Auditor's report. The member for Kingston and the Islands has five minutes for his presentation.

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): This issue arose as a result of a letter that was dated December 6 from the Provincial Auditor to Mr

Runciman, the Minister of Public Safety and Security. It deals specifically with respect to comments that he made both inside and outside the House in the week previous to that. I want to quote from the transcript of the scrum that was taken, I guess, on December 3 in which the minister said, and this is with respect to items that are contained in the Provincial Auditor's report as it relates to the Ministry of Public Safety and Security, "I'm implying that it's certainly in many respects inaccurate and misleading." Later on he said, "I'm concerned that it leaves a wrong impression and a misleading impression."

The main concern is this: the word "misleading" is something that would be unparliamentary if it were said in this House, and the member would be forced to withdraw that comment. It is my position that when a minister of the crown says the same thing—that something is misleading about an officer of this assembly—then in effect he's doing the same thing outside this House. That's what it all revolves around.

Specifically, the auditor asks four questions in his letter of December 6. It states:

"In summary I would appreciate if you could clarify to the Legislative Assembly that:

"The number of 10,000 was an estimate agreed to by your ministry at the time of the audit;" and the auditor says earlier that "The methodology used to estimate the 10,000 arrest warrants was presented in a briefing meeting with your ministry on March 8, 2002 and on March 12, 2002 and we received the ministry feedback in writing along the following lines..." and I could recite them, but they do not specifically disavow the number of 10,000.

Second, it states, "The CPIC number of 5,900 had never been communicated to my office"—namely the auditor's office—"and represents more current information which was obtained by you in November 2002."

Third, "I would appreciate if you could clarify to the Legislative Assembly that ... my report is not misleading, but you have more current information, which you wanted to provide to the Legislative Assembly and you and I agree that there are thousands of outstanding arrest warrants, many of which are for serious (level 1) offenders. Your ministry has made the commitment to act on this issue."

I'd like him to respond to that.

Fourth, "My report does not indicate that there are 3,000 serious offenders in our community being unmonitored." That's what the minister said in the House in response to my earlier question last week.

I want specific answers to the questions that are raised by the auditor in his letter. Now, I will say this: at 5 o'clock tonight I received a copy of a letter that is from the minister to Mr Peters, dated December 9, that seems to clarify some of the issues that were raised in his letter. I did receive a copy of this letter earlier. But my point is quite simply this—

Mr Frank Mazzilli (London-Fanshawe): You don't have one.

Mr Gerretsen: Excuse me; if you would let me continue. My point is quite simply this: to say an officer of this assembly is giving us misleading information in his auditor's report is something that is unparliamentary. It's not something that would be allowed in this House and it's something that, in my opinion, the minister should apologize to the auditor for.

The Acting Speaker: The minister has up to five minutes to reply.

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Minister of Public Safety and Security): I believe the letter that I supplied a copy of—it's directed to the Provincial Auditor—certainly explains my view with respect to the issues he and other members of the Liberal Party have raised. I think I certainly adequately answered those concerns. I answered them with respect to my responsibilities as the Minister of Public Safety. When a figure is published that could cause some concern amongst the public, I have a responsibility to address that. I did that, so I have no apologies to make in that regard.

I think it is unfortunate that this has been blown out of proportion with respect to the way it has been treated by some members of the opposition. I think it's a reflection of what we've seen in this House lately. We saw the Speaker commenting on it recently: a deterioration in the House. I had members calling for my resignation over doing my job. It's become all too commonplace for members opposite to call for resignations. I think the public recognizes that this is game-playing. It does not serve this place well.

I can recall my time in opposition. I spent 10 years in opposition, and I think in those 10 years, to the best of my recollection, I only called for the resignation of a minister on one occasion. That was for a Liberal Solicitor General going into a police station at 3 in the morning and making demands on the sergeant on duty that evening. Certainly, I think in the view of everyone in retrospect, that individual should have resigned and, ultimately, she did.

The things we hear across the floor today I think just fuel the attitude in this place; the lack of respect for members across the floor. One of the reasons I'm here tonight is that I believe in this place. I try to show it respect. I've certainly showed emotion on occasion, especially in opposition. We do feel deeply about issues, but I think we can continue to have respect for each other. We don't see enough of that in this place today. Certainly the public recognizes that, and I think that's reflected in public polling with respect to respect for all of us as elected officials.

