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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Tuesday 6 May 2003

Mardi 6 mai 2003

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 6 May 2003

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 6 mai 2003

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

SUDBURY REGIONAL HOSPITAL

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): My community is tired of the pathetic game of political chess the Minister of Health and the government are playing with regard to the Sudbury Regional Hospital and its financial woes. It's time for your manoeuvring to stop, and it's time for you to call checkmate and send the cheque to Sudbury.

Our community has done everything this government has asked it to do. You asked us to raise \$17.5 million over five years; we raised \$23.6 million over three years, thanks to the hard work of Gerry Loughheed Jr, the Heart and Soul Campaign, and a giving community of Sudbury in northeastern Ontario.

What is your record? You've got a project that's gone from \$88 million to \$363 million. Capital construction stopped two years ago and hasn't started up. We have a community uncertain about its health care future because of your inaction. We have a hospital supervisor appointed by you who is waiting for you to take action.

Today, on behalf of the constituents of Sudbury, on behalf of the people in Nickel Belt, on behalf of the people of northeastern Ontario, we demand that you send the cheque and get the project onboard again. We need our hospital.

ROTHERGLEN SCHOOL

Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton): I take this moment to congratulate the Ottawa Senators and their winning the Eastern semi-finals. It certainly sets up the opportunity for an all-Canadian Stanley Cup, something that has for far too long been absent from this country.

On another completely different topic, during the recess, back in the depths of a very snowy March, I had the opportunity to speak to grade 5 students and teachers at Rotherglen School in Oakville. Teachers Jean Lem, Don Otto, and Julie Enyedi-Peric took their classes to Queen's Park a few weeks after I had chatted with their students at their school.

These students asked some very impressive questions, showing a remarkable understanding of local issues and a keen interest in the political process. It certainly reflects well on the process that has taken place and how well

these children learn. Questions ranged from the details of an MPP's job and the election process through to local, provincial and indeed federal issues. Talking with young people provides an interesting and enlightening window on our educational system. Students' questions reflected the high quality of education provided at this private facility.

Schools like Rotherglen, with its program firmly rooted in Montessori principles, provide a choice for parents and a competition between educators that can only benefit Ontario's students. Rotherglen School operates at six campuses in Oakville, Mississauga and Burlington, with students enrolled in pre-school through grade 8.

NORTHERN HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENTS

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): With Premier Eves heading to Thunder Bay tomorrow for a fundraising event, I want to use this opportunity today to call on him to spend at least part of his time in my community dealing with some major transportation improvements that have been needed for several years and which so far have, sadly, been brushed aside by the Tory government.

Certainly the expansion of our highway system in northwestern Ontario, specifically the four-laning of the Trans-Canada where no alternate route exists, cannot be ignored any longer. Even your own Smart Growth panel, Premier, which formally presented its recommendations last week, views four-laning as a vital priority from both a public safety and an economic point of view.

A real commitment to such a project is needed, but two other major projects demand your attention as well. The construction of the Shabaqua Expressway is long overdue. The project has been ready to go for several years and will make an enormous difference to the movement of vehicles, particularly transports, through our community. It will alleviate serious problems on Arthur Street and Dawson Road, and for some time has been the top priority for Thunder Bay city council.

Another relatively inexpensive project that would markedly improve public safety on the Thunder Bay Expressway is our long-standing call for a full set of advance warning lights. Recently, Thunder Bay police chief Bob Herman spoke out publicly on the need for such a system and expressed his amazement that this obvious safety improvement was still not being supported by the government.

Premier, surely you would agree that if we can save even one life by installing these warning lights, it would be well worth it. You will have the opportunity on Wednesday to correct years of neglect related to highway improvements in our region. Please, for the sake of public safety, do not let this opportunity pass.

PLANIT MEASURING CO

Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South): I'm very pleased to recognize the pioneering achievements of the PlanIt Measuring Co Inc, a high-technology engineering firm in my riding. PlanIt won the Toronto Construction Association's 2002 Innovative Product/Technology Award for its exciting invention, the Measuring Board. This new product delivers real-time digital floor plans that can be combined with virtual tours of residential and commercial real estate. It also received National Research Council support.

The Measuring Board is an engineering integration of a laser measuring tool, a computer-assisted design (CAD) program and the new Scribbler tablet computer produced by Electrovaya, another groundbreaking company in my riding. Electrovaya won a 2001 Ontario Global Traders Regional Award for innovation.

The Measuring Board is such an accurate measuring tool that some commercial office owners discover over 2% more rentable space. As well, because the Measuring Board is a CAD file, architects and designers can use it as a basis for renovations and home improvements. The Measuring Board was launched in Canada and France last year, and the company has a patent pending in the United States.

I would ask members to join me in congratulating Mike Laurie, the company's visionary president and CEO. Mr Laurie, a professional engineer who graduated from Lorne Park Secondary School in my riding, jointly founded PlanIt with his wife, Odette, in 1994.

I wish PlanIt every success as the company expands worldwide and revolutionizes the real estate world. We are extremely proud of you, Mike Laurie.

ADAMS MINE

Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming-Cochrane): In September 2002, the Adams mine dump site was sold to a numbered company for \$1.8 million. Soon after, this company began negotiating with the Eves government to purchase over 2,000 acres of crown land that are needed to make this dump deal a reality.

This purchase is being done in secret and without due process for the shockingly low price of \$22 per acre. My constituents have been outraged by these secret negotiations. Hundreds of letters, phone calls and e-mails objecting to the sale of this crown land have been ignored by this government.

I believe the government is trying to rush this fire sale through as a political payoff to powerful land developers involved in the Oak Ridges moraine travesty, who also

happen to be large Conservative Party donors and tied to a sitting Tory MPP. These Tory insiders are actively campaigning to use the groundwater of Timiskaming as a dumping ground for Toronto waterfront contaminated soils and for urban waste from across the province. To make this deal possible, the government is offering another fire sale: the selling off of the Ontario Northland Railway to Adams mine dump partner Canadian National Railways.

To show you how cynical the people in the north are concerning the government's abuse of public trust, a newspaper poll in Timiskaming is about to be released stating that 94% of residents believe that this government is working on a secret backroom deal to revive the Adams mine garbage deal.

Walkerton proved the need to protect groundwater and Smart Growth declared the need for watershed protection, yet this government is willing to trade the groundwater of Timiskaming as a political payoff to its pals.

AMBULANCE SERVICES

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): I rise in my place today to bring to the attention of the government and the public an existing and growing crisis that exists within the area of public safety. I'm talking about the ambulance dispatchers. Many government members should know that, right now, we only have a retention rate of 30% of new ambulance dispatchers. What's happening is, people are being hired by the Ministry of Health and are being trained, but because of the poor wages and the wage differential—and I'm talking \$10,000 to \$20,000 a year now—what happens is once the Ministry of Health has trained these dispatchers, they then move on to the fire or police world, where dispatchers are paid what they're worth.

What's happening is that where the guidelines, your guidelines, say there should be a two-minute response, because we're so short-staffed in a lot of these dispatch centres, it's taking up to six minutes. We have people working in the dispatch centres who are having to have their own emergency personnel come to their workplace because these workers are dropping because of the pressure and the stress. We have people who are answering 911 phone calls who have been on the job anywhere from 16 to 24 hours. That's a recipe for disaster. In fact, OPSEU has examples where people's lives have been at risk. In one case, they believe it directly attributed to the shortage of staff.

You have the power to do something. Use that power. Save Ontario lives.

1340

CELT FEST

Mr AL McDonald (Nipissing): Today I rise before the House to personally invite everyone to northern Ontario's only Scottish celebration and Highland festival, Celtfest 2003, in beautiful Callander, Ontario. In its three

years, Celtfest has brought international attention to the town of Callander.

I'm happy to announce that one of Scotland's best-selling authors, David Ross, will be participating in the Celtfest activities. David is well known as being the leading authority on Braveheart, Scotland's national hero, William Wallace.

Celtfest is also recognized as an important stop on the Scottish games circuit. Other participants in this year's Celtfest games will be none other than Canada's own Guinness Book of World Records holder Kevin Fast, who holds the record for the heaviest truck pulled over 100 feet, as well as local competitors the Wand brothers of Powassan.

Some of the events at this year's Celtfest will include the Highland and step dance competition, piping and drumming competitions and, new to this year's event, sheepdog herding. The Metro Toronto police pipe band will be performing in concert. The event organizers are anticipating the biggest battle of the bands in northern Ontario.

I'd like to congratulate and thank Celtfest organizer Tom Mason, founder Colleen Porter, as well as all the volunteers who make this festival a great attraction.

For further information, you can visit www.celtfest.org or phone 705-752-2112. I invite everyone in the province of Ontario to Celtfest on May 16 and 17.

SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale): The Dream Team is in the House. I want members opposite and here to join with me in welcoming a group of consumer/survivors, their families and community members who advocate for more supportive housing and for dignity for the mentally ill.

I have my own leader of the Dream Team, Neil McQuaid. Neil McQuaid is a resident of St Jude Community Homes in my riding. Last year I had the opportunity to honour him with the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal because Neil McQuaid stands out to our society as a model for what can be achieved when we offer people appropriate supportive housing in their communities. He, like these other people, has gone from a point where they were regularly institutionalized, where they were frequent flyers in our medical system, to becoming a contributing member of our society again.

Their message to you and to all of us today is that if we want to meaningfully deal with the challenges we see in front of us on our streets, it's not enough to talk as some members of the government party do about sweeping them up, arresting them and putting them in jail. It's to talk about the need to build supportive housing.

Today I bring these people to the Legislature, and they bring their story to the Legislature. It's a story that says when government makes the necessary investments in supportive housing, individuals whom we all know have an opportunity to restore their capacity to be full-fledged,

contributing, committed members of our society. That's the message of the Dream Team. It's a message that two parties in this Legislature have got, because there are serious commitments in their platforms to building more supportive housing, and we'd encourage the government to do so.

When the Premier arrives, we'll send these cards across to him as further encouragement from the Dream Team to get behind the need to build more supportive housing.

KINGSWAY COLLEGE

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): Last Saturday, May 3, I had the privilege of attending a very meaningful and moving event, the 100th anniversary of Kingsway College in Oshawa. Kingsway College is a Seventh-day Adventist high school in my riding that encourages personal spiritual commitment and fosters academic excellence. It also focuses on physical fitness, music, service to others, growth in employment and social skills.

Kingsway College has undergone several changes of name over the years; however, its emphasis on service and academic excellence has been constant. When it opened in 1903, with just eight students, it was known as Lornedale Academy, located in Lorne Park, Ontario. It moved to larger premises in Oshawa in 1912 and it has remained at its present location in east Oshawa ever since. Recent milestones have included the construction of the A.E. King Memorial Fitness Complex in 1980, the largest facility of its kind in Durham region. Today the school has close to 200 students enrolled from grades 9 to 12.

I'd like to congratulate principal John Janes, senior pastor Dr Douglas Devnich, guest speaker Gordon Pifher, the alumni chorus under the direction of Dr James Bingham, and indeed all those who participated in a very memorable Sabbath service of worship and celebration on May 3. This literally was a homecoming with a spiritual impact, including a walking tour of the grounds and an opportunity to reminisce.

Congratulations once again to students, staff, alumni and friends who contributed to the success of Kingsway College, 100 years with a motto of "Service not fame."

VISITORS

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): It gives me great pleasure today to welcome in the member's gallery the honourable Professor Dalbari Lal, ex-Speaker of the legislative assembly and now Deputy Minister of Education, Punjab state, India, and other prominent members of the Indian community.

Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South): I would like the members in the House to recognize the man whom I was speaking about in my statement this afternoon, Mr Michael Laurie, the designer of the PlanIt measuring tool, which is the Measuring Board. He's a young man, the kind of person that we need in this prov-

ince, who designed something, marketed something and will hopefully have a world patent. He's just the kind of Ontarian that the future holds for all of us—Mr Mike Laurie.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

ONTARIO ENERGY BOARD
CONSUMER PROTECTION
AND GOVERNANCE ACT, 2003
LOI DE 2003 SUR LA PROTECTION
DES CONSOMMATEURS ET LA RÉGIE
DE LA COMMISSION DE L'ÉNERGIE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mr Baird moved first reading of the following bill :

Bill 23, An Act to amend the Ontario Energy Act, 1998 and the Municipal Franchises Act in respect of consumer protection, the governance of the Ontario Energy Board and other matters / Projet de loi 23, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur la Commission de l'énergie de l'Ontario et la Loi sur les concessions municipales en ce qui a trait à la protection des consommateurs, à la régie de la Commission de l'énergie de l'Ontario et à d'autres questions.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): 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 1349 to 1354.

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	Galt, Doug	O'Toole, John
Arnott, Ted	Gerretsen, John	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Baird, John R.	Gilchrist, Steve	Parsons, Ernie
Barrett, Toby	Gill, Raminder	Patten, Richard
Bartolucci, Rick	Gravelle, Michael	Peters, Steve
Beaubien, Marcel	Guzzo, Garry J.	Phillips, Gerry
Bountrogianni, Marie	Hardeman, Ernie	Pupatello, Sandra
Boyer, Claudette	Hoy, Pat	Ramsay, David
Bryant, Michael	Jackson, Cameron	Runciman, Robert W.
Caplan, David	Johns, Helen	Ruprecht, Tony
Chudleigh, Ted	Johnson, Bert	Sampson, Rob
Clark, Brad	Klees, Frank	Sergio, Mario
Cleary, John C.	Kwinter, Monte	Smitherman, George
Clement, Tony	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sorbara, Greg
Coburn, Brian	Levac, David	Spina, Joseph
Colle, Mike	Marland, Margaret	Sterling, Norman W.
Crozier, Bruce	Martiniuk, Gerry	Stewart, R. Gary
Cunningham, Dianne	Maves, Bart	Stockwell, Chris
Curling, Alvin	Mazzilli, Frank	Tascona, Joseph N.
DeFaria, Carl	McDonald, AL	Tsubouchi, David H.
Di Cocco, Caroline	McMeekin, Ted	Turnbull, David
Dombrowsky, Leona	Miller, Norm	Wilson, Jim
Ecker, Janet	Molinari, Tina R.	Wood, Bob
Elliott, Brenda	Munro, Julia	Young, David
Eves, Ernie	Murdoch, Bill	
Flaherty, Jim	Newman, Dan	

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

Nays

Bisson, Gilles	Kormos, Peter	Martin, Tony
Churley, Marilyn	Marchese, Rosario	Prue, Michael
Hampton, Howard	Martel, Shelley	

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 76; the nays are 8.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

The minister for a short statement?

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Energy, Minister responsible for francophone affairs): We defer to ministerial statements.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

ONTARIO ENERGY BOARD
COMMISSION DE L'ÉNERGIE
DE L'ONTARIO

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Energy, Minister responsible for francophone affairs): On October 7, 2002, the Premier ordered a review of the Ontario Energy Board. I committed to conduct that review and report back to cabinet within 100 days.

Our consultation process was extensive. We posted a consultation paper on our Web site and sent out more than 1,500 letters to MPPs, stakeholders, consumer groups and municipalities. We received 78 written submissions, and I personally met with more than 25 different groups.

The government heard from the people of Ontario. We heard their suggestions, their concerns and their points of view. We heard about the need to focus more attention on consumer protection. I'm proud to say that the legislation being introduced today has incorporated many of the ideas that were brought forward.

The government's proposed legislation would greatly improve and strengthen the Ontario Energy Board. If we are to have a strong energy market, we need a board that is not only strong but diligent, independent and well resourced.

Since the Ontario Energy Board was established more than 40 years ago, it has expanded, it has evolved, and it has endured changing times and changing circumstances. The board has talented and dedicated people, but it has not been given the opportunity to modernize and its mandate has not grown as quickly as it could have or should have.

I believe the legislative initiatives being proposed today would improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Ontario Energy Board. They would improve govern-

ance and accountability, while ensuring that consumer protection remains paramount.

Je crois que la loi proposée aujourd'hui permettrait d'améliorer l'efficacité de la Commission de l'énergie de l'Ontario. Les réformes que contient cette loi renforceraient la régie et la responsabilité de la commission et mettraient plus que jamais l'emphase sur la protection des consommateurs.

The legislation contains the following measures. If passed by the Legislature, the board would be self-financing and secure the ability to provide compensation that is competitive within the existing marketplace. This would lead to more effective decision-making and a better operating climate.

1400

We are proposing to establish a management committee comprised of the chair and two vice-chairs. The committee would oversee the board's performance, its resource needs and its fee structure. This is significant because the committee would deal with the immediate administrative duties of the board, allowing the other members to focus their full attention on hearings. This proposed legislation would set board terms for an initial two-year period, with renewal terms of up to five years. Full-time board members would be eligible to receive pay-for-performance based on the delivery of the board's business plan. Compensation would not relate specifically to the members' respective adjudicative responsibilities.

As well, this legislation, if passed, would establish an advisory committee of stakeholders, industry representatives and of consumers to review the board's performance measures. We further propose that the board would now be required to establish an annual regulatory calendar with a statement of priorities, thus increasing accountability and ensuring that stringent timelines aren't just established but met.

Through the proposed legislation, board members would be allowed to delegate decision-making responsibility to officials. This would help speed up the decision-making process. It is important to note that these decisions could still be appealed to the board, if necessary. It is vital that we streamline the hearing process while ensuring that consumers have an opportunity for input. We are proposing to develop criteria for consumer protection support that may include grouping together interested parties. The criteria would be established by the Ontario Energy Board management committee, in consultation with the advisory committee that I mentioned earlier. We propose to harmonize the powers of the Ontario Energy Board to eliminate duplication and streamline the regulation of natural gas and electricity.

Finally, this legislation addresses the issue of retroactive decisions. This has been an area of significant public interest. If passed, this legislation would ensure that the board makes decisions within meaningful time frames. Having to pay retroactive amounts is difficult for consumers, and this legislation would effectively eliminate retroactive charges that sit and accumulate month after month.

This legislation proposes that the recovery of any charges occur in the future by reviewing them more frequently and rolling them into future rates for a short period of time. Board decisions should be equitable, they should be clear, and they should be consistent. Investors in Ontario must know that they are entitled to both recover their costs and to earn a fair rate of return.

People must be properly informed and updated on the OEB's decisions and activities. I believe that it's the responsibility of the board to communicate effectively, to tell people what they're doing and why. The board's decisions can have far-reaching implications. For that reason the board's communications role would be enhanced and improved through this legislation. Timely information and pertinent data are critical to allow people an opportunity to better plan for themselves and their organizations. The people of Ontario have told us they want increased consumer protection. I believe this legislation would not only protect consumers even further, but help to improve efficiency, accountability and resources at the board.

As I've said on a number of occasions, I was impressed with the changes that were made at the Ontario Securities Commission. It wasn't change for the sake of change; it was change that led to a stronger, more effective operation. With our new legislation, we're proposing to adopt many of the aspects of the OSC model. The reforms I have outlined today are of extreme importance to everyone in the province because energy is not a luxury; it's the lifeblood of both our economy and indeed our entire society.

Les réformes que j'ai présentées aujourd'hui sont d'une importance capitale pour l'ensemble de la province. L'énergie n'est pas un luxe. Au contraire, l'énergie est absolument essentielle au fonctionnement de l'économie et de notre société. Cette loi, comme les autres lois que nous avons présentées dans le passé, est nécessaire pour protéger les consommateurs et pour répondre à nos besoins dans le futur.

This legislation, like previous legislation brought before this House, is necessary in order to protect consumers and meet their future needs.

