



Legislative Assembly
of Ontario

First Session, 38th Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario

Première session, 38^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Thursday 10 June 2004

Jeudi 10 juin 2004

Speaker
Honourable Alvin Curling

Président
L'honorable Alvin Curling

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

Hansard on the Internet

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

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

Index inquiries

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

Copies of Hansard

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

Le Journal des débats sur Internet

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

Renseignements sur l'index

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

Exemplaires du Journal

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



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 10 June 2004

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 10 juin 2004

The House met at 1000.

Prayers.

PRIVATE MEMBERS'
PUBLIC BUSINESS

PETROLEUM PRODUCTS
PRICE FREEZE ACT, 2004

LOI DE 2004

SUR LE GEL DU PRIX

DE CERTAINS PRODUITS PÉTROLIERS

Mr Tascona moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 48, An Act to provide for an interim freeze in the price of certain petroleum products / Projet de loi 48, Loi prévoyant le gel provisoire du prix de certains produits pétroliers.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bruce Crozier): Pursuant to standing order 96, Mr Tascona, you have 10 minutes to lead off.

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Bill 48, the gas price freeze act, was introduced by myself on April 5 of this year in a move to stop consumer gouging at the pump and, more importantly, to bring stability to the gas marketplace in terms of pricing.

Since then, in the period of time of April, May and June, we have seen wild swings in the price of gasoline, swings sometimes of 20 cents per litre in the price of gasoline, which is just not supportable with respect to how the marketplace is actually working and in my view is strictly designed to take advantage of people who rely on it, and in particular, in my riding, where there is heavy, heavy commuter traffic to get to work; in other words, to take advantage of them in terms of the price of gasoline. After all, that is something they rely on day to day. What we are seeing, as opposed to last year when the price of gasoline at the pump was 62 cents per litre, is at times almost a 50% increase in the price of gasoline, which is detrimentally affecting not only the economy but also the pocketbooks of people who rely on gasoline to get back and forth to work.

So what this bill does is deal with price stability for 90 days, for April, May and June, and also an additional 60 days, which would take us through this summer, to bring stability into the marketplace.

The province has the power to set the price, as they do already in Prince Edward Island. In fact, what the Liberal

government is in effect doing for the price of energy is that they set the price with respect to what we pay for electricity. They can also do that with gasoline. Why they're not doing it, I really don't know.

As you are well aware, Bill 48 puts an interim freeze on the price of gas at the pump at the dollar amount of the product as of March 31, 2004. The act comes into force 10 days after it is passed by the Ontario Legislature and lasts for 90 days, with an option to be extended for an additional 60 days by the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

I recognize that the federal government is responsible for the gasoline marketplace under the federal Competition Act, but they continue to do nothing to stop consumer gouging. One of the main reasons is that they have not put in place realistic measures with respect to ensuring fairness in the marketplace by holding companies to a civil standard of proof as opposed to a criminal standard of proof. We are dealing with competitive activity in the commercial marketplace and the civil standard of proof is what should be put. We tried to get them to change that back when we were on the gas price task force in 1999, but the federal government has done nothing, notwithstanding that they had their own task force that recommended a civil standard of proof, and also the elimination of the GST on the price at the pump.

It is clear that consumers have had enough. I believe a freeze on the price of gasoline will bring a much-needed break and stability to the scene. I have always said that the solution to high and volatile gas prices lies in a more stable and competitive marketplace. The federal government needs to step up to the plate and manage this issue. A good start would be to fix the Competition Act so that the tools and powers are there to protect consumers and ensure the market operates in a fair and transparent manner, while at the same time making the industry responsible for defending its own pricing strategies and business practices.

After all, there are three main companies that control the gasoline marketplace. They also refine the gasoline and they sell it. They have controls at all levels of the marketplace. Quite frankly, that's something the government should be looking at with respect to what kind of profits they're making at each level. They'll say they're making nothing at the retail level, but rest assured, from what I understand, they're making a very handsome profit at the refinery level, to the tune of about 26%. That's something that is not fair.

I know the Speaker shares with me the concern about the marketplace, because he's put forth bills himself with

respect to notice in terms of changing the pricing, which would also leave the marketplace a little bit fairer with respect to changes in the price. Due to the lack of action on this issue by the federal government, I introduced this bill. If they won't do anything to stop the price-gouging monopoly, then the province needs to step in and provide the necessary protection for the people of Ontario.

Former Ontario Premier Bill Davis got it. He was the Ontario Premier who said he would not stand by and let the people of Ontario be taken advantage of as a result of high gas prices. He froze them. In 1974, after OPEC cut oil production and gas prices went through the roof, Bill Davis froze them. If Davis could do it then, we can too. That is what's needed right now.

I also want to mention a recent survey that was taken. I refer to an article in last Sunday's Toronto Sun. On June 6, the Toronto Sun reported the results of a poll. The poll asked Ontarians what they thought was the biggest rip-off. Guess what they identified? Across Ontario, 38% of the people stated that gas prices were the number one rip-off.

Anyone who knows my record on this issue is well aware that I have been pushing for lower gas prices since I took office. When I first addressed the issue of high gas prices to the current Liberal government, the response I got was laughable. The Minister of Energy, the Honourable Dwight Duncan, said, on May 13, "There is a world problem right now and for Ontario to act unilaterally to put a freeze on anything could do potential harm to the economy." To the minister I say, high gas prices are hurting Ontario taxpayers, the same taxpayers who were recently hit with huge tax increases in the budget.

1010

The minister also said that he can't see how either freezing gas prices or having gas stations post potential increases a few days in advance will do anything to help the gouged consumer. I respectfully disagree. If he feels it is within his power to control pricing in the hydro-electric industry, why wouldn't he do it with respect to gasoline prices? To him I say, then what will?

Hon James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism and Recreation): Stephen Harper wouldn't like this.

Mr Tascona: The Minister of Tourism is going to be facing a tourism industry under pressure. I can tell right now that there are a lot fewer cars coming up through Barrie because of the price of gasoline.

If you are so concerned and are watching the issue so carefully, what is your plan? What does the government plan to do about this? I hope the answer is not the same as that of his federal cousins in Ottawa. As we all know, what they have done or plan to do is absolutely nothing. I have a plan and it works. We know it works because it has been done before.

This is a serious issue facing the economy of Ontario and it's a serious issue facing the pocketbooks of many Ontarians. We've been having a petition put across the province with respect to this issue in terms of encouraging the government to pass Bill 48 and make sure it comes forth in a timely manner. This is second reading.

Also, we're putting in it that the federal government remove the GST, which is an illegal tax, a tax on a tax. The federal government has known from their own task force back in 1998 that the GST should be removed.

To make it clear in terms of where we stand on taxes, certainly the province's is a flat tax, 14.7 cents per litre. The federal tax is 10 cents per litre plus the GST. So when we were paying 62 cents for gasoline, the tax structure was still in place. The only variable tax was the GST put on by the federal government. Now at certain places you're paying up to 95 cents a litre, depending on where you are in the province, and the taxes are the same. What you're going to see, I imagine, once we get through this quarter, are unbelievable profits by the Big Three oil companies. They won't be made at the retail level; they will be made at the refinery level.

What I am asking for is a simple solution: price stability—it's within the jurisdiction of the province—until the marketplace sets itself in a way that the price of crude and the price in terms of what is happening at the refinery level are stable. It is unstable when you're seeing price fluctuations of almost 20 cents per litre back and forth. The price is going up 10 cents per litre and then decreasing. We have to have price stability. Otherwise, the economy is not going to function properly.

What's going to happen, with the Liberal budget that is taking, in general, between \$1,400 and \$2,000 out of the taxpayers' pockets, along with these hydro increases, along with car insurance increases and along with the price of gas is that we're headed toward an economy that's going right down the tubes.

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): I certainly understand the frustration people are going through with regard to the price of gas when they go to the pump and see the price going up and down. I think there is a great deal of, if you want, both scepticism as well as trying to—there is no clear understanding in the general public as to why these gas prices are going up the way they are, and they differ from gas station to gas station.

The member from Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford is bringing forward a bill. It's perplexing to me because I know he co-chaired a task force with Mr O'Toole, I believe, and they reported to the minister at that time, who was the Honourable Mr Runciman, Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relation, on June 29, 2000.

That task force, by the way, apparently provided to the minister at the time—the previous government also appointed a task force in 1998. I guess my question to the member is, if he feels that this is doable, that it's something the provincial government can do, why, then, did they not act to freeze the prices at that time? I don't understand why now, when he is in opposition. This is certainly good political fodder, but the reality is that the agreements we have under NAFTA and others do not give Ontario that flexibility to freeze the rates.

Now, I certainly understand that there should be discussion with our Minister of Energy and our petroleum industry in Ontario, and I believe that the minister has spoken with them and will be meeting with them in

regard to this issue, because we don't want to see our consumers at the pumps feeling that they're being gouged with these prices.

But let's look at the reality of this. I know that Mr Tascona has said that Premier Davis could do it, but he froze gasoline prices for 90 days in 1974 when OPEC cut production at that time. The irony in this place sometimes is that we can talk and compare things without anybody looking at the evidence and at the facts so that when we have an argument to this, there is actual substantive fact underlying what we're presenting. It kind of troubles me.

There's a huge difference. I know the member stated that, for instance, if we can somehow control the price of electricity—well, there's a tremendous difference. He's comparing apples and oranges here. I want to go back to when Premier Davis froze gasoline prices. He's trying to copy what Davis did. However, it was a different time, and in 1974, gasoline prices were regulated by the federal government, there was no NAFTA, and the 90-day delay reflected the timing for crude from Alberta to show up at gasoline pumps in Ontario. Under NAFTA, favouring domestic suppliers is not allowed. He knows that, and he understands that.

Again, I believe that the government certainly has a responsibility to meet and to discuss with the petroleum industry why these prices are going up and see what we can do for consumers; but to try to pretend that freezing prices at March 31 rates is a way to attain stability in Ontario is disingenuous, because the member understands full well that that's unrealistic and that the jurisdiction is not there for us to be able to do that. Nonetheless, I do believe that consumers need to have some protection in the fluctuation of prices from, as I said, increases of prices that seem to be sometimes not understood by the consumer.

Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): I'm pleased to rise and speak in support of the bill before us, Bill 48, An Act to provide for an interim freeze—I think it's important to recognize that it is an interim freeze—in the price of certain petroleum products. I commend the member from Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford for introducing this bill. From all the information I've had, the member has been actively and very strenuously working on this issue for some time, from the time that he was appointed as a member of what was commonly known as the gas-buster committee. He has been actively involved in this situation and worked very hard on it.

I do believe that, as the member across the way and the member from Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford pointed out, this really is a difficult situation to step in and freeze the price of petroleum products when generally the situation revolves around the federal government and their rights and responsibilities.

I do want to take exception, though, with the comment that it can't be done under NAFTA. Under NAFTA, you can't give preferential treatment for domestic suppliers. I don't see anything in the bill that deals with domestic suppliers. The results of this bill would in fact treat imported products exactly the same way that it treats our

own domestic products. So I think it may be a little far-fetched to have that comment.

1020

I think it's important to recognize that this problem isn't just new today, but it has been ongoing for some time. I was looking through some of my correspondence this morning, and I have a letter here—I just wanted to refer to it—from one of my constituents. It says, "I wrote your office in 1999 and 2000 concerning exorbitant gas prices that needed regulation, due to lack of competition and/or price-fixing that existed at that time, continued to exist in 2003"—he included some clippings with that—"and continues to exist today on a larger scale than ever...."

The gas price in Ingersoll the day that he wrote this letter—this letter was written May 16—was 90 cents a litre. In Nova Scotia, it was in the mid-90s. In British Columbia, it was \$1.02.

"The need for regulation was never greater, as obviously absolutely nothing has been done to curb these exorbitant prices five years later, federally or provincially. When, if ever, can we expect some action to control these completely unjustified prices?"

He has a PS on the bottom that I found rather interesting. I guess this is kind of a note to me: "Please don't refer to high crude prices. According to scale"—\$1 on the crude price is less than one penny a litre for the gasoline.

Just very quickly, I wanted to touch on when we talk about the price per litre at the pumps. I do a lot of travelling, as you do, Mr Speaker, up and down the 401 to come here to Queen's Park. I stop to fill my car up at least every other day when I'm travelling back and forth. It takes two trips per tankful. On the pumps, we have a little sticker. Now, I wouldn't want to suggest that it's misleading advertising, but if you read the sticker, it points out the amount of the per litre price that is crude, the amount that is tax, how much is for refining and so forth. The amount is in a percentage for each one.

Now, when these stickers were put on, if you read the very small lettering, it says that this was based on 2002 pricing. If you read that, then the percentage of crude or the percentage of the refining cost is very low. But, as the member mentioned in his introduction, the taxes are fixed. So the 13 cents provincial tax, the 11 cents federal excise tax and the GST—incidentally, the GST is the only one that does fluctuate—are an ever-decreasing percentage of the price of gas at the pumps.

Again, that goes to the PS on my letter here from my constituent, who says that isn't the total answer. There is more to it than the oil companies are telling us, as far as setting the price and it ever going up. It is, I suppose, based on consumer demand in an open marketplace, the problem being that there are so few refiners and so few actual distributors that they can really set the price wherever they want. They know that, as I'm going down the 401, I have no choice but to stop and buy the gas. When I was in the livestock feed business, competition meant that I had to keep the price in line or they would

just purchase from someone else. There was no set price that everybody was charging, and that's really what's happening here.

I just want to quickly go over what was related earlier by the member from Sarnia-Lambton, that there's really nothing that the provincial government can do. Well, I think this bill this morning points out that something can be done on behalf of the provincial government, and passing this bill would do that.

I have here some quotes. Also, I should mention that I've been in this House for a number of months and years, I suppose, and when the Liberal Party was in opposition, I heard some of the members saying that they had the answer to this. I have to assume, from when they had the answer, all the government of that day had to do was implement their answer. I believe it was Mr Bartolucci, the member for Sudbury, who said, "All we had to do was implement their answer." I can only assume, since all this Legislature really has the power to do is pass legislation, that there was something—when he said they had the answer, that they were proposing to legislate at least a temporary price freeze or some way of controlling the price from going up.

I think it is somewhat, I wouldn't say dishonest, but different, that they would suggest at one point that they had the answer and now say there is absolutely no answer available on behalf the provincial government. I think there's a conflicting story in those two.

The Minister of Energy said, I read from the paper of May 13, "I'm deeply concerned about the price of gas, far beyond what its impact is on automobile users,"

It is said worldwide; they are called the Five Sisters. Those Five Sisters make enormous profits, not only in Ontario, not only in Canada, but literally around the world.

The price of crude oil, although it has started to go up and there are many factors for making it go up, is only around \$40 a barrel. If you do the mathematics—and I invite all of the members to do the mathematics—of how many litres are in a barrel, there are over 200 litres of crude in a barrel of oil. For a minute, stop and think about that. That's about 20 cents a litre. There are refining, processing and transportation costs, there are all of those things, but west Brent goes for around 20 cents a litre. That's what the big oil companies pay for it on the spot market.

The big oil companies also have a supply in this country that lasts a long time. The oil that you pump into your gas tank today arrived in Canada—if it came from outside of Canada or came from Alberta—90 to 120 days ago. It has been in the system for a long time. Yet, if you watch—and we all watch—as the price of a litre of gasoline goes up every day, when the spot market says, “The crude oil price is going up a nickel or a dime today or a dollar a barrel today,” you can literally see that the price of the litre of gasoline being sold at the neighbourhood garage is going up at the same time. That is totally unfounded and unfair because the gasoline being pumped was paid for, shipped, processed and was sitting in a vault, reserve or a tank somewhere for 120 days. They know how to raise the prices and they know how to use the arguments of the spot market, but they are not beholden to that spot market for at least 90 to 120 days.

That's why I like this bill: because the bill will freeze the price for 90 days. If there is a good argument to be made on the spot market and if there is a good argument for the oil companies to make that the price of a barrel of oil, be it Brent, west Texas, North Sea or Alberta, has gone up a significant amount in the previous 90 days, then that's a fair comment. If it has gone from 20 cents to 21 cents a litre, or 22 cents a litre, maybe gasoline will have to go up a penny or two, or whatever it goes up, but the wild fluctuation every day is certainly nothing more than price gouging. The commuters know it, those who run automobiles know it, and even those who take public transit know it, because the public transit authorities, like the TTC, have to pay those prices too, unless, like the TTC, they're very smart and buy their gas in bulk at the year's beginning; the prices actually didn't affect them very much this year.

I was surprised—or I shouldn't have been surprised, I guess—to listen to the member from Sarnia-Lambton when she lambasted the member from Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford for not being successful in his previous government in putting his issue forward and having former Premiers Harris and Eves follow him in the direction he wanted to go. That is correct: He was not able to get them to follow the direction he wants to go. But he should be commended, because he has never deviated from the direction he thinks this province should go. If it takes him

one or two or five times to pass a bill like this, I am sure he will continue in his efforts.

I am asking the Liberals to follow him. I am asking you not to castigate him or say he was wrong or anything else about what happened before in a previous government. I am asking you to do what you have always said you would do if you were in government. You know, it's been very nice these last couple of weeks; we finally have a researcher, and I have some quotes of what some of you gentlemen have said in the past. I would like to read some of them out because I think they're quite instructive.

I'd like to start out with one that happened recently. Norm Miller, the member from Muskoka, asked Mr Bartolucci, who is now the Minister of Northern Development and Mines, a question on May 10 of this year about the bill. Mr Bartolucci replied, “It's incumbent that the petroleum products industry understand the significant impact that gas prices have on the people of northern Ontario.” He then said he'd been meeting with executives from the industry and that this was “the first time” blah, blah, blah, “that they met with a northern minister.”

He went on, though, to add that he would “never apologize for” what he did in opposition. He said that in light of the Conservative government, “We in the opposition had to be very creative and articulate the concerns of northerners.” He concluded by stating, “We will not be raising false expectations or hopes.”

This is from the same minister who introduced bills himself, but now, because he's on that side, he seems to be taking a diametrically opposite position than he did when he was on this side of the House. I have to tell you, he's not alone.

Interjection.

Mr Prue: No, he's done other things. I mean, here it is, Mr Bartolucci, April 12, 2000. He stood in this House, again on this side of House, with a petition. It was a wonderful petition because he, at the end, signed and said he was in agreement. It called upon the government to pass “Bill 16, the Gasoline Pricing Act, introduced by ... Jim Bradley;”—who is now a minister and who's right over here—“Bill 18, the Gas Price Watchdog Act, introduced by ... Mike Colle;”—who is sitting over there today and who is now the PA to the finance minister—“and Bill 52, the Petroleum Products Price Freeze Act, introduced by ... Rick Bartolucci.”

The whereases in that petition he presented had the sentence, “Furthermore, we the consumers want Mike Harris to know that we want to be able to go to the pumps and fill our tanks without emptying our pockets.”

On May 17 in Hansard, Mike Colle, who's sitting here today, noted that in 1975, Bill Davis had stepped in to protect consumers by freezing prices for 90 days. He urged the then Premier to “stop the bellyaching and take concrete action, because frankly people don't want to hear any more complaints. They want you to do your job. Prices are at 75 and 78 cents a litre.... Stop whining and do something.”

On November 23, 1999, Mike Colle, again in Hansard, asked the Minister of Consumer and Commercial

Relations, "Why don't you protect consumers? Why are you so afraid and unwilling to take on the big oil companies? Why don't you use your power to freeze and roll back gas prices just like Bill Davis did in 1975? When are you going to stand up for the consumer and bring these oil companies to account just like Bill Davis did in 1975?"