Again, I'm going to be a little political here: I think one of the things they'd like to see is greater co-operation, and members of the opposition as well as members of the government talking about issues people care about. If you wanted to talk about law and order issues, perhaps this week we could have talked about the federal Auditor General's report on C-68, the gun registry: \$1 billion of taxpayers' dollars wasted on a useless, ineffective gun registry, which this government

fought vigorously on behalf of Ontario taxpayers—really on behalf of Canadian taxpayers.

I appeared before the Senate of Canada. The government of Ontario did significant research in terms of the implications of that legislation, what it would mean to taxpayers and what effect it would have in keeping guns out of the hands of criminals. We spelled that all out to the federal Liberal government back in 1995 and 1996, without the support of the provincial Liberal Party.

I may take this opportunity to put a couple of quotes on the record. This is from a gentleman by the name of Dalton McGuinty, from Hansard in October 1998: “I want to make it perfectly clear: I’m going to talk about gun control ... I’ll be working with the ... federal government to implement universal gun registration in Ontario.”

Dwight Duncan, from a Hansard of October 2000, said: “I support the federal government’s gun registry.”

Dominic Agostino said: “We believe the gun registry is a good law and this government should work with the federal government to enforce it, rather than fight it.”

Those are the kinds of situations where we could have worked together and, rather than taking political stances, done what was in the best interests of Ontarians and Ontario taxpayers, especially those in rural Ontario, farming community people who have guns and shotguns which they use in the operations of their farms. Hunters—Mr Speaker, you and I share those kinds of ridings where this is a part of people’s culture. We have, through legislation at the federal level, this true boondoggle, tried to criminalize honest, law-abiding citizens right across this country. Those are the kinds of issues we should be talking about and working together on.

The Acting Speaker: The motion to adjourn is deemed to have been passed. This House stands adjourned until 6:45 of the clock.

The House adjourned at 1820.

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)	Haliburton-Victoria-Brock	Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC) Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot	McMeekin, Ted (L)	Halton	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)
Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford	Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)	Hamilton East / -Est	Agostino, Dominic (L)
Beaches-East York	Prue, Michael (ND)	Hamilton Mountain	Bountrogianni, Marie (L)
Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale	Gill, Raminder (PC)	Hamilton West / -Ouest	Christopherson, David (ND)
Brampton Centre / -Centre	Spina, Joseph (PC)	Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington	Dombrowsky, Leona (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	Huron-Bruce	Johns, Hon / L'hon Helen (PC) Minister of Agriculture and Food / ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation
Brant	Levac, Dave (L)	Kenora-Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	Gerretsen, John (L)
Burlington	Jackson, Cameron (PC)	Kitchener Centre / -Centre	Wettlaufer, Wayne (PC)
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Kitchener-Waterloo	Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth (PC) Deputy Premier, Minister of Education / vice-première ministre, ministre de l'Éducation
Chatham-Kent Essex	Hoy, Pat (L)	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	Beaubien, Marcel (PC)
Davenport	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Lanark-Carleton	Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W. (PC) Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Don Valley East / -Est	Caplan, David (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
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	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
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	London West / -Ouest	Wood, Bob (PC)
Durham	O'Toole, John R. (PC)	London-Fanshawe	Mazzilli, Frank (PC)
Eglinton-Lawrence	Colle, Mike (L)	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
Elgin-Middlesex-London	Peters, Steve (L)	Mississauga Centre / -Centre	Sampson, Rob (PC)
Erie-Lincoln	Hudak, Hon / L'hon Tim (PC) Minister of Consumer and Business Services / ministre des Services aux consommateurs et aux entreprises	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
Essex	Crozier, Bruce (L)	Mississauga South / -Sud	Marland, Margaret (PC)
Etobicoke Centre / -Centre	Stockwell, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC) Minister of the Environment, government House leader / ministre de l'Environnement, leader parlementaire du gouvernement	Mississauga West / -Ouest	Snobelen, John (PC)
Etobicoke North / -Nord	Hastings, John (PC)		
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Kells, Morley (PC)		
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		
Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant	Barrett, Toby (PC)		

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

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Time allocation, government notice of motion number 84, <i>Mr Stockwell</i>	
Mr Galt	3722
Mr Bartolucci	3722
Mrs Munro.....	3723
Mrs Bountrogianni.....	3724
Mr Miller	3725
Mr Crozier	3726
Mr Bisson	3727
Mr Bradley	3731
Mr Curling	3732
Mr Parsons.....	3732
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