Let me again convey my pride that the government is introducing this legislation after hearing from Ontarians. To those who submitted their ideas, either in person or in writing, I want to thank you for your time, your effort and your energy.

I would like to conclude by congratulating the Honourable Howard Wetston, the proposed new chair of the Ontario Energy Board. Mr Wetston is an outstanding individual. He was former head of the Competition Bureau at the federal government, he was a former Federal Court of Canada judge, and he served with great distinction as the vice-chair of the Ontario Securities Commission. His appointment will be reviewed by a legislative committee tomorrow. I think that any member, seeing his outstanding, non-partisan qualifications would agree that this outstanding public servant will make an

incredible difference in the lives of both enterprise and individuals in Ontario.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Minister of Public Safety and Security): This week is Emergency Preparedness Week and the theme is "Prepare now! Learn how!" I'd like to take this opportunity to remind the House of some of the actions this government has taken to ensure both the safety and security of Ontarians.

I want to pay tribute to the hundreds of people who have responded so heroically to the SARS health emergency. SARS is the first province-wide emergency faced by this province. Our Commissioner of Public Security, Dr Jim Young, always says that each emergency is unique and requires a unique response, but we can learn from each emergency in order to be better prepared in the future.

There are many kinds of emergencies, including ones caused by nature, such as the ice storm of 1998. There are accidents, such as the Mississauga train derailment, and there are disasters, such as the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001. An emergency can be anything from a flood to a forest fire to a new virus. Each situation is unique and each one has one thing in common: the capable and determined response of individuals.

Many of us saw this first-hand in 1998 during the ice storm. I was born and raised in eastern Ontario and knew the resilience and fortitude of its people, but I was amazed to see their strength in adversity and the generosity of the entire province and beyond.

September 11 was a wake-up call. Before that we thought mainly in terms of natural disasters and accidents. But, frankly, most people didn't think that anyone could be so evil as to purposely set out to destroy thousands of innocent lives, or that the destruction would hit so close to home. I had the opportunity to see first-hand the devastation the terrorists caused in New York City, as well as to meet a number of victims' family members and some of the front-line workers who led the response.

During each emergency we saw first-hand the dedication and professionalism of our emergency response teams. But courage, professionalism and downright intestinal fortitude aren't enough. You have to be prepared. That's why this government has worked so hard to improve the province's ability to respond to emergencies of all kinds.

One of the ways was to amalgamate the former Ministry of the Solicitor General and the Ministry of Correctional Services into the Ministry of Public Safety and Security. That was done in order to better meet the challenges of a changed world, a world in which global terror is a significant threat and coordinated public security is in the forefront of many people's minds. The ice storm and September 11 also led this government to introduce and pass the Emergency Readiness Act, which

requires all municipalities to have emergency plans and to train their staff in the best ways to respond to emergencies.

We're investing \$30 million a year to increase Ontario's ability to protect itself and respond to emergencies. Thanks to this investment, we have seen the doubling of staff at Emergency Management Ontario, the establishment of a round-the-clock provincial operations centre, as well as a backup centre. We have also seen the founding of Community Emergency Response Volunteers Ontario, or CERV Ontario. This is a made-in-Ontario program that will see a province-wide network of neighbourhood-based, multi-functional teams of volunteers trained in basic emergency management principles and skills. They will act as support to our front-line professionals in the event of an emergency.

We named Dr Jim Young, one of Ontario's most capable public servants, as the Commissioner of Public Security.

We established a security council of experts in emergency management and terrorism, under the chairmanship of Dr Young. The council consists of retired Major-General Lewis MacKenzie; former RCMP Commissioner Norman Inkster; Dr Colin D'Cunha, Ontario's Commissioner of Public Health; and Scott Newark, former executive officer of the Canadian Police Association and current vice-chair of the Office for Victims of Crime and special counsel.

Just yesterday, the Premier made policing history in Ontario when he announced that Ontario will add 1,000 new police officers to our front lines. This brings a total of 2,000 new officers that this government has committed to putting on the streets and highways of Ontario since 1995. That's more than any other jurisdiction in Canada.

1410

The SARS emergency demonstrated that although, as Dr Young says, each emergency is unique, we can apply past lessons to present circumstances. We activated the provincial emergency operations centre, bringing together experts from a number of ministries to work together in a co-ordinated and effective manner. The fight against SARS has been a truly collaborative effort, led by the Commissioner of Public Security, Dr Young, and the Commissioner of Public Health, Dr D'Cunha. These two provincial offices, working alongside Toronto public health and health care workers in facilities across Ontario, have effectively contained the spread of SARS in Ontario.

This government also moved to provide job protection for those people who could not go to work and were required to stay at home or in isolation due to exposure to SARS. The SARS response act prevents employers from firing employees who were in quarantine or isolation and not able to work due to exposure to SARS.

The government is doing everything it can to make Ontario a safer, more secure place to live, work and raise a family. Emergency Preparedness Week is an opportunity for all Ontarians to learn about what they can do personally to improve their own and their family's safety.

I encourage everyone to check the Ministry of Public Safety and Security's Web site to see how they can prepare for the unexpected. This is truly a time when we can all learn how to prepare now.

ONTARIO ENERGY BOARD

Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's): I say to the Minister of Energy, Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberals have been calling for reforms to the Ontario Energy Board, so we are going to look closely at this legislation, which we have not had an opportunity to look at to date. I can tell you right off the top, though, I did turn to page 1. We believe that the number one objective of the Ontario Energy Board at present under the legislation is clear. The number one objective of the Ontario Energy Board is—and we think this is wrong—to serve and protect the electricity industry. We on this side of the House believe that the number one objective of the Ontario Energy Board rather ought to be to serve and protect the consumers of Ontario.

I say to the government, I truly believe that the electricity industry also would agree with that. If we do not have a strong Ontario Energy Board, we will have a situation where, as the chair of the National Energy Board said this week in a speech, you will get huge consumer price spikes, which in turn will transform into a huge consumer backlash and a public backlash that results in the entire industry being turned on its ear. That's not in the interests of the industry, that's not in the public interest, and that's certainly not in the interests of consumers.

We need an Ontario Energy Board which in fact reflects the huge responsibilities that it presently has. The OEB used to be a gas regulator and then it suddenly was to become an electricity regulator as well. Yet it wasn't given the tools and the resources to address these huge new responsibilities, so instead of undertaking these reforms years ago before the electricity reforms were undertaken by this government, we're getting this legislation now.

We need not only these legislative reforms, we also obviously need the tools and the resources. Perhaps the self-financing model is the way to do it, but we've got a long way to go when the Ontario Energy Board is about a third of the size of the OSC, if the OSC is in fact our model. Obviously, in order for the game to work, we have to have enough officials and the right officials on the ice. If we don't, the game won't work and everybody suffers. This government has learned that lesson when it comes to the electricity regulation marketplace the hard way.

There is some concern, I think, I say to the Minister of Energy, in terms of overlap between the mandate of the Ontario Energy Board and the independent market operator that needs to be addressed. We have a great concern that this is just going to be a reform undertaken in isolation. We do not want that to happen because unless we address all the problems going on in Ontario energy, particularly what's going on in Pickering—we

were supposed to get answers on that, but we have not to date—this in fact may be a step backward instead of a step forward.

I say in closing—it must be said: this bill is an admission of failure by this government. It is in fact something that should have been introduced years ago. In that sense, too little, too late.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Mr Dave Levac (Brant): It is a privilege to rise on behalf of Dalton McGuinty and the Liberal caucus to respond to the minister's statement on Emergency Preparedness Week and the theme, "Prepare now and learn how." He wanted to take an opportunity to talk about what their government does. I wanted to take an opportunity to express my sympathy to the minister for having the Premier and the Minister of Finance cut his budget by \$181 million. I feel badly for him.

By the same token, the minister refers to the ice storm of 1998. Can he explain to us why the ministry sat on the report until April one year later, when we learned about municipalities that were not prepared? Ninety per cent had a plan, but less than 70% had even practised it because they didn't get any money from the government to try to put these practices in place. That's not emergency preparedness. Unfortunately, he didn't have a plan then.

He says now that September 11 is a wake-up call. Let's talk about that wake-up call. That wake-up call was responded to immediately by my leader Dalton McGuinty, who offered us the Ontario security fund. Half of the fund would have been \$50 million—not \$30 million—available to municipalities to update their plans and response and to train people. So that was quick thinking. That was leadership to help our community instantly.

Let's talk about our growing communities platform initiated a year ago, with 1,000 new police officers in the province of Ontario. But let's also make sure you understand this: we are going to also include 100 probation and parole officers of a new hire. That would keep our community safer and secure if he were to do that.

The minister also made references to something else that I brought to this House's attention. He established the security council with experts in terrorism. What we suggested and what I suggested was, why don't you look at architects and construction workers, work with labour, so that when we build our buildings they're done and made safer. We expect better action from this government in the future.

ONTARIO ENERGY BOARD

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): In response to the Minister of Energy, the Minister of Energy wants people across Ontario to believe that he's actually doing something today about the degree to which consumers have been ripped off and taken advantage of. I want people to clearly understand what

this is really all about. What the minister is attempting to do is add a little sugar coating to the bitter pill of hydro privatization and deregulation. For that reason, I'm not surprised that the Liberals are voting with him to support him and that the Liberals stand in support of this bill.

I want to speak a bit from the perspective of the people of Wawa. I'm surprised the member for Algoma-Manitoulin isn't on his feet protesting this, because under your scheme of hydro privatization and deregulation, the good people of Wawa have no less than five hydro electricity generating dams within about eight kilometres of the municipality. Those hydro-generating dams generate electricity at about half a cent a kilowatt hour. There are no transmission lines to deliver that electricity to the community; it's so close. The distribution lines have been there for years, yet under hydro privatization and deregulation, do the people of Wawa effectively pay 50 cents a kilowatt hour for that electricity? Do they pay half a cent a kilowatt hour? Do they pay three cents? Do they pay seven cents? No. When you work out the math, they are effectively paying what amounts to 11 cents a kilowatt hour to have that electricity delivered five kilometres to their door. They're paying 22 times what it costs to generate it only five kilometres away.

This government and these Liberals think that's OK. You think that's acceptable. You think it's acceptable when the people who work at the sawmill are laid off from their jobs. You think it's acceptable when one of the only two food stores in the town closes down. You think it's acceptable when someone who owns a small apartment building gets a \$10,000 electricity bill.

Going a little further afield, in Timmins this summer Falconbridge is going to lay off 300 workers at their refinery for three months. Why? Because they can't afford to pay the excessive cost of privatized, deregulated electricity.

What is the Minister of Energy in this government going to do about it and what are the Liberals going to support? They're going to support this excuse for legislation, which will do nothing for the hydro consumers in Wawa, nothing for the people who are going to be laid off from their jobs in Timmins, nothing for those people who continue to see their hydro bills escalate despite the phony rate caps. It will do nothing for those people here in Toronto or Guelph or Burlington who are going to see dirty diesel generators in their communities this summer because the private sector hasn't built any new supply, and they won't build new supply unless the government allows the price of electricity to go even higher and higher.

I say to the Minister of Energy, shame on you for promoting this sham and I say to Liberals, shame on you for supporting it.

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EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): For the Minister of Public Security to talk about emergency pre-

paredness and his Conservative government in the same sentence is the penultimate oxymoron. This government can promise more cops, but until it delivers them, they are nothing but shallow promises. A thousand new cops, my foot. It'll be the same as it was before, and any new police officers will simply be replacing the rolls of retired police officers. The fact is that you've downloaded so many costs on to communities like regional Niagara, like every other community in this province, that they can't afford to hire adequate policing, they can't afford to have adequate staffing in their police forces.

You want to talk about emergency preparedness? Talk about ensuring that there's adequate funding and resources for municipalities to ensure minimum staffing for firefighting services. You've abandoned firefighters just like you've abandoned cops in Ontario.

Only yesterday ambulance dispatchers were here at Queen's Park warning you about the incredible crisis, the risk of loss of life. I say to you that lives will be lost until you attend to the needs of ambulance dispatchers promptly. The disparity in wages by ambulance dispatchers, members of OPSEU, from dispatchers in other sectors is so extreme that there's but a 30% retention rate in new hires. Ambulance dispatchers are working 16- and 24-hour days. People are going to die in this province. It's because of this government, and I tell you, you'd better accept that responsibility, because others are imposing it on you.

Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would like to ask the House for unanimous consent to give second and third reading to Bill 7, An Act to amend the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998. It would end the discrimination against the Great Lakes Power area customers.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Is there unanimous consent? I'm afraid I heard some noes.

HEPATITIS C

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'm seeking unanimous consent, with the concurrence of the other two parties, to have an up to five minutes per side discussion on hepatitis C, statements on hepatitis C.

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

Hon Mr Clement: I rise in the House today to raise awareness of hepatitis C. This disease is a significant public health concern and I join with Ontario's health care providers in urging Ontarians to learn more about hepatitis C so they can combat its effects and prevent its transmission.

Hepatitis C, if left untreated, can cause serious liver damage and even cancer. While it can be fatal for most sufferers, it is also debilitating, with symptoms including extreme fatigue, confusion, abdominal pain and depression. Unlike other forms of hepatitis, there is no vaccine against hepatitis C, but antiviral drugs are an increasingly effective form of treatment. These drugs can

now treat about half of all patients. For those patients who do not respond to the antiviral drugs, liver transplantation can be a life-saving procedure.

Those most at risk are people who received blood transfusions prior to the onset of screening for the virus in 1990, people exposed to contaminated needles through tattooing, acupuncture and drug use, and health care workers. It's estimated that up to 2% of the Canadian population carries the hepatitis C virus. However, nearly half of these people are not yet aware of their infection. In Ontario, we have identified about 60,000 people who are infected with hepatitis C, but there are many more people who still do not know that they have it.

Hepatitis C sufferers represent a wide cross-section of society, but individuals with blood disorders form an important subgroup of all victims. For example, because hemophiliacs require more frequent access to blood and blood products, the majority of individuals with this blood disorder were infected through the blood system prior to 1990.

Ontario remains committed to ensuring that everyone who was infected through the blood system in this province is treated fairly, regardless of when the infection occurred. That's why Ontario launched the Ontario hepatitis C assistance plan in November 1998, which provides \$25,000 in compassionate assistance to individuals who were not covered by the federal-provincial-territorial hepatitis C settlement plan. I'm proud to say that no other province provides this level of financial assistance to the pre-1986 and post-1990 victims.

Over the next several years, medical experts anticipate a dramatic increase in the number of hepatitis C sufferers requiring health care services. In addition to providing compensation, Ontario is committed to ensuring that all blood victims have reasonable access to quality treatment and care. To meet this goal, we established an expert panel, the hepatitis C advisory committee, to determine what health care system enhancements will be required to accomplish this goal.

I remain proud of our government's actions to help those people afflicted with this terrible disease now and in the future.

Ms Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West): This month is hep C awareness month. We know that hep C is a viral blood infection that can lead to liver failure. Many of us know people who have contracted hepatitis C. We understand, in the way they live, that sometimes they feel well and sometimes they feel terrible. We know that sometimes they're able to work, and often they just can't work. We know that, even according to Bill Buckels, the head of HepACT, who's lived with hep C for over 30 years, there is a way to manage this infection. There is a way to manage and live with hep C.

What help does the government have available, and what role should the government play in making that kind of disease manageable? We know that across the country 275,000 Canadians are infected with this blood-borne disease, and 70% of those are unaware and could well be contracting it to others.

Even though modern screening techniques have virtually eliminated the risk of contraction through tainted blood, education and awareness are still essential to curbing the spread of the disease and putting others at risk.

Upwards of 20% of Canadians afflicted with hep C develop cirrhosis of the liver, and between 1% and 5% of those will develop liver cancer. There are many Canadians who live with hep C and don't meet treatment criteria, and suffer, therefore, because they can't get the best treatments available. Others don't respond to treatment and have to wait for something new to come along, and that's slow in coming. Without intervention, the death toll from hep C is expected to triple by the year 2010. This can only be stemmed through increased public awareness and primary care physician utilization of hep C tests. There is currently no broad-based testing for hepatitis in Ontario, and the number of infected persons is rising dramatically, especially among seniors, many of whom are unaware that they are even infected.

That brings us to how to manage hepatitis C. Primary care is essential for these individuals across Ontario who have to have ongoing care by physicians who are experts in dealing with hepatitis C. There are people across Ontario who live with hep C with no hepatologist working for them. If you live in parts of Ontario with severe doctor shortages and even more severe specialist shortages, as in Windsor, where we don't have a hepatologist, I can tell you very sad stories about people with hep C in my own riding and in many other parts of Ontario who wait up to six to eight months to get an appointment with a specialist in Toronto. One of my constituents has been waiting eight months for an appointment in Toronto, not even receiving so much as a call to set up the appointment. Meanwhile, the damage to her organs continues.

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It can't be stressed enough that funds need to be set aside for early detection and treatment. But in all other aspects of health policy in this province, the most basic of those is primary care, the very basics of having a family doctor to attend to you and to see that ongoing care continues. Even if you're put on a treatment program with a specialist, even if that specialist is in another city, you have to have that continuing care in your own community. This is essential for everybody, but especially for those who are combatting hepatitis C.

All of us now in this House must have met these individuals to understand that we owe them the very basics of care—let alone that we live in the richest province in the richest country in the world. Can we not offer these individuals who suffer with hep C that they can live very great lives and can be contributors to society? We owe them the basics. In some cases that means a family doctor and, in many cases, a specialist who can deal with hepatitis C.

I don't think we ask very much. In this, Hepatitis C Awareness Month, can we not get this government to go back to the basics and provide us with family doctors across the board, with specialists who are happy to work in this province? Never mind the innovation that they

create on their own; we just have to put people in place in personnel positions in the health system to get them to work for our public.

Let me say out of interest that HepCURE Canada, which works year-round for hep C patients, called the Minister of Health's office for certificates of recognition in honour of Hepatitis C Month. The ministry said no. Here are some really basic things about people who work for hep C patients who want just that little bit of recognition. I would urge the minister to reconsider his policy—that when it comes to us, celebrating the work of staff and volunteers, like we are today, who follow hepatitis C patients diligently year-round, I think we can do something as basic as offering certificates of recognition.

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): Close to 250,000 Canadians are infected with hepatitis C, and thousands of those live in Ontario. In fact, Ontario has the highest number of infected in all of Canada. Many will die of liver failure waiting for liver transplants. Others will spread the infection back to the community without knowing it, or they'll suffer for years, and so will their friends, families and co-workers, waiting for a better treatment to be approved. Current treatments are not 100% effective. Still others won't be found in time to prevent the damage of years of attack by the hepatitis C virus.

Ontarians who live with hepatitis C need our support and recognition of this terrible disease. They need to know that, through awareness, this is a disease that can be prevented. That was why a letter was sent to Premier Eves and Health Minister Tony Clement on March 4 specifically requesting that the Ontario government issue a proclamation: first, that the month of May 2003 would be recognized as Hepatitis C Month, and second, that May 1 specifically would be designated as Hepatitis C Awareness Day. In fact, in the letter that was sent to the Premier, with a copy to the Minister of Health, there were two potential proclamations that this government could use: one from the province of British Columbia and one from the province of Manitoba, which both issued proclamations last year. We know that other provinces were lining up to actually issue proclamations. Newfoundland and Labrador did this on April 4; Nova Scotia and New Brunswick did this even before that. PEI was due to issue a proclamation the week of April 4; Yukon already had. Manitoba and British Columbia were due to issue theirs as well the week of April 4.