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): And what was the response?

Mr Prue: Well, I'm going to get to that.

On November 22, 1999, Mr Bartolucci tabled a petition he had signed asking government "to introduce predatory gas pricing legislation in order to control the amount of money we, the consumers, are forced to pay at the gas pumps."

1040

Mr Speaker, I don't want to leave you out either. In the Legislature in December 1998, Bruce Crozier, now the Speaker, and a very capable one, said, "Pricing is under the control of the province. If the government were really serious about the peril of the independent dealer in the province of Ontario, they would be looking at predatory pricing, because that is in their jurisdiction."

Last but not least, I'd like to go back to Mr Bartolucci. He seems to be a favourite in all of this. On September 3, 1997, Mr Bartolucci told the Legislature, "Our constituents, from any riding in Ontario, are tired of people passing the buck. They're tired of the provincial government putting the onus on the federal government. They're tired of the government saying it was the Liberals' fault or the New Democratic Party's fault.... Then I wrote to and discussed with the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations the idea that a commission should be set up, a commission to investigate when prices rise to see if it's acceptable and justifiable, so the consumer in Ontario would be protected. Again, nothing has happened with regard to that recommendation."

The opportunity presents itself again today. We have a bill that has been put forward by Mr Tascona, the member for Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford, a bill that will do exactly what at least four members of the government party, when in opposition, were asking to happen. It is a bill whose time has come again. It comes in cycles, but the time is very relevant today.

We can see in this province what is happening in terms of the trucking industry. We can see what is happening in terms of our industrial capacity, with the cost of manufactured goods being transported back and forth. We can see what is happening to tourism, with the number of tourists coming from the United States in decline and the number of our own internal tourists from Canada or from Ontario seeming very much to be in decline. We are seeing our restaurants and our tourist areas being hurt. We are seeing consumers every day being forced to pay increasing amounts of money merely to go back and forth to work. They are looking for answers.

Last October, we went through a general election. There were at least 231 promises that came forward from

the governing party. They promised to do many things: They promised not to raise taxes, they promised to make things better, they promised to increase the staff in our hospitals and they promised to do things in the schools. But they promised to listen to what the people wanted and that they would do consultations in a way that had not been done in many years. I invite the members opposite to go out there and ask your constituents what they think about this. We already know what they think about your hospital tax and we already know what they think about your ability to lead, but go out and ask them what they think about this price freeze.

I will tell you, if you pass this bill, if you support this bill, if you do something to regulate the high cost of gasoline and price-gouging in Ontario, you will redeem yourselves with some of those very people who have turned their backs on you in the last number of weeks and who have turned their backs on your Liberal cousins seeking election to Ottawa. This is an opportunity for you to do something right, to do something correct. This is an opportunity for you to actually help in keeping one of the promises you made last October.

I commend the member from Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford and I would ask that members opposite support his bill as well.

Hon Mr Bradley: It's always interesting, if you go back in Hansard, to read the speeches of people who sit on the opposition side and the government side. It seems only the names change; the arguments are the same.

I commend my friend Joe Tascona, as an opposition member, for bringing forward this bill. There's a bit of mischief in it, but I think he genuinely feels annoyed and angered, as we all do, by the high price of gas. I'm not one to say this is strictly politically motivated, but this is a political House and I understand that.

There are many quotes that could be made about what has happened years back. We have to say this, Joe: You were a member of the task force, the gas-busters or whatever it was called, that the last government set up to give the appearance of doing something about high gas prices. There were 14 recommendations that came out, and one of the 14 was implemented by the previous government, of which my friend Joe Tascona was a member.

When I asked questions of the previous government, they talked about the virtues of the free market system. I know this Conservative Party, with the exception of a few moderates in it, are very, very committed to the absolute free market determining all prices.

So I understand that when people are in opposition, they are able to bring forward this kind of legislation. In government, they get new information provided to them. I once said, Joe, that for the last 25 years Ministers of Energy have had the same briefing note about gas prices in the book when they get up to answer, because I have heard those answers.

But I'm as annoyed as I think most members are at what I consider to be—and you always get in trouble when you say this—the collusion that we see at the gas

pump. Nobody can tell me, when everybody puts up the price at the same time and it is just about the same—it goes up to 79.9 cents or something like that—that somehow there's not collusion. I don't know if you can call it price-fixing, but it's collusion. The other thing members have mentioned—and my friend Bruce Crozier on a number of occasions has talked about this annoyance—is the price jumping huge amounts almost overnight.

I think if you examine it carefully, you'll see that in these times of very high gas prices, the people who make the most money are the oil companies. You're right, Joe. You will see the next profit, and it will be listed as a huge profit by the oil companies in their next reporting. To say it's simply reflecting the price of crude oil—I find that not believable. Maybe I'm being unfair, but I don't think so. If you ask anybody out there, "Is it a problem?" it is a problem.

I look around the country and say, "So what are other parties, other governments, doing?" I thought, because I heard my good friend from Beaches-East York talk about the NDP, the prices must be lower in Manitoba. Indeed, they're not lower in Manitoba, with an NDP government. Then I said, "Well, OK, that's an aberration. Saskatchewan, surely." I looked in Saskatchewan and they are higher than they are in Ontario, and they're right next door to the oil patch.

I remember that when the NDP was in power—I hate to go back to these things—they raised gasoline taxes by 13%. I have some quotes here from Jenny Carter, a former energy minister, and Brian Charlton, both saying, in essence, "There's nothing we can really do about it." And I could say that of my many Conservative friends, but that's not what we're talking about today.

One thing I'm glad the member did mention is that it's not taxes that are the problem. The right wing also says that. I did hear Stephen Harper say, "If only you drop the taxes, all will be solved." Is there anybody in this House who thinks that if you drop the tax by five cents, the oil companies wouldn't simply put the price of gas up five cents? Of course they would. So that isn't the solution. The solution from the oil patch in Alberta, from Stephen Harper and Ralph Klein and so on, of simply dropping the tax, is not the solution. It's the companies putting the price up. I know where the strongest support comes from for my friend Stephen Harper and my friend Ralph Klein; it comes from that oil patch. In fact, they were dictating Conservative policy on environment. Just yesterday I heard him say, "We're going to abandon the Kyoto accord because I know how popular the Kyoto accord is in the oil patch of Alberta."

When this was done before, it seems to me we didn't have NAFTA at the time. I remember Brian Mulroney, that great Conservative Prime Minister, said, "NAFTA is absolutely necessary." He went to Washington and sang an Irish song with the late President of the United States, to whom people in the US are paying tribute at the present time, President Reagan. They put together the NAFTA agreement. The NAFTA agreement doesn't allow a two-price system. This is why, back when Bill Davis did it originally, you could do it.

There are a lot of people in the east who liked the national energy policy. It wasn't popular in Alberta. I understand that.

1050

Mr Tascona: PEI.

Hon Mr Bradley: The member mentions that PEI, which I think is about the size of the city of St Catharines, has some control. But when you examine what the prices are in those provinces, I wish they were substantially lower. When you examine them, they really aren't lower if there is a huge demand taking place.

What I like about the member bringing this forward is that it focuses some attention on the gas companies. That's what I like about it. That's not his only purpose. He wants to focus some attention on the government and say, "What are you going to do about it?" I understand that.

I met with the people from the United States and they said, "What is this doing with tourism? We're really hit with gas prices." They were talking about the United States, even though theirs are somewhat lower than ours. So all over the world we are faced with this situation.

I actually think that the more we can rail at the oil companies about this, the more focus of attention we put on them, the better. From that point of view, I want to commend the member for bringing forward this legislation at this time. I want to suggest to him that he speak to Stephen Harper and explain to him that it is the oil companies—his friends in Alberta that support the Conservative Party so strongly provincially and federally—that are the problem, not the gas tax. I want to commend my friend from Barrie for saying that. He understands that and is deserving of the greatest of praise for that.

This is an interesting piece of legislation, as I say. In opposition, everybody loves this. In government, they are a little bit afraid of it. They do remember that the federal Progressive Conservatives deregulated oil prices in Canada in 1985. It's unfortunate that that happened at that time, back in 1985. I think a lot of us would like to have seen that rolled back, but again, that's all to do with the NAFTA agreement and the inability to implement some of these tools, such as Premier Davis brought forward, because of that NAFTA agreement.

Good for you, Joe, for focusing attention on this issue. I'm sorry that as a member of the gas busters you were unable to bring the prices down when you were in office. It was all a big show. They stood out there in front of various places. I remember the pictures—always in the Toronto Sun, of course—of the gas busters, and the price of gas went up or went down according to what the market was going to do at the time.

The worst things that happens is when you bring forward this resolution and the gas prices are going down at the time, because you always want to bring forward a resolution or a bill at a time when the prices are heading way up. I don't think they are going to go down substantially over the next while.

I think it would have been good if Premier Harris and Premier Eves had brought the oil barons into their office

and laid the law down with them. The only time that Mike Harris and Ernie Eves seemed to meet with the oil barons was at the Tory fundraisers. That's that only place, because they were there at the fundraisers.

Let me say this, I think on behalf of all members of this House: We are angry about this. The environmentalists within the New Democratic Party would be saying, "We should be raising gas prices." I've heard them say that. Of course, it's a very fashionable—

Interjection.

Hon Mr Bradley: You're not really a New Democrat, because you're from East York as well as the Beaches, although I think the member for Beaches-East York is the future leader of the New Democratic Party. I want to say that to him.

But I think we've got consensus in the House that we're all angry about the gas prices in this province. The oil companies should be called on the carpet and told how unhappy we are about them, and any action that is legal and is possible should be taken to control these prices that are outlandish.

Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington): I am pleased to have the opportunity to follow the Minister of Tourism and Recreation and respond somewhat to his comments. I would agree with him that in our constituencies, substantial numbers of people are very, very angry about gasoline prices, the fluctuation of gasoline prices, certainly. I think the fluctuation has an impact on our economy and there are reverberations felt throughout our economy.

I want to commend the member for Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford for bringing forward this legislation. I think he brings it forward in the best tradition of private members' hour, representing his constituents and putting forward the plan and the idea that there needs to be a temporary freeze on gasoline prices.

As the member indicated, this is an idea that was pursued by a former government, a Progressive Conservative government, in 1974 in response to a serious increase in the gasoline prices at that time. I think it is quite right and proper that we would focus attention on this issue in the Legislature and quite right and proper that we would inquire what the government, if anything, is prepared to do about this problem. Certainly there have been speeches made in the past when Liberals were in opposition and New Democrats were in opposition, and I think we need to bring those ideas forward and inquire what exactly the government is prepared to do.

One thing the government could do is reduce the provincial tax on gas. Right now it is 14.3 cents a litre, I believe, if I am not mistaken.

Interjection: It's 14.7.

Mr Arnott: It's 14.7; I stand corrected. That is something that could be undertaken directly by legislation of this House, and I am sure that if the government brought forward a bill of that nature, it would enjoy the support of certainly the Progressive Conservative Party, and most likely the New Democrats as well. So I would leave that as an idea.

I know that my colleague the member for Simcoe North wants to participate in this debate as well, so once again, in closing, I will congratulate the member for Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford for bringing forward this important legislation.

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): I'd like to congratulate my colleague from Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford, a good friend of mine and a person who works very hard on behalf of his riding to make sure these types of issues are dealt with.

I have to very briefly comment on something the member for Waterloo-Wellington mentioned, and that is the fact that the provincial government in fact does have the ability to drop the sales tax. When we see the types of tax increases we have seen with things like the health premium, which is going to add probably \$2,200—I'm sorry; let me rephrase that. The 2004 budget that was just recently presented will add approximately \$2,000 to every working family in the province of Ontario in one form of taxation or another.

I think this is a real opportunity for the government when it is trying to rebuild the economy and trying to strengthen the aftermath of their budget. I think the proper and right thing to do is to actually drop the prices. However, I do believe with the interim freeze that the member has mentioned—I can remember sitting on the opposite side of the House when he was a member of the gas busters, and we had very minimum increases over those years. It was a difficult thing, a very difficult challenge he had. But since this government has taken power, we have seen about a 35% or 40% increase in the gas prices. Something must be done. We are not getting any leadership from Ottawa. Of course, we know they've got other problems, and we probably won't have a Liberal government in Ottawa very shortly. But the very fact of the matter is that we need leadership in this country. Based on the gas prices we are seeing here, Dalton McGuinty doesn't appear to be doing anything. We know that Paul Martin is doing nothing. So the official opposition will have to take the leadership role here.

I would ask that all members of this House support Mr Tascona's bill, Bill 48. It is an important bill, and I think that by implementing this, it will help rebuild the economy of the province of Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford has two minutes to reply.

Mr Tascona: I want to thank all the members who spoke on the bill and debated it: the members for Sarnia-Lambton, Oxford, Beaches-East York, and Simcoe North, and also the Minister of Tourism. I would urge the members here today to vote for this bill. It is important to get to the bottom of what's going on with respect to the gasoline price industry.

The government should be expected to do more than what the Liberal member for Sarnia-Lambton says. She says they have a responsibility to meet and discuss. I would say they have a lot more of a responsibility than that to the taxpayers of this province. The member for

Oxford is correct: The time to act is now. It's the appropriate time to send a message to the big oil companies. As the member for Beaches-East York said, they have a reserve of 90 to 120 days. There's no relationship to the price of crude at the spot market. What we see is a price gouge, in his words, and wild fluctuations day to day.

1100

In the words of the Minister of Tourism, he states very clearly that he feels there's collusion at the gas pump. The problem is these high-price fluctuations. He indicates that there's no reflection of that in the price of crude oil. There's no relationship whatsoever.

I think the gas companies are very clever to mirror, saying it's the taxes. They also say that's it related to the price of crude oil, when they have a 90- to 120-day reserve.

The Minister of Tourism says, "NAFTA stops us from doing that." Well, it doesn't stop the province of PEI from setting gas prices, and it also didn't stop the Ontario government from setting hydroelectric prices.

So I would say to the members, let's pass this bill. Let's send a message to the oil companies that we're serious here. As the Minister of Tourism says, "They need to be put on the carpet." This is the way to do it.

GREAT LAKES PROTECTION

Ms Jennifer F. Mossop (Stoney Creek): I rise today to move the resolution that in the opinion of this House, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario should do everything within its power to ensure that the Great Lakes, the largest source of fresh water in the world, be protected from pollution and degradation of all kinds, through appropriate legislation, monitoring and enforcement, and through intergovernmental relations.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bruce Crozier): Pursuant to standing order 96, the member for Stoney Creek has 10 minutes.

Ms Mossop: I had a dream the other night. I dreamt that I was very old and very frail, a grandmother sitting inside a small institutional room. There was a window, but I couldn't open it. In fact, it didn't open. It was made that way. I sat in a chair looking out. Through a sepia haze, I could see the lake, one of the Great Lakes of our planet.

Someone came in the room, and in my dream I knew that she was my granddaughter. She looked to be about seven years old. I asked her why she wasn't outside playing in the sun, on this summer day, down at the beach. She looked at me and furrowed her brow, a look of confusion and worry working her face.

"Granny," she said, "you know we can't go outside any more."

I nodded, remembering. I saw the pity in her young eyes. She climbed on to my knee and asked me to tell her again about what it was like in the days when we were allowed to go outside, in the days when you could feel the sun, still hot even in the late afternoon, warming our bare arms and legs, a gentle breeze ruffling our hair, the

lake glistening and sparkling. Gradually the reflection of the light on it would turn the surface into a shimmering silver lamé. As the sun lowered itself to the horizon, it cast a path of gold across the water, ending at our feet at the shore. I told her, again, how it felt to plunge into the cold, clear water, the sense of invigoration, the sheer joy of playing like dolphins in the waves in the water.

I woke up from that dream, but it's a recurring nightmare for me.

Some in this House may remember that one of the key reasons I ran for election was what I was witnessing along the shores of our Great Lakes, particularly the shores of Lake Huron and Lake Ontario, where routinely beaches are closed to swimmers. In fact, on Lake Huron a stretch has been permanently closed. It is the canary in the coal mine. We're being given a clear signal that our health is threatened.

One of the highest rates of breast cancer in the world is found on the northern shore of Lake Ontario. It is a clear signal that we are at risk and something is going very, very wrong.

In my early days as a reporter in the Niagara region, I covered the aftermath of the Love Canal crisis. Poisons had leached out of an old industrial chemical landfill site into a neighbourhood, into people's basements. It was believed that those toxins and many others were finding their way into the Niagara River and Lake Ontario, the source of drinking water for millions of Canadians and Americans.

There was a reporter at the St Catharines Standard at the time by the name of Doug Draper. He covered the environment exclusively, and he raised my awareness of the damage already done and the need for stricter regulations. I started to focus my work on the issue. I visited the Centre for Inland Waters in Burlington and I saw fish that had tumours on their gills and on their lips. I remember interviewing government officials who stubbornly refused to acknowledge that our water was becoming a health risk. I covered the efforts of various groups like Operation Clean Niagara, which at the time was headed by Margherita Howe, to get governments at all levels to recognize the threat to our drinking water and to move to protect it.

I have watched over the years as the algae has become thicker and thicker on the shores of Lake Ontario. Then, unbelievably, it showed up in Lake Huron. Three short years ago, walking along the beach of Lake Huron, I had to pick my way among the dead and dying waterfowl and fish. It was a scene of carnage, a slaughter. Why? We don't really know why, because the resources to find out had been slashed from government and agency budgets.

I have watched over the last few years as the lake turned from crystal blue to cloudy green, yellow and brown. I watch as the population along the lakes grows, both humans and animals, both of them being housed in larger and more abundant structures. Small family farms have given way to factory farms. Small cottage communities are turning into suburbs. Fertilizers and pesticides are liberally applied to our land and our lawns,

lawns that are ethnically cleansed of all species but green blade grasses, as if people will be more worthy or perhaps die happier if they have spent much of their time and their money, and risked the health of their children and animals, to have a manicured and uniformly green lawn. Those substances eventually make it into our lakes in runoff.

Of course, there is the toxic particulate that falls from the sky in raindrops into our waterways, particulate from the smog created by an ever growing number of cars, cars that seem to get larger and larger, idling monsters on these ribbons of concrete, they seem to be, eating up much of our green space. There is particulate, too, from industrial smokestacks, especially the coal-fired generating plants supplying us with much more light and power than we actually need, but we consume it all with a gluttonous zeal. Despite all that light, we still cannot seem to see our folly.

If we do nothing as politicians, as government, as a society, as individuals, we should protect the elements that sustain our very lives, although at times I think our suicidal behaviour brings into question the worthiness of saving humanity.

We impale ourselves on our vanity and our foolhardiness, our petty little wants, our short-sighted visions. We fall victim to seductive fantasies of a utopian lifestyle. We've lost touch with what is essential. We bow to pressure groups and lobbyists who think only in the here and now. We destroy the very things that sustain our very lives. No matter how rich or how powerful or how influential or how popular or how beautiful or pious or self-righteous, no matter how good or worthy we are, we cannot live without clean water and clean air. None of us can.

It is possible to turn around this damage. I remember the International Joint Commission celebrating victory over the high levels of mercury in Lake Erie in the early 1980s. That proved that, if recognized and acknowledged, environmental damage can be reversed. Mother Nature's ability to rejuvenate is remarkable. In fact, when I'm feeling particularly despairing about what we are doing to our magnificent lakes, I take solace knowing that what we are doing will only serve to wipe us out, and without us around, the lakes and the rest of nature will have an opportunity to renew. Forever, the setting sun will cast its path of gold across the lake, even if we are not here to revel in its beauty.