By April 6, because the government still hadn't responded to this particular request, all of us in this assembly received a letter from Bill Buckels, who was acting as a representative of three organizations—the Canadian Hepatitis C Network, the Canadian Hepatitis C Activist Group and the Hepatitis C United Resource Exchange—encouraging us to lobby the Premier and the minister to issue the proclamation. I wrote on behalf of our party on April 9. I haven't received a reply.

I appreciate that we are doing a unanimous consent today to raise awareness. What would it have taken for this government to follow the lead of six other provinces

and one territory to actually issue a proclamation and proclaim this as Hepatitis C Month? I don't think it would have taken a whole heck of a lot for the government to do that. I regret they didn't do that and that we are here with the next alternative, which is unanimous consent.

Given the comments I heard the minister make today about his concern for hepatitis C sufferers, I call on him and the Premier to clearly demonstrate their compassion and support for hepatitis C sufferers and immediately ensure that life-saving drugs for hep C sufferers are actually covered under the Ontario drug benefit plan to ensure that people who are not independently wealthy can actually pay for these therapies.

The minister would know that there was a very important media conference held at Queen's Park on January 30. A number of groups were involved, particularly the hep C society of Ontario. They condemned this government for its failure to ensure that life-saving drug therapies were covered under the Ontario drug benefit plan. In fact, the group said—and I'm quoting from their press release—“The groups were reacting to a series of recent decisions taken by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care which they claim severely restricts access to badly needed medications. They argued that these decisions have had an immense negative impact on men, women and children living with chronic disease and life-threatening disabilities, including cancer, HIV-AIDS, hepatitis C, hemophilia and arthritis.” In fact, “The groups released a list of medications that have not been approved by the Ontario health ministry and suggested that the lack of approval was part of a concerted effort by the Conservative government to ration drugs and to incorporate an American-style HMO system into Canada by way of stealth.”

The representative from the Hepatitis C Society of Canada said the following: “It is pretty pathetic when I cannot get treatment now, after living so long with hepatitis C,” says Alain Courchesne.... ‘I had hoped to avoid getting sick until a better form of treatment is available. Now it is here, I'm sick but I can't get treated.’”

The cost of the drug that most interests hep C sufferers now is \$16,500 per round of treatment. That is cost-prohibitive for the majority of Ontarians and hep C sufferers. If this government wants to put its money where its mouth is today and really support hep C sufferers, this government would immediately guarantee that the drugs hep C sufferers need are covered under the Ontario drug benefit plan.

ORAL QUESTIONS

NURSES

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Premier. Premier, this morning your Minister of Health said he was sincerely surprised to learn just how many nurses are working two or three

part-time jobs at different hospitals. I'm sure that will come as very disappointing news for the fully 50% of Ontario nurses who are working part-time or casual, not because they want to but because full-time work is not there for them.

Your government's record on nurses was and remains abysmal. Your government fired thousands of nurses and compared them to Hula Hoop workers. We now have the second-fewest nurses per capita in the country. Can you now tell Ontario nurses how it is that your Minister of Health could be so woefully out of touch with the state of our health care system that he didn't know that so many of our nurses are working two or three part-time jobs, not out of choice but because they can't find full-time work in Ontario?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I believe the Minister of Health would like the opportunity to respond very directly to this question.

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I can assure the honourable member in this House that this government has been more aware than the governments that preceded it when it comes to the struggles our nursing profession has to face. The fact of the matter is that we're the government that created over 12,000 nursing positions in Ontario, we're the government that moved ahead on nurse practitioners, we're the government that is moving ahead on internationally trained nurses and we're the government that put our money where our mouth is and said to Ontario's hospitals, "We understand that you have to have a multi-year framework to make your human resource and staffing decisions." We're the ones who said that we understand that multi-year funding for our hospitals will help our hospitals hire the nurses and keep the nurses and deliver the quality health care that Ontarians expect and deserve.

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Mr McGuinty: Minister, yours is the government that fired nurses by the thousands. Yours is the government that compared nurses to Hula Hoop workers. Yours is the government that spent 400 million taxpayer dollars, not on hiring nurses, but on severance packages when you fired nurses. That's the truth about your record with nurses. Now Ontario finds itself in a position where we have the second-fewest nurses per capita in the country.

I am sure you will be familiar with the RNAO's study. They canvassed over 3,000 registered nurses worldwide, nurses who have left the province of Ontario. It turns out that two thirds of them cited downsizing and lack of full-time employment as their reasons for leaving Ontario.

They were asked, would they come back? Here's the good news: fully 78% of respondents said they would come back to Ontario. What would bring Ontario nurses back? Two thirds said they would return for the availability of full-time work.

When is it, Minister, that you are going to do something to ensure that the 50% of nurses who are working part-time and casual can in fact work full-time in Ontario?

Hon Mr Clement: Actions speak louder than words. Since 1997 the government on this side of the House has spent on behalf of the taxpayers of Ontario over \$800 million to create new full-time positions and, yes, part-time positions for those who want them—over 12,833 positions to date.

The honourable member speaks about the nursing profession. He would know that Doris Grinspun at times has to disagree with the government on issues, and that's her role. But this is what she said just last year: "Nurses are better off today than they were during the period of 1996 to 1998," to be fair to her. "If I look back 25 years ago when I entered the profession, it's true that we have both won and lost. However, all in all, I think we're doing better."

I could not say it any better than Doris has done. That is the confidence that they have in what we are doing to help ensure that our nurses have a place in our Ontario, in our health care system, side by side with other medical professionals, delivering the quality health care that Ontarians expect and deserve.

Mr McGuinty: The minister is just confirming how out of touch he is with Ontario nurses and nursing conditions today.

Here are some of the comments collected in this same survey that I just referred to, comments from nurses who are living in other parts of the world but would like to come back to Ontario.

One of the comments: "The complete disregard and lack of respect for professional RNs and their need to earn a decent full-time income at one place of employment." That's the reason they weren't here.

Another says, "We left Canada for a more positive work environment, to be treated better by our employers and for better job security."

Another nurse says, "There were no full-time positions available in Ontario, only part-time or casual work. Hospitals and long-term care facilities all offered poor staffing, increased workload and nurse-patient ratios."

That is what is happening on the front lines of nursing today in Ontario.

We have a plan, Minister, and I'd advise you to take a good, long look at our plan. Our goal is to establish 70% of Ontario nurses working full-time at the end of four years. We'll give nurses what they want and what they need and what they deserve: respect and full-time work. Why won't you do that, Minister?

Hon Mr Clement: The honourable member talks about plans, but the record of his government and the successor government under the NDP is very clear. When they were in government for 10 years, we lost more than 10,000 hospital beds in the system. How is that going to secure and retain more nurses in the province of Ontario?

We have more than plans. We are fixing the broken promises of the Liberal and NDP era and we are making a difference for health care in Ontario. We are proud, on this side of the House, of the progress we have made today.

HYDRO GENERATION

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): I have a question to the Premier. Premier, because of your hydro bungling and fumbling, because you failed to plan for our electricity needs, you are now going to install filthy diesel generators this summer in a number of Ontario neighbourhoods.

We understand that the communities you are considering putting these diesel generators into include Guelph, Kitchener, Burlington, Toronto, Etobicoke, London and Ottawa. The people living in those communities are, understandably, very concerned about the fact that you are about to impose on them your filthy diesel generators. Can you tell us whether or not these generators will be subject to the usual provisions of the environmental assessment legislation?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): The leader of the official opposition would be the first one to stand up in this place and criticize the government for not being a prudent planner and preparing for every possible eventuality as this summer approaches. He was the first one to criticize us for the hot summer last year. If the hot air being generated in this chamber is any indication, it will be another hot summer again this year. There are certain things that we can't control on this side of the House, but we are being prudent managers in preparing for them in the worst-case eventuality.

Mr McGuinty: Your handling of the hydro issue in Ontario will make the perfect case study in poli-sci 101 about how to grossly mismanage, in the most incompetent way, public policy. That's what that's going to stand for. That will be your legacy.

I gather from that, Premier, that you are in fact telling those people living in those communities, and whatever other communities you are considering putting a diesel generator in, that you're going to exempt those generators from the usual environmental assessment process. What kind of opportunity will you extend to people living in those communities in those neighbourhoods, what kind of opportunity will you be granting them to comment publicly on your plans to put a generator in their community, and what efforts are you going to make to make them aware of the impact on their health and the quality of their air as a result of you putting your generators in their neighbourhoods?

Hon Mr Eves: First of all, the leader of the official opposition is entertaining his favourite sport: fear-mongering. If you don't have the facts, make something up. These proposals, on page 15 of the document, "must demonstrate that they will be compliant with any assessment, inspection, certification, approval, or other licensing that may be required by any authority having jurisdiction, including but not limited to federal, provincial, regional or municipal governments." With respect to your fearmongering, the odds are overwhelming that these generators will not be necessary, but we are doing

the prudent thing and planning for every eventuality, as it is incumbent upon us to do, and act responsibly.

The true solution to the generation of hydroelectric power in this province lies in the long-term generation capacity of the province of Ontario. The minister has already started, with respect to the budget, responding to some of the initiatives that we are taking to bring more generation of power on-stream. Some are proceeding, are very near and are at completion as we speak. There will be more to come in the not-too-distant future, so stay tuned.

Mr McGuinty: I gather what you just told me was that the diesel generators will indeed be subject to environmental assessment legislation. I gather that's just what you told me.

What you'll want to do is take a look at page 16 of the Ontario Electricity Financial Corp RFP for your dirty diesel generators. You might want to do this as well, Minister. It says that, "OEFEC is seeking a declaration order from the Minister of the Environment requesting that the requirements of the Environmental Assessment Act not apply to the use of short-term temporary generators."

Maybe you can tell us now: do you intend to grant that request, the one sought by the OEFEC, or will you stand up for those neighbourhoods and those residents of Ontario, and act on their behalf and say yes to a full environmental assessment for your plans to put your generators in their neighbourhood?

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Hon Mr Eves: There's going to be an environmental process that will be followed. But going back to the issue of generation of more power, there will be 2,500 megawatts of additional power available by this summer. I think that surely the leader of the official opposition will be happy with that, and he'd like to actually stand up and compliment the government on doing something, and on our future initiatives. I look forward to you voting for that on the floor of this Legislature.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): New question?

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Premier. Today is World Asthma Day. About a million Ontario residents suffer from asthma, including 100,000 children. Over 150 people will die this year in this province as a result of it. Your latest scheme, Premier, to cover up your disaster of hydro privatization—that is, dirty diesel generators in Toronto, London, Kitchener, Burlington and Guelph—will make that problem even worse. It will increase the number of smog days. It will increase the number of people who suffer from respiratory illness. It will result in more deaths. Premier, will you stop this insane scheme to generate electricity in the dirtiest way possible before more people die?

Hon Mr Eves: If he was listening to the response to the previous question asked, he would know that there will be 2,500 megawatts of additional power available for Ontario consumers this summer. That is certainly a step in the right direction. It's an increase of approximately

11% of the power available to the consumers in the province of Ontario, and we will do everything we possibly can to make sure that we continue along those lines and to continue to generate more clean power in the province of Ontario than ever before.

Mr Hampton: Well, Premier, you can go on making your predictions of more power supply just as your former Minister of Energy did and your now Minister of Energy does, but the reality is, you want to put in place, in neighbourhoods where people live, dirty diesel generators. In California when this proposal was brought forward, they noted that it increases the cancer risk for people by 50%. It's five times dirtier than the dirtiest coal plant.

I think I understand why you don't want it subject to the Environmental Assessment Act, because if you have to go through the Environmental Assessment Act you would have to put forward a case as to why this is necessary and you'd have to allow people to examine it and you'd have to allow people to put forward alternatives.

Premier, are you so desperate to cover up the hydro privatization fiasco that you don't want people to be able to ask questions, you don't want people to be able to demand that you make the case? Is that how desperate you are, that you want to deny even that level of accountability and you're willing to pollute people's air that much?

Hon Mr Eves: The leader of the third party will know that an adjudicator has been appointed in this matter. It is not for the government, and I'm sure he wouldn't want the government, to politically interfere with that adjudication process.

But I wish he would get back to the issue of the generation of 2,500 megawatts of new power available for Ontario consumers this summer, enough power to take care of 1.8 million homes in the province of Ontario. He's the same political person who last year at this time stood in his place and said that we would have all kinds of blackouts all across the province of Ontario; we would grind to a halt. Guess what? He was wrong. He will surely do the decent thing now and stand up and apologize for those ridiculous fearmongering statements he made last year.

Mr Hampton: Premier, it's you who should be apologizing to the people of Ontario, first of all for driving the hydro rates out of sight, then for the brown-outs and the risk of blackouts, and now for polluting their air more than ever.

This is a puffer. It's used by asthma sufferers. If you walk into any classroom in the province, you'll see children using puffers like this. Their asthma is made worse by the very scheme, the very strategy, of using dirty diesel generators. You don't seem to understand that we've already got a very bad smog situation. Diesel generators will make it worse.

What will it take for you to understand that this involves the health of hundreds of thousands of people and tens of thousands of children? Will we have to bring

in hundreds of these puffers, because that's what's going to result from your scheme? That's the natural health result of your scheme. Will we have to bring in hundreds of puffers like this to make the case to you that you're wrong and you should withdraw this now?

Hon Mr Eves: The leader of the third party might want to have a whole box full of those on hand when he tries to drive his diesel bus at this year's International Plowing Match, as he tried to do last year. You might want to think about that, in terms of polluting the environment, before you start going down this road.

The solution to the future in the province of Ontario lies with the generation of new, clean power, and we are delivering 2,500 megawatts of new, clean power in this province this summer and we will continue to do things to do that until we are at 20% above the needs of the province of Ontario.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): Again to the Premier. Premier, first there was Walkerton and then SARS. I think it's fair to say that in the last few years the people of Ontario have really learned how valuable our public health units are.

Last year, when we demanded that you provide immediate funding to health units so that they could prepare for the West Nile virus, you said it wasn't necessary, but then at the very last minute you provided 100% of the funding. But it was too little, too late.

This year, after health units in many parts of the province have already been dealing with the SARS virus, they're already overextended, you send out this glitzy, glossy thing telling the people of Ontario what your government is doing about West Nile. But then we find out that you'll only provide 50% of the money that the health units need for a West Nile program.

After Walkerton, after SARS, after all of the public health challenges that our public health units are facing, do you still think you can only pay to get half of the job done?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): To the leader of the third party, the Ministry of Health has a very aggressive seven-point plan to provide \$100 million toward dealing with the issue of West Nile virus in this province over the next five years. I have talked to your friend in the province of Manitoba, Premier Doer, and received advice from him on how that province dealt with an extreme outbreak of West Nile virus, on a per capita basis more serious than the one here in the province of Ontario, last year. We are taking advice from everywhere we can get it to contain and deal with the West Nile virus in the province of Ontario, and we have not abdicated this responsibility at all.

I have never said that we were doing nothing about the West Nile virus. We are doing \$100 million worth of assistance to make sure that communities are able to cope with the West Nile virus in a method that suits them and their needs at a particular time in their geographical loca-

tion and climate, because no two places—you coming from the northwestern region of the province will certainly know that the needs in Kenora are not the same as they are in downtown Toronto.

Mr Hampton: Public health units are now having to take money away, for example, from the fight against tuberculosis; they're having to take money out of their budget to deal with sexually transmitted diseases; they're having to take money out of mandatory program budgets to prevent West Nile. Why? Because after all your advertising, you're only going to provide 50% of the money to get the job done. After all your government has done, downloading on to municipalities, putting more and more costs and responsibilities on to municipalities, you want to say that you're doing the job on West Nile, but in fact you're only providing 50% of the money and you're saying to the health units, "Go to the municipality and get the other 50%."

I ask you again, Premier, after what happened at Walkerton, the deaths of people, after what's happened with SARS, do you really think it's adequate to make all kinds of announcements, send out the propaganda and then only provide half of the money to get the job done?

1500

Hon Mr Eves: Surely the leader of the third party is not going to stand in his place in this Legislature and say that the reason why a SARS outbreak occurred in the province of Ontario was because of any funding or lack of funding to public health units in this province. He knows very well how the particular SARS incident in this province started. He knows how it got here with one individual and he knows how the health care professionals in this province responded as well as anybody in the world could have responded to contain what could have been a very serious outbreak.

The leader of third party does those health care professionals no justice and he is serving no useful purpose other than standing in his place and fearmongering. You're really criticizing the health care professionals, the very nurses that we talked about earlier, the doctors, the lab technicians, the paramedics, the people who put their lives on the line every day for you and I and for the benefit of the people of Ontario. To play cheap political theatrics with this is surely even above you, Howie, on the floor of this Legislature.

Applause.

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): Thank you very much, Premier. Some people whistle when they're going by the graveyard; others stand up and applaud. We can make the comparison here.

My question is to the Premier. The Dominion Bond Rating Service reports that you're running a \$2-billion deficit. The chief economist at TD Canada Trust agrees. Even a respected columnist for the Report on Business says that you are employing Enron-like accounting to cook the books and hide your deficit. Premier, what

public asset will you be selling so that you can give corporations another giant tax cut?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): Last Thursday, the leader of the official opposition stood in his place and made some sarcastic comment about me referring to nurses as Hula Hoops. He hasn't had the common decency to stand in his place and apologize for that.

Mr McGuinty: Who said that?

Hon Mr Eves: Not me. That's all you need to know.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. Premier, continue please.

Hon Mr Eves: Today the leader of the official opposition stands in his place and arrogantly, smugly and sarcastically refers to Conservative members of this Legislature talking about the very serious issue of SARS and talks about them whistling by the graveyard.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Premier, you may continue.

Hon Mr Eves: You might do well to return to Chicago at your expense and get some more media training.

Mr McGuinty: I can understand why you don't want to address the issue that I raised. The chief economist at TD Canada Trust says you're running a \$2-billion deficit. DBRS says you're running a \$1.9-billion deficit. The Report on Business says you're running a \$2-billion deficit and refers to your accounting as being Enron-like.

When are you going to be straight with the people of Ontario, Premier? When are you going to have the courage to tell them that you cannot promise them \$5 billion in tax cuts and at the same time put the \$2 billion back into public schools that Rozanski said you took out and that you have to put back in, that you cannot at the same time fix the double cohort mess that you created, that you cannot at the same time hire back the thousands of nurses that you fired, that you cannot at the same time build the hydro generation you neglected to build during the course of the past eight years and balance your budget?

Why won't you have the strength and the courage, Premier, to stand up here today and say to Ontarians, "I'm going to be straight with you. We cannot do all those things and balance the budget. So instead I've chosen to run a \$2-billion deficit"?

Hon Mr Eves: A Liberal talking about a balanced budget is certainly an oxymoron. Liberals don't balance budgets. The very person—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Premier, take your seat. Premier, you may continue.

Hon Mr Eves: We have a track record that is second to none. For the first time since 1908, five balanced budgets in a row have been produced in the province of Ontario.

There were many times over the six and a half years that I was finance minister in this province that DBRS

and other bond rating agencies, both in New York and Toronto disagreed with the path this government was taking. They, like you, failed to grasp one simple fact: if you allow millions of Ontarians to keep their own money, they spend it. That has generated 1.15 million jobs and \$16 billion a year more in revenue so we can do all of the things that you talked about in your question.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): My question today is to the Minister of Labour. In my previous career as a manufacturing specialist, I used to belong to IAPA, which is the Industrial Accident Prevention Association. I understand, Minister, that you attended a major event with IAPA last month, involving over 1,000 youth, where you made an important announcement. Can you please tell us what that announcement was all about?