I know the McGuinty government is moving in the right direction on water quality and air quality, and I mention both water and air quality because they are inextricably linked. I know that the Minister of the Environment, Leona Dombrowsky, understands the tragedy of permanently closed beaches along Lake Huron, and I know we are introducing many initiatives that will be addressed by my colleague the member from Perth-Middlesex. He'll be discussing those a little bit later.

I know we are moving to address the pollution of our lakes, and I know that this government gets it, but we must be ever vigilant. We cannot take our lakes and all

they mean to our quality of life, to life itself, for granted. We must all, every one of us in this society, wake up and take responsibility for the damage we are collectively doing.

If not, I fear that one morning I will not wake up from my recurring nightmare: Those halcyon days in the sun with the breeze in our hair, swimming in the clean, clear water, will all be the stuff of lore, tales from granny.

1110

Mr Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa): I appreciate the opportunity to rise and speak on such an important issue. I would hope the member knows, although she's new to the Legislature, that there has been a great deal of action has taken place in this area already. I would hope the member knows that in June 2002, the Ontario-Canada five-year agreement to restore the Great Lakes took place, and \$51.5 million was put in place at that time to support the Great Lakes basin ecosystem

Also, a number of years ago, \$5 million was set aside to establish an agency called the Great Lakes Renewal Foundation. Their function at that time was to clean up the areas of concern. It was a joint commission between Ontario, Canada and the United States, talking about cleaning up the Great Lakes. This foundation was brought forward to help clean up these AOCs: areas of concern. They have spent a great number of hours of work on projects, including the ones in the St Clair River.

At the Bay of Quinte, I know they had Ducks Unlimited in as a partner, doing a lot of restoration in the marshes there. For those who don't realize it, marshes are one of the best ways to clean our waterways. As a matter of fact, I know of one place in Florida where they had problems with their water quality, with the taste and smell of their water. They put in a 50-acre marsh above where they got the water, and it cleaned up the water substantially. That's adding to it.

There are a lot of groups and organizations in the province of Ontario that are working very hard. In the member's own area, in the Randle Reef there was \$1 million that was set aside, in the Hamilton area, because Hamilton Harbour was one of the most polluted areas in the Great Lakes. Also, \$3.5 million and a lot of partners were brought forward in the Thunder Bay area, with Abitibi Consolidated, a lumber company, Canadian National Railway, as well as the Northern Wood Preservers, all contributing to the cleanup in that area.

Once upon a time, it was viewed that we could flush all this stuff down our streams. It takes a lot more than that. It's not just cleaning up the Great Lakes. It's the feeder streams. It's when we build houses and construction throughout Ontario. Everybody notices now how we have these ponds there. Once upon a time, we put up subdivisions and the water would go right into the streams. Then the banks would flood and cause problems later on. They've come to realize that what takes place, with all this blacktop and roof-top, with blacktop being driveways and roadways, and obviously roof-top is all the roofs—they collect water that used to seep into the system and then slowly drain into the water courses. As

we build these subdivisions, we eliminate those opportunities. Now they build these nice storm-water retention ponds in these areas to collect all that. Everybody thinks it looks great and wonderful, and it's nice, but there is a real reason why they have those.

Not only that, but you'll see the fountains there. People wonder why we have those fountains. The fountains are there because mosquitoes won't be able to breed in them. The way they use their proboscis to stick it into the air to catch air: The fountain stops that and it stops the breeding of mosquitoes to some extent in those areas.

So there's a lot of movement moving forward. Personally, this is an area I had a strong concern with, in my own riding and with other people around. It's an area where you have to start right at the youth. As a matter of fact, on Wednesday I had a classroom of kids going out. We released wild rainbow trout back into the Oshawa Creek. What I'm trying to do there is reinstitute the value of the stream system and the ecosystems within our community right in the schools. So as those kids grow, they learn.

We've done six schools in the riding so far this year. We take the kids down and we show them rainbow trout coming up to spawn in the stream. Some of the fish are 15 to 18 pounds. Then we take the eggs, put them in aquariums in the school, and then we let the eggs hatch. The kids watch the entire process. I provide a video and a classroom preparation document for the teachers in the schools. They do an entire learning subject in their curriculum with this.

Then, on Wednesday, there was the last school we were doing. We took the kids down and we actually released the rainbow trout back into the stream. They see the entire life cycle of that stream. They gain an understanding of how planting trees along the stream—we plant trees as well—actually adds to the entire benefit of this program because it slows the seepage that goes into the stream. It allows it to retain those waters so it doesn't flood. It shades the streams, providing cooling.

There are a lot of things happening that take place in this area. I know that a lot of companies have been actively getting involved. I know that the governments of Canada and Ontario and several private sector companies have signed a pollution prevention memorandum of understanding that aims to reduce emissions of priority toxic substances into the environment. Because of signed agreements like that, over 390,000 tonnes of toxic substances are no longer contributed back into the environment. There are a lot of things taking place in this area. All we have to do is look out and work with the companies.

In my own riding of Oshawa, I work with the city, Ducks Unlimited, OPG and the Great Lakes renewal trust fund foundation to rework with the Second Marsh in Oshawa. Actually, I work with the South Central Ontario Big Game Association in providing thousands of hours cleaning up the stream and the watercourse.

People don't realize what takes place here. It's an entire life cycle. It's like that show, the Lion King, where

it talks about the "great circle of life." It all comes together there. In these areas you look at what takes place. We actually took out the log-jams there. What log-jams do in a river—people don't realize—is slow down the water, and as the water slows down, it heats up. Guess what happens when the water heats up? Bacteria start to grow. If you can increase that flow down through the streams into the Great Lakes so there's not so much stoppage and heating up, it will reduce the amount of bacteria growth.

I know there are a lot of members within my own caucus who wish to speak as well, so I'm going to share my time. Thank you for the opportunity.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate.

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): I am standing to support this bill and commend the member from Stoney Creek for what I think were very nice words. I don't have dreams like that that I ever remember. I have to tell you that. I wake up in the morning wondering what I dreamed. Although I know I dreamed, it's gone. Anyway, we support the protection of the Great Lakes. I think every rational human being on this planet would support the protection of our environment.

Having said that, there is no alternative but to accept the motion that is here and hope that the motion will trigger some further action, because we believe further action needs to be taken. It is not enough to say the nice things that I'm sure are going to be said here today, but there has to be a commitment by this government that goes well beyond what we saw in the budget that was presented in this House just a few weeks ago.

I invite the member who put forward the motion to turn to page 12 of the budget, because what you'll find on that page is something very chilling. You will find that the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Ministry of the Environment are both slated, this year, for a freeze in the expenditure. They will have to do what is necessary to protect the very Great Lakes that we hold dear. What is even worse on page 12 is that these are two of 15 ministries that between now and the year 2007-08 will actually see a reduction in the budget to the point of some 12%, so that they cannot even protect what they are doing today; they will be less and less able to protect in the years between now and 2007-08.

The statement is an excellent statement. The actions, though, belie what we are trying to do or what the member is trying to say. The same statement has already been made and in fact has been a part of the governance of this province since 1971—for 33 years—the Canada-Ontario agreement respecting the Great Lakes basin ecosystem, 1971. That act contains almost identical words to the motion that is put before us today. That act clearly set out in that time frame how we were to protect the Great Lakes.

There has been some good action. I remember as a boy not being able to swim at the beaches of Toronto at all, and now they're only closed down half the swimming season. I remember seeing no fish at all in the Don River, and now we do see some minor fish—no sport fish.

Interjection.

Mr Prue: Yes, but things are improving. I travel every year down the Don River as part of a group of canoeists who travel down from Lawrence Avenue to the lake, and you can see that the banks of the Don River are being cleaned up. You can see that Lake Ontario is a cleaner and better lake in the last number of years than it was in the past. But so much more remains to be done, and I am afraid that with the gutting of the environmental bills and ministries between this year and 2007-08, which has happened in this budget, all of the good wishes of the member from Stoney Creek will not happen and she will wake up from that dream saying, "We should have done more." That's really where we should be headed.

1120

In this very chamber, in April, the Minister of the Environment and the Minister of Natural Resources stood up to announce that there was going to be some \$13 million put into Great Lakes cleanup. I would have thought that was a good announcement, but it wasn't. In fact, all that was, was a reannouncement of what the Conservatives had promised in their \$51 million spread out over five years. This year they had already promised \$13 million. So what we got from a new government was nothing more than saying, "We are going to continue with the program of the previous government."

Now, it would have been worse, I will put it to you, had they announced, "We're going to cut that." But there was nothing new. There was no new commitment that had not already existed and been passed by this Legislature. It was the same old arguments, when in fact you recognize and I recognize, and most thinking people recognize, that we are simply not doing enough to protect the Great Lakes and the waters that flow into the Great Lakes. We are not protecting them enough for ourselves, and we are certainly not protecting them enough for our children and for those who come after us.

I put it to the member that although we will be supporting this motion, there are six things that we need to do, six actions that this Legislature must pass, six things that the government must find the money to do, if the wonderful words that she said are to have any meaning at all.

The first is that we need to have a separate office for the Great Lakes. The Great Lakes are, of course, as she put it in her motion, the largest single source of fresh-water in the world. They are not in and amongst themselves the largest lakes—because the Caspian Sea is, for anyone who's a good geographer—but Lake Superior and right down to the smallest lake, Lake Ontario, are magnificent and huge bodies of water, and have enormous potential, not only to provide fresh water to communities, but also to have a full range and ecosystem of life, support a huge development of fisheries, a huge development of birds and all of the life that comes from a water environment. And it is simply not there. There are too many places where those ecosystems are damaged, and too many places where there are problems.

We need to have a separate office that looks only at the Great Lakes and can work in conjunction with the

Canadian government, the state Legislatures and the American government, to make sure that those are cleaned up and are made at least as good as they were, at least as pure and as clean and as vibrant as they were when people first started to settle on these shores. I should say, when western people first started to live on these shores. I'm sure that our native Canadians treated the lakes with much greater respect than we of European heritage did in subsequent years.

The second thing we need to do is have real plans and funding to look at invasive species. We can read every day in the newspaper about some of those invasive species that have found their way into the Great Lakes systems. We know about the lampreys and how they completely devastated the lake trout industry and fishery in the Great Lakes. We know about zebra mussels and how they, although they appear to be cleaning up the water a little, or making it clearer, are also making it much more difficult for many, many fish species to continue to exist, particularly walleye fisheries around the Bay of Quinte. We know about other invasive species that are finding their way in—everything from quagga mussels to fish—round gobies—spiny water fleas, all of those things that are finding their way into the Great Lakes that ought not to be there. We need to have real plans to get rid of them and we need to have the funding to do it. There has been funding for many years, as an example, for getting rid of the sea lampreys, by using lampricide, but we also need to find other ways of making sure those invasive species do not grab hold and drive out the native species from our lakes.

We need to look and have plans and real funding to make sure that contaminated discharge is looked after. A great amount of contaminated discharge continues to flow into the lake. Places like Love Canal are not unique. Love Canal was discovered, but there are others that we don't know about but that we need to know about.

We need to also look at a real problem that is emerging, and that is in terms of pharmaceutical discharge. People don't look at this. We have no real plans for pharmaceutical discharge and how that is going to impact life in all of the Great Lakes. We need to have some plans and funds for at least these three things.

The next item we need to look at is to restore the Great Lakes program. The Great Lakes program was largely gutted by the previous government in the middle 1990s. The Great Lakes program needs to be reintroduced and it needs to be funded. There is no money in this current budget, and perhaps no one thought that it was needed. But with the passage of this motion, I am asking the members opposite, in discussing the budget bill—and we heard yesterday that it may go out to committee—to actually look for money for restoring the Great Lakes program.

We are asking next that there be remedial plans. The Canadian Environmental Law Association says that in order to remediate the Great Lakes—those that are in the province; there are four of them—we need to have remedial plans to bring back the lakes where there are

problems. Those remedial plans are going to cost about \$1.9 billion, if the Great Lakes are to be restored. That is a lot of money for a government that is struggling to find it. That is a lot of money. I'm sure it's going to take place, not in one budget year, but over many budget years, in order that the Great Lakes can be revived and in order that that little girl can go out and swim in the lake that was in the dream. It certainly cannot be done with just statements that we want it to happen. It's going to take a government budget that is a good deal more enlightened on the environment and natural resources than the one we saw introduced here a couple of weeks ago.

We know that the remediation needs to be improved. The previous government passed a \$51-million plan to help the Great Lakes over five years. And it has worked to some extent—I'm not going to say it hasn't worked—but it certainly is not enough. If we are to do the whole job, the Canadian Environmental Law Association says we need \$1.9 billion, and I would think it should be spent sooner rather than later. That might be an amount over 10 or 20 years, but it certainly needs to be spent. They assess the cost of remediating Hamilton harbour alone—and I think the member from Stoney Creek will be interested in this—at running somewhere between \$545 million and \$600 million, if that is to be a clean and safe harbour, if you are to swim in and around the beaches or areas of Hamilton, Stoney Creek and the like, if you are to have fish that you can catch and eat, if you are to have sports fishing and all the things that we would like to think that you can go out and do on Lake Ontario.

1130

So what I am saying is that the words are good. The action that we need to take is clear to us; we have to have the resolve as a Legislature and the resolve as a government party—you being in the government party—to literally put your money where your mouth is, because I am afraid that we know the problem but that we can conveniently sometimes as people turn and say that it may go away, that Mother Nature is wonderful and can remediate herself—and of course she can. But she can't remediate herself when there are invasive species. She cannot remediate herself when there is pharmaceutical dumping, she can't remediate herself when there are discharges we don't know about and she certainly can't remediate herself in the presence of human beings without those same human beings having the wherewithal to spend the necessary funds to assist Mother Nature as the population grows, as the number of people on the planet increases, as new housing subdivisions are being built in and around Ontario, as we continue our love affair with the car, as acid rain falls, and the 100,000 other things we do that we should not do to our Great Lakes.

In the minute that is left, I would like to commend the member for Stoney Creek for her thoughtful analysis of where we should go. She has set out very well what a grandmother might see through sepia windows—I haven't heard that word in a long time—and how she

would like to leave a legacy for her granddaughter. I would like to reiterate, though, that the problem is not in the dream, the problem is in the action that will follow that dream. If the dream was a wake-up dream—and we've seen many stories in history where a dream has set someone to great action or forewarned them about a future they were able to divert—let this be one you are able to divert. Go back to your caucus, go back to the cabinet ministers and tell them that the amount of money that is being spent on the Great Lakes cleanup is not sufficient for that little girl.

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): I'm pleased to stand and support the member for Stoney Creek, and I thank her for bringing this motion forward. Each of us in this House has some tools at our disposal to bring forward issues that are extremely important to us. I have to say that this is something that is also near and dear to my heart. As you know, I have a constituency that is at the tip of Lake Huron and into the St Clair River. As well, we have the petrochemical industry there. We have a clustering of industry there that is the largest in Canada.

You may not know this, but when I was in opposition, one of my biggest battles was trying to get stricter standards for the disposal of hazardous waste. Why? Because it's about the future, it's about degrading our environment, our habitat. I don't want to have the nightmare you spoke of—you called it a dream; I call it a nightmare. I have to say that one of the more frightening aspects of what's happening in this election is the fact that the Kyoto accord is not going to be—it's an issue federally. Yesterday I heard Mr Harper say that he doesn't agree with the Kyoto accord and that we don't have to do this.

Each one of us has a responsibility for the future, and you're absolutely right when you say that if we cannot have clean water and clean air, then there is no purpose, in my opinion, in government. Government has to have the will to leave this a better place than we found it.

I know that our government is doing a great deal in my area, with the spills action team. We have a SWAT team. You talked about the Love Canal. Those standards for disposal of hazardous waste came about in the United States because of the Love Canal.

As I say, I certainly pressed the former government. I'm really thrilled to know that we're taking at least one step further and that we are going to have stricter rules for the disposal of hazardous waste very shortly in this province, which is another step in taking that nightmare away. Hopefully, we can improve this place because of the direction this government is going.

I thank you for bringing this forward and reminding all of us that we have a responsibility here to do something about it and not just to talk about it. One more thing I have to say in respect to the Great Lakes is, that certainly is a hot point where we have to stop these spills that go into the lakes, and we have to stop these emissions that go into the air. We can only do that through regulatory stewardship, if you want, that government imposes.

I thank you very much for bringing it forward. I'll certainly support it, and I know that we, as a government—I wouldn't be a Liberal; I wouldn't be here if I didn't think our government is committed to cleaner air and cleaner water.

Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant): I'm pleased to address this motion from the member for Stoney Creek. I think it goes without saying that everyone in this House would agree that this government should continue to do everything in its power to ensure the Great Lakes are protected from pollution. Quite simply, it's essential that the efforts continue. The Great Lakes are a natural resource for environmental reasons, but they also support so much of Ontario's and Canada's economy.

I think of Canadian industries, and we certainly know of cases of industrial pollution. Of course, we bear in mind the \$100-million commercial fishery that is supported by the Great Lakes, and the recreational fishing industry comes in to the tune of \$300 million a year in revenue. That's why our government—and this goes back certainly to 1972, previous Tory governments dating back to the Canada-Ontario agreement respecting the Great Lakes basin ecosystem. We've introduced a number of measures coming from that, and continued to do that up till last fall.

In June 2002, Ontario and Canada announced the five-year agreement to protect and restore the Great Lakes basin, and in 2002, our government alone committed \$51.5 million over five years. Certainly on this side of the House, we trust that the new government will carry on that five-year commitment and that minimum commitment of \$51.5 million respecting the Great Lakes ecosystem.

Provincially, so many ministries are involved: certainly the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Ministry of Agriculture—measures and funding that came out of much of the nutrient management concerns—and, of course, the Ministry of the Environment. The five-year agreement does set aggressive targets to clean up the Great Lakes, and co-operation and sharing is very important in that regard.

I'd also like to mention that while this motion addresses the Great Lakes, there are other lakes in the province of Ontario. And lo and behold, with the recently introduced Adams mine legislation we have a whole new definition for lakes. I don't know whether this kind of resolution could handle the kind of definition coming from the Adams Mine Lake Act. In fact, the definition is found in section 7: A lake is now defined as "a body of surface water that ... results from human activities, and ... directly influences or is directly influenced by ground water," and is larger than one hectare—that's about 2.2 acres.

I'm wondering about these other sites, other lakes by this definition: obviously no new landfill or refuse will be going into these man-made, defined lakes. However, there are many bodies of water out there under this new definition that contain garbage, and given that we have

this new definition, will this legislation be broadened to encompass the cleanup of all these newly defined lakes—pits, quarries, gravel pits, iron ore mines, whether it be Dofasco or Stelco? Under this new definition of "lake," are we now looking at committing to cleaning up all these other existing sites? I'll leave that for members to deliberate.

Mrs Maria Van Bommel (Lambton-Kent-Middlesex): I, of course, speak in favour of this motion. The motion of the member for Stoney Creek is more of a vision statement for this Assembly. The member from Lambton—Sarnia-Lambton, I should say; I'm the member from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex—was also talking to her constituents. She and I share the same lake-shore. Our constituents live along the St Clair River. There certainly has been a lot of media focus on the issues of water and air pollution in that area.

1140

There was a great deal of concern last summer, in August, when there was a spill that affected the people of Walpole Island and Wallaceburg. There was an initial panic when people realized what could potentially be in their tap water, in their drinking water. But even beyond the panic comes the anxiety and frustration of the people in my constituency and in my riding. They argue among themselves about what should be done. They argue among themselves within their own families about what to do. Some are living with only bottled water. They've now refused to drink water from their taps.

As a young person, I would never have believed that some day I would pay for bottled water, and yet we do it all the time now. It has become part of our life. Yet, 20 years ago someone would have said I was crazy to pay good money for water. It was available in abundance, and everybody expected that. But that is no longer the case. My grandchildren see bottled water as a normal part of their lives, and I find that really frightening. Where we thought getting something like pop or chocolate milk was a great thing, they think water is a great thing. That tells me something about how we've changed as a culture. We no longer have the confidence that we should have in our tap water.

In my constituency, we also have issues of air pollution and issues of fly ash that comes from the stacks in the industries in my area. That has brought about a lot of concerns among farmers in my community, who see this ash floating on to their crops, on to the hay fields, and that hay, in turn, is fed to the cows and gets into the milk. There's worry about what's going to happen and if it is really impacting. We are told it isn't, but there's always that gnawing fear, that concern that somewhere there might be something getting through.

We've had studies done in my community, actually by a former federal member, the Honourable Ralph Ferguson, who did studies on the incidence of cancer in his farm community of Alvinston, in Brooke. They found a higher incidence of cancer there compared to neighbouring communities. They're trying to find out what's causing this. Why are we seeing pockets of increased cancer incidence in certain areas and not in others?

We heard earlier in private members' business about an act that would ask us to freeze gas prices. I have concerns about such things. I know we all drive vehicles, and we talk about gas and that we need to have something that's affordable. But if we freeze gas prices, we encourage people to continue to buy gas and not look for alternative fuel sources to power our vehicles. Are we necessarily doing a good thing there?

I hope we can learn from the things we have seen in the past and that we will be able to clean up our environment. I thank the member for Stoney Creek for bringing forward her motion.

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford): I want to speak on this resolution with respect to the Great Lakes and just point out a couple of facts on the record. I note in the budget speech that the Minister of Finance, Greg Sorbara, says that between 2004-05 and 2007-08 the budgets of 15 ministries are either being flatlined or decreased. Natural resources and environment are among those 15 ministries. So that raises a question about anything the government would want to do with the Great Lakes that costs money.

Another fact, and I report it out of the Windsor Star of August 22, 2003, is that a subsidiary of Minister of Finance Greg Sorbara's former company, Royal Group Technologies, was responsible for three chemical spills into the St Clair River last year. In 2003, Royal Polymers, a Royal Group subsidiary, was responsible for three chemical spills, two in August and one in November. The company failed to notify the Ministry of the Environment of the spills for several days.

In the article it states, "... from Royal Polymers of Sarnia entered the water system and almost a week after an initial spill during the power blackout on Thursday.

"While the chemical would not have contaminated the water supply by the time it reached the Windsor area, city water officials are concerned they weren't notified immediately." That's a quote of Saad Jasim, director of water quality and production for the Windsor Utilities Commission.

"The MOE was not informed about the spill until well after the fact," Jasim said. "We still don't know a lot of the details ... but there was an unfortunate communication gap" about this major issue.

"Despite the fact the MOE spill hotline was up and running on generator power during the initial blackout—and officials were receiving calls about sewage spills and other emergencies—they did not receive word about the Royal Polymer incidents until late Tuesday, said John Steele, ministry spokesman.

"Whenever there is a chemical spill the (ministry) action centre must be notified immediately," Mr Steele said. "And we were not. This incident has been turned over to our investigations branch."

That was on August 22, 2003, from the Windsor Star.

From the Sarnia Observer, November 27, 2003:

"Royal Polymers Ltd discharged an estimated 828 kilograms of toxic vinyl chloride to the air Saturday morning after a process computer failed. The company

notified the Ministry of the Environment and says it called local radio stations the same day.

"But a news release wasn't issued until Tuesday morning and the four-sentence summary the Observer received explained little about the incident and nothing about its impact. Royal Polymers is already under investigation by the environment ministry for failing to immediately report a chemical spill to the St Clair River this summer." That's as I quoted with the Windsor Star, which was in August 2003, and here we have in November 2003, from the Sarnia Observer, the actions of Royal Polymers, which is a Royal Group subsidiary—as indicated earlier, Minister of Finance Greg Sorbara's former company—with respect to these spills into the Great Lakes without notifying the Ministry of the Environment. Quite frankly, that is really, really difficult to understand, that type of irresponsible conduct which was being reported in the Windsor Star in August 2003 and then again in the Sarnia Observer in November 2003.

So I think the member who has put forth this resolution should be talking to her Minister of Finance, should be talking to her government, because quite frankly, they have no intention of doing anything about the Great Lakes. They have flatlined the spending for natural resources and the environment, and in fact there are actions going on on the Great Lakes with respect to the Ministry of the Environment that are not being reported. They have a hotline to make sure that things are reported about spills and also what's going into the air with respect to discharges from this particular company. So I would say that the member is good-intentioned, but I don't think her government is.

Mr Kevin Daniel Flynn (Oakville): It's a pleasure to speak to this resolution today, and certainly the previous speaker trying to give us lessons on environmental protection was worth the price of admission this morning.

I don't think there's a resolution, I don't think there's anything you can do, that's more pro-business for the province of Ontario than to have a clean, strong environment.

1150

It's not just words. Everybody, I think, had "green" in their last campaign slogans. Politicians seem to think that if you drop "green" into every second sentence, then you're doing something good for the environment. But, certainly, it's action that's got to be taken.

As it is on most environmental issues, and as it has been for the last eight years in this province, the politicians have been lagging far behind the public, when you're looking at the urban impact of growth on the Great Lakes. There's nothing as basic as clean water to sustain life. There's no business—not one business—that could operate in this province without clean water, and we just have to look at examples.

In my own community, we found we had a problem with algae in the Great Lakes, on the shoreline. It was impacting the local economy. It was impacting the lifestyles of those who lived close to the shoreline. Simply, it was fouling the shores. Who led the charge on

that? It was not the local politicians. It was certainly not the provincial government at the time, the previous Eves-Harris government. In fact, I'm not even sure if we could get anyone to answer the phone during those years. It was the people in Halton. The people in Halton came together and formed what's called the Lake Ontario Shoreline Algae Action Committee, which eventually drew the support of local politicians, Conservation Halton and the University of Waterloo.

Now we're going into what's called a yellow fish program. Most of the storm sewers in the urban areas in Oakville and Burlington will have a yellow fish painted on them this summer. The idea is that before you pour anything down a storm sewer, you remember that it's going to find its way into the lake. You remember that there's wildlife in that lake. You remember that that lake's part of our ecosystem.

So I am so pleased to see a resolution as forward-thinking as this. Hopefully this signals a change, a turnaround from the previous eight years of environmental mess we've lived with.

Mr John Wilkinson (Perth-Middlesex): I'm delighted, as the newly minted parliamentary assistant to the Honourable Leona Dombrowsky, the Minister of the Environment, to speak to the member from Stoney Creek's resolution.

Our government is committed to higher standards of numeracy and literacy. We're committed to that. But, for some people, it's a little bit too late. I had the member for Beaches-East York say to this House that somehow, on page 12 of the budget, we were reducing our financial commitment to the Ministry of the Environment. Then the member from Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford had to jump in as well, because some people obviously have trouble with literacy and numeracy. He also agreed with the member that somehow there wasn't a commitment.

I refer you to page 71 of the budget papers, under operating expenses for the Ministry of the Environment: last year, under the previous regime, \$260 million; this year, \$304 million. Now, where I come from, that's an increase. That's not a decrease. I look at the capital budget of the Ministry of the Environment: \$4 million with the previous government. What are we spending? It's \$13 million. To walk into this House and talk about page 12, and you can't find your way to page 71 and page 72—my God, that's amazing.

I want you to know that the Ministry of the Environment is committed to the resolution today. I want to remind the members of the House that in April the Minister of the Environment and the Minister of Natural Resources reinforced that commitment with a \$13-million investment, that this government is supporting the cleanup of contaminated sediment in Ontario's 15 identified problem areas, known as the Great Lakes area of concern.

Our government is committed to developing a renewed relationship with both the federal government and the Great Lakes governors to protect this shared resource, and we're meeting our commitments under the

Canada-Ontario agreement on Great Lakes water quality. Source protection will help protect lakes and the many smaller watersheds that feed them, and source protection plans will help prevent the excess buildup of harmful pollutants.

But I wanted to say to the member from Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford, now that I've been able to develop the corporate message, I want to talk from the heart. There was a previous government in this land that slashed—slashed—the Ministry of the Environment's budget by a third. Half of the people were gone. What did we get from that? We had a government that sent a signal that they weren't committed to the environment. There are families in this province who paid a tremendous price for that decision.

Our government is committed to the environment. Our government—

Mr Tascona: Point of order.

Mr Wilkinson: Go right ahead.

Mr Tascona: Mr Speaker, can you have the member speak to the resolution? He's not even remotely close to it.

Mr Wilkinson: Oh, the truth hurts, my God, and I only have 59 seconds left.

I want to let you know that the first bill introduced by my ministry, the Adams Mine Lake Act, Bill 49, says to the world that we don't take trash, dump it in the aquifer and then somehow figure that it's not going to end up being in the Great Lakes. That's why we passed that act. I might mention that the opposition voted against that—not the NDP, but the Progressive Conservatives.

Now, why would they do that? Because they still haven't got the message of the last election, that the people of Ontario want a government that protects the environment, that puts more resources into it.

I want to commend the member for Stoney Creek. That's why I want to commend her for this. I urge all members that they should vote on this resolution, because Ontario will want to know whether a previous government has learned the lesson.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Stoney Creek has two minutes to reply.

Ms Mossop: I want to thank all the speakers today, who largely greeted my tales from granny with the spirit in which they were delivered. A lot of dollar figures have been thrown about—how much money was spent, how much money is being spent, how much money should be spent—but there are two things that are far more important in this.

The first one is education. We all have to understand exactly what we are doing when we pollute our lakes. We have to understand that in every choice we make, in every decision we make, in every action, if we are polluting our lakes, what we are doing is akin to manslaughter—period.

The second thing that we need to do—and I found this out when I went to a conference in Hamilton recently on heritage. It was largely about heritage buildings, and the preservation of heritage buildings, but a world expert was

there, author Anthony Tung. He travelled all over the world to determine why some places, some societies, were more successful at preserving their heritage, both man-made and natural, than other societies.

The answer was simple: The ones that were successful had binding laws that said, "No, you cannot do that. There are no exceptions. There are no appeals." You can throw all of the money in the world at the problem, but if you don't have a binding law, you will not have any success at all—period.

I understand that it's important to have money for the enforcement and all the rest, but the bottom line is we have to all understand, every one of us, the intrinsic value of our lakes to the very lives of all of us, now and in the future. We have to reflect that in a binding law that says, "No, you cannot pollute the lakes—period." Thank you for the mathematics, the arithmetic, and all the rest, but my efforts will be focused with this government, and all other governments, to have binding laws to protect our future.

PETROLEUM PRODUCTS
PRICE FREEZE ACT, 2004

LOI DE 2004

SUR LE GEL DU PRIX

DE CERTAINS PRODUITS PÉTROLIERS

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bruce Crozier): We shall deal first with ballot item number 25, standing in the name of Mr Tascona.

Mr Tascona has moved second reading of Bill 48, An Act to provide for an interim freeze in the price of certain petroleum products.

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

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

We will call in the members after we've dealt with the next ballot item.

GREAT LAKES PROTECTION

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bruce Crozier): We'll now deal with ballot item number 26, standing in the name of Ms Mossop.

Ms Mossop has moved that in the opinion of the House, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario should do everything within its power to ensure that the Great Lakes, the largest source of fresh water in the world, be protected from pollution and degradation of all kinds, through appropriate legislation, monitoring and enforcement, and through intergovernmental relations.

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

I thought I heard a no.

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

I actually need some help. I thought I heard a no in that. It's a no. OK, thank you. I've gotten my assistance now.

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1201 to 1206.

PETROLEUM PRODUCTS
PRICE FREEZE ACT, 2004

LOI DE 2004

SUR LE GEL DU PRIX

DE CERTAINS PRODUITS PÉTROLIERS

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bruce Crozier): Mr Tascona has moved second reading of Bill 48, an Act to provide for an interim freeze in the price of certain petroleum products.

All those in favour will please stand.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Di Cocco, Caroline	McMeekin, Ted
Barrett, Toby	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	McNeely, Phil
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Hardeman, Ernie	Mossop, Jennifer F.
Brown, Michael A.	Jeffrey, Linda	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Brownell, Jim	Kwinter, Monte	Prue, Michael
Colle, Mike	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Rinaldi, Lou
Craitor, Kim	Martel, Shelley	Ruprecht, Tony
Dhillon, Vic	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tascona, Joseph N.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please stand.

Nays

Baird, John R.	Mitchell, Carol	Van Bommel, Maria
Caplan, David	Patten, Richard	Watson, Jim
Delaney, Bob	Racco, Mario G.	Wilkinson, John
Gerretsen, John	Sandals, Liz	Wong, Tony C.
Marsales, Judy	Smith, Monique	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Matthews, Deborah	Smitherman, George	

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 24; the nays are 17.

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Pursuant to standing order 96, the bill is referred to—

Mr Tascona: I'd like it referred to the standing committee on agencies, boards and commissions.

The Deputy Speaker: Mr Tascona has moved that the bill be referred to the committee on agencies, boards and commissions.

I hear a no.

All those in favour, please stand and remaining standing. Take your seats.

All those opposed will stand and remain standing. Take your seats.

A majority of the House being opposed, this bill will be referred to the committee of the whole.

Mr Tascona: I'd move that it be put to the Legislative Assembly committee.

The Deputy Speaker: Is there unanimous consent that this motion—

I heard a no.

The doors will be open for 30 seconds before we deal with ballot item number 26.

GREAT LAKES PROTECTION

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bruce Crozier): Ms Mossop has moved that in the opinion of this House, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario should do everything within its power to ensure that the Great Lakes, the largest source of fresh water in the world, be protected from pollution and degradation of all kinds, through appropriate legislation, monitoring and enforcement, and through intergovernmental relations.

All those in favour will please stand.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Hardeman, Ernie	Patten, Richard
Baird, John R.	Jeffrey, Linda	Prue, Michael
Barrett, Toby	Kwinter, Monte	Racco, Mario G.
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Rinaldi, Lou
Brown, Michael A.	Marsales, Judy	Ruprecht, Tony
Brownell, Jim	Martel, Shelley	Sandals, Liz
Caplan, David	Martiniuk, Gerry	Smith, Monique
Colle, Mike	Matthews, Deborah	Smitherman, George
Craitor, Kim	McMeekin, Ted	Tasca, Joseph N.
Delaney, Bob	McNeely, Phil	Van Bommel, Maria
Dhillon, Vic	Mitchell, Carol	Watson, Jim
Di Cocco, Caroline	Mossop, Jennifer	Wilkinson, John
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	O'Toole, John	Wong, Tony C.
Gerretsen, John	Ouellette, Jerry J.	Wynne, Kathleen O.

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed will please stand.

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 42; the nays are 0.

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

All matters relating to private members' public business having been dealt with, I do now leave the chair. The House will resume at 1:30 of the clock.

The House recessed from 1212 to 1330.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

TREE PLANTING
IN WELLINGTON COUNTY

Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington): I want to inform the House of a very special celebration taking place in 2004, that being the county of Wellington's 150th anniversary. To mark this occasion, our county came up with a fabulous idea: As a lasting green legacy, 150,000 trees would be planted in Wellington.

Over a two-week period, school classes, municipalities, service clubs and private landowners took part, planting trees throughout our scenic and beautiful county. Other key partners in the project included the Grand River Conservation Authority, the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Wellington County Stewardship Council, and both of Wellington county's school boards. For their part in planting this living and lasting legacy that will improve the environment in Wellington county for generations to come, they all deserve enormous credit.

I'm very proud and glad to support this important initiative. We all know the importance of planting trees,

and if greenhouse gases and excess carbon dioxide are a problem, humankind around the world should respond by planting hundreds of thousands, even millions, of trees. Wellington county has shown the way.

I want to thank and acknowledge Wellington county Warden Linda White, who a few days ago planted a sugar maple, tree number 150,000, as well as county council for their leadership that has improved the environment for our children and grandchildren. Chief administrative officer Scott Wilson and county staff also deserve recognition on a job well done and for a program that should be adopted by other municipalities across the province.

TIME ALLOCATION

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): Here it is: We're in time allocation. The government, while in opposition, purportedly said they were going to start a new Legislature and find a new way to make sure that members of the assembly all had an opportunity to participate fully in debate. They said they were opposed to time allocation motions. I remember those speeches. I remember Dwight Duncan, the now government House leader, and a whole bunch of others who used to stand up in opposition to time allocation.

What's the time allocation motion? Surprise, surprise, it's on the budget. Let me tell the government House leader something. I see this as nothing more than an attempt to cut short debate on the budget bill so that you can try to put that under the radar screen, so that your federal cousins, who are all yelling at you for having done the most unpopular budget in the history of Ontario, can somehow get through this federal election.

It ain't going to work. At the end of the day, there has to be a democratic process. You're the guys who stood for transparency and said you were basically not going to do time allocation and were going to change the way we do business in the Legislature of Ontario.

I'm here today to say there is no change. Your government has introduced time allocation. The budget will be a done deal by Thursday of next week. I say to the government, you can try to hide your unpopular budget all you want in this federal election, but at the end of the day people get it and they're going to turf out Liberals across Ontario, not only because of Paul Martin but also what this government has done with that budget and all their broken promises.

SOCCER

Mr Lorenzo Berardinetti (Scarborough Southwest): Every summer, people across the province look forward to a number of world-class sporting events. This year, the European soccer championship, or football as it is known around the world, will be held in Portugal and will begin this Saturday, when Portugal faces Greece in the city of Porto, and will culminate in Lisbon on July 4, 2004, with the championship game.

These tournaments bring Ontario's vast ethnic diversity to the forefront, as soccer fans, either born elsewhere or having parents or grandparents born elsewhere, come together across the province. Soccer is one of the most vastly played recreational sports in our province, played by children and adults alike.

Cafes and restaurants across the GTA will be serving food like Greek souvlaki, Portuguese churrasco barbecued chicken or tasty German frankfurters while fans cheer for their favourite team. In my own riding of Scarborough Southwest, I will be witnessing cars driving along Kingston Road, carrying their English flags, their Dutch flags, their Croatian flags and flags from countries all over the world.

Most importantly, this tournament represents fair play between nations. In our province, this will be seen as an overwhelming sense of coming together by people from different cultures and different countries as they celebrate world class sport and ethnic diversity in Ontario. I'm extremely proud of Ontario's ethnic diversity.

I encourage every member in this Legislature to participate in cheering on their favourite team and to encourage the sharing of cultures in their constituencies. Hopefully, Ontario and Canada will one day host a world-class event like the World Cup of soccer.

DIALYSIS

Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): I rise today to urge the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to fulfill his budget promise to make dialysis treatment a health-care priority, and to sign off on the capital improvement for the Tillsonburg District Memorial Hospital satellite dialysis unit.