Hon Brad Clark (Minister of Labour): I want to thank the honourable member for the question. We had a conference at the IAPA last month. Over 1,000 young people came out to this conference. It was really quite remarkable, because we had 1,000 young people, union leaders, corporations, CEOs, board members and volunteers. Everyone came out together for one thing, and that was to lower the number of incidents of young worker injuries in the province of Ontario. We launched at that conference WorkSmartOntario. It's something that I'm sure my Liberal colleagues would like to look up. WorkSmartOntario—it's a great Web site. It's in the Ministry of Labour Web site. This teaches our young people how to be safe in the workplace, the questions that they should ask, what they should look for and how to refuse work if they feel that they're at risk. There is ample information there. We're helping young people prepare themselves to come home safely every single night.

Mr Gill: I want to thank the hard-working minister for this enlightenment. Can you please tell us about that exciting new Web site that the youth are so interested in? Can you please give us the address of the Web site?

Hon Mr Clark: That's an easy one: worksmart-ontario.gov.on.ca. This Web site—and I know that the Liberals and the NDP all support us on this—very clearly shows young people how to protect themselves on the job. This Web site actually provides them not only with occupational health and safety information, but it also provides them with employment standards information. It gives them the answers to the frequently asked questions that I'm sure the member for St Catharines gets all the time. As a matter of fact, he could probably enlighten himself by logging on to WorkSmartOntario, and actually find out the answers so that he can hand them off to the young people in his community.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Ms Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West): My question is for the Minister of Health. More and more questions

are being raised about your lack of commitment to public health units across Ontario, which has put families in Ontario at risk. Your cutbacks to hospitals have eliminated any surge capacity to deal with a crisis. Your firing of public health scientists leaves Ontario with none, while New York has some 150.

You have said in this past week that you've given public health units more. But if you look at your own public accounts and statements over the last four years, it's very clear from your own documents that public health units across Ontario have, over the last four years, \$50 million less.

I ask you: why would you not tell everyone the facts about your funding of public health units and how you have cut their funding over the last four years by \$50 million?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): It's just not true. It's just not true what the honourable member is saying. I will give the honourable member the actuals—if you can read a balance sheet—versus the estimates. The actuals for 1998 were \$304.4 million; for 1999, they were \$337.7 million; for 2000, \$355.9 million; for 2001, \$394.6 million; and the actuals for 2002 were \$435.9 million. The increase from 1998 to 2002 for public health in the province of Ontario, municipal and provincial, both went up by 43%. Both went up. The total additional public health resources is an increase of 43%.

Ms Pupatello: You're trying to suggest that numbers you make available to the public are inaccurate. I don't believe you. It looks like you're prepared to make up whatever numbers work for you at the time.

Let me read you a quotation, a position statement from the Association of Local Public Health Agencies pleading for more funding: "Boards of health currently lack the resources—both financial and human—to effectively address these recent developments. Due to underfunding, boards have had to use funds allocated to other programs, which already do not meet compliance, toward these new developments." It goes on to say that, according to their latest survey, your cutbacks to public health care funding in Ontario means that "no board of health is fully compliant with the Mandatory Health Programs and Service Guidelines."

Right now, you keep cutting their funding. The number of public health units complying with the guidelines is zero. I think you should tell the public the truth about your funding of public health units.

Hon Mr Clement: The truth is that since 2000, the overall public health funding has increased by over \$100 million. The truth is that our overall laboratory funding has increased by 33% since 2001, providing an extra \$62.6 million this year. That's the truth.

If the honourable member is interested in quoting, I have a quotation from a letter to the editor by Dr Don Low, microbiologist in chief at Mount Sinai Hospital. He said:

"We have learned a great deal about SARS during the last eight weeks, an outbreak that could not have been

prevented whether or not a hospital or the province had reacted more swiftly or if there had been different public health and infection control infrastructures in place. The fact is that we have been lauded for our control measures and the swift response of public health that turned the SARS epidemic in Ontario from an event that might have had 200,000 victims to one not likely to have more than 320.”

That’s from the microbiologist in chief. We are committed to our front-line health workers, we are committed to our public health officials and that commitment will only grow under an Ernie Eves government.

DUFFINS ROUGE AGRICULTURAL PRESERVE

Mr John O’Toole (Durham): My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Minister, on April 21, 2003, you announced that you had signed a minister’s zoning order under the Planning Act to protect the Duffins Rouge agricultural preserve. This indeed was welcome news at the time. Back in 1999, Durham was promised that this land would be preserved for agricultural use forever. We were told that this agreement signed at the time between the town of Pickering, the region of Durham and the province would ensure that this land would be theirs for future generations.

Recently it seems that this promise is in doubt. The city of Pickering was starting a growth management study, a study funded by developers, that some worried could lead to the development of this land. Now I hear that Mayor Wayne Arthurs of Pickering is disputing the acts of the province. For example, in today’s Toronto Star, “He says he never considered the agricultural designation to be permanent,” if you can understand that. Minister, can you provide some clarity for the House today on this important issue?

Hon David Young (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I thank the honourable member for his question. I too was surprised to read the comments of Mayor Arthurs in the Star today. I didn’t think there was any doubt about what was intended in relation to this land. I say to you that this government, the Ernie Eves government, took action to make sure that the promise made by three levels of government was a promise that would be kept.

The honourable member a moment ago, when asking the question, referred to an agreement that was signed in May 1999 by the town of Pickering, the region of Durham and the province of Ontario. It was an agreement that made clear that this land would remain agricultural forevermore.

I think the best way to clear up any doubt is to actually quote from the agreement that Mayor Arthurs signed on behalf of Pickering. He said at that time, “It is the intention of the parties that the covenants and easements herein shall run with the property in perpetuity.” It could not be any clearer.

Mr O’Toole: Clearly, Wayne Arthurs has drunk from the Liberal Kool-Aid, it appears. Certainly, Minister,

there is no ambiguity in your answer. I gather that some people do not share this view. I read with great interest that some members of Pickering council put on black armbands and claimed that this was the death of democracy. I know this decision was made after careful and thorough review, and so I’m hoping you can share with me some of the advice that you received prior to making this commitment to keep this as a permanent agricultural preserve for the people of Durham and indeed the people of the province of Ontario.

Hon Mr Young: I think democracy means listening to people. I think democracy means living up to one’s word. I think democracy means keeping one’s promise. The people of Pickering were very clearly promised that the land in question would be protected—not protected for a month or two when it was politically convenient, but protected forevermore. If there was any doubt about it, that doubt was cleared up when David Crombie prepared his report and once again confirmed in his advice that this land should be agricultural forevermore.

We didn’t make this decision lightly. We listened to the people of Pickering. We heard their advocate, the Minister of Finance, stand up and speak on behalf of the people of that area. We heard David Crombie. I say to you that we remembered that there was written commitment to the people of that region. It was a good idea then; it’s a good idea today. This government believes that a promise made is a promise kept.

1520

SOFTWOOD LUMBER

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): A question for the Deputy Premier. Deputy Premier, four times over the last 20 years, the softwood lumber barons in the United States have imposed punishing duties and penalties on Canadian softwood lumber, much of it produced by sawmills in northern Ontario. Each time this has happened, a review of the factual evidence has disclosed that the duties and the penalties are completely unfounded.

Now this has happened again. We understand that your government is currently in a back room in Washington secretly negotiating a deal that would result in Ontario caving in to those same softwood lumber barons. It would result in many small sawmills essentially losing their allocation of crown timber and eventually being forced to close, large tracts of crown forest essentially being put up for sale and potentially being sold to mills in Michigan or Minnesota at the expense of jobs and communities in Ontario.

Minister, are you caving in to those softwood lumber barons in the United States? If so, why?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): In response to the question from the leader of the third party, I just want him to know that the Ontario government continues to work diligently in order to continue to support an all-out challenge of the US softwood lumber duties, both at the World Trade Organiza-

tion and under the North American free trade agreement. We remain open to consideration of a reasonable alternative to litigation, and certainly we are doing everything we possibly can.

Mr Hampton: It was that last part, the “but” part, that worries us, Minister. As you know, Ontario forest policy for the past 50 years has essentially said that if a sawmill or a paper mill wants access to crown timber, they must tie that timber to a mill which produces jobs and economic activities for communities. In other words, no jobs, no wood. What we’re told now is that your government is essentially prepared to sever that relationship, that you are negotiating in Washington to essentially allow a company to purchase crown timber without any guarantee of jobs, without any guarantee of economic activity.

Minister, will you guarantee the people of northern and central Ontario that you will not sign on to any deal like that without holding public hearings in the communities that may be affected?

Hon Mrs Witmer: I can assure the member opposite that our government will do everything we possibly can in order to protect the interests, and we will do everything we can to protect the lumber industry and the workers in the lumber industry.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): My question is for the Minister of Health. Minister, in 1998 your government forced the hostile amalgamation of the hospitals in Trenton, Belleville, Picton and North Hastings. Since that time, they have had to implement cuts to patients each and every year. The ultimate is this year, where because of a \$2-million shortfall they are being forced to cut nursing hours substantially. Cutting nursing hours means cutting nurses, means cutting patient care. I contrast that with the throne speech in which you had input, which says that “To increase the number of nurses practising in Ontario, your government will launch an aggressive nurse recruitment and retention program.”

Minister, you can’t have it both ways. You can’t be laying off nurses quietly while at the same time claiming to want to increase the number of hours. I’m going to ask you to intervene into the business plan for Quinte Health Care. Provide them with the proper funding.

Will you assure the people of the Quinte area that there will be no reduction whatsoever in nursing hours or hours of service care to patients in that community?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I’d certainly be happy to review any situation, but I must tell the honourable member that last year alone the increase to base operating funding for hospitals approached \$1 billion, and certainly Quinte Healthcare received its fair share of the total.

This year, of course, there will be a 5% increase, which was announced in the budget announcement, and in terms of capital funding, an additional budget which is

in an increase of 44% to base funding since 1995. So on both the operating and the capital side, we are building and rebuilding our hospital sector to provide wonderful new modern facilities that help us recruit and retain our medical professionals, including our nurses. I mentioned earlier in question period the \$800 million of spending for nurse recruitment and retention, and certainly Quinte Healthcare is no stranger to that. So they have our continued support and commitment.

Mr Parsons: Minister, this is a very simple situation. Approximately 30 nurses will lose their jobs because of the \$2 million in underfunding. These hospitals that you joined together are 150 kilometres apart. They experience far higher costs than two hospitals that are next to each other. Quinte Healthcare, in their business plan to you, says that they will be reducing nurses and nursing hours. Your rhetoric says that you’ll be attracting more nurses. We have, as a Legislature, thanked the doctors and nurses, the RPNs, for their service during SARS. This is a heck of a thank you, when nurses will be losing their jobs. I ask you for a very simple commitment. Based on the throne speech, will you commit that no nurses in Ontario will lose their jobs?

Hon Mr Clement: Let me bring the honourable member up to date. We are aware of a number of plans that have been filed by a number of hospitals, of course, and those become a topic of discussion between ministry officials and the local hospital authorities. That will be the case in Quinte Healthcare as well. I can certainly assure the honourable member that in terms of health care, in terms of access to health care in his riding, our commitment is second to none. We’ve proved it through our funding; we’ve proved it though our interest in accountability; we’ve proved it in our interest in priority funding, to make sure that priority services are funded regardless, and that kind of commitment will continue.

NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): My question is for the tireless, hard-working, effective Minister of Agriculture and Food, renowned in rural Ontario, I want you to know, and building on her reputation as a very effective minister representing Huron and Bruce. Minister, as you know, farmers in my great riding of Perth-Middlesex are very interested in the ongoing consultations and discussions under the Nutrient Management Act. They have strongly supported widely consulting with all parties and providing an open process for the protection of both rural water wells and the competitiveness of Ontario’s agriculture industry, the second-biggest in the province. They’ve appreciated the opportunity to meet with you to share their concerns about the regulations under the act.

I understand the changes to the previously proposed regulations were announced recently. Could you provide the Legislature and the farmers right across Ontario with the details?

Hon Helen Johns (Minister of Agriculture and Food): I’d like to thank the member from Perth-Middlesex for

the question and thank him for his support for his agricultural community. He's done a fabulous job in that area.

As a result of a lot of consultations that happened over this intersession, if you will, on March 21 we responded to the consultations that we had had out in the communities. We decided that we needed to have a balanced approach that provided more clarity to the agricultural community and flexibility that would allow the community to come up to the environmental needs that we had for them, but allow them the opportunity to do it in different ways depending on if they were in eastern Ontario or western Ontario. We put into place and we kept as the basis of our regulations the important requirement of ensuring environmental protection; we made restrictions on the application of nutrients on the land; we clarified very carefully the requirements of a nutrient strategy and a nutrient plan; and we also talked about minimum setbacks from municipal wells and surface water, because that's important—

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

1530

Mr Johnson: Thank you very much for that answer, Minister, and for the hard work you put into the process for the people of rural Ontario. I heard back from many farmers after your meeting in Stratford at the Victorian Inn in early February, and they were impressed with you as minister representing them.

One issue that was of particular concern for the farmers in my riding and across Ontario was the availability of cost-shared funding to assist with the implementation of the regulations. Could you explain how our government has addressed these concerns—

Interjection: Where are those regs?

Mr Johnson: I'm sorry. Am I interrupting somebody in the opposition?

Minister, could you please explain how our government—

Interjection.

Mr Johnson: Does the member from Kingston and the Islands have the floor or do I?

Minister, could you please explain how our government has addressed this concern and what proposals have been advanced to financially assist our food growers, the farmers?

Hon Mrs Johns: I want to say that we are very proud on this side of the House about the consultations we have done with nutrient management. We're also very proud of the comments that were made in both the budget and the throne speech to alleviate concerns the agricultural community may have had. We're very clear that when we implement regulations along the line, when we come along and bring a new category into the regulations, that we will certainly have the funding to be able to move that category along, that we will work with the agricultural community to decide what that funding should look like. The farm groups have a number of different ideas that we are starting to consult on. We will work to make sure we have that benefit there.

We understand on this side of the House that these changes benefit all of society. They benefit the environment of all Ontarians. We're going to work with the agricultural community to make sure that those costs are borne appropriately.

HYDRO GENERATION

Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East): I have a question for the Minister of Energy. Minister, Don Valley East residents were shocked and appalled to hear that you're considering putting a giant diesel generator at the Leslie transformer station. I'm sure you're aware that this station is in the middle of a residential neighbourhood only a couple of hundred metres from literally thousands of residents living in the Finch and Leslie neighbourhood.

I've spent all last week and this weekend since then literally talking to the community residents and listening to their concerns. They're very clear. There is already bad air quality in our city, both from pollution and from cars on Finch Avenue. Having this compounded by your dirty diesel generators is simply not acceptable.

Let me tell you what just one resident said. This is a letter from Karima Dhanani, who told me how her husband is suffering from chronic respiratory illness. She says, "It is difficult for him to step out of the house due to smog. Premier Eves will sacrifice him, the father of my two small children, to meet his objective."

So, my question to you, Minister, on behalf of Don Valley residents is this: I want your commitment today that the Leslie transformer site will be removed from your request for proposal so that my neighbours' health and well-being will no longer be threatened by your dirty diesel generators.

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Energy, Minister responsible for francophone affairs): In addition to the 2,500 megawatts of new, clean electricity that'll be coming on to the grid in the province of Ontario this summer, we felt it was prudent for two reasons: one, to try to encourage less reliance on high-cost imported power, and two, to take some prudent measures to ensure that there was adequate electricity supply in the province of Ontario—

Hon Brad Clark (Minister of Labour): A contingency plan.

Hon Mr Baird: —a contingency plan, as one of my colleagues says.

We are looking to the private sector to ask what opportunities might be available. There could be opportunities with respect to large natural gas portable generation or from some small diesel-powered generation. I would suspect with the latter that it would be fair to say there are more than 4,500 of them today, probably hundreds in residential environments like his own community; that, for example, if we'd had this policy in place last year, it might have been required for 14 minutes.

Mr Caplan: The minister's answer is simply not good enough. This is your request for proposal: on page 7, June 15, 2003, is when you want to have the diesel

generators come on-stream, and on page 16 it's very clear that you'll want to exempt them from environmental assessment legislation. That is simply not good enough for the people of Don Valley East. They know that these generators will be running during peak demand hours. This means that in late afternoon and early evening when they're getting home from work, when they want to be outside and enjoy a summer evening, that's going to be impossible. They know that these machines generate sulphur levels almost 50 times greater than cars on Finch Avenue. They know that because of the geography in the area. Seneca Hill is the highest point in the city of Toronto, and with the nature of the generation, the emissions will be staying in the community and will not dissipate into the atmosphere.

Minister, it's your company. Ontario Electricity Financial Corp is run by Michael Gourley, formerly Premier Eves's right-hand man. Residents in Don Valley East—

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

Hon Mr Baird: The member opposite stood in his place and said, "I know, I know, I know"—they know, they know, they know. Well, he doesn't know. We haven't made any decisions. What we've said is that we want to go to the private sector and ask what requirements might be able to be offered. They could be clean-burning natural gas which could help reduce our reliance on high-cost imported power. In the unlikely event, despite the 2,500 megawatts of new, clean electricity coming on-line—

Interjection.

Hon Mr Baird: The member for Don Valley East might want to listen to the answer so you can take this news back to your constituents. Had we had this plan in place last year, and if it had been fully subscribed, in addition to the 4,500 such generators which are already operating in the province, which are already operating in the member's own constituency, it would have been required—

Interjection.

Hon Mr Baird: In residential neighbourhoods. They're operating today. The member opposite asked a question; he might want to listen. Last summer, had this plan been employed, it would have been 14 minutes. It's disappointing the member opposite doesn't want to listen—

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

WINE INDUSTRY

Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls): My question is for the Minister of Consumer and Business Services. As you know, Ontario is home to some of the greatest wines produced in the world—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. Stop the clock so the member can have the time. Come to order, please. The member for Niagara Falls has the floor to ask a question. Sorry for the interruption.

Mr Maves: My riding is home to Reif, Vincor, Hildebrand Estates, Chateau des Charmes, and many others. It seems that every time we open the food and wine section of the paper we read about another great Ontario wine that has just won international acclaim. Just a few weeks ago, one of Ontario's wineries became the first Canadian winery to win the top overall award, the Grand Vinitaly Award 2003 in Verona, Italy. This industry is still growing and there are many people who aren't aware of the great products that we offer here in our province.

This government and its previous ministers have a strong track record of support for this industry through new marketing initiatives, passing VQA legislation, investing money and developing partnerships with Ontario wine industry, resulting in new jobs. Minister, what are you doing to support this important Niagara industry?

Hon Tim Hudak (Minister of Consumer and Business Services): I appreciate the member's question, and I congratulate him as well on his outstanding support for the Ontario wine industry. He's been a very strong advocate. By coincidence, the member asked me at a very good time because earlier today, I was present at a new initiative to help promote Ontario's award-winning VQA wines. Believe it or not, to the member for Stoney Creek, it actually involved the Toronto Star. We don't often agree with the Toronto Star, but we do agree on the high quality of Ontario award-winning wines.

A very interesting and exciting new initiative called the Wine Connection, the first of its kind in all of North America, like a newspaper wine club, is a partnership between the Toronto Star and the Ontario Wine Council to promote Ontario VQA wines. Already, in its first week, it's planning on selling out its initial stock of wines that are driving VQA sales.

I'm happy to report to members of the assembly that in the past year alone through the LCBO, we've seen an increase of 21% year over year in Ontario VQA wine sales, which means jobs in the industry, it means investment in agribusiness and agri-tourism, and it means good things to the province of Ontario.

1540

PETITIONS

SOINS DE LONGUE DURÉE

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): J'ai ici une pétition avec plus de 4 000 noms provenant de 104 communautés, dont celles de Plantagenet, L'Orignal, Sturgeon Falls, Timmins, Elliot Lake, Chelmsford, Port Colborne, North Bay, Cornwall, Larker Lake et plusieurs autres.

« Pétition des aînés et des retraités francophones parrainée par la Fédération des Aînés et retraités francophones de l'Ontario.

« À l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario :

« Attendu que notre président, Jean Comtois, a clairement pris position en notre nom, dans ses lettres du 16 juillet au 16 août 2002 contre l'augmentation de 15% des frais de résidence imposée aux personnes recevant des soins de longue durée en Ontario;

« Attendu qu'aucune réponse, pas même un accusé de réception, n'a été reçu du ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée;

« Nous, soussignés, rappelons à l'attention du ministre Clement, le message de notre président et confirmons que nous sommes contre l'augmentation, même graduelle, de 15%, des frais imposés aux personnes recevant des soins de longue durée en Ontario »

J'y ajoute ma signature avec fierté.

SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): I am standing, Mr Speaker.

It's my pleasure to present petitions to the House provided by the Dream Team, a group of extraordinary people who are fighting for supportive housing for people with mental illness. They've provided me with thousands of cards which I will present to the Premier tomorrow.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Conservative government's failure to provide supportive housing for people with mental illness has left thousands of Ontarians homeless or living in squalid, substandard conditions; and

"Whereas 5,000 units of supportive housing are needed in Toronto and an estimated 14,000 are needed province-wide;

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

"To increase the supply of affordable and supportive housing across Ontario so that people facing mental illness can rebuild their lives and contribute to society."

I will proudly affix my signature to this petition and I thank this tremendous Dream Team for the incredible work they are doing on behalf of people with mental illness.

EDUCATION TAX CREDIT

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford): I'm very pleased to present a petition to the Legislature of Ontario with 39 signatures. It reads as follows:

"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 the next five years."

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): I have a petition that is related to tuition fees, signed by hundreds of students from the Lakehead University Student Union. It is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I am in full agreement with this. I am passing it off to Brian Donohue, our page from Marathon, in my riding of Thunder Bay-Superior North. Thanks, Brian. It's great to have you here.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a petition that has been signed by hundreds of workers of associations for community living, their families and friends in Sudbury, Manitoulin Island and Espanola. The petition is addressed to the Legislature of Ontario and reads as follows:

"Whereas in June 2001 the Honourable John Baird, in his address to the Ontario Association for Community Living annual conference, acknowledged the funding crisis in developmental services related to staff salaries and benefits by stating, '...the challenge of high turnover and staff burnout must be addressed. It must be addressed now with the existing services and it must be addressed for the standards next year. So in our first year we will

commit to almost \$32 million to help address the quality of care and help revitalize this sector.’

“Whereas in September 2001 Minister Baird repeated the commitment he made in June for new funding for developmental services in a variety of initiatives including \$31.7 million to address the high staff turnover and burnout by directing these funds to improve salaries and benefits and offer more staff training and development; and

“Whereas the \$31.7 million, although welcomed, will only scratch the surface of the salary and benefit crisis for workers in this field and additional funding on a multi-year basis is necessary to address this crisis;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature to ensure the government of Ontario honours the commitment made in June and September by the Honourable John Baird to continue to direct additional funds for staff salaries and benefits over a multi-year period so that the high turnover and hiring difficulties are resolved and that people with developmental disabilities are offered the quality service they deserve, delivered by staff who make this work their career.”

I agree with the petitioners. I’ve affixed my signature to this.

ABORTION

Mr Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge): I have the pleasure of introducing a petition signed by 568 good citizens of Cambridge addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and Parliament assembled.

“We, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, draw to the attention of the House the following:

“That Ontarians are being asked to consider alternative forms of health care delivery due to escalating costs; and

“That 65% of Ontarians surveyed in October 2002 objected to the public funding of abortions on demand; and

“That almost all abortions are done for ‘socio-economic’ reasons in Canada; and

“That the Canada Health Act imposes no duty on the provinces to fund any services other than those which are medically necessary; and

“That there are no legal impediments preventing provinces from de-insuring abortion;

“Therefore your petitioners call upon the Parliament of Ontario to enact legislation which will de-insure induced abortion.”

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

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

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas long-term-care facilities in this province are understaffed, underfunded and ignored by the current government;

“Whereas many residents of St Catharines and of other communities in Ontario are unable to find a family doctor as a result of the growing doctor shortage we have experienced during the tenure of the Harris-Eves government;

“Whereas cancer patients in Ontario requiring radiation treatment face unacceptable delays and are often forced to travel to other jurisdictions to receive medical attention;

“Whereas many prescription drugs which would help patients with a variety of medical conditions such as macular degeneration, multiple sclerosis, arthritis, diabetes and heart failure are inadequately covered by OHIP;

“Whereas long waiting lists for diagnostic tests such as MRIs, CT scans and ultrasounds are jeopardizing the health of many individuals already facing serious illness;

“Whereas the Harris-Eves government has now spent over \$250 million on blatantly partisan government advertising in the form of glossy brochures and television and radio ads;

“We, the undersigned, call upon the Conservative government of Ernie Eves to immediately end their abuse of public office and terminate any further expenditure on political advertising and to invest instead in health and long-term care in the province of Ontario.”

I affix my signature. I’m in agreement with this.

CREDIT UNIONS

Mr Bob Wood (London West): I have a petition which I wish to present on behalf of the member for London North Centre. It has 225 names and was given to her by the Kellogg Employees Credit Union.

“Whereas Credit Union Central of Ontario’s (Central) 208 members represent 90% of Ontario’s credit unions, have over one million members, manage assets in excess of \$12 billion and have branches in communities across Ontario; and

“Whereas Credit Union Central of Ontario and Credit Union Central of British Columbia are planning to merge the finance and treasury functions of both operations into one interprovincial council; and

“Whereas 98%, on a proportional basis by assets, of Central’s members voted in favour of the merger resolution presented to them on November 23, 2002; and

“Whereas legislative and regulatory changes are required to the Credit Unions and Caisses Populaires Act, 1994, before the merger can be completed;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to call on the Minister of Finance to make the necessary legislative changes so that the merger can be finalized.”

1550

WASTE MANAGEMENT

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

“Whereas we strenuously object to the proposed Richmond landfill expansion by Canadian Waste Services; and

“Whereas fractured limestone is an inappropriate location for a landfill; and

“Whereas the town of Greater Napanee produces less than 1% of the waste sent to the Richmond landfill, and has indicated that it is not a willing host of the proposed expansion; and

“Whereas the Ernie Eves government has indicated that they will break their promise that no community should have to accept waste against their will;

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

“We request that this Conservative government keep their promise, stop the expansion of this landfill and make waste reduction a priority for Ontario.”

Because I am in full agreement, I very happily sign this petition.

SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex): The original number of signatures for this petition was 30,000, and I continue to receive petitions from across the riding, and the province as well.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

“That the measures contained in the private member’s bill An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act to protect children while on school buses, presented by Pat Hoy, MPP, Chatham-Kent Essex, be immediately enacted....

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

“And we ask for the support of all members of the Legislature.”

Of course, I have signed this petition.

AUDIOLOGY SERVICES

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): The title of this petition is “Listen: Our Hearing is Important!”

“Whereas services delisted by the Harris government now exceed \$100 million in total; and

“Whereas Ontarians depend on audiologists for the provision of qualified hearing assessments and hearing aid prescriptions; and

“Whereas the new Harris government policy will virtually eliminate access to publicly funded audiology assessments across vast regions of Ontario; and

“Whereas this new Harris-Eves government policy is virtually impossible to implement in underserved areas across Ontario; and

“Whereas this policy will lengthen waiting lists for patients and therefore have a detrimental effect on the health of these Ontarians;

“Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature to demand that the Harris-Eves government move immediately to permanently fund audiologists directly for the provision of audiology services.”

Again, I affix my signature to this petition and give it to Aaron to bring to the table.

AIR QUALITY

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

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Eves government’s wholly owned Nanticoke generating station is North America’s largest dirty coal-fired electricity producing plant and Ontario’s largest producer of the chemicals and acid gases which contribute to deadly smog and acid rain; and

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

“Whereas at least 13 Ontario municipalities and seven northeastern US states have expressed concerns that Ontario Power Generation’s proposed cleanup plan for Nanticoke is inadequate in protecting the air quality and health and safety of their residents; and

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

“Whereas because the Conservative government has lifted the moratorium on the sale of coal-fired plants and has set a date for deregulation of electricity, the operator of the Nanticoke plant will likely stoke up production to maximize profits which will only worsen the air quality in cities like Toronto, Hamilton, Welland, Niagara Falls and St Catharines;

“We the undersigned petition that the Ernie Eves government immediately order that the Nanticoke generating station be converted from dirty coal to cleaner-burning natural gas.”

I affix my signature. I am in agreement.

OPPOSITION DAY

SARS

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): I move that the Legislative Assembly supports the establishment of a commission of inquiry under the Public Inquiries Act to investigate the SARS outbreak and provide recommendations on how best to prevent and respond to such an outbreak in the future.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): Mr McGuinty has moved Opposition Day number one. The leader of the opposition.

Mr McGuinty: I am pleased that there are some members of the government here and I hope that they will draw from this motion tabled here today that it is presented to this Legislature in a very non-partisan spirit, with a view to ensuring that we draw whatever lessons that we might from this terrible SARS experience.

On behalf of the Ontario Liberal caucus, I want to begin by congratulating the people of Toronto and the people of Ontario, because the people have defeated SARS. I know the battle against the illness continues still, but the people have already won because while they fought to control SARS, they did not let SARS control them. Where there was the potential for panic, they supplied resolve. Where there was the potential for fear, they showed us courage. When the world suggested that we were down, the people stood up. We in this House enjoy a very, very special privilege. We are elected to represent the people of Ontario. I only hope that we can live up to the standard that they have set for us yet again.

I want to commend public health officials for leading the fight, for keeping people informed, for their courage, their commitment, their competence and, perhaps most of all, their sense of calm in a storm. I want to thank front line health care workers for their tireless, selfless efforts. What firefighters were to New York City on September 11, nurses and doctors were to Toronto in the spring of 2003.

In a word, those nurses and doctors are heroes. What makes their heroism even more remarkable is that we have put them through a lot over the last several years. But when we asked them to do even more, they said, “Of course we will because saving lives is what we do.” They do it every single day, quietly, anonymously and professionally. But we have just been reminded in a very dramatic way how precious those people are to us. Let no one ever suggest that a nurse in a hospital is redundant. Let no one ever suggest that a nurse in a hospital is anything but precious.

I want to congratulate as well the many members of the Chinese-Canadian community who were at times and unfairly singled out. They could have lashed out, but instead they reached out, and people responded with reason and intelligence instead of ignorance.

Finally, I want to mention the thousands of business people and working families directly affected by the economic fallout. Sometimes I think it is difficult for us to understand just how far-reaching the economic fallout has been.

1600

Yesterday I had the opportunity to visit the two compounds at Pearson airport. I passed through the airport, as I have for 13 years at least twice a week, where I frequently get into a car and am driven to Queen’s Park. I had the opportunity to meet with a number of the drivers, and they are hurting. Business is down close to 70%, yet they have their fixed expenses. It costs about \$150 every single day. These drivers work very, very long shifts. They sometimes work for 24 hours. They sleep, of course, during part of that, because they’ve got to do a lot of waiting—waiting to be called. Anyway, what many of them conveyed to me was that they were not even able to meet their daily fixed expenses, and yet of course they’re raising families. They’ve got kids to feed and rent or mortgages to pay.

We have a responsibility to help those people and all the others who are out there who, while not that visible, I’m sure their pain and anguish are very, very real. I think we have to help them in any way that we can, and when I say “we,” I mean all levels of government.

Almost three weeks ago, I wrote to the Prime Minister. In my letter I asked the federal government to work with the provincial and municipal governments to help the individuals and businesses hurt by this crisis. I was pleased last week to see that money is finally beginning to flow.

That said, more must be done, and we in our party will continue to pressure both the Prime Minister and Ontario’s Premier to ensure that more is in fact done.

I want to read for you and for the people watching at home the motion that I’ve introduced and that we are debating today, notwithstanding that I just read it, because I think it’s important that people understand what it is we are in fact debating. It reads as follows:

“That the Legislative Assembly supports the establishment of a commission of inquiry under the Public Inquiries Act to investigate the SARS outbreak and provide recommendations on how best to prevent and respond to such an outbreak in the future.”

The reason for this motion is as simple as it is important. We simply must learn what we did right and what we did wrong fighting SARS so that we are better prepared if and when something similar happens again.

We believe that in this matter our future can and should be guided by our past. I don’t think there can be a better example of that than the Walkerton tragedy. Following the Walkerton disaster and after a bit of encouragement from this side of the House, then-Premier

Harris established a public inquiry, and in so doing, he appointed a respected judge to head up that inquiry. I believe the results of that process were an overwhelming success. What Justice O'Connor gave us was a road map—a road map to protect our drinking water and improve our public health networks. So powerful and so legitimate was the inquiry process that all three parties were quick to embrace its recommendations.

Some wrongly equate the calling of an inquiry as a political exercise; in fact, it is quite the opposite. My friends on the other side of the House know it's true that no one from any political party, no editorial board and no victims' group ever accused Justice O'Connor of playing politics with his inquiry. In fact, a public inquiry process keeps the politics out. When there is a public inquiry, politicians can't fiddle with its work. They can't edit out embarrassing mistakes or manipulate witness lists, for example. Most importantly, they discount or dismiss the findings of a public inquiry at their peril.

Public inquiries give us facts on what happened in the past, and they give us valuable recommendations for the future. They give the public the answers that they desire and to which I believe they are entitled.

Now, I know the Premier doesn't want a public inquiry. Instead, he's promising some sort of internal review. I'm pleased to see that the Minister of Health is present as I speak to this matter. I'm hoping that he will reflect upon the debate today, and that he will be able to convince the Premier otherwise.

I say to the Premier that conducting an internal review is not good enough. After serving more than 20 years in this place, I think he knows that. He knows that a private review is very, very different from a public inquiry.

Under the Public Inquiries Act, the commissioner is given important powers. For example, a public inquiry provides whistle-blower protection to ensure people can't be fired for sharing their personal experiences. It allows the commissioner to summon witnesses to give testimony under oath. It empowers the commissioner to subpoena physical evidence and other documents.

I believe that we need to know everything about where our public health system succeeded and where it failed, because experts tell us that we will likely face this kind of thing again.

The West Nile virus is already here in Ontario. While SARS is on its way out, other diseases will be around the corner, threatening our families and our future prosperity. Were we ready? Are we ready now? There's a consensus building amongst the experts that we were not ready then or now.

I think it's important to draw a distinction—and I tried to make this in the House yesterday—between the magnificent way in which our front-line health care workers rose to the challenge and performed heroically. Of that, there is simply no question, and our hats are off to all of those people.

But there is another issue, and that's what today's debate is all about. It's about our state of readiness in the province of Ontario to grapple with these kinds of

challenges. It's about whether we're doing everything that we can and should be doing to support our front-line workers as they rise to the challenge before them.

Let me quote from some of the experts in this matter. Dr William Bowie is the head of the infectious disease program at UBC. According to Dr Bowie, "SARS was an accident waiting to happen." He says, "...because of the priorities of the government, the cost-cutting measures, the conditions were great for SARS to take hold." Dr Bowie was one of the people we had to turn to because, less than two years ago, this government fired our own experts. But I'll talk about that a bit more in a few minutes.

What conditions did Dr Bowie find in Ontario's public health system when he got here? He said, "They had to start from scratch. Ontario doesn't seem able to pull together an integrated effort, either for pandemic planning or to deal with bioterrorism. It's gotten progressively worse. Advice has been ignored for a long time."

Dr Allison McGeer is the head of infection control at Toronto's Mount Sinai Hospital. She happened to be one of the key members of the SARS containment team. This is what she said: "It's been very clear to us that we were going to pay for the public health dismantling that has happened under the provincial and municipal governments."

Neal denHollander was the gentleman who headed the provincial lab's standards and development section, right up until 2001. This is what he had to say about public health under the Harris-Eves government: "I saw the public health labs and the public health units being underfunded and undersupported and being dismantled from the inside out. I didn't want to be any part of that."

Dr Susan Richardson, the head of microbiology at Sick Kids, said that the lack of provincial resources meant that it was up to her colleague, Dr Raymond Tellier, to develop on his own a diagnostic test for the coronavirus behind SARS. "The ability to respond to this outbreak came from the efforts of individuals," Dr Richardson said. According to Dr Richardson, the fact that Dr Tellier worked day and night on his own initiative using their hospital lab was "the only reason that we have survived this outbreak against all odds."

1610

I think we have a serious problem on our hands, when we have to rely on the goodwill and the volunteerism of people in the context of a huge challenge. I think we need to have the institutional capacity to grapple with these kinds of things.

I think everybody in this House is familiar with the work of Dr Donald Low. This man's fight with the disease was more than professional. For a time it was also personal, as he, like many other health care professionals, was forced into quarantine after being exposed to the SARS virus.

Listen to what Dr Low had to say. "We needed a centralized agency within the province to handle this sort of thing. We needed somebody in charge who had the authority to make decisions and the resources to do what

had to be done to carry them out. Instead we were borrowing and begging to carry out a proper investigation.”

Dr. Sheela Basrur's leadership was key during this outbreak. As Toronto's public Medical Officer of Health, she knows far too well the challenges faced by our front-line health care workers during this crisis.

This is what she had to say: “We would try to beg, borrow or steal staff from other health units who could voluntarily come to Toronto and help out for a week or two and then go back to their home base. It's like ripping the bandage off one wound to stop the bleeding of another one.”

In another interview she stated, “It's called ‘surge capacity,’ and that is something that has been systematically stripped from the system ... so the ability of public health, of hospitals, of governments in general to respond to an unforeseen crisis of large proportions is dramatically reduced when we have already cut ourselves to the bone.”

Has the Harris-Eves government learned any lessons from SARS? Dr Basrur tells us that if the throne speech is any indication, the answer is an unqualified no. This is what she said: “I challenge you to find any mention of public health in there. We're in the middle of a wake-up call and people are still sleeping.”

Saturday's *Globe and Mail* reminds us that just 16 months before SARS hit, the Harris government laid off the last of its leading lab scientists and dismissed the prospect of any new disease threatening the province.

“Do we want five people sitting around waiting for work to arrive?” That was the Minister of Health's \$300,000-a-year spokesperson's declaration. He continued, “It would be highly unlikely that we would find a new organism in Ontario.”

How wrong he was. We've now learned that these organisms, these bugs can travel just as fast as international travellers do. By way of comparison, the state of New York has 150 scientists on the payroll. I'm not talking about lab technicians or scientists, effective though they may be, working at our hospitals devoting themselves to other responsibilities, who we might call upon at the last instant. I'm talking about institutional capacity. New York's got 150, and to the best of my knowledge, we have none. Not a single one.