His ministry has already approved the unit and committed operational dollars to it. The community has shown its support by raising all the funds necessary to purchase the equipment—over \$700,000. Now everyone is waiting, and has been waiting for some time, for this minister to allow the rooms to be renovated.

When this government was in opposition, the now minister, Ms Papatello, came to Tillsonburg and stated clearly to the citizens and the media that if they became government, they would not play political football with something as serious as dialysis treatment. Now it's becoming clear that this is exactly what is happening.

Perhaps Minister Papatello could talk to Minister Smitherman and impress upon him how important this is to people like Ed DeSutter who suffers not only from the ravages of his disease, but from the stress of constant travel to get the life-saving treatment he needs.

Young and old, people from three counties have been waiting patiently for this minister to take action. I have submitted a petition signed by thousands for that action to take place as soon as possible.

I ask the minister not to make this a political football, but to think of the citizens of this province who want to enjoy a better quality of life without further delay. I ask him to make good on his budget promise to make dialysis

treatment a priority and make it possible to receive treatment closer to home for these very sick people.

MARKHAVEN HOME FOR SENIORS

Mr Tony C. Wong (Markham): I rise to congratulate Markhaven, a long-term-care facility in my riding of Markham, on its grand opening this past weekend. I would also like to thank Minister Smitherman for coming out to Markham in support of this very important event.

Markhaven was founded in 1960, when a nurse named Lois Neely and her husband welcomed seniors into their home. With an increased need for long-term-care facilities in Markham, the board of directors expanded and rebuilt Markhaven in 1970. By 1996 it was evident that a larger facility was urgently needed.

Markhaven's celebration this past weekend was the result of a very successful community-based fundraising drive. I wish to acknowledge the hard work of many people involved with the successful reopening of Markhaven, including Ralph Aselin, Pauline Loney, Eric Tappenden and Harry James. I thank them for their dedication and support that ensure Markhaven continues to provide Markham seniors with valuable and high-quality service. As a member of the fundraising committee for its gala last year, I was impressed by the enthusiasm of Markhaven's staff and volunteers.

In addition to having Markhaven as a valuable part of their community, Markham's seniors will also benefit enormously because the Liberal government is fulfilling its promise to seniors by creating thousands of additional long-term-care beds, 12,000 bed-lifts for hospitals and long-term-care facilities, and an additional investment in long-term care of \$406 million, that will grow to \$546 million by 2007-08.

Seniors in Markham recognize that this government, working in partnership with institutions such as Markhaven, is fulfilling its promises to provide them with access to timely medical services and a higher quality of life.

NIAGARA FALLSVIEW CASINO RESORT

Mr Kim Craiton (Niagara Falls): On Tuesday I had the honour of opening the new Niagara Fallsview Casino Resort, located in the heart of my riding in Niagara Falls. There are now 6,500 people directly employed at the Fallsview casino and Casino Niagara, which has been open since 1996. Last year, Premier McGuinty announced Casino Niagara would remain open, giving Niagara Falls two more attractions and all the economic benefits that go along with them.

The new Fallsview casino is a real gem for the city of Niagara Falls. It is on 10 hectares of land overlooking the magnificent falls and was built as a complete entertainment centre, including a theatre, convention centre and a new luxury hotel. The Niagara Fallsview Casino Resort is now officially open to the public today.

1340

When the casino was being built, it was listed as the second-largest construction site in Canada, behind the new terminal at Pearson International Airport. During the construction, the Niagara Falls casino used 85,000 cubic metres of concrete, 7,500 tonnes of structural steel and 7,000 tonnes of reinforcing steel.

I would like to invite all the members here, across Ontario and across Canada to come to Niagara this summer and marvel at the Niagara Fallsview Casino Resort as well as the Niagara Parks Commission attractions, our world-class golf courses, our award winning wineries and the magic of the Shaw Festival.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): Yesterday at Queen's Park literally hundreds of people from across the province came—

Laughter.

Mr Klees: —and the members laugh. The House leader laughs, and members of the opposition laugh. Let me tell you, folks, your constituents are not laughing. You're trying to shrug off what the people of this province consider a very serious transgression: a government that shrugs off the responsibility to keep the law.

There were people here yesterday who travelled from right across the province to send a very strong signal to this government: first, that they expect that their government, which is charged with the responsibility to keep the law, will in fact keep the law; that the Premier, who is the chief person in this province responsible for upholding the law, should uphold the law, namely the Taxpayer Protection Act, which he has broken.

The Premier of this province should be listening, and his backbenchers should be listening, rather than laughing at the people of this province when they say to them, "Keep the law of the land."

If you're going to have a tax increase, at least do it in accordance with the act in place in this province. The people of this province have rated this Premier the least-trustworthy Premier ever to hold the office in the province of Ontario. It's because he has no respect for the law.

PORTUGUESE CANADIAN COMMUNITY

Mr Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East): Today is a very special day for me. I rise today not only as the provincial member of Parliament of Mississauga East but also as a Portuguese Canadian MPP. Today marks the third anniversary of Portuguese History and Heritage Month here in Ontario.

May I take this opportunity to thank those of you who joined my guests and I as we raised the flag of Portugal here at Queen's Park earlier today. Today's event has been but one of many events being held right across the

province in honour of Portugal's heritage, an opportunity for people of Portuguese origin to celebrate their heritage and, perhaps more importantly, to share their culture with others.

Last year marked the 50th anniversary of the first Portuguese pioneers. It was a chance to reflect on the trials, tribulations and successes of those first Portuguese immigrants. It was because of their hard work, struggles and determination that we are able to celebrate today.

This year, I chose to celebrate the next 50 years, an opportunity to recognize the accomplishments of Portuguese Canadian youth, as well as a call to the youth of Portuguese heritage in Ontario to continue the work that has been begun by their parents and grandparents.

Portuguese Canadians have contributed so much to our success as a province, and we have so much more to offer. Please join me in thanking those first pioneers—the celebration of Portuguese heritage here in Ontario.

KYOTO PROTOCOL

Ms Judy Marsales (Hamilton West): I was shocked yesterday when Stephen Harper, leader of the federal Tories, said that he would scrap the adoption of the Kyoto accord. Mr Harper said, "Carbon dioxide, while linked to global warming, is not a threat to air quality."

Where does that come from? Most scientists concede that the burning of fossil fuels emissions is increasing the earth's temperature, leading to smog in many cities, including my own, Hamilton.

Elizabeth May, executive director of the Sierra Club of Canada, said Harper's plan to abandon Kyoto is foolhardy: "Acting as though air pollution and climate change are separate issues is both bad policy and bad science."

Smog can cause eye irritation and shortness of breath, and for people with asthma such as myself it means having to be confined indoors if the air quality is poor.

I'm proud to say that our government understands the importance of the Kyoto accord. We are committed to doing our part in Ontario to ensure that Canada lives up to the accord. We have already made our emissions standards for large diesel trucks and buses the toughest in North America, and we will generate 5% of Ontario's energy from renewable sources by 2007. So I ask you, where did he become a scientist?

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): We have with us today in the Speaker's gallery the consul general of Portugal, Dr Artur Magalhaes, on the occasion of Portuguese History and Heritage Day. Please join me in welcoming him here.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on general government and move its adoption.

Clerk at the Table (Mr Todd Decker): Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

Bill 27, An Act to establish a greenbelt study area and to amend the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act, 2001 / Projet de loi 27, Loi établissant une zone d'étude de la ceinture de verdure et modifiant la Loi de 2001 sur la conservation de la moraine d'Oak Ridges.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed. The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

LIQUOR LICENCE AMENDMENT ACT, 2004 LOI DE 2004 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES PERMIS D'ALCOOL

Mr Watson moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 96, An Act to amend the Liquor Licence Act / Projet de loi 96, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les permis d'alcool.

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

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those against, say "nay."

I think the ayes have it.

Hon Jim Watson (Minister of Consumer and Business Services): I'll speak during ministerial statements.

1350

FIRST NATIONS RESOURCE REVENUE SHARING ACT, 2004

LOI DE 2004 SUR LE PARTAGE AVEC LES PREMIÈRES NATIONS DES RECETTES TIRÉES DE L'EXPLOITATION DES RESSOURCES

Mr Bisson moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 97, An Act respecting the sharing of resource revenues for First Nations / Projet de loi 97, Loi concernant le partage avec les Premières nations des recettes tirées de l'exploitation des ressources.

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

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): This bill attempts to find a process that would bring First Nations

in northern Ontario into the whole prospect of mining and forestry. As we know, currently, if a mine is found let's say just outside of Sudbury or Timmins, there is a mechanism for municipalities to levy an assessment against the property and buildings to get taxes to build roads, sewer systems etc. First Nations don't have that ability. First Nations are frozen out, such as in the case of Attawapiskat, and they are having to go out and renegotiate any type of development every time.

What this bill simply does is ask the government to negotiate an agreement with First Nations over a three-year period that would deal with revenue-sharing in whatever form that the government and the First Nations agreed to, and, if there is no agreement, that there be an arbitration process to determine the outstanding issues so that First Nations, for the first time in Ontario and probably Canada, can get their fair share when it comes to revenue from mining and forestry activities around the First Nations.

NIAGARA ESCARPMENT PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT AMENDMENT ACT, 2004

LOI DE 2004 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA PLANIFICATION ET L'AMÉNAGEMENT DE L'ESCARPEMENT DU NIAGARA

Ms Churley moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 98, An Act to amend the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act / Projet de loi 98, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la planification et l'aménagement de l'escarpement du Niagara.

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

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): This bill simply provides the same level of protection from urban boundary expansion as enjoyed by the Oak Ridges moraine act that was brought in by the previous Tory government. The applications for the Niagara Escarpment can be made at any time, while applications to the Oak Ridges moraine are only considered once every 10 years.

I moved this as an amendment to the greenbelt legislation in committee, but all of the Liberals voted against it. I'm now putting it forward as a private member's bill.

TRANSPARENCY IN PUBLIC MATTERS ACT, 2004 LOI DE 2004 SUR LA TRANSPARENCE DES QUESTIONS D'INTÉRÊT PUBLIC

Ms Di Cocco moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 99, An Act to require open meetings for provincial and municipal boards, commissions and other public bodies / Projet de loi 99, Loi exigeant des réunions publiques pour des commissions et conseils provinciaux et municipaux ainsi que d'autres organismes publics.

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

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): This bill requires specific provincial and municipal councils, boards and commissions and other public bodies, as prescribed, to hold meetings which are open to the public. The public can only be excluded from the meetings—

Interruption.

The Speaker: Order. Clear the gallery.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. While the gallery is being cleared, I was—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Could I ask the member from Oak Ridges to come to order? I would appreciate very much—when the gallery was being cleared, the members here were encouraging this kind of demonstration—

Interjection.

The Speaker: Order. This is not proper decorum for the House, and I would warn you all to refrain from doing so in the future.

Ms Di Cocco.

Ms Di Cocco: I didn't realize my bill was that controversial.

Anyway, what this bill does is that the public can only be excluded from meetings of the body if certain specific types of matters are going to be discussed by the body. Minutes of meetings open to the public have to be made available to the public in a timely fashion and must contain enough detail.

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

MOTIONS

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader): I move that pursuant to standing order 9(c)(i), the House shall meet from 6:45 pm till 9:30 pm on Thursday, June 10, 2004, for the purpose of considering government business.

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

All those in favour of the motion, say "aye."

All those against, say "nay."

I think the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1358 to 1403.

The Speaker: All those in favour, please rise and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arthurs, Wayne	Dombrowsky, Leona	Qaadri, Shafiq
Bentley, Christopher	Duguid, Brad	Racco, Mario G.
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Duncan, Dwight	Ramsay, David
Bradley, James J.	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Rinaldi, Lou
Brotten, Laurel C.	Fonseca, Peter	Ruprecht, Tony
Brown, Michael A.	Gerretsen, John	Sandals, Liz
Brownell, Jim	Hoy, Pat	Sergio, Mario
Bryant, Michael	Jeffrey, Linda	Smith, Monique
Cansfield, Donna H.	Kwinter, Monte	Sorbara, Greg
Caplan, David	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Takhar, Harinder S.
Chambers, Mary Anne V.	Marsales, Judy	Van Bommel, Maria
Colle, Mike	Matthews, Deborah	Watson, Jim
Cordiano, Joseph	McNeely, Phil	Wilkinson, John
Craitor, Kim	Meilleur, Madeleine	Wong, Tony C.
Crozier, Bruce	Mossop, Jennifer F.	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Delaney, Bob	Peters, Steve	Zimmer, David
Dhillon, Vic	Peterson, Tim	
Di Cocco, Caroline	Phillips, Gerry	

The Speaker: All against, please rise and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Jackson, Cameron	Prue, Michael
Baird, John R.	Klees, Frank	Runciman, Robert W.
Bisson, Gilles	Kormos, Peter	Tascona, Joseph N.
Chudleigh, Ted	Marchese, Rosario	Wilson, Jim
Churley, Marilyn	Martel, Shelley	Witmer, Elizabeth
Dunlop, Garfield	O'Toole, John	
Hardeman, Ernie	Ouellette, Jerry J.	

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 52; the nays are 19.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

LIQUOR LICENSING

PERMIS DE VENTE D'ALCOOL

Hon Jim Watson (Minister of Consumer and Business Services): I'm honoured to introduce the Liquor Licence Amendment Act, 2004. In bringing forward this measure, our government is striking a balance between consumer choice in liquor service and stronger enforcement measures to increase public safety. This is an important first step forward in modernizing the Liquor Licence Act and bringing Ontario's liquor laws into the 21st century.

It has been 14 years since the last significant changes to Ontario's liquor licensing laws took place, and the rules and regulations have become increasingly outdated as the marketplace evolves and society changes. This bill before us today is the first step in our overall strategy to modernize the Liquor Licence Act by increasing consumer choice, strengthening enforcement tools and reducing administrative burden.

Let me tell you briefly about the two components of the bill. The first component would lay the groundwork for Bring Your Own Wine, also known as BYOW. The bill proposes a definition of "supply" to make it clear that the term "supply" includes instances where a person

brings wine into a licensed establishment for their own consumption.

Cette définition sera applicable à toutes les fois où l'expression « fournir » se trouve dans la Loi sur les permis d'alcool. S'il est adopté, cet amendement appliquera les exigences actuelles de la responsabilité sociale au service Apportez votre vin.

The Bring Your Own Wine idea is about choice. It's about a new consumer choice for liquor service. It's about choice for licensed restaurants as to whether or not they want to offer this service.

Bring Your Own Wine would allow patrons to bring commercially made bottles of wine into licensed restaurants and consume it there. Participation by licensed restaurants would be entirely voluntary. Nobody would force a business to offer this option. This service would be just what Ontario's entertainment and restaurant industries need.

Ontario's cultural diversity, especially in large cities like Toronto, Ottawa, London and Windsor, has led to a restaurant industry that is first-rate in North America. Giving licensed restaurants and consumers more choice is good for business. BYOW would also assist consumers in smaller communities, where restaurants may not have an extensive wine list.

Restaurants who choose to participate would apply to the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario for a special endorsement of their liquor sales licence. Let me reiterate that if this legislation passes, this would be a voluntary program. Participating restaurants would have the option to charge a service or corkage fee, and to decide themselves the amount of that fee.

Si le projet de loi que nous proposons est adopté, le gouvernement effectuera les modifications réglementaires requises pour que les Ontariens bénéficient du service Apporter votre vin. Grâce à ces mesures, l'industrie de l'accueil ontarienne pourrait offrir une nouvelle option fort intéressante à ses clients.

If this bill is passed, the government also plans to bring another consumer choice option to Ontario. The option is called Take Home the Rest. Again, this would be about choice for the consumer and the restaurant. This initiative would allow patrons to remove an unfinished bottle of wine from a licensed restaurant as long as the licensee had properly resealed the bottle. Participation by licensed restaurants would, once again, be entirely voluntary. All of the existing rules for responsible sale, consumption and transportation would continue to apply.

Liquor law reform is about more than choice; it's also about social responsibility and public safety. Let me share with this assembly our approach for stronger enforcement, which is the second component of our Liquor Licence Act reform package.

1410

This bill contains three measures to ensure responsible use and public safety. First, we are proposing to allow the registrar of Alcohol and Gaming to immediately suspend a liquor licence in the public interest, as in situations where there is a threat to public safety. This amendment

would enable the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario to take quick action to address urgent problems as they occur.

Second, we also want to create an offence for failing to leave a licensed premise when required by a police officer, or for returning the same day after being asked to leave. This would facilitate the police when they are trying to clear a premise. The Toronto Police Service recommended this change as far back as 1997, and I believe this action is long overdue.

Third, we want to double the minimum fines for offences related to liquor and underage persons to show we mean business when it comes to underage drinking. This is another step in improving social responsibility standards for beverage alcohol. The bottom line is, stronger enforcement means safer communities. Our government believes that modernization of the liquor licence system must strike a balance: It must improve consumer choice and customer service on the one hand and provide stronger and more effective enforcement tools on the other.

The package we are presenting today does this. It is the first stage of long-overdue reform, and our government is committed to further phases of Liquor Licence Act reform. Once the House has dealt with this legislation, we will begin consultations with stakeholders and the public on the next steps in bringing the liquor licence laws in this province into the 21st century, but that's down the road. The measures we're introducing today demonstrate real, positive change to modernize the regulatory system for beverage alcohol.

We only have to look at other jurisdictions for examples of success.

Depuis plus de 18 ans, les consommateurs du Québec peuvent apporter leur vin au restaurant, ce qui a eu un impact positif sur l'industrie de l'accueil de cette province.

De plus, mon homologue de l'Alberta m'a indiqué à quel point ce programme connaît du succès dans sa province.

Dans l'État de New York, certains restaurants permettent aux clients d'apporter leur vin les mardis seulement, ce qui a eu un impact positif, car cette soirée est habituellement tranquille dans l'industrie.

In the state of New York, for instance, some restaurants offer BYOW just on a slow night—a Monday or a Tuesday. As a restaurateur recently said, “What's good for the patron is good for the restaurant.”

Finally, this package would make our communities safer. It would provide stronger enforcement tools and raise the bar on social responsibility.

I want to thank the many members of the hospitality sector who have contacted me, offering their support—people like Rod Seiling, a great alumni of the Toronto Maple Leafs, member of the board of the Canadian Tourism Commission and president of the Greater Toronto Hotel Association, who said, “These changes are progressive and will enable the industry to better service its diverse customer base.”

Restaurateur Stephen Beckta, sommelier-owner of Beckta Dining and Wine in Ottawa, said, "I'm all for allowing customers the option to bring their own wine into our restaurant for a corkage fee. The practice allows people to dine out more often and with greater flexibility. Having worked as a sommelier and restaurant manager in New York, I know first-hand that this can be beneficial to both the guests and the restaurant alike. That is why I am a firm supporter of this initiative."

Finally, my predecessor and a former Minister of Consumer and Business Services, Mr Tim Hudak, said, "I'm in favour of bring-your-own. Let's look at the best practices. I think it's good for consumers, good for tourism. It was always my feeling as consumer minister that we have to allow tourism operators to be innovative in order to compete with other locations."

E-mails and letters to my office since this initiative was first announced support the idea of a ratio of 9 to 1. I want to thank the staff at the Ministry of Consumer and Business Services, many of whom are with us in the gallery today, for their tremendous work and their outreach to various stakeholders.