We need an inquiry to make sure that we get this right, to make sure that mistakes of the kind described by the experts I've just quoted don't happen again. As Dr Bowie himself said this week from British Columbia, “SARS is a tragedy. But it would be a much worse tragedy for Canadians not to learn from the lessons we can take from this.”

So I'm saying to members, as we debate and vote on this important motion, let us not forget that many people have suffered. Some have suffered the loss of a loved one. Long after news of SARS has receded from the front pages and the newscasts, long after our health care system and our economy has recovered, they will still feel that loss. Some 23 people died in Canada, all of them

in our province. They were our friends, our family, our people, and we mourn their passing—23; 23 too many. Yet, this loss could have been much greater if it were not for the tireless work of so many. It could have been worse.

With that in mind, we all share a very heavy responsibility to learn from this tragedy. The passage of this motion and the holding of a public inquiry will help us do just that.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): It's a pleasure for me to participate in this debate. I want to say at the outset that on behalf of myself and my NDP colleagues, I want to thank those Ontarians who were very much responsible for getting this outbreak finally under control. That includes all of those nurses, those paramedics, those firefighters, police, Toronto public health, all of the community organizations which supported those in quarantine and those who went into voluntary quarantine and stayed there as they should have. Our thanks to all of those who responded. It's clear to me that without their exceptional efforts, the extent of this outbreak and the number of deaths would have been much larger; there is no doubt in my mind about that. Thank goodness for their exceptional efforts. But I think no community, and I use “community” in the broadest sense, should ever be faced with such a health threat. We have to ensure that the community, in the broadest sense of the word, here in Ontario is never faced with a threat again.

So that is why three weeks ago, on April 15, our leader Howard Hampton held a press conference in the media studio here at Queen's Park and called on Premier Ernie Eves to commit to a commission of inquiry into Ontario's response to SARS. He was very clear that this should be done after the outbreak ended, obviously, but he was very clear that it should be done.

I think it's appropriate that I read into the record for those who are watching the letter which our leader sent to the Premier that day, April 15, three weeks ago, calling on him to support a public inquiry and also outlining the framework for that particular inquiry. It reads as follows:

“Dear Premier,

“The last few weeks have been extraordinarily difficult ones for many Ontarians. From the families that have lost loved ones, to the thousands living under quarantine, to the health care workers that have worked endless hours to contain the SARS outbreak, the impact of SARS has been all-consuming.

“New Democrats have expressed our sincere condolences to those who have lost family and friends to this terrible illness. We also commend those health care workers, nurses, doctors, public health officials, for their enormous efforts to contain this outbreak.

“It is certainly at times like this that we appreciate more than ever the importance of our public health care system, and the central role that government must play in protecting our public services.

“I believe the people of Ontario are looking to you for assurance that once SARS is contained, you will call an

independent commission of inquiry under the Public Inquiries Act to ensure that we learn from this experience. We must be assured that if an outbreak like this occurs again, our system will be even better prepared.

“Many questions are being asked by experts and health care providers and by many of our constituents about how prepared Ontario has been and what other jurisdictions may have done differently. I believe the following issues should be included in the commission of inquiry:”

First, “the capacity of our public health units to respond and the effect on their ability to carry out other important prevention programs;”

Second, “Ontario’s infection control capacity;”

Third, “the capacity of our health care system—in particular our hospitals—to cope with the additional burden of SARS;”

Fourth, “the coordination and speed with which directives and alerts were issued by the Ministry of Health;”

Fifth, “jurisdiction over private clinics (independent health facilities) during this crisis;”

Sixth, “the technical and scientific capacity of the public health branch of the Ministry of Health, particularly the capacity of our public labs;”

Seventh, “the role of the federal government in providing support for public health.

“Premier, there is no doubt that at this time, all our efforts should be focused on containing the outbreak, treating the sick, and ensuring that those under quarantine have all the supports they need to be fully compliant. That is why the NDP has continued to put forward positive suggestions such as supports for quarantined workers, a compensation plan, and a plan to help businesses in the Chinese community.

“Assuring the public that there will be a commission of inquiry is another positive step forward.

“Sincerely yours,

“Howard Hampton,” leader of the Ontario NDP.

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On April 15, the day we called on the Premier to hold a public inquiry, a similar letter was also forwarded to Dr Colin D’Cunha, the public health commissioner, and to Dr James Young, the commissioner of public security, asking them as well to be supportive for a public inquiry once the SARS epidemic was under control.

I regret to say that we haven’t had a response to our request from three weeks ago, April 15. It appears that the government is not interested in a public inquiry; the government is going to do some lesser kind of formal review, which is not appropriate, and I’ll respond to that in a few moments.

I say that three weeks ago this government should have responded promptly to our request for a public inquiry. We should be here today assuring people that that will be done.

I want to look at some of the points we raised in terms of what should be included in a public inquiry so I can put on the record some of the concerns we have and what

we think the inquiry should look at, because more than anything else, we should use the public inquiry as an opportunity to ensure that never again do we put the community, generally speaking, under such a threat as it has been with respect to SARS.

The first point: the capacity of Ontario public health units to respond to SARS and carry out other important prevention activities. The fact of the matter is that our public health units, particularly in Toronto, have been put under enormous pressure to respond to SARS. I was at a briefing with the Ministry of Health where it was made very clear by the deputy minister, by Dr D’Cunha, that in fact Ontario at that point was in a position of trying to hire right across Ontario because there wasn’t enough capacity in Toronto, that they were trying to hire students from university to be on the phones to do the calling, that in fact they were stretched to the limit in trying to respond. That’s a fact.

We have a situation where in the last couple of years public health units have not been able to do all that needs to be done with respect to public health. My own public health unit has to subsidize the Healthy Babies program because they do not receive enough funding from this government to fully carry out their mandate. My own health unit has to subsidize the cost for the flu shot program because this government does not provide the funds necessary to make sure that program works adequately.

There are a number of other public health programs that municipalities have to subsidize because this government hasn’t stepped up to the plate to ensure that the funds are in place and the human resources are in place to ensure that public health units can do the important work that has to be done. We should fully examine the gap between what public health units are mandated to do and what this government provides in terms of funds to actually allow them to do that job, and that should be examined under a public inquiry.

The next point was Ontario’s capacity to control infection, and that’s an important point. We received an e-mail message from Dr Ronald Gold, who is professor emeritus of pediatrics, faculty of medicine, University of Toronto, former chief, division of infectious disease, at the Hospital for Sick Children. His question was the following: what will be done to ensure that there is not another failure by the Ontario Ministry of Health to issue a timely warning to medical facilities throughout Canada at the risk of importation of a new infection such as SARS? He points out:

“News of the outbreak of an unexplained phenomenon in Hong Kong was posted on the Web site of ProMED-mail and distributed via e-mail ... February 12 and 15. ProMED-mail is a program of the International Society for Infectious Diseases which collects reports of outbreaks of human, animal and plant infections around the world. When the first reports of the unexplained” phenomenon “which became SARS were posted, the health ministry in BC notified all hospitals and health care facilities of the possibility of a traveler from Hong

Kong arriving” with “this new infection. When the first case (and subsequent cases) presented” themselves “to the emergency department of a Vancouver hospital, the patient was immediately isolated and managed with infection-control procedures appropriate for a respiratory infection.

“No such warning was issued by the Ontario Ministry of Health. Failure to warn Toronto hospitals of the possibility of importation of SARS resulted in the subsequent spread of the epidemic after the first case was hospitalized and not properly isolated on March 7....

“Vancouver (and Vietnam) provided good examples of how such imported infections should be handled in order to prevent epidemics; Toronto (and Ontario) provided an excellent example of how not to do it.”

I think Dr Gold’s concerns should be investigated through a public inquiry. But Dr Gold also raised another concern, and this was dealt with in our third point, which should be included in the public inquiry: the capacity of Ontario’s health care system, hospitals in particular, to cope with the burden of SARS. He’s made it clear that we should be looking at whether or not Ontario hospitals have adequate funds to hire the recommended number of certified infection control nurse practitioners. He raises this point:

“Current recommendations call for one infection control practitioner for every 220 to 250 beds in a hospital. Very few Ontario hospitals meet this goal. Such practitioners are essential for proper surveillance of hospital-acquired infections as well as for proper implementation of infection control policies and procedures and, most importantly, for ongoing training of all hospital workers in infection-control practices. Without proper infection control, spread of infections such as SARS is inevitable.

“Continued shortchanging of public health, in particular, and of the health care system in general is a recipe for disaster.”

This message, again, was sent to us by Dr Gold, who has some very excellent credentials to speak about these matters. Whether or not our hospitals have the workers in place to deal with infection is another issue that should be dealt with through a public inquiry.

Our fourth issue involved the coordination and speed with which directives and alerts were issued by the Ministry of Health. The fact of the matter is these weren’t very prompt at all, despite the work that was done to try and get this under control. It was March 7 when Dr Finkelstein diagnosed a patient with pneumonia at a hospital in Ontario. He had not received any official warnings of a flu-like illness breaking out in China. The sick man was not isolated immediately and spent 24 hours in an emergency room, where a patient next to him became infected. It was not until March 25 that the Ontario health minister made SARS a reportable virulent communicable disease under Ontario’s Health Protection and Promotion Act. On October 31, Ontario action plans for emergency response procedures came together. The first directives that went out to hospitals went out March

27, provincial directives to all acute care hospitals on how to deal with SARS, what procedures had to be undertaken. The directives for GTA and Simcoe county acute hospitals went out on March 29, and interim directives went out March 31.

The first case was March 7. The first set of directives went out March 27, 20 days later. We need to have a public inquiry to examine why it is that directives and alerts were not issued in a timely fashion to Ontario acute care hospitals. That goes for the other directives that were issued as well. There were directives finally issued April 1 with respect to inter-facility patient transfer, a directive that went out to physicians April 2 on how to deal with potential outbreaks in outpatient settings. I think a public inquiry would discover that that kind of response time was just far too long. The only way we are going to get to that is through a public inquiry.

We’ve looked at other items as well. I mentioned the private clinics, the technical and scientific capacity of Ontario’s private labs and the public health branch of Ontario’s Ministry of Health. Well, the sad reality is that we don’t have much of a capacity left any more because this government laid off all of the Ministry of Health lab scientists on October 18, 2001. We should be looking at that decision, why it was made, how it was made and what Ontario has to do to have adequate capacity in the public health system in order to deal with outbreaks like SARS and other infectious diseases.

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We’re also concerned about the role of the federal government. We want an investigation of their commitment to public health, whether or not, as more money is provided to various provinces, including our own, for health care, some of that should in fact not be targeted, designated essentially for public health so we can support our public health units in this province.

As I said, that request was made to this Premier on October 15. Instead of agreeing to a public inquiry, what this Premier and this Minister of Health have done is suggest that they will have some kind of formal review into how the province handled the SARS outbreak. I say to you, Speaker, that is just not good enough. Under a public inquiry, the experts will have the decision about what the mandate and framework of that public inquiry will be. The experts will be able to subpoena anyone and everyone who needs to come and talk about what they knew when and what else should be done. The experts will be able to subpoena all documentation that led to decisions that were made or that resulted in delays of decisions that should have been made. I’m not confident at all in a formal review because I’m not confident the government will do what has to be done to have the broadest public look at how Ontario responded with respect to SARS.

So I say again to the minister who is here today, to the Premier to whom I hope this message will be transmitted, we made a very specific request to your government on April 15, three weeks ago. We asked you to call a public inquiry. Do the right thing. Deal with the concerns people

have. Go that extra step and ensure we use a full public inquiry as an opportunity to guarantee that our public health services are in good shape and that the community will never be asked to respond again in the exceptional way they have had to in order to deal with SARS.

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): It's been almost two months now since all of us in Ontario were first introduced, if I can be euphemistic, to SARS. To be exact, it was 54 days ago that our lives would be forever changed and our definition of normal in the health care system forever shifted.

On March 14, Ontario was confronted with a new challenge, a new disease, a foreign entity that had a potentially devastating impact, a disease that had no cure and no vaccine. At that time, little was known of SARS. There was no road map to follow; there was no precedent to guide our next move. But what we did know was that our actions must be swift, immediate, definite. We knew we could, if we rose to our best, overcome this emergency.

I say this because the province has the best and the brightest health care workers as the backbone of our health care system. Although it has taken a tragedy such as SARS for the people of this province to collectively come together to thank the health care workers for all they have done, our government has long believed the foundation was in place for our health care system to meet any challenge. SARS tested that belief and showed that, with the right people in the right places doing the right things, we could overcome anything.

Our government has spent the last eight years building a health care system from the bottom up. Previous governments just didn't put into place human resources plans that would attract and retain the very best health care professionals as a matter of course. Consultations with doctors, nurses and other health care professionals gave us an idea of what needed to be done to make sure that Ontario had a health care system that worked at its best when we needed it the most. To ensure this, our government joined with all Ontarians to tell doctors and nurses that we did want them to stay here, and we wanted them to stay in Ontario to work here and to raise their families.

It has taken eight years to turn an outdated health care system into one comprised of state-of-the-art facilities, equipped with the latest and greatest technology and staffed by the smartest and most talented doctors, nurses and other health care professionals—health care professionals, I might add, who have put their health on the line day in and day out to protect us all and meet this epidemic head-on; health care professionals who have felt the loss first hand of 23 patients whose lives were lost in the battle against SARS. I want to take this opportunity to express my deepest sympathy and remorse to the families of those victims.

Although one life lost is too many, Ontario has been successful in meeting the challenge that SARS has posed to us. We have worked together—doctors, nurses, volunteers, police, firefighters and other health care, emer-

gency and public health professionals—as a team, working together to fight SARS. And I can say we are winning that fight and we are defeating this disease. That opinion is not just my own. It is mirrored by the World Health Organization; it is mirrored by the people of Ontario, by politicians from both sides of the Legislature, and by health care authorities across the globe.

In a recent article that appeared in the Toronto Star titled “SARS Response Called Triumph of Public Health,” a top mathematical epidemiologist stated that the actions Ontarians took to fight SARS have been unprecedented. They were actions that turned the SARS outbreak in this province from a potential catastrophe infecting some 200,000 people to a crisis affecting only just more than 300 people. That is less than one fifth of 1% of the predicted damage that Ontario could have felt, because of a swift and immediate response by a health care system that was built to work at its best when we needed it the most.

It is quite an accomplishment and success that could not have been reached if not for the dedicated and committed health care professionals in this province, an accomplishment that would not have been realized if leadership was not demonstrated, leadership that eased the fears that Ontarians were feeling and led to results that not only saved the province but I dare say saved the nation.

I would like to speak not only of the leadership of so many doctors and nurses and other medical professionals but also the leadership of Premier Ernie Eves. Premier Eves, on March 26, declared a provincial state emergency, giving health care professionals the tools they needed to combat SARS and stop it before it could spread into the community.

It was leadership that saw the implementation of an action plan that would limit the effects that SARS would have in Ontario, an action plan that would contain SARS and make sure those who had been exposed to it were cared for in an isolated environment, protecting the lives of all other Ontarians.

Under the leadership of Premier Eves, emergency services admissions and non-urgent services at hospitals have been temporarily suspended at hospitals across the province, while visitors into those buildings have also been restricted in an effort to prevent the transmission of SARS.

Under the leadership of Premier Eves, Toronto public health followed up with all Scarborough Grace division patients discharged from March 16 onwards, as well as students, volunteers and staff who might have had direct contact with SARS.

Under Premier Eves's leadership, SARS became a reportable, virulent, communicable disease under Ontario's Health Protection and Promotion Act, allowing public health officers the opportunity to track its movement and issue orders to stop infected people from engaging in activities that may transmit SARS.

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Under the leadership of Premier Eves, York Central Hospital and Scarborough Grace Hospital were tempor-

arily closed down because it was the right thing to do to stop the spread of SARS. And under the leadership of Premier Eves, a SARS treatment centre was established at the Women's College campus of Sunnybrook and Women's hospital and a provincial operations running at full steam 24 hours a day, seven days a week was created to provide assistance to health care professionals and Ontarians across this province.

These were steps that our Premier and our government knew had to be taken, and we didn't hesitate, because public health is a top priority of our government. These steps demonstrated that our government's leadership, when leadership was essential to keep morale high in our communities, would be given.

I want to reiterate that our government, in collaboration with the 37 provincial public health units, did everything that we could do to combat SARS. Anything and everything was done. I assure you that as we move forward, we will do whatever it takes to defeat SARS and make it tomorrow's news.

On top of all of the steps just mentioned, our government offered the people of Ontario transparency and the knowledge that ensured that every Ontarian could self-identify SARS and take the appropriate actions to contain it.

In terms of transparency, practically every day, at the same time, at the same location, daily updates were given to the press and to their audiences. Ontarians were kept abreast of everything, including the unfortunate news of one passing away, but also news of those being discharged from the hospitals because they were well.

Indeed, today I can share some news with you, numbers that show this province's success in controlling SARS continues. Ten days ago, 41 people were identified as active probable cases in our hospitals. Yesterday that number decreased to 29. Ten days ago, 150 people were discharged from the hospital after receiving quality compassionate care from our doctors and nurses. That number has been added to, to create a total number today of 179. These numbers and the trends they depict were readily available when I recently travelled to Geneva to discuss the travel advisory on Toronto that the World Health Organization declared.

Thanks to health care professionals, who continue to work around the clock, these statistics and other impressive identified trends allowed the World Health Organization to realize that the new news was that the warning, the advisory, was no longer necessary. Thanks to the actions taken by the Premier and by Toronto public health and York public health and many other officials, and thanks to the individual efforts that each Ontarian undertook, that ban was lifted on April 29. I mention again that I was just the messenger of the hard work of many, many people.

In terms of educating the public and providing them with the knowledge necessary to be active defenders in our battle against SARS, a number of initiatives were undertaken to provide Ontarians with the tools they needed to identify and contain SARS.

Personally, I had the pleasure of demonstrating how to properly wash one's hands when it became known that such a simple action such as handwashing could be an effective preventive measure in stopping the transmission of SARS.

On top of this, advertising in all forms of media have helped inform the public about preventive measures that can be taken and the numbers to be called. Accessible phone numbers like Telehealth and a dedicated SARS info line were a phone call away for all Ontarians, phone numbers that at a time were dialled by more than 15,000 Ontarians a day—15,000 a day. Ontarians were then told about the symptoms and were provided with the knowledge to make a decision on whether voluntary isolation or quarantine were necessary steps to take.

A high level of public co-operation has allowed us to contain SARS to this day, and I want to thank and commend every Ontarian for putting the health of the people ahead of personal interests.

By citing these examples, I'm just reiterating the actions that told the people of Ontario that our government was in control of fighting, containing and defeating SARS.

As our government realized that more could be done, we didn't hesitate to continue. Recently, in response to the social and economic effects of SARS, Premier Eves announced a range of additional measures needed to combat SARS. They included providing more than \$118 million, part of which will help fund a two-year tourism recovery plan to rebuild global confidence that Toronto is the place for families and friends to visit, and \$25 million for hospitals across the province to help address surgical backlogs caused by SARS.

Furthermore, the Premier recently announced the SARS Assistance and Recovery Strategy Act, a bill that was passed this sitting that includes protecting the jobs of people affected by SARS, those who voluntarily quarantined or isolated themselves, strengthening the powers available to front-line health care workers to deal with this type of outbreak, and assisting the tourism sector in its recovery, especially hotels which have felt the economic effects of SARS.