In conclusion, whether a couple is celebrating a wedding anniversary with a special bottle of wine or a customer wants to bring a fine bottle of Ontario wine to a restaurant that does not carry that particular label, consumers all around the world have experienced and embraced Bring Your Own Wine. With the Legislature's approval, so too will Ontario consumers.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Responses.

Mr Robert W. Runciman (Leeds-Grenville): I appreciate the opportunity to respond to Minister Watson's announcement. I guess this is what he considers a substantive initiative from his ministry. I have to say that this is a somewhat surprising announcement, given that the possibility of this legislation coming forward, along with a desire for early passage, has never been discussed at a House leaders' meeting.

It's sort of a typical of this group of cheap trick artists, with seat-of-the-pants initiatives. One can only imagine that great brain trust that runs Premier McGuinty's office—now more frequently referred to as the 9% man's office—that stumblebum crew burning the midnight oil, trying to come up with ideas to distract Ontarian's attention away from their horrific budget, and the broken promises and heavy tax increases that go with it.

Just picture it: One of the bright lights says, "Let's give them bring-your-own booze. I can hear Matt Maychak saying, "That crew in the press gallery, if there's anything that will get their attention away from our disaster of a budget, it's booze or sex—or maybe booze and sex." Of course, those of us on this side of the House have much more respect for members of the gallery. We know that's not true, and this little deception will fail. It will fail primarily because Ontarians will see through this ruse, a ruse that is essentially another broken promise.

Mothers Against Drunk Driving—

Interjections.

Mr Runciman: I hope they're not laughing about Mothers Against Drunk Driving. They describe this move as "a piecemeal publicity stunt." I couldn't have said it better myself. They also describe it as "irresponsible legislation that will lead to more impaired driving." Where is the Minister of Public Safety on this? Where is the Minister of Transportation? Mothers Against Drunk Driving also say that this move ignores the recommendations of the government's own liquor task force.

I think this announcement begs the question, just who the minister consulted with, other than the mental mid-gets who recommended that violation of Ontario's trust called the Liberal budget. MADD wasn't consulted. Were the police consulted?

Interjection: No.

Mr Runciman: No. Were restaurants and the hospitality sector consulted?

Interjection: No.

Mr Runciman: No, of course, is the answer. Was the Minister of Tourism consulted? Where was he on this?

Interjection: No.

Mr Runciman: Of course, the answer for this Liberal Party that pretends to want consultation is that they talked to no one other than their tainted political gurus in the 9% man's office.

I want to make it clear. The Conservative Party will not allow speedy passage of this legislation. It may be politically popular, but it would be irresponsible to allow the Liberal gang that can't shoot straight to shove something like this through without opportunity for public input.

Many questions need to be answered. I'll pose just a few in the minute left to me: Why is a government in such dire shape financially prepared to lose liquor and gallonage tax? Why did the minister break his promise to make any change part of a wider liquor licensing review? What will the impact be on Ontario's already fragile hospitality industry? That's the question the Minister of Tourism should have been asking. Who will be held liable if consumers break the seals on bottles? What about the increases to liability insurance premiums? What's the view of police associations with respect to increased incidences of impaired driving? And on and on.

This is a ill-thought-out, cheap political PR stunt that will once again backfire on this inept Liberal crew, another cynical move, a political party that has raised cynicism to an art form, a Liberal Party that refuses to apologize for breaking faith with the people of Ontario, and shoves tax increases and the loss of critical medical services down their throats through closure legislation in this Legislature.

Interjection: Shameful.

Mr Runciman: Truly shameful.

1420

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): On behalf of New Democrats, I want to indicate to you that it's pretty remarkable that the minister waltzes in here with this announcement, as if somehow it's a given that people should applaud and endorse this departure from the

historic role of how alcoholic beverages are served, sold and consumed in this province.

I should mention that the public response is going to be interesting. I can see that there are people out there who, at first blush, find this a rather attractive proposition. I make no bones about acknowledging that. But look at an e-mail that my colleague Michael Prue received already today. It says:

“Michael, of all the numerous problems facing the Ontario government—health care, environmental concerns, transportation—I could go on for a long time—what does Business Services Minister Jim Watson bring before the Legislature? A bill to allow customers to bring their own wine to a restaurant! Of all the lame wastes of taxpayers’ money and MPPs’ time! I hope you can convey this to him in some way.” It’s signed “Bill.”

I say to Michael Prue’s constituent, your message has just been conveyed. What this person is saying is the province is going to hell in a handbasket and this government’s solution is to offer consumers the supposed choice of being able to bring their own wine to a restaurant.

This warrants far more thorough consideration than the government clearly has given the issue. I say to this government that there is nothing near unanimity among restaurateurs regarding this policy; in fact, I say to you that the vast majority of restaurateurs oppose this policy.

Everybody knows—it’s no secret—that the profit in most restaurants is from liquor, wine and general spirit sales, that restaurants rely upon those spirit sales for their profits. When those restaurants are deprived of those profits as a result of being able to charge merely corkage fees, they are going to be forced to increase food prices. We have a restaurant industry in this province, including Niagara Falls and Toronto, that has already had to struggle with a disastrous tourist season last year, that is highly competitive and that finds itself ill-prepared to accommodate this minister’s and this government’s attempts to divert attention away from the crisis that this government has created around health care and around taxation of the lowest- and middle-income people in this province.

I share the concerns expressed by others with respect to shutting MADD out of the process. I spoke with MADD leadership and, indeed, their press release issued today indicates that they are very disappointed in this minister’s broken promise. They participated in the broad-based consultant group around broader, longer-term liquor beverage reform in this province. They indicate that they were not given advance notice nor were they privy to the minister’s directions in the drafting of today’s bill. MADD very specifically states—and I agree with MADD and so do New Democrats—that if you’re going to embark on this sort of change and reform, you do it not piecemeal like this government is proposing, but you do it as part of a process.

What consideration has there been of hard-working and struggling wait staff, service staff in restaurants? Government talks about a corkage fee. I put to you that

15% of a \$10 corkage fee puts a lot less money in a hard-working waiter’s or waitress’s pocket than 15% of a \$30, \$40 or \$50 bottle of wine. Restaurateurs are going to suffer, wait staff are going to suffer, and the general public is going to suffer because insufficient attention has been paid to the warnings expressed by MADD and other advocates for safer streets, safer highways and a reduction of injuries and personal anguish caused by drunk drivers and excessive alcohol consumption.

This, I put to you, sir, is an abdication of the role of social responsibility that Ontario has maintained through its public ownership of liquor sale and distribution outlets and through a legacy of strong control and responsible service of alcohol in this province.

New Democrats are not going to jump on this bandwagon. New Democrats expect this bill to be thoroughly debated. New Democrats expect it to go to committee. This government has left a whole lot of constituents behind once again with its knee-jerk approach to this issue.

Hon Michael Bryant (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I believe we have unanimous consent to immediately call the order for second and third reading of Bill 94, An Act respecting public accounting, and that when the orders are called, second reading will be moved by a member of the official opposition and third reading will be moved by a member of the third party, and that the Speaker shall put the questions on second and third reading of Bill 94 immediately, without debate or amendment.

The Speaker: The Attorney General has requested unanimous consent for Bill 94. Is it agreed? Agreed.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTING ACT, 2004

LOI DE 2004

SUR L’EXPERTISE COMPTABLE

Mr Tascona, on behalf of Mr Bryant, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 94, An Act respecting public accounting / Projet de loi 94, Loi concernant l’expertise comptable.

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

All those in favour of the motion, say “aye.”

All those against, say “nay.”

I think the ayes have it. Carried.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTING ACT, 2004

LOI DE 2004

SUR L’EXPERTISE COMPTABLE

Mr Hampton, on behalf of Mr Bryant, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 94, An Act respecting public accounting / Projet de loi 94, Loi concernant l’expertise comptable.

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

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr John R. Baird (Nepean-Carleton): My question is for the Premier. You have broken just about every promise you made to the voters of Ontario—every major promise. You've raised taxes and now you are abandoning your promise to consult the public through a referendum that you promised Ontario voters.

Now we learn that you also want to shut out the public and get ready to ram your budget bill through the House without any traveling consultations across Ontario. If you're as proud of this budget as you say you are, why not allow the committee to travel and to hear from taxpayers in Ottawa, in Windsor, in Barrie, in Kenora and in Cornwall?

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): Unlike the previous two governments, yesterday we announced our intention to hold public hearings on our budget bill. We have spent twice as much time in the Legislature debating our budget plan as either the NDP or Tories allowed to debate theirs, just so we're clear about that. In power, the NDP and the Tories both rammed through their budget bills with no public hearings and no third reading debate of any kind. We will have both.

Mr Baird: I know why you're afraid to have your MPPs travel the province and hear what the taxpayers have to say about the budget. It's because they will face a tidal wave of protest and an avalanche of anger from voters who are angry with you and your government for breaking their commitment to working families in the province of Ontario. That's why.

Taxpayers are angry. They're angry in the north, they're angry in the south, and from east to west. Taxpayers are furious. They are livid. They feel betrayed by what many say is nothing short of massive electoral fraud.

1430

I say to the Minister of Finance, you have fallen below the credibility and integrity of Brian Mulroney. There isn't a single federal member of Parliament who supports his bill. This is the worst-received bill in the history of Canada.

Interjections.

Mr Baird: For the member opposite to hector—he should go out and listen to what taxpayers have to say. Will you now abandon this disgraceful attempt—

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Thank you, Premier?

Hon Mr McGuinty: If the member wants to stick to the issue here, I want to remind him again that they had

no public hearings and no third reading debate. We are going to have both. Let me tell you something else. If they are so interested in debating this bill and having an opportunity to speak to it in an intelligent and thoughtful way, then why is it that on 15 separate occasions they have adjourned the debate with respect to this bill? They are not interested. The only conclusion I can draw is that they are not—

The Speaker: Final supplementary.

Mr Baird: Premier, you can call six hours, not travelling outside the second floor of the Legislature, public hearings. We don't call those public hearings. We call it a sham. There is no time in your closure motion for amendments to be proposed, based on what we hear from the people of Ontario. It's a sham and it's a disgrace.

Let's look at what your time allocation says: "In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by the committee...." So we could have a decision where the committee rejects your bill, where the committee proposes amendments successfully, and you're going to ram through your big tax increase just the way it is. Premier, will you not abandon this disgraceful attempt to shut out taxpayers in Ontario, or is their only chance to vote against your federal Liberal cousins on June 28?

Hon Mr McGuinty: The member just won't take yes for an answer. We are going to have public hearings and there will be third reading debate. His anger is misplaced and he misunderstands the source of Ontarians' anger. They are angry that they had hidden the notion of a \$5.6-billion deficit from them. They're also angry that they've received no apology from the previous government, and they're also angry that the members of the former cabinet are not turning over \$9,000 cheques to the provincial treasury. That's what Ontarians are angry about.

The Speaker: New question; the member from Oak Ridges.

Interjection.

The Speaker: I would ask the member for Nepean-Carleton to quieten down a bit.

Mr Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): Speaker, I'd like a page to take these petitions over to the Premier. My question is for the Premier. Premier, the page is delivering to you more than 500 names of people, and this is a very small sampling of literally thousands, who have submitted petitions to me, to the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, to the Toronto Sun. These are people from across the province who are calling on you, sir, as the Premier, to keep the law of this province. They are calling on you to have a referendum with regard to the \$2.5 billion of tax increases that you promised you wouldn't give them.

Premier, you made a decision to change the budget, to change your promise, based on consulting with 237 people. There are in front of you more than 500 names. Will you undertake today to call those people personally and get their sense and to have you explain to them personally why you're not prepared to keep the law of this province?

Hon Mr McGuinty: The member opposite will know, because I made reference to this yesterday, that we are very concerned about huge numbers of people. In particular, we're concerned about the 3.3 million vaccinations we're going to be delivering to Ontario children as a result of this budget. We're concerned about the 100,000 more Ontarians, predominantly seniors, who will now receive home care and be able to stay in their homes longer. We're concerned about the 70,000 seniors who are presently shut into long-term-care centres, nursing homes, living out the rest of their lives, and we're concerned about making sure they enjoy a better quality of care. Those are the people who are uppermost in our minds. They may not be among the 200 who showed up yesterday on the front lawns of Queen's Park, but nonetheless we think they are important and we will not forget their concerns.

Mr Klees: The Premier continues to attempt to spin his way out of his impossible situation. Less than 9% of the people of this province believe him, and it's the kind of answer he's giving us now that brings him into this difficulty. He refers to immunization. Why doesn't he tell the people of the province that not one dollar of provincial money is going into that program, that it in fact is coming from the federal program? He continues to tell untruths that basically are taking the people of this province in the wrong direction.

Will the Premier please simply stand up and give a commitment to us that he will take the opportunity and listen to these people, the 500 names I have sent him, who are representative of literally hundreds of thousands? They just want you to keep the law of this land. Please, will you stand up and say you will give them a call and listen to them personally?

Hon Mr McGuinty: I am delighted and pleased to be able to make a number of very important commitments to these individuals and to all the people of Ontario. We're committed to fixing their health care, we're committed to improving the quality of public education, and we're committed to ensuring that the kind of fraud that was perpetrated by this government, by hiding a \$6-billion deficit at the time of the provincial election, never, ever happens again.

Mr Klees: Well, Premier, the people of this province elected an individual who said he would uphold the law of this province, who promised he would not raise taxes. What they have now is a Premier who is not the same Dalton McGuinty whom they elected. The people of this province are demanding that at least this man keep the law. He is not doing that. The people across this province know that every time a question is asked of him in this House, he refuses to answer. He continues to give the people of this province more and more spin, no doubt as provided to him by the people in his backroom.

Dalton McGuinty, will you take the right step and be honest with the people of this province? Keep your promise. Don't be the chief lawbreaker in this province, sir. You have a responsibility to keep the law. Have the

referendum. Will you commit today to keep your word to the people of this province?

Hon Mr McGuinty: One of the very first things we did was that we were honest with the people of Ontario when it came to the state of the government accounts. The previous government was ashamed of the state of our finances. We made that information public and we've made some difficult decisions to address the mess that was left to us by the previous government. That is the kind of approach we will bring throughout our mandate in dealing with the people of Ontario. We will be straightforward and upfront about our decisions, why we're making them and the state of the mess that the previous government left to us.

TAXATION

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Premier. New Democrats have shown you for many days now just how unfair and regressive your new taxes are for middle- and modest-income working families, and today I want to give you another example.

Under the Harris Conservatives, an individual with an income of \$100,000 a year got a 35% tax reduction. He also got an 18% tax reduction from someone named Paul Martin in the federal budget. Combining those two reductions, that individual with an income of \$100,000 a year got a tax cut of \$9,600 a year. With your budget, a single mom with a taxable income of \$23,000 a year will see her provincial income tax increase by 24%. Meanwhile, that individual with a taxable income of \$100,000 a year who got a combined \$9,600 tax reduction from Mike Harris and Paul Martin will see his income taxes go up by only 7%. Is that fair, Mr Premier?

1440

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I appreciate the opportunity to speak once again about our health care premium and how progressive it is. Here's some information that I am sure the member opposite will want to relay to concerned citizens and in particular to his constituents: 43% of Ontario tax filers will pay nothing; 48% of Ontario seniors, nearly half of all Ontario seniors, will pay nothing.

I want to contrast that with the NDP's first budget. Under their first budget, if you were making \$20,000, your taxes went up by \$160. In the course of their mandate, tuition fees went up 50% and gas taxes went up 30%. Again, under this budget, our health care premium, 48% of Ontario seniors pay nothing and 43% of all Ontario tax filers pay nothing.

Mr Hampton: Part of the difference is that New Democrats didn't go around the province promising people they wouldn't raise their taxes.

Premier, I have another example for you. An individual with a taxable income—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Order, Minister of Finance.

Leader of the third party.

Interjections.

Mr Hampton: Speaker, can you do something to restrain the Minister of Finance, please?

An individual with a taxable income of \$125,000 a year got a 30% tax cut from Mike Harris and a 16% tax cut from Paul Martin. That's a combined tax reduction of \$11,500 a year from the Martin Liberals and the Harris Conservatives.

Now, under your budget and your regressive and unfair taxes, a husband and wife together, who each have taxable incomes of \$50,000 a year, will have to pay \$1,200 of your new regressive taxes while that individual with a \$125,000-a-year income, who got an \$11,500 tax reduction, will pay only \$750 more. I say again, does that seem fair to you, Premier?

Hon Mr McGuinty: Again, somebody earning \$20,000 or less under this budget will pay nothing by way of a health care premium. Under the NDP budget, if you were earning \$20,000 you had to pay another \$160 in taxes. Under this budget, 48% of Ontario seniors will pay nothing by way of a health care premium. Not only that, but many will qualify for an increase in the Ontario property tax credit of \$125. Again, 43% of all Ontario tax filers will pay nothing.

Student tuition went up by 50%; we have frozen it. Gas taxes went up by 30%; we are taking some of the existing gas tax and giving it to our cities for public transit. That is the stark contrast between the NDP government and this Liberal government.

The Speaker: Final supplementary.

Mr Hampton: Speaker, I don't think the Premier wants to answer the question, so I'll give him another example.

Under Mike Harris's budget, somebody with an income of \$250,000 a year got a 25% tax reduction from Mr Harris and a 13% tax reduction from Paul Martin. They got a combined \$20,000-a-year tax reduction from Mr Martin and Mr Harris.

Under your budget, that individual with a taxable income of a quarter of a million dollars a year, who got a \$20,000-a-year tax reduction from Mike Harris and Paul Martin, will pay only \$900 of your new tax. But again, that husband and wife, who are working very hard and each has a taxable income of \$50,000 a year, will pay \$1,200 a year. I say again, Premier, does this sound fair to you?

Hon Mr McGuinty: It's interesting for my friend to pursue this line of questioning. Over here, we're asking ourselves why he defended his friends, the corporations, when we were trying to roll back corporate tax cuts. Why did he defend his friends, the wealthy parents, who were sending their kids to private schools when we voted to eliminate the private school tax credit? It's very difficult to determine from day to day on which side of the fence our friend here happens to find himself.

Again, some very good news for 48% of Ontario seniors, who will be paying nothing with respect to this

new health premium, and 43% of all Ontario tax filers, who will pay nothing under our new premium.

The Speaker: New question?

Mr Hampton: It seems the Premier wants to continue to avoid answering the question, so I'll give him another example. An individual with a taxable income of \$150,000 got a 28% tax reduction from Mike Harris and a 15% tax reduction from your friend Paul Martin. That's a combined tax reduction of \$13,150 a year. That person is only going to pay \$750 additional under your very regressive tax changes in this budget. Meanwhile, that hard-working husband and wife who each have taxable incomes of \$50,000 a year will pay \$1,200.

I simply ask you again: Does that seem fair to you? It doesn't seem fair to me. In fact, it seems so unfair that you should withdraw your budget and bring back figures that allow for a more even, a more balanced, a more fair spread.

Hon Mr McGuinty: I know the Minister of Finance is anxious to speak to this.

Hon Greg Sorbara (Minister of Finance): The actual truth of the tax system in Ontario makes us the most competitive jurisdiction, in terms of personal income taxes, for those earning \$55,000 or less in Ontario. The average tax rate for people in Ontario who earn about \$200,000 a year is about 40%. So 40% of their income comes back in taxes. Because we have a good, strong, progressive rate, those who earn, say, \$16,000 pay only about 9% of their income in tax. By way of creating a premium that is geared to income, we keep the progressiveness of our tax system.

But I can understand the pain the leader of the third party is going through. It was back in 1991, I believe, that his friend the Treasurer at that time—Floyd Laughren's first budget—introduced a budget that sent this province into an economic tailspin that took us some 12 years or more to recover from. So I take no lectures on economics or policy or tax from that member.

Mr Hampton: The Premier wouldn't answer the question, and it now seems the Minister of Finance won't answer the question. In fact, the answer I got was very much like the answers the Conservatives used to give. As they continued to cut taxes on the well-off, they said, "Well, we want to be competitive with George Bush. We want to get taxes on the well-off right down where they are with George Bush." Your budget is even more regressive than the budgets we used to see under the Conservatives.

I ask you again, does it seem fair to you that an individual with a taxable income of \$100,000 a year, who got a tax break of between \$10,000 a year and \$20,000 a year from Paul Martin and Mike Harris, is only going to pay \$750 more under your new budget and your new regressive taxes, while that single-parent mom, with a taxable income of \$22,000 a year, sees her income tax go up by 24%?

Hon Mr Sorbara: The problem my friend has is that he has absolutely no credibility on these matters. When we were sworn in on October 23, we inherited a province

that had an entrenched debt and a debt spiral that was only matched by what his party brought the province into back in 1991.

1450

But I want to tell my friend, if he were honest with the people of Ontario, he would explain to them why back in November, when we brought forward a bill to raise corporate income tax rates so that we had the money for public services, he voted against it. He should explain to the people of Ontario why, when we brought in a bill to eliminate the private school tax credit brought in by the Conservatives, he voted against that measure. Why is it, when we brought forward a bill to eliminate a very luxurious tax credit for the most wealthy seniors in this province, he voted against that? Once he explains that, his credibility in this House might improve just a little bit.

Mr Hampton: I feel almost mortally wounded getting a lecture from a Minister of Finance whose budget only 11% of the people of Ontario think is on the right track, and from a Premier who only 9% of the people of Ontario think is doing a good job. The 11% Minister of Finance and the 9% Premier: All your attempts to evade the question aren't going to work.

The reality of your budget is this: Banks and insurance companies, who have huge profits, are getting a \$1-billion tax reduction when your budget is fully implemented. Those who are very well off—and I give the example again: Somebody who has an income of \$125,000 a year, who's getting a combined tax reduction from Paul Martin and Mike Harris of close to \$15,000 a year—you're hardly going after them at all. But hard-working modest- and middle-income families are seeing their provincial income taxes go up by 16%, 24%. How do you justify this? When are you going to withdraw your budget and bring in some progressive tax changes?

Hon Mr Sorbara: I'm surprised that this member thinks that he should have the luxury of such gross distortions in his questions; I really am.

In the first year of our budget there will be a \$990,000 reduction in capital tax amongst corporations. By comparison, as a result of the by-election, my friends in the NDP will get a \$1.8-million increase to their research staff, to provide, amongst other things, a driver for the leader of the NDP.

I say to my friend on the other side: They only have one enemy. Just to speak to the examples that he raises, an individual in Ontario who earns \$30,000 a year has an average tax rate of 15%. An individual who earns \$100,000 in our province has an average tax rate of almost double: \$30,000. That's as it should be, and that's the way it stays with the Ontario health premium.

CANCER TREATMENT

Mr Cameron Jackson (Burlington): My question is to the Premier. On May 10 and again on June 3, I raised the issue of your government's offensive hard cap on Cancer Care Ontario's new drug funding program. I

personally came to you in the House and gave you proof and evidence of the fact that your government, in a memo to Cancer Care Ontario, had instructed them to stop reimbursing zoledronic acid treatments for prostate cancer which has metastasized into the bone.

Since January 28, according to the Canadian Cancer Society, we have had over 3,000 new cases of prostate cancer diagnosed. Today, I bring to the House the case of a woman in her 30s living in the GTA who is battling metastatic breast cancer. Her husband's drug plan has reached its cap and she is now mortgaging her home in order that she can have this life-palliating drug and take the remaining years of her life with her children.

Premier, how can you go on television, look into the camera, and tell Ontarians that you personally guarantee that every cent of new money going into health care will go to pay for, among other things, new cancer treatments when your hard cap, imposed by your government for the first time since Cancer Care Ontario had begun, has removed life-palliating and life-saving drugs from Ontario residents?

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Inter-governmental Affairs): Let me first, in reference to the specific case raised by the member opposite, offer my very best wishes to the individual involved.

Let me say that my understanding is that—and this is basic information I got from the Minister of Health—Cancer Care Ontario is an independent agency that manages the cancer system. They also manage the drugs which they decide are going to form part of their particular formulary. We don't do that through the cabinet. Currently, physicians can apply, through what is known as a section 8 application, for access to particular drugs, and this process remain very much alive.

Mr Jackson: Premier, you've been misinformed by your own ministry. First of all, Cancer Care Ontario put this drug on the list of eligible drugs. It was on there for 28 days, and then your ministry and your minister intervened and said, "You know what? You're going to go \$4 million to \$6 million over on your budget, and we won't pay it. Therefore, start pulling back drugs." That is what is happening, Premier, and you've been misinformed by your minister.

I want to bring another drug to your attention that has been caught in this web: Rituximab, which significantly prolongs progression-free survival of cancer patients with advanced non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. This drug saves lives. This is not a palliating drug. In Ontario, you have to be 60 years of age or older in order to get this drug. In BC and in some other provinces, it's eligible for all patients in that province. I have names of people who are now going to Buffalo in order to pay for this private treatment, when if they were in British Columbia, they would get the treatment as a matter of fact.

Premier, you have increased taxes in order to pay for more health care. You're on television telling them that you're going to increase cancer treatment. My question to you simply is this: Will you not stand in your place, as I have asked you on two previous occasions, and tell

Cancer Care Ontario and the thousands of cancer patients in this province that you will not put a hard cap on the new drug funding program so we can give hope to cancer patients in this province and not send them to either the United States or to other provinces to get this treatment? Will you stand in your House today and guarantee that you will cover these new drugs in our province?

Hon Mr McGuinty: Again, Cancer Care Ontario is an independent agency and manages the cancer system, including the drugs. We are investing another \$60.7 million for drugs, and that includes—

Mr Jackson: That's less than we spent last year.

Hon Mr McGuinty:—my friend may want to listen to this—\$4 million for new drugs this year in connection with Cancer Care Ontario's budget.

CHILDREN'S IMMUNIZATION PROGRAM

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a question to the Premier. Premier, yesterday your Minister of Health said that your new unfair health tax is paying for your immunization program, and then, yesterday afternoon, the Minister of Health was forced to admit that in fact it's the federal government and not your health tax that's paying for immunizations in Ontario.

In the federal budget, \$400 million over three years was allocated to Ontario for immunizations. Ontario's share is \$156 million. That is the very same amount of money that the Minister of Health yesterday announced for the program. Premier, why is it that you are telling people that immunizations are going to be paid through your new health tax when in fact it's the federal government paying for the whole program?

Hon Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I am very, very pleased to report that as a result of our extensive lobbying efforts to the federal government, we're receiving \$156 million. That's point number one.

Point number two: That is not permanent and fixed funding. We're going to cover the full cost when that funding runs out.

Point number three: We will not be putting that money into corporate tax cuts; we'll be putting that into vaccinations for Ontario children.

Ms Martel: Premier, let me remind you what your health minister said on behalf of your government. He said yesterday that the vaccination program "is a very good example of what a health premium does to provide premium health care in the province of Ontario." Then he was forced to acknowledge that the province is getting federal dollars for the immunization strategy and dedicating all of it to the program. Not one single cent of your premium is going to pay for the immunization program.

I know that you are desperate to try and defend your unfair, regressive new health tax, but don't you think it's time to tell people the truth? Not one cent of the premium dollar is going to pay for vaccinations; the federal gov-

ernment is paying for all of it. Why are you telling people that, and where is the \$156 million going?

Hon Mr McGuinty: What has the member opposite got against vaccinations for children? We think this is a good program. We think it's a great program. Over the course of three years, we are going to deliver 3.3 million vaccinations for Ontario children, covering chicken pox, pneumococcal disease and meningitis. We think that's an important, progressive step made on behalf of our children and in the interest of public health in Ontario.

1500

LIQUOR LICENSING

Ms Kathleen O. Wynne (Don Valley West): My question is for my friend the Minister of Consumer and Business Services. I'm asking a question of clarification today on the new legislation you've introduced that, if passed, would permit Ontarians to bring their own bottles of wine to restaurants.

This proposal is very popular with the dining public, but some restaurant owners are concerned about what it's going to mean to them. We all know that restaurants operate on a slim profit margin. Many of them rely on wine sales to stay in the black. These restaurant owners and their staff are concerned that allowing consumers to bring their own wine might devastate their businesses. What assurances can you give restaurant owners and their staff that bring-your-own-wine initiatives will not impair their businesses or cause job losses in the industry?

Hon Jim Watson (Minister of Consumer and Business Services): I want to thank the honourable member for Don Valley West. This piece of legislation that I introduced today is very much permissive in nature. It allows a restaurant that has a liquor licence in Ontario to opt into the BYOW program. If a restaurant doesn't want a BYOW endorsement on their licence, it doesn't have to have it.

Let me read you a couple of quotes from some people in the industry.

"It's a great idea. Why not? It's freedom," said Michael Stadtländer, a chef in Collingwood.

"In Quebec, for years patrons have brought their own wine to restaurants, and Alberta has become the first province to let folks bring in their own bottles even in the licensed eateries. No riots, no restaurant closings, no mass social responsibility. Isn't it time we too rejoined civilization?" according to wine critic Gord Stimmell.

Finally, let me quote Tim Hudak, who is much more progressive and enlightened than the member from Leeds-Grenville, who was frothing at the mouth when he was speaking on this issue. Mr Hudak is much more progressive. He said, "I'm in favour of bring-your-own-wine. Let's look at the best practices. I think it's good for consumers, good for tourism. It was always my feeling as consumer minister that we have to allow tourism operators to be innovative in order to compete with other locations."

Ms Wynne: Thank you, Minister. I'm really happy to hear that there are restaurateurs, and Mr Tim Hudak, who are very happy about this initiative. It will allow consumers to bring their favourite wines, some of which may not be on the restaurant's wine list. It might save them some money, in which case they might buy a more expensive meal.

Some patrons, though, when they order a bottle of wine to go with their meal, feel obligated to drink more than they normally would, because they don't want to see the wine go to waste. I understand there's a take-home-the-rest policy that is part of your legislation. How will this work in practice?

Hon Mr Watson: The take-home-the-rest policy, which is also in effect in places like British Columbia and Alberta, allows an individual who perhaps has bought a bottle of wine or brought a bottle of wine in—if they don't feel it appropriate to finish the bottle, the restaurant will have the ability to cork the bottle flush with the top and allow people to remove it.

I received a note today from MADD Canada, who were saying, "We are not opposed to patrons of restaurants corking an unfinished bottle and taking it home with them."

We are having discussions with the Ontario Community Council on Impaired Driving, because these individuals realize that if we allow people to bring home the rest, it is much more socially responsible. Again, it's a voluntary concept on the part of the restaurateur. We think this will bring legislation into the 21st century.

On a final note, we're also listening to the Toronto police force, which the previous government ignored. In 1997, they came forward and said they wanted the authority for a police officer to ensure that someone can be charged when they refuse to leave a licensed establishment. They talk law and order—

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Thank you. New question.

COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT FUND

Mr Jim Wilson (Simcoe-Grey): My question is for the Minister of Finance. You've put municipalities on notice that your government is planning to renege on a promise to pay for 2003 policing costs through the community reinvestment fund. The Town of the Blue Mountains is just one municipality that is going to have to raise its property taxes 24% because you refuse to pay legitimate bills for expenses incurred by municipalities last year and you're not committing any money to this year. Your government promised this money to municipalities. Towns and cities everywhere went through their budget process and, in good faith, they set their tax levies for this year, and they included in that process some expectation of provincial government assistance.

You're renegeing on a deal. If a private company renegeed on a deal like this, someone would either have to pay a heavy penalty or someone would be sent off to jail. So I ask you, Minister, how can you in good conscience

not pay your bills from last year and leave municipalities like the Town of the Blue Mountains in the lurch with a 24% tax increase?

Hon Greg Sorbara (Minister of Finance): If I could just go back for a moment to the extensive consultations that we had before the budget, one of the themes that came through loud and clear in the 14 consultations that I conducted personally, whether it was with big cities or the very smallest and most remote municipalities, is this: that the financing of municipalities that we inherited after eight and a half years of downloading from the province—in the city of Toronto, they were unable to pay their bills, and that's the one we all hear about on the front pages. But small, rural municipalities say, "We don't have enough money to repair the bridges."

One of the things I'm most proud of in the budget is that we have begun to repair the process of financing of our municipalities: large and small, north and south, east and west. We are, for example, going to upload to the province 75% of the cost of public health. In the city of Toronto, we are investing significantly in public transit—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Thank you.

Hon Mr Sorbara: Sir, but for your interjection, I could go on.

The Speaker: Supplementary.

Mr Wilson: Minister, you're hanging municipalities out to dry. You seem to have lots of money for your pet projects. You're making announcements almost every day of millions of dollars of new money, but you refuse to pay your bills from last year. The Town of the Blue Mountains and most of rural and northern Ontario aren't going to see a cent from your gas tax promise. You even admit in your own budget that the majority of new money for public health to municipalities will largely go to the GTA. You're not doing anything to help rural and northern towns and cities.

I tell you again, if you don't live up to paying your bills from last year, the ratepayers of the Town of the Blue Mountains are going to see—and this is from the treasurer and the mayor themselves—a 24% tax hike because of you.

At the very least, before you make another spending announcement in this province, could you pay your bills from last year and save the property taxpayers in rural and northern Ontario this huge grief? Stop renegeing on your promises, show some backbone, put some honour back in this place and pay your bills.

Hon Mr Sorbara: He does some of his work here, but he's headed for Stratford. That guy has an acting career. He doesn't have a political career, but he does have an acting career.

I'll be very brief. The Town of the Blue Mountains will receive this year \$1.683 million from the community reinvestment fund.

Beyond that, just to speak for a moment to the rhetoric, virtually every single municipality in this province said, "Thank God for the new themes in municipal refinancing that were contained in the budget."

He mentioned northern Ontario. For the first time in 10 years, a provincial budget has talked about financing a program to bring prosperity and hope and economic development and high-quality community services to the north. That he should refer to the north and say that we're not doing anything makes his question absolutely without credibility.

1510

AUTISM SERVICES

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a question for the Attorney General. Your government was in court again yesterday, this time at the Supreme Court of Canada. I was there and I listened in dismay and then anger as your government once again aggressively fought autistic children and their families. You were there supporting the Gordon Campbell government of British Columbia, a government that has refused to pay for IBI treatment for its autistic children, despite the lower court's ordering it to do so.

Minister, you were at the Supreme Court yesterday. You're still in court here in Ontario, fighting the families involved in the Wynberg and Deskin court cases. You are now fighting 80 other families who have gone to the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal. When is your government going to stop fighting autistic kids and their families and do what you promised to do: fund IBI for all those autistic children who need it?

Hon Michael Bryant (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal): The government of Ontario was intervening before the Supreme Court of Canada on the issue of whether or not the government—in this case, of Ontario—should be able to design the best program possible to treat autistic kids, instead of having this being addressed by interlocutory injunction, application or other order in the courts.

We are fighting for the ability of this Legislature to determine the government's ability to provide a better program and better treatment for autistic kids in Ontario. That's what we are fighting for. Are the courts going to decide that or are the elected representatives of the people of Ontario going to decide that? That's what we're intervening over.

Ms Martel: The BC government refuses to fund IBI treatment despite lower court rulings, and you were there in support.

But let me remind you of the very specific promises your own Premier made to autistic children. He said during the election campaign on September 17, "I also believe that the lack of government-funded IBI treatment for autistic children over six is unfair and discriminatory. The Ontario Liberals support extending autism treatment beyond the age of six."

After the election, however, you have refused to end the discrimination against children over the age of six. You are spending hundreds of thousands of dollars fighting families in an Ontario court. You are spending thou-

sands and thousands of dollars fighting other families at the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal. Minister, you have fought these families and these kids just as aggressively as the Conservatives before you, and that is wrong.

When are you going to live up to your own election promise and fund IBI for autistic kids for as long as is medically necessary? When are you going to do that?

Hon Mr Bryant: Just to be clear here, the member said the government of Ontario was in there supporting another provincial program. We were in there trying to fight for Ontario's program.

Here's what we're fighting for. We're fighting for the provincial ability to do this: support children with autism from their early years right through to their school years. We're fighting to permit the province to do that, committing an additional \$40 million in funding per year to assist these children. We're fighting for the ability to do that in this Legislature, as opposed to having it designed in the court. We're fighting for the ability to have a comprehensive plan that doubles our spending to serve children diagnosed with autism across the province.

I've got to tell you, it is our view that through an interlocutory motion, the court is just unable to provide the kind of comprehensive program that will best serve the needs of autistic kids. That's what we are fighting for in the courts, and I will make no apology for that.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Mr Shafiq Qaadri (Etobicoke North): My question is for the Honourable Chris Bentley, the Minister of Labour. Many of my constituents in Etobicoke North are new to this country and perhaps not fully aware of the rights and privileges they are guaranteed under law. Some employers, unfortunately, are taking advantage of this by withholding pay and engaging in a number of questionable practices.

I understand you've made an announcement about a new employment standards initiative. I ask, would you be able to inform this House and the people of Ontario about this announcement, and especially how it will protect vulnerable workers and make it easier for employers to comply with the Employment Standards Act?

Hon Christopher Bentley (Minister of Labour): I'd like to thank the member for Etobicoke North for his question, and for his concern and advice he's been giving me in my position as minister about the concerns of vulnerable workers.

We have indicated quite clearly as a government that we are determined to make sure the most vulnerable in our society are protected and have all their rights under the Employment Standards Act protected. We announced a threefold initiative. We introduced the 60-hours legislation, which will protect a worker's right to choose whether to work more than 48 hours in a week. We also announced as companion announcements an awareness initiative and an enforcement initiative. It became clear that we needed to do something to make sure we have the best-practice advice from people who work with vulner-

able workers. So just today, I announced the Minister's Employment Standards Action Group. It will be chaired by my parliamentary assistant, the member from Oakville, Mr Flynn. It will bring together workers from labour and business organizations to advise us how to best protect the vulnerable in our society.

Mr Qaadri: Thank you, Minister. With your remarks, I'm sure my constituents will welcome the news of this particular action group. For the record, I'm pleased that our initiatives regarding immigrants and new Canadians are not to be found under the Criminal Code section, unlike with the previous regime.

The hard-working people of Rexdale, Jamestown and Thistleton are hungry for justice, and they deserve nothing less. Minister, what other initiatives is your ministry undertaking to reverse the effects of the previous government's negligence and to ensure that Ontario's employers fully understand and comply with their responsibilities under the Employment Standards Act?

Hon Mr Bentley: I'm looking forward to the advice that's going to be given to this government by the Minister's Employment Standards Action Group, but in the meantime we've undertaken a number of initiatives. First of all, we have to make workers, particularly vulnerable workers, more aware of their rights under employment standards and other pieces of legislation. So we are taking an initiative which will make easy-to-use, easily accessible information available, not simply in English or French but in languages that may be found in the GTA in particular, and the province of Ontario, among many new arrivals in Canada.

The important aspect is that we take the complicated, put it in a form that people can easily use and access, make workers more aware of their rights, and then they will know how to access some protection in the event that their rights may be violated. That's extremely important for the protection of the workers in this province.

CIVILIAN OVERSIGHT OF POLICE

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): My question today is for the Attorney General. Minister, this morning you made an announcement in the media studio. From this announcement, we know that you're reviewing the police complaints system. What we really don't know, Minister, is exactly why you've ordered this review, exactly how it will be conducted and actually who requested you to do the review. Did you make this announcement this morning to take attention away from Dalton McGuinty and his plan to slam the door on the budget debate with time allocation?

Hon Michael Bryant (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal): We did provide an update to a process that's been underway for some time. We have been saying for years now that it is important for police to receive the respect and confidence from the public that they deserve. We believe we need to have a civilian oversight system that is independent and transparent.

We have consulted with everybody imaginable so far, and asked for more advice in terms of who else we should be meeting with. Now begins the consultation, facilitation, analysis and decision-making part of this process. I have asked the former Chief Justice of the Superior Court, the Honourable Patrick LeSage, to do this, and he has agreed. It is an opportunity for somebody who is unquestionably and irrevocably neutral to put his mind to this issue. I know that he has the respect of many Ontarians, and we look forward to getting his advice.

Mr Dunlop: Thank you, Minister. The announcement this morning was hastily thrown together and you didn't identify any specific criteria that the Honourable Patrick LeSage is expected to follow in his review, although you have mentioned a couple now. In fact, based on the press conference, you were asking him to go into select communities for his review without identifying those communities, instead of a more open and inclusive review process. Is this exercise just another way for your government to show its true colours, its lack of confidence in the men and women who put their lives on the line every day: Ontario's police officers?

1520

Hon Mr Bryant: I have enormous confidence in the Honourable Patrick LeSage and that he will conduct himself and these consultations in a way that everybody has confidence in. I really believe that he is going to do this in a way that everybody can have confidence in, and that there will be a wide mixture of different types of consultations. He has said that he will travel the province. He will make sure that we look not just at the urban context, but that we look at what the contexts are outside of Toronto, Ottawa, London etc.

I have enormous confidence in Patrick LeSage. And you're right. I haven't said to former Chief Justice LeSage, "Here are the limitations on your review." I've said, "Please consult and please advise on this very important issue so that we can ensure that the public has confidence in a civilian oversight system, and that the police have the respect and confidence that they deserve."

MINISTRY INTERVENTION

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): I have a question for the Attorney General. I thought your government supported rights for same-sex couples, but I guess I was wrong. I was shocked to learn of your last minute intervention in the Hislop case. You are opposing this man's right to get the CPP survivor benefits his partner paid for through his pension contributions. You are saying the trial judge was wrong to grant him those benefits. The judge ruled it is discrimination not to pay retroactive survivor benefits dating back to 1985 when gays and lesbians were included in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Why are you joining the federal Liberals in opposing same-sex survivor benefits to people like George Hislop?

Hon Michael Bryant (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs, minister responsible for

democratic renewal): I'm really happy to let the member know what is going on. The government of the province of Ontario is intervening on this case. There are two issues. There is a rights issue that you're speaking of and an equality issue that you're speaking of. We are not speaking to that issue at all. We are not disputing that issue at all.

Interjection.

Hon Mr Bryant: No we aren't. We are intervening on the issue of constitutional remedies and whether or not they can be retroactive or proactive. All of the leading case law suggests that when constitutional rulings come down, they are prospective. If they are retrospective and the government, on any issue, has to go back and make payments retrospectively for something unconstitutional, it has enormous implications on a wide variety of ministries for a wide variety of issues. There has never been, on a rights-based issue of this magnitude, a retroactive order.

It is only on that general legal principle that we are intervening. It is not on the rights-based issue, it is not on the equality issue, and I am happy to let the member know that.

Ms Churley: That is legal mumbo-jumbo. This is about rights and about people who paid their own money into the pension plan. This is their money. I want to know, do you know George Hislop? He is a man in his 70s who uses a walker. He has contributed to his community as one of Toronto's first gay activists and the first openly gay person to seek office. He is a hero to many. His partner paid into the Canada pension plan. It's his money. The federal Liberals, your federal cousins, are saying he shouldn't get survivor benefits. I'm asking you again, why are you joining your federal Liberal cousins to try to deny George Hislop a survivor pension?

Hon Mr Bryant: The Ministry of the Attorney General, when we make interventions on general legal principles, we intervene based on those principles that are before us. We look at whether or not we want to intervene on a particular part of a judgment. And I just want to say again for the member so she understands it: We are taking no position, we are not intervening and we are not speaking to the issue of equality rights or the charter rights. I can tell you that we are intervening with respect to constitutional remedies, broadly speaking.

That is the independent judgment that this ministry has made. We are trying to ensure that the court is giving attention to an issue that has extremely broad implications, retroactive versus prospective remedies. I say again, we are not intervening on the equality and rights issue, period.

FORMATION D'APPRENTISSAGE APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): Ma question s'adresse à la ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités.

Minister, on behalf of trades people in Ontario, and more specifically in the beautiful riding of Glengarry-Prescott-Russell, I can tell you today that the number of spaces available in our eastern Ontario colleges for apprenticeship programs has not met demand. Many people in my riding who would like to participate in a plumbing apprenticeship program have been unable to do so because the demand for in-class training is greater than the number of spaces available. Has any progress been made toward increasing the number of in-class spaces available in eastern Ontario for plumbing apprenticeship programs?

Hon Mary Anne V. Chambers (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities): Yes, we are indeed committed to increasing apprenticeships for the people of Ontario. In fact, our target is 26,000 annually by 2007-08.

At present, Algonquin College provides programs for the plumber apprenticeship training. We have also recently increased the number of training agents for delivering those programs in eastern Ontario. Starting this fall, La Cité collégiale will also be providing those programs, which will also serve the francophone community well.

Mr Lalonde: I have recently been approached by Plomberie Séguin Plumbing of Embrun and other enterprises regarding the ratio of certified plumbers and electricians to apprentices allowed on construction sites. I understand that in both trades, the current ratio is one apprentice to one journeyman for the first two apprentices, and one apprentice to three journeymen for each apprentice after that.

We must ensure that the ratio does not lead to an unnecessary barrier to potential apprentices in these trades, which could lead to a future shortage of plumbers and electricians in eastern Ontario. What is the government's role in relation to journeyman-apprentice ratios in Ontario?

Hon Mrs Chambers: We are committed to a number of things. One is accessibility to the trades, and two, the safety and quality of the work done with our apprentices. I am indeed waiting for proposals—and I expect that they will be with me shortly—from the provincial advisory councils for the plumbing and electrician trades.

PETITIONS

TAXATION

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

"Whereas the McGuinty government's 2004 budget will break the taxpayer protection law by not conducting a referendum on tax increases; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty signed an election pledge on September 11, 2003, not to raise taxes without the explicit consent of voters through a referendum; and

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised in TV ads not to raise taxes by one penny on working families; and

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty pledged in writing to obey the taxpayer protection law, which requires a referendum before increasing taxes;

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

“To ensure that all of the McGuinty government’s tax increases are put before the people of Ontario in a referendum.”

I affix my signature to this petition, as I totally agree with it.

1530

CHIROPRACTIC SERVICES

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

“To: Legislative Assembly of Ontario

“Re: Support for chiropractic services in Ontario health insurance plan

“Whereas,

“Elimination of OHIP coverage will mean that many of the 1.2 million patients who use chiropractic will no longer be able to access the health care they need;

“Those with reduced ability to pay—including seniors, low-income families and the working poor—will be forced to seek care in already overburdened family physician offices and emergency departments;

“Elimination of OHIP coverage is expected to save \$93 million in expenditures on chiropractic treatment at a cost to government of over \$200 million in other health care costs; and

“There was no consultation with the public on the decision to delist chiropractic services;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reverse the decision announced in the May 18, 2004, provincial budget and maintain OHIP coverage for chiropractic services, in the best interests of the public, patients, the health care system, government and the province.”

I am in agreement with it and affix my signature thereto.

Mrs Donna H. Cansfield (Etobicoke Centre): On behalf of the constituents of Etobicoke Centre:

“Re: Support for chiropractic services in Ontario health insurance plan

“Whereas,

“Elimination of OHIP coverage will mean that many of the 1.2 million patients who use chiropractic will no longer be able to access the health care they need;

“Those with reduced ability to pay—including seniors, low-income families and the working poor—will be forced to seek care in already overburdened family physician offices and emergency departments;

“Elimination of OHIP coverage is expected to save \$93 million in expenditures on chiropractic treatment at a cost to government of over \$200 million in other health care costs; and

“There was no consultation with the public on the decision to delist chiropractic services;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reverse the decision announced in the May 18, 2004, provincial budget and maintain OHIP coverage for chiropractic services, in the best interests of the public, patients, the health care system, government and the province.”

RECREATIONAL TRAILERS

Mr Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa): I have a petition that reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas many owners of seasonal trailers kept at campgrounds have raised their concerns over the impact on property taxes on seasonal trailers and the unfairness of imposing a new tax on persons who use minimum municipal services;

“Whereas this new tax will discourage businesses and tourism opportunities in Ontario and will cause many families to give up their vacation trailers all together;

“Whereas the administration of this tax will require a substantial investment in staff time and resources across the province of Ontario;

“Whereas some representatives of the recreational vehicle industry, campground providers and trailer owners have suggested an alternative sticker or tag system to establish fees for seasonal trailers;

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

“That the Parliament of Ontario immediately abandon the assessment of taxation of recreational trailers used on a seasonal basis in 2004, and that the government of Ontario consult with all stakeholders regarding the development of a fair and reasonable sticker or tag fee that would apply to recreational trailers used on a seasonal basis.”

I affix my name in full support.

TRANSITION BENEFITS

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

“Yes, Peter Kormos, I agree with you. The Liberal government must enforce our rights for transition benefits.

“Whereas HOOPP is presently funding retirement benefits for those who have less than 20 years of service and are 55 years of age or older;

“Whereas HOOPP is proposing to eliminate the availability of these transition benefits beyond 2005;

“Whereas we, the undersigned, will have in excess of 30 years of service and will not be entitled to these benefits because we have not reached the age of 55;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to enforce our rights to

receive these transitional funds extended until December 31, 2008.”

I've signed it as well.

TAXATION

Mr Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): I have a number of petitions forwarded by Anna and Vince Thow of Brampton that read as follows:

“Petition to force Premier McGuinty to obey the taxpayer protection law.

“Whereas the McGuinty government’s 2004 budget will break the taxpayer protection law by not conducting a referendum on tax increases; and

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty signed an election pledge on September 11, 2003, not to raise taxes without the explicit consent of voters through a referendum; and

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised in TV ads not to raise taxes by one penny on working families; and

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty pledged in writing to obey the taxpayer protection law, which requires a referendum before increasing taxes;

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

“To ensure that all of the McGuinty government’s tax increases are put before the people of Ontario in a referendum.”

I will add my name to this petition.

CHIROPRACTIC SERVICES

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): I have a petition that I received from the office of Dr Gary Bovine in Welland. It’s addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Re: Support for chiropractic services in Ontario health insurance plan:

“Whereas,

“Elimination of OHIP coverage will mean that many of the 1.2 million patients who use chiropractic will no longer be able to access the health care they need;

“Those with reduced ability to pay—including seniors, low-income families and the working poor—will be forced to seek care in already overburdened family physician offices and emergency departments;

“Elimination of OHIP coverage is expected to save \$93 million in expenditures on chiropractic treatment at a cost to government of over \$200 million in other health care costs; and

“There was no consultation with the public on the decision to delist chiropractic services;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reverse the decision announced in the May 18, 2004, provincial budget and maintain OHIP coverage for chiropractic services, in the best interests of the public, patients, the health care system, government and the province.”

Signed by thousands, including myself.

Mr John O’Toole (Durham): I have a petition to present on behalf of Dr Wysorski, as well as her patients Niki Cooper and many others.

“To: Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Re: Support for chiropractic services in Ontario health insurance plan:

“Whereas,

“Elimination of OHIP coverage will mean that many of the 1.2 million patients who use chiropractic will no longer be able to access the health care they need;

“Those with reduced ability to pay—including seniors, low-income families and the working poor—will be forced to seek care in already overburdened family physician offices and emergency departments;

“Elimination of OHIP coverage is expected to save \$93 million in expenditures on chiropractic treatment at a cost to government of over \$200 million in other health care costs; and

“There was no consultation with the public on the decision to delist chiropractic services;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reverse the decision announced in the May 18, 2004, provincial budget and maintain OHIP coverage for chiropractic services, in the best interests of the public, patients, the health care system, government and the province”—indeed, Canada.

I’m pleased to sign this and endorse it on behalf of my constituents in Ontario.

TAXATION

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

“We, the undersigned, request that an immediate stop be put on the new health tax. This tax will cause undue hardship on many working Ontario residents.”

Signed by thousands, including myself.

Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton): I have a petition here today to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and Samuel is here to collect it from me.

“Whereas the McGuinty government’s 2004 budget will break the taxpayer protection law by not conducting a referendum on tax increases; and

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty signed an election pledge on September 11, 2003, not to raise taxes without the explicit consent of voters through a referendum; and

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised in TV ads not to raise taxes by one penny on working families; and

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty pledged in writing to obey the taxpayer protection law, which requires a referendum before increasing taxes;

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

“To ensure that all of the McGuinty government’s tax increases are put before the people of Ontario in a referendum.”

I’m pleased to include my name on this petition.

PENSION PLANS

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

“Whereas Stelpipe Ltd and Welland Pipe Ltd are currently operating under the protection of the Companies’ Creditors Arrangement Act (CCAA), as part of the restructuring process being undertaken by Stelco Inc; and

“Whereas there is a significant unfunded liability in the Stelpipe and Welland Pipe pension plans for hourly employees; and

“Whereas there will be a significant negative impact on the pensions of both active employees and retirees in the event of a windup of these pension plans; and

“Whereas the pension benefits guarantee fund (PBGF) does not protect the entire amount of accrued pension benefits; and

“Whereas the PBGF may not have sufficient assets to provide such protection;

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

“(1) to amend the provisions of the PBGF in order that it provides complete coverage and protection for the accrued pension benefits of all pension plan members;

“(2) to amend the financing provisions for the PBGF in order to ensure that sufficient funds are available to provide for the complete protection of all accrued pension benefits;

“(3) to take interim action as required in order to provide immediate protection of the accrued pension benefits of both active employees and retirees of Stelpipe and Welland Pipe.”

It’s signed by thousands, and I’ve affixed my signature as well.

1540

PROPERTY TAXATION

Mr Kevin Daniel Flynn (Oakville): The last in a series of petitions signed by over 600 people in Oakville.

“Whereas the current method of allocating municipal tax revenues to the taxpayer by property tax based on current market value assessment has the following unwanted characteristics:

“(1) The tax burden varies subject to the desirability of a location, making taxes unpredictable and difficult to budget for;

“(2) The relative market value of a property is subjective and variable and subject to disagreement;

“(3) Long-time residents on fixed incomes in particular are affected, causing hardship, but this problem also affects young families;

“(4) Neighbourhood instability is increased as house sales are accelerated beyond the normal rate of neighbourhood renewal;

“(5) Residents who have done no home improvements pay increased taxes because of new higher-cost development in a neighbourhood, out of their control, and perceive this as unfair;

“(6) Widely different property taxes caused by market value pay for equivalent services for each resident, without any apparent conscious policy social good and regardless of ability to pay...;

“(7) Long-standing policy exempts the sale of a principal residence from capital gains tax, yet current value assessment effectively contradicts this, causing a prepaid capital gains penalty based on a latent value which may never be realized;

“(8) Resentment in one part of a community that it is paying more than its fair share can lead to division and other socially undesirable effects; and

“Whereas these undesirable effects, which are sufficient reason on their own for our petition, are exacerbated by the increased reliance on the property tax to fund a greater range of government programs as instituted by the former government;

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

“To change the method of property assessment so that it becomes based on objective criteria, using a formula such as lot size in conjunction with building total exterior dimensions, and removes the location and desirability factor from the calculation.”

It’s a petition I agree with and I’ve affixed my signature thereto.

TRAFFIC SIGNALS

Mr Jim Wilson (Simcoe-Grey): A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the Ministry of Transportation promised in June 2003 that the residents of Green Briar would get traffic signals installed at the intersection of the 10th side road and Highway 89 in the town of New Tecumseth; and

“Whereas traffic can be lined up 15 to 20 cars deep while motorists are waiting to turn on to Highway 89 at peak traffic; and

“Whereas the increased traffic on Highway 89 has made it extremely difficult and hazardous to enter or exit at this location;

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

“The residents of Green Briar and the people of New Tecumseth request the immediate support of the government of Ontario to improve safety along Highway 89, and, in so doing, we request that the Ministry of Transportation immediately begin working to construct traffic signals at the entrance to Green Briar to improve safety and prevent a serious accident from happening along Highway 89.”

I agree with that. I note that almost all of the several hundred residents of Green Briar—I’d have to count them all, but if somebody went door to door, address to address, almost all of them have signed this petition.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader): I move that pursuant to standing order 46 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 83, An Act to implement Budget measures, when Bill 83 is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment and at such time the bill shall be ordered referred to the standing committee on finance and economic affairs; and

That the standing committee on finance and economic affairs shall be authorized to meet on June 15, 2004, from 10 am to 12 noon and following routine proceedings until 6 pm, and on June 16, 2004, from 10 am to 12 noon for the purpose of conducting public hearings on the bill, and that the committee be further authorized to meet on June 16, 2004, following routine proceedings or 4 pm, whichever is earlier, for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of the bill; and

That the deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the clerk of the committee shall be 12 noon on June 16. No later than 5 pm on June 16, those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill, and any amendments thereto. The committee shall be authorized to meet beyond the normal hour of adjournment until completion of clause-by-clause consideration. Any division required shall be deferred until all remaining questions have been put and taken in succession with one 20-minute waiting period allowed pursuant to standing order 127(a); and

That the committee shall report the bill to the House not later than June 17, 2004. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

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

That at 5:50 pm or 9:20 pm as the case may be on the day that the order for third reading of the bill is called as the first government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the third reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That there shall be no deferral of any vote allowed pursuant to standing order 28(h); and

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to 10 minutes.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Mr Duncan?

Hon Mr Duncan: The government is anxious to get this bill into committee to allow public participation. We have had an important debate so far in this House, and I should point out that this particular budget bill has had almost five full days of debate time.

The Conservative government of Mr Harris and Mr Eves had 16 budget bills, 13 of which received no more than three days of second reading debate. We will be sending this bill out to committee for public consultation and clause-by-clause review, something the previous administration rarely did. Bill 83 will actually be debated at third reading. That is something that rarely happened under the previous government.

I would like the members of the official opposition and the third party to remember that their members have moved for adjournment of the debate 15 times: Mr Baird moved adjournment of the debate twice; Mr Yakabuski moved it twice; Ms Scott moved it twice; Mr O'Toole moved it twice; Mr Dunlop moved it once; Mr Marchese moved it twice; Ms Churley moved it twice; and Ms Martel moved it twice. They deprived roughly 40 members of the opportunity to participate in this debate.

The opposition finance critic, Mr Baird, voted 62 times for time allocation while he was in government. As government House leader, he has the most time allocation motions as a percentage of total bills of anyone in the history of this province. That is an absolutely embarrassing record, and he