Today we live in what I have referred to in the past as the "new normal." Although we are currently on the road to defeating this disease, we must not sit on our laurels. We must learn from this experience so that we can be prepared for future diseases that will come to our borders in due time. To ensure that our government is prepared for tomorrow, a review of the health care system's response to SARS will be conducted which will assess the capacity and the capability of our health care system, in case diseases like dengue fever or some other tropical disease or some other pandemic comes to Ontario.

As I close, I know that my words spoken here today may not be remembered years from now, and perhaps by some members may not be remembered tomorrow. But what will be remembered are the heroics of our health care professionals and the vigilance that will ensue. I want to reiterate just how important it is, and how

beneficial for us that we live today and tomorrow with vigilance.

Together, we will learn from this experience to be prepared for tomorrow's surprise and tomorrow's unexpected challenge. No less can be expected of us by the people of Ontario.

Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale): I have a brief time to speak in this debate, and I want to say right at the outset that the oratory of the Minister of Health is excellent, but I think the last line he said was that we must prepare for tomorrow's eventualities. The fact of the matter is that in this very same place about two years ago, following 9/11, we heard a lot of talk from the government about preparation as a result of bioterrorism. Unfortunately, too many people who are involved in the health care system in Ontario, front-line workers that I've had the opportunity to speak with and many people who have been quoted in this place today by my leader, Dalton McGuinty, find that Ontario's preparation for what happened with the SARS outbreak was not adequate.

It is not to say that we don't have an enormous amount of respect for health care. We stand and fight for those values every single day. But I see that the attempt on the part of the Minister of the Health is to hide behind the front-line workers and the experiences and the effort that they put into this, and not to take enough responsibility for the fact that there have been some very, very serious problems highlighted with respect to our health care system and its capacity to respond to a complicated problem like SARS.

I've had the opportunity to talk to front-line workers, because my office is in a building where St Michael's has 20 doctors. They're still in masks and gowns there, and their experience from this has been problematic. They need an opportunity to be heard, not in some process that allows just those voices from associations and hospital CEOs to speak up, but a process that allows front-line health workers to participate in a commission of inquiry that is independent, thorough and, above all else, transparent.

1650

We owe it to ourselves and to the society that we are part of to make sure that we do learn all of the lessons that can be learned from a review that allows all of those people to have a voice. We need to know what the effect was of our lack of epidemiological capacity within our provincial labs. We need to know what the problems were that occurred with respect to the communication of information. I've never seen in my life, around politics for 25 years, an issue that moved more rapidly than this one. I've heard very serious concerns raised from many different fronts about the capacity of the Ministry of Health to promptly inform people across the breadth of our health care system. We've got to get a good look into what were the infrastructure problems that existed at various hospitals, in terms of being able to control airborne problems.

So I don't stand and make comments in the interest of trying to raise some political benefit, but I do very much

say that, as one Ontarian who has a very large proportion of life sciences and health care workers in my riding, that I do think it's critically important that at a time and age where we know that there will be more complex situations like this that confront us, we take every advantage that we can, that we reach out to all of those who have a voice and we hear of their problems and we take them seriously and we act to address those concerns, not in some review where nobody knows who's asking what questions and under what mandate, but under a commission of inquiry that is independent, thorough and transparent. Only then can we be certain that all of the lessons that are to be learned have been learned to ensure that our capacity to protect our citizens is enhanced to the greatest extent possible. That's what we're calling for.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): It almost feels surreal standing here today talking about SARS now in the context of doing a review, an investigation, an inquiry into how well Toronto, and all of us, handled the crisis, because indeed at the time it was a major catastrophe, a living nightmare for those of us in Toronto who had many of our constituents affected by the SARS outbreak. I know that in my riding of Toronto-Danforth there is east Chinatown. The small businesses there were severely affected by the outbreak and continue to be affected negatively to this day. So there's a whole other side to the SARS outbreak and the implications to us as a community, and that is that, first and foremost, and we all agree and appreciate, is containing it, that people's health came first.

As we dealt with this crisis day after day after day in many different ways, some of us working quietly behind the scenes, I know that many of the media said to me, "You're not your usual partisan self, Marilyn. You're not out attacking the government on a daily basis." I believe that throughout the crisis overall, for the first few weeks when people were dying and more and more people were getting sick and businesses were failing, all of us tried to contain and put aside those partisan differences and concerns, because we knew that this was a situation where all of the parties and all of the people of Ontario needed to work together to contain the disease. That was the number one priority. So I appreciate the minister's comments today, and any efforts that he made and his government made. I have, in fact, thanked them for the economic package that they recently outlined.

I want to say to everybody from all three parties, some who are more vocal than others, others working behind the scenes doing what they could within their own communities and within the city of Toronto to deal with various aspects of this, that it is in times like these, and we've all said this, that we appreciate more than ever our public health care system. Unfortunately, it took an incident like this to make us remember the important, vital role our public health units play in our lives. We often take them for granted because a major role they play is working behind the scenes, keeping us and our communities healthy.

I want to thank Dr Sheela Basrur, Toronto's medical officer of health, all of the public health workers from Toronto and the greater Toronto area and, indeed, from across the province, who came to our aid in our great need. They did a tremendous job. I want to make it clear, over and over again, as we thank our health care workers and our professionals for the great job that they did, that we mean that from the bottom of our hearts. When we're asking for an inquiry, as sometimes might have been implied by the government, we're by no means criticizing the great work that our health providers did.

I do want to spend a few minutes talking about the economic impact because that is something that had a huge impact on our community, and continues to. I know that many people took the opportunity, as described by some, to take advantage of the situation, I suppose, and show up at a Chinese restaurant and have lunch for a photo op.

I know that on April 4, I went to the Pearl Court Restaurant in my community in south Riverdale, and invited the Premier and other ministers to join me. They were unavailable at that time, but did send the Minister of Citizenship. We appreciated that very much.

I also brought an entire community with me. We packed the restaurant that day because that was at the beginning of the heightened fears. People stopped coming to shop in Chinatown and stopped coming to eat in the restaurants. We were seeing our businesses losing 80% to 90% to 95% of their customers. They were dying.

So we did that. We also, along with my colleague Rosario Marchese and our leader Howard Hampton, met on April 14 with representatives from the Chinese-Canadian business owners and talked about remedies. We came out of that meeting with recommendations that the government did not adopt.

We later met with representatives from the hotel and restaurant union to talk about the profound negative economic impact that the SARS crisis was having, and is still having, on their workers. We came up with some recommendations for the government to help those workers in their time of need.

The government eventually did come up with an economic package that went some distance in terms of dealing with some of the economic crisis. But, unfortunately, the people who have been left hanging out to dry are still those small businesses and those hotel and restaurant workers. They're the people who are still suffering greatly, because either they're having their days going to work in the restaurant or the hotel cut, or, as in terms of the Chinese small businesses—indeed, it's now far more than the Chinese small businesses. The trickle-down effect is affecting many of our businesses across our communities.

We urge the government, and I'm urging the government yet again today, to bring in some of those measures because, indeed, we suggest, and still do, that this crisis in the small business community be treated as a disaster.

We're urging again today something that we urged weeks ago and still has not been done: that hydro and

natural gas providers delay cutting off services to impacted workers and small businesses and that they pay when they can with remedies attached to that so they won't be penalized down the road when they are paying overdue bills.

1700

We also asked for support for small businesses and impacted workers who are tenants, if threatened with eviction. We asked for changes to the Ontario disaster relief assistance program so that the smaller business that may not be assisted by other elements of the program can receive assistance. I do want to point out that, as I understand it, the government's Bill 1 could enable this to happen, but it still has not enacted it.

The NDP members, along with our leader, met with the hotel and restaurant employees' union. We worked with them; I spent many hours on the telephone talking to Paul Clifford, the head of that union, trying to come up with ideas that wouldn't cost the hundreds of billions of dollars that the Premier said when he was asked if he would help small business and these workers but would be a modest doable plan, both on the disaster relief for those businesses most affected to help tide them over, but also for the assistance that we have been asking, and still ask, for those hotel and restaurant workers. What we came up with was, I think, a very good plan, and that is that Human Resources Development Canada, HRDC, make emergency work-sharing EI funds available to Toronto's tourism industry and relax the eligibility requirements so that the industry workers could qualify.

We asked that the city of Toronto economic development plan call for labour market readiness in the hospitality industry. We asked that the federal, provincial and city governments work together to allow the workers in hotels and restaurants, on the days that they're not called in, to go for training or to have their skills upgraded under an existing program within EI, where the federal EI program would pay 85% of their wages. What we asked the provincial government to do is to top those wages up 15% so that all of those workers would be receiving their usual salary. We have not seen action on that yet.

In conclusion, I want to say yet again to members of the government—and I'm glad to say, by the way, the city of Toronto did adopt fully the hotel and restaurant workers' recommendations—they still need our help. We're all hoping and praying that we've come to the end of this terrible disease, but in the meantime it's going to take some time for those businesses in the Chinese community and throughout our communities overall and for those hotel and restaurant workers to be able to recover from such an economic catastrophe. So we call on the government to not forget those workers, to not forget those small businesses; while they negotiate with doctors in this province and others to try to compensate them, to not forget those people who are in dire need and those most economically impacted by this terrible disease.

I do want to say, once again, that the NDP leader called for an inquiry three weeks ago. At that time, of

course, our main concern, as I said before, was to make sure that the health care issues were taken care of first and that this terrible disease be contained. We do need an inquiry for all of the reasons outlined by other speakers, including Ms Martel, our health critic for the New Democratic Party.

We do know that it's quite possible—we've been told that with global warming and the greenhouse gas problems we have that we may see other terrible diseases that we don't even know about, can't even dream about, come into this province. We have to be better prepared. We do have to look at the cuts and all of the other things that have happened with the downloading of our public health units to the municipalities. We have to be clear and sure, whatever comes our way again, that we are better prepared than we were this time.

I would call upon the government to not see this call as a partisan call to get them. I don't believe that anybody in this Legislature wants to take that approach, and I don't believe the people of Ontario want to see any of us taking that approach. What they want to see is all of us working together to come up with the best plan possible so that, should such an outbreak happen again, we are better prepared to deal with it.

Hon David Young (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I am certainly pleased to join this very important debate. Let me start by saying that our hearts and our thoughts are with the families of those who tragically lost loved ones as a result of this deadly disease. I also want to say that our prayers are with those who have become ill, some of whom are still in hospital.

No effort, from day one, has been spared or will be spared to fight SARS in Ontario. I also want to say at the outset that we have indeed seen great leadership, balanced leadership, reasoned decisions made by Premier Eves and by the health minister, Tony Clement, and I want to take a moment to personally thank them and thank them on behalf of my constituents.

Before we move on from the thank yous, let me also of course thank the real heroes, the men and women who got up every morning in spite of the fact that they were likely to face a threat that may have taken their lives, may have harmed their loved ones. But they nevertheless awoke each and every morning, went to work and treated patients. As a result, they saved many lives and they contained this deadly disease. I say to the men and women, those health professionals, whether they are nurses or doctors or technicians or receptionists in hospitals or volunteers at the front desk, that we owe them a great debt of gratitude.

SARS has had a very significant impact upon this province and indeed upon this great country. More than 10,000 residents have been asked to isolate themselves to protect others. One of those 10,000 was my youngest daughter, my 12-year-old daughter, who is fine but did receive that call from the public health department. They asked that she be quarantined for the remaining part of what was a 10-day period. She, of course, complied and stayed away from school and fortunately is fine. We had

that same experience; we had that caring, informative conversation with the public health official that had obviously a very significant effect upon our family. That happened not once, not twice, of course, but 10,000 times across this province.

It's estimated as well that one third of Ontario businesses have been hurt by the impact of SARS. Of course, the tourism industry in this province has been especially hard hit. We know that thousands of individuals, thousands of jobs are at stake. We certainly were relieved when the World Health Organization lifted what was, in my view and in the view of many experts, an unjustified travel ban relating to this great city of Toronto.

We are now in a position to begin what is going to be a difficult road back to prosperity in this great province. The Ernie Eves government has pledged to take every possible step in speeding Ontario's recovery. I say that we started immediately. Within one hour of receiving a recommendation from the chief medical officer of health, our Premier, Premier Eves, declared a provincial emergency, and that allowed for the enactment of powers to protect the health and safety of Ontarians in every part of this province. A provincial command centre was activated, and representatives of all ministries were made available to provide necessary information.

My own ministry took a number of steps in those early days and is continuing to be involved in this recovery. I should say to you that we offered assistance to municipalities in the very early days. We had SARS-related staff available, individuals who had the knowledge and information about SARS. They worked with our municipal partners to talk about pressures and challenges that our municipal partners were facing. They talked about how best practices could be shared between regions and they talked about how the municipalities and the province were going to deal with what were very significant costs.

1710

On April 28, I had an opportunity to meet with representatives of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, and we discussed a number of different challenges they were facing. I should pause to say that I was very pleased on behalf of the government to receive appreciation from them. They were quite appreciative of the actions the Ernie Eves government had taken. We will continue to work with our municipal partners. I say to you that Minister Flaherty and Minister Coburn have been meeting with representatives of the city of Toronto, as have I, and we will continue to work with them in order to recover from what has been a great challenge to this great city.

I know many of my colleagues wish to speak to this as well, but in the time I have left, I wanted to touch on Bill 1. That is the bill that passed, I should say, with unanimous consent of this great assembly. It passed last Wednesday and, as a result, quite frankly, we as a province are in much better shape. The bill did a number of different things, but I will highlight three of them, if I may.

First of all, in relation to job protection, this bill has made it clear that anyone who is or has been affected by SARS-related personal illness, quarantine or isolation will not have their job jeopardized. We will be there as a government with the force of law to ensure that no one who had to absent themselves from their place of employment will suffer adverse financial consequences as a result of that.

Second, the bill that the Premier tabled and that was passed last Wednesday will strengthen the government's ability to curb the spread of SARS and other infectious diseases.

Thirdly, the bill gave Ontario an economic jumpstart of the sort we desperately needed. It established a sales tax holiday for our vital hotel and entertainment sector. I'm very proud of the fact that Premier Eves came forward early on with this package. It will not only help us recover from this great challenge that was posed by SARS; it will also help us in the future if and when we face similar challenges.

I will also say that we have attempted to involve our federal colleagues. Indeed, I wrote to Minister McCallum on April 11, 2003, at which time I did indicate to him that municipalities and the province were facing enormous financial pressures. By all indications, those pressures were going to continue to mount, which of course they have, and Minister Clement talked about just how significant those pressures have become. I am somewhat disappointed to say that I have not heard back from Minister McCallum today in any formal sense. I understand the federal minister has arranged for someone in his department to speak to a civil servant in my department some time later this week. I'm hopeful there will be some good news there, but I am somewhat disappointed that I haven't heard back directly from the minister to what was indeed a very direct request on behalf of the government.

I will say as well that I think the federal government should treat SARS as what it is, and that is a disaster, an emergency, and there must be a corresponding response from all levels of government. Certainly our hopes were raised earlier this month when we heard that the federal government would be coming forward with a SARS package of, I guess, not less than \$100 million. However, this announcement did not deal with the emergency costs of our health and municipal sectors. The people of Toronto quite frankly deserve better. They know the federal government should and can do more, and I'm hopeful they will in the very near future.

I will say, though, that with or without that assistance from our federal colleagues, the Ernie Eves government has done what it can to this point. We will continue to assist Ontarians throughout this emergency and we will spare nothing in order to get this province back to the position it was in before this terrible disease found its way into this province.

As I conclude, I want to say to you that the only way we're going to be able to expeditiously accomplish what I've just described is for all levels of government to work

together. I say to you that the federal and municipal governments will find full, willing partners in the Ernie Eves government. I look forward to hearing back from Minister McCallum and others in Ottawa as soon as possible.

Mr Joseph Cordiano (York South-Weston): I am happy to contribute to this debate. Let me start by thanking all the health care workers who were engaged in the battle against SARS, and in particular in my own riding the front-line workers at the West Park health care facility, whom I praise endlessly. I also send out our condolences to those families who lost loved ones and who may still have family members in the hospital.

Let me start by saying that there has never been a crisis more serious than the crisis we faced with SARS in this province, and for that reason alone, this government should concede to have a commission of inquiry around this matter. I don't think there has ever been a time in this modern period where we have faced this kind of crisis.

The fear that everyone felt was palpable. You could go anywhere in the city and people were frightened by what could have been a calamity worse than the one we had. This is not to be underestimated in terms of its gravity and the seriousness with which people came to view SARS. I think partly why we did so well against this disease is that people in the community took it quite seriously. If you were so unlucky as to have been quarantined, most people, in almost all cases, took that as a serious matter. So the Ontario public must be commended for their efforts in taking this matter very seriously.

But I say to the members opposite on the government benches, what this crisis pointed out was simply this: the health care system in our province was stretched to the max; there was no surge capacity. What it also resulted in was the fact that the health care system was virtually brought to a standstill. No one who was undergoing serious treatment for cancer care, for example, or for other types of illnesses, could continue to go to their health care facility to get that treatment. This crisis brought the health care system to a standstill, virtually crippling it. So for that reason I say as well that we should have a commission of inquiry. There is absolutely no question that we need one.

I say to the members opposite that this opposition day motion also gave the Minister of Health an opportunity to speak to this matter because he has yet to have spoken to the House regarding this matter and his handling of the crisis. I think it points out the need for a commission of inquiry because there are many unanswered questions on how we respond to this. Do we have, for example, first-response capability? Once the government got rid of its lab scientists, we virtually had no capability to determine that there was an infectious agent that was introduced to the province and how to cope with that. Yes, we had health care workers on the front line, public health officials who did a remarkable job given the circumstances, and they are to be commended. But it points to the need for a commission of inquiry to get at where we are weakest, the weakest links in the chain.

1720

The Acting Speaker: Further debate? The member for Trinity-Spadina.

Applause.

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): Thank you, Mr Stockwell. It's good to be back. I missed this place. It's so good to have the opportunity to speak on issues, and it's so good to respond to Dr Clement—the Minister of Health; I don't mean to offend him. But he spoke so much about leadership, I couldn't believe it. I was watching him on television and he talked so much about, first of all, thanking the health care professionals, which of course I would do, I will do, others have done, he does, he did, and he speaks of them as the real heroes, and he's right. If there are heroes to be named, it isn't Minister Clement, it isn't Premier Ernie Eves, it isn't the rest of cabinet—Mr Stockwell, *pardonnez-moi*—and it isn't the rest of the caucus. If there are heroes—Minister Clement mentioned them—these are the health care professionals. And he's right.

Mercifully, we had somebody on the watch looking after us, because if we had to rely on Minister Clement or Premier Eves, the damage would have been worse.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): Oh, Rosie.

Mr Marchese: But it's true, Minister of the Environment. Dr Gold says to us, "News of the outbreak of unexplained pneumonia in Hong Kong was posted on the Web site of ProMED-mail ... and distributed via e-mail"—and it's got the address here—"on February 12 and 15." In British Columbia, they were dealing with this news and dealt with it effectively. In Ontario, they—the leaders and the leadership of Monsieur Eves—were asleep.

Ms Martel: No notification to hospitals at all.

Mr Marchese: No notification to hospitals of any kind. I don't know what he was doing. I don't know what the Minister of Health was doing, but to hear him so quietly talking about how concerned he has been, to praise the health care workers, God bless them, and that, yes, they put their health on the line and, yes, how the health care workers must have felt really bad—and of course they did, losing 23 people to SARS; of course they felt badly.

I wondered, where were our leaders? First of all, where was Mayor Mel Lastman? Because I thought about it. In March I was thinking, where is Mayor Mel? And then I thought, but where is Premier Eves? And then I added, but where is Monsieur Chrétien? Why aren't all these three leaders getting together to discuss what it is they should be doing, what plan they have to deal with this issue?

Mr Frank Mazzilli (London-Fanshawe): Chrétien had nine holes of golf.

Mr Marchese: Chrétien didn't have a plan. I don't think he was playing golf with Ernie Eves; I think there were two separate trips. Ernie Eves didn't have a plan.

Mr Stockwell's going to speak next and he's going to tell me what he and others did in February, what he and

others did in March and what he and others did in April. The only time Ernie Eves came up with a plan was April 24. At the height, he wasn't there; toward its recession, they come with a plan. Isn't that great leadership, Minister of the Environment? Please, you've got to remind Mr Clement not to talk of those things. It's foolish when he does that.

I was looking for the leadership of Ernie Eves and it wasn't there, and I was looking for the other leaders because, like Giuliani, when there was a serious problem in New York, Mayor Giuliani was right there, and everybody else was there, like the governor, and everyone else concerned was there, taking this issue on. And health care workers were concerned, businesses were concerned, people in quarantine were concerned and not compensated, and they didn't respond. We held press conferences, of course, on our own, trying to urge them—not attacking the government so much as trying to encourage them to do something, and they weren't there.

So please, Minister of Health and others who want to speak, don't talk about leadership. It's shameful and it's embarrassing. Yes, praise the health care workers. But to talk about what you've done by way of prevention or by way of helping those affected, both businesses and those in the community and those who are quarantined—please don't talk about that. It's too embarrassing to talk about.

I just wanted this brief opportunity. I'm sure I'll have other opportunities in the future. I'm going to leave some time for my colleague.

Hon Jim Flaherty (Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation): As I rise to speak to this resolution today, I feel great concern and increasing hope in the face of this unprecedented challenge in Ontario. Our government's first concern, of course, is for those persons in Ontario most directly affected by SARS. Those who are grieving the loss of loved ones to this new disease remain in our thoughts and prayers. We encourage those who are close to these bereaved families to continue offering support and comfort in the days and weeks ahead. We also remain committed to providing every resource at our disposal to ensure that those patients who are still in hospital will be restored to full health as quickly as possible.

Our next concern is for those on the front lines in the battle against SARS: our public health officials and health care workers. I know we are all agreed that their response to this crisis has been nothing short of heroic. They have performed above and beyond the call of duty, and they deserve both our praise and our gratitude. We acknowledge and respect their professionalism, their dedication and their willingness to sacrifice for their patients and for their communities. They are a source of renewed confidence in the health care system of this province. They have done us proud.

Our government is also very concerned about limiting and reversing the damage done to our economy by this new disease, and this is a particular concern for me as the minister responsible for economic growth. The consequences have been felt not only in the city of Toronto,

but in the greater Toronto area and indeed in Ontario generally. The great city of Toronto is uppermost in our minds, of course. But the GTA and the adjacent area, all of Ontario, have been and will be affected by the economic fallout of SARS.

There's some good news today. Today the Minister of the Development and Technology from the smallest province in Canada, the province of Prince Edward Island, the Honourable Michael Currie, was here. He was here bringing 20,000 pounds of Prince Edward Island mussels to the restaurants of the city of Toronto. This is of course to get people out to the seafood restaurants. You've got to get out there. I had some of those mussels today—they're absolutely fabulous—straight from Prince Edward Island. They even promised to follow up with some potatoes, they said, from the island, and we're looking forward to that as well. It's Canada's smallest province, but clearly the people of Prince Edward Island have the biggest hearts today—they do—and we very much appreciate that thoughtfulness and generosity.

As we know, we had a difficult situation here, and that difficult situation was made worse when the WHO, an agency of the United Nations, advised against non-essential travel to Toronto. The speed and ease with which our health experts responded belied the WHO's claims about our city. In fact, one week later—without apology, though, and without remorse and without explanation—it rescinded its travel advisory. That was good news, to be sure, but Toronto's reputation was needlessly blackened by this unaccountable body. Local retailers, conference organizers and hotel operators will find no comfort in the WHO's hasty about-face.

So now we do have to help. From the beginning, we were confident that Toronto and Ontario were more than equal to the challenge. Because of vigilance and hard work, we have this disease under control. An end to the immediate crisis is certainly now in sight. Our government believes that we must invest considerable effort and resources if we are to completely overcome the effects of SARS on our people, our communities and our economy. For that reason, on April 29 Premier Eves announced new steps in our government's comprehensive strategy to overcome the disease and its effects. To protect those Ontarians most directly affected, we will immediately bring forward legislation to protect the jobs of quarantined workers and to give the government the power to provide compensation for wages lost due to quarantine. We will invest \$118 million in a two-year plan to restore global confidence in Toronto's and Ontario's reputation as a world-class tourist destination. An additional \$10 million is pledged to mount a complimentary campaign aimed at the international investment and business communities. To this end, we are bringing forward legislation to waive hotel and admissions taxes from now until the end of the crucial summer season.

1730

To further protect our people and our economy from any similar crisis in the future, our government is committed to immediate measures to strengthen our health

care system. We will immediately establish a registry of nurses and other health care workers to assist facilities under stress from SARS. We will immediately expand staffing in public health surveillance, epidemiology and related laboratories, and we will create six mobile rapid-response teams to help deal with any future outbreaks.

My ministry, the Ministry of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation, will help ensure a coordinated response to infectious diseases through the Ontario Innovation Trust and the Ontario Research and Development Challenge Fund. We will also continue to co-operate with the academic and medical communities and the federal government.

Now, regarding the government in Ottawa, because of the seriousness of the present situation and to help prevent further crises, I believe it is important to state a few things for the record. The SARS crisis has dramatically illustrated once again that the federal government must not take Ontario for granted. The federal government has a role to play in preventing and overcoming such challenges. Ottawa has a duty to do its fair share. Complacency and dithering are inexcusable. Now, at last, the federal government has agreed to move beyond the most minimal and perfunctory screening at Pearson International Airport, a facility for which the federal government is, of course, responsible. We can only wish that they had done so when our government requested it urgently almost a month ago. The WHO travel advisory which so greatly increased Toronto's and Ontario's economic difficulties might have been avoided, but to prevent any recurrence of SARS and any lingering uncertainty about Pearson airport, it is important the federal government move quickly to implement the measures they have now promised.

Our government wishes to reassure the people of Ontario that the SARS crisis has had, and will continue to have, our full attention. We will continue to be vigilant in the battle against this new disease, and we will continue to commit whatever resources are necessary to win that battle decisively. For this reason, and because of the great example set by our citizens and by our health care professionals over the last few weeks, we are hopeful that SARS will be completely defeated and its aftermath overcome as quickly as possible.

We have had meetings here at Queen's Park with the leaders of the various tourist and hotel and restaurant associations. We had another meeting just over a week ago at Toronto city hall at the request of the Toronto Chinese Business Association. I was pleased to attend with the mayor and with Minister Collette federally on behalf of the province. At that meeting, the province was asked by the municipality, the Toronto Chinese Business Association and the federal government to take on the coordinating role with respect to the economic revival plan. We are pleased to do that. The first meeting of the group with everyone together is on Thursday morning this week. Working together, we will ensure the economic revival of Toronto and Ontario.

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): Again I remind the public that what this debate is about is the

call for an inquiry to look into the SARS outbreak and to find ways to prevent a similar thing from happening again. I've noticed the government members have not talked about that. I would hope that that doesn't signal that they are going to vote against the motion.

I represent the area called Scarborough-Agincourt. Scarborough Grace Hospital is in the area I represent. Many of the people who were directly affected lived there and live there. Tragically, several of the people who unfortunately passed away lived in the area I represent. On behalf of the Legislature, I want to extend our sympathies to them.

I also want to, once again, thank the people at Scarborough Grace Hospital. It's a terrific hospital. Two of our granddaughters were born there. My mother-in-law, my wife—virtually all of our family has had outstanding service there. I compliment them once again.

I say to us that we have a responsibility—and I don't mean to exaggerate this—to the world to look at what happened, how we dealt with it, what lessons we learned, what things went right, what things went wrong and how a similar thing is prevented in the future. We have that responsibility. As I say, we all can cast our minds back to just a few weeks ago. The major world television networks were here in Toronto. We were, in many respects, the centre of attention. We can't simply ignore that.

So I say, what is the best possible way of gathering together what we learned about what went right, what went wrong and how we prevent a similar thing? We have the model, Walkerton, where, in hindsight, I don't think there's a member of this Legislature who doesn't now acknowledge that that inquiry has provided enormous benefit to the people of Ontario.

I say to all of us—and we're going to vote on this in 20 minutes—that surely we owe it to ourselves, to the people of Ontario and to the world that we pull together the learning in one place. What better way than the recommendation of my leader, Dalton McGuinty, a public inquiry. I say to us, let's do it.

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): In the two minutes or so that is left to me, I want to say that I believe, with all my heart, that we need a public inquiry. But I want to say that we do not need the public inquiry to determine how our health care professionals acted. They acted with great passion. They acted in the public interest at all times. They went over and above the call of duty.

I especially want to give my congratulations to Dr Sheila Basrur and Dr Barbara Jaffe of the city of Toronto. It was my privilege and honour to work with those two women for many years as a councillor in the city of Toronto. In fact, going back to the time in East York, I had the singular opportunity—not once, not twice, but three times—to hire Dr Basrur, first as the associate medical officer of health, later as the medical officer of health for East York and finally in the city of Toronto, to choose her amongst all the others as the person to go on. I have to say that I have never been disappointed once in my decisions to hire her, and never

once has she disappointed the people for whom she worked. She is a dedicated professional and a person who puts more than 100% every day into her work.

I want to say as well that she has led an extraordinary team at the city of Toronto, everything from this SARS outbreak, but has also pioneered legislation around pesticides, pioneered legislation around tuberculosis, sexually transmitted diseases and smoking in public places. You will find Dr Basrur there giving only the best advice to the people of the city of Toronto and to the city of Toronto council.

But I am supporting a public inquiry because we need, as a community and as a government, to look at the mandatory programs. We need to look and see whether or not they were appropriately funded. We need to find out whether or not there were sufficient staff resources on the ground that allowed them, at the beginning, to go out and do what they needed to do.

We need to look, as well, at the mandatory programs and whether or not this government or any government, in giving 50-50 funding splits, is doing enough for times of crisis, whether they be SARS or West Nile virus; and whether, in fact, we need, as a provincial government, to make more funds available, not only to the city of Toronto but to all of our boards of health.

We need to find out whether or not the decisions were timely and that the information that was conveyed was done so in a timely matter. We need to know whether there were roadblocks along the way with the hospitals or the laws of quarantine.

We need to look at whether the federal government did or is doing anything at all that needs to be done, because surely they have a role to play here.

1740

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Minister of Public Safety and Security): I don't have a lot of time. I simply want to say that I don't disagree with the members opposite that there needs to be a review when indeed the provincial emergency is lifted. We should look at what happened, how the province of Ontario and the various agencies responsible for dealing with emergencies handled this crisis. But I think that at the same time if you look at the connotations related to the whole idea of a public inquiry and the positions put forward by primarily the official opposition, they're trying to cast a shadow over the response of the Ontario government. They're trying to cast a shadow—and all of the outstanding professionals in the province responded in such a magnificent way to this crisis.

The member opposite used the example of Walkerton. The reality is, the Ontario response was described by the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta—no one with any political bias here or an axe to grind. They described the Ontario response as a triumph. We should not forget that. That doesn't mean we haven't learned from this, that we can't improve with respect to how we respond to emergencies, but to try and score political points on this is truly, truly regrettable, and that's indeed what is happening.

We should take some time to reflect on the outstanding professionals in the public service of Ontario who worked 24 hours a day, seven days a week in the best interests of—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Order.

Further debate?

Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough-Rouge River): I'm one of those who is not at all surprised that our civil servants have responded so well, and of course we commend them. Can you imagine if they were given all the tools? Maybe that's what we should be looking at.

Let me say that now that the crisis is under some control and we have looked at the economic situation and the impact it has caused, there's one other aspect that should be looked at: the social impact, the sort of turmoil it has put on some of my constituents in Scarborough-Rouge River, which has been impacted tremendously in this situation. Schools were closed at one time because of the fear—there's not only SARS, there's the fear of SARS itself. Apartment buildings in quarantine were being announced on CNN. It wasn't so. Something happened here. Maybe the government should be saying, "Did we handle this thing properly?"

What Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals are calling for—and I know that the NDP is supporting this, and I heard the public safety minister saying he understands there should be some sort of inquiry into what went wrong. Maybe we should be asking whether Parliament should have returned at the time to deal with the issue, like when we had the garbage strike. Should the first minister of the day be around all the time? Would that be helpful? Did the hospitals have enough resources at the time to handle the situation? Was the information dispensed in a way that people could have been better informed? All of this kind of stuff would be very important and we could learn from it.

Let me tell you, Scarborough-Rouge River is pulling itself together. We're going to have a festival in my constituency, showing the confidence in the system, that we are people who can come together, not depending on whether Ernie Eves would come back to call the House to order.

We must have an investigation. That's what we're asking for. We want to establish an inquiry that we can all learn from; we can learn for the future. Because SARS will not be the only thing that will happen. I'm sure other diseases or other events will come. Are we ready to handle all of that? We're not quite sure. An inquiry is something we should go forward with.

Scarborough-Rouge River and all of us are ready to support that inquiry, and I hope you do so too.

Mr Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale-High Park): It is a pleasure to rise in this House on what I think is public business. It's about defining the public interest in terms of the SARS outbreak. It is the job of this House, and would that we were sitting sooner to do more of that work, frankly.

But it is not about trying to assign partisan blame to the government of the day. The question is not that. The question is, why does government member after government member want to hide away from that responsibility? We support them in this as the government, and we expect them, as the government, to do their very best, and then we expect them as the government to not be afraid of what might have gone wrong. That is somewhat of a concern today as we stand in this House—and we stood here before in similar conditions for two weeks until Mr Conway's intervention, until Mr McGuinty's intervention and until other people's interventions. There was a reluctance to have an inquiry on Walkerton. For two weeks the government said no to that. I think instead what we will hopefully see prevailing is the public interest.

Clearly we had a mysterious disease. Clearly it came into conflict with some of the prior decisions of this government. Were those important decisions, to have part-time public officers of health in some parts of the province, to stand down from some of our disease protection? The fact is, we don't know. The fact is, we cannot afford not to know.

The question, I think, for all reasonable Ontarians is, why would any government of any political stripe not want to know? We have only the reasonable apprehension that we will be able to experience this at some point in the future in some way. We want, on this side of this House—and I would like to believe this sentiment is shared—to experience these kinds of outbreaks, these potential crises, in the best way possible. What could be wrong with an open, public, accountable review? Too often in the last seven years in this province, accountability has been a one-way street. It can't be any longer.

This certainly is a bigger proposition than the parties in this House, than the future of this government; it has to do with whether or not some of the people in this province deserve to be heard. There were casualties. We owe them respect. There were collateral casualties. A woman of my acquaintance, her husband died at St Joseph's hospital. He died with a phone in his hand because she wasn't allowed to visit him, even though it was known that he was dying. There were newborns, for example, at St Joseph's hospital as well who couldn't be visited by parents for weeks on end because of the exigencies of this crisis. There were other people dying who were not comforted day after day after day. There were organ transplants that couldn't happen.

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): What would you have done?

Mr Kennedy: The member asks, what would we have done? What we would have done in the shoes of the government is hold a public inquiry. We would not be reluctant to get to the bottom of what is the public interest in this, an important public issue.

The Acting Speaker: This completes the time allocated for debate. I will now place the question.

Mr McGuinty has moved opposition day number 1, "That the Legislative Assembly supports the establish-

ment of a commission of inquiry under the Public Inquiries Act to investigate the SARS outbreak and provide recommendations on how best to prevent and respond to such an outbreak in the future.”

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 nays have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1749 to 1759.

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

Ayes

Agostino, Dominic	Crozier, Bruce	Martel, Shelley
Bartolucci, Rick	Curling, Alvin	McGuinty, Dalton
Bountrogianni, Marie	Di Cocco, Caroline	McLeod, Lyn
Bradley, James J.	Duncan, Dwight	Parsons, Ernie
Bryant, Michael	Gerretsen, John	Patten, Richard
Caplan, David	Gravelle, Michael	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	Ramsay, David
Conway, Sean G.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Smitherman, George
Cordiano, Joseph	Marchese, Rosario	Sorbara, Greg

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

Nays

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

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 36; the nays are 51.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

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

The House adjourned at 1802.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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

Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Gary Carr

Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers

Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffière: Deborah Deller

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

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

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Algoma-Manitoulin	Brown, Michael A. (L)	Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant	Barrett, Toby (PC)
Ancaster-Dundas- Flamborough-Aldershot	McMeekin, Ted (L)	Haliburton-Victoria-Brock Halton	Hodgson, Chris (PC) 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) Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
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		
Essex	Crozier, Bruce (L)		
Etobicoke Centre / -Centre	Stockwell, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC) Minister of the Environment, government House leader / ministre de l'Environnement, leader parlementaire du gouvernement		
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		

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Mississauga East / -Est	DeFaria, Hon / L'hon Carl (PC) Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors / ministre des Affaires civiques, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées	Scarborough Centre / -Centre	Mushinski, Marilyn (PC)
Mississauga South / -Sud	Marland, Margaret (PC)	Scarborough East / -Est	Gilchrist, Steve (PC)
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 Transportation / ministre des Transports	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	Clearly, John C. (L)
Ottawa Centre / -Centre	Patten, Richard (L)	Sudbury	Bartolucci, Rick (L)
Ottawa-Orléans	Coburn, Hon / L'hon Brian (PC) Minister of Tourism and Recreation / ministre du Tourisme et des Loisirs	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, Hon / L'hon Ernie (PC) Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre associé des Affaires municipales et du Logement	Timmins-James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	Bisson, Gilles (ND)
Parkdale-High Park	Kennedy, Gerard (L)	Timmins-Baie James	Smitherman, George (L)
Parry Sound-Muskoka	Miller, Norm (PC)	Toronto Centre-Rosedale / Toronto-Centre-Rosedale	Churley, Marilyn (ND)
Perth-Middlesex	Johnson, Bert (PC)	Toronto-Centre-Rosedale	Marchese, Rosario (ND)
Peterborough	Stewart, R. Gary (PC)	Toronto-Danforth	Sorbara, Greg (L)
Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge	Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet (PC) Minister of Finance / ministre des Finances	Trinity-Spadina	Sorbara, Greg (L)
Prince Edward-Hastings	Parsons, Ernie (L)	Vaughan-King-Aurora	Arnott, Ted (PC)
Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke	Conway, Sean G. (L)	Waterloo-Wellington	Flaherty, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC) Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation / ministre de l'Entreprise, des Débouchés et de l'Innovation
Sarnia-Lambton	Di Cocco, Caroline (L)	Whitby-Ajax	Young, Hon / L'hon David (PC) Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Sault Ste Marie	Martin, Tony (ND)	Willowdale	Pupatello, Sandra (L)
		Windsor West / -Ouest	Duncan, Dwight (L)
		Windsor-St Clair	Kwinter, Monte (L)
		York Centre / -Centre	Munro, Julia (PC)
		York North / -Nord	Cordiano, Joseph (L)
		York South-Weston / York-Sud-Weston	Sergio, Mario (L)
		York West / -Ouest	
		Mississauga West / -Ouest	Vacant

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

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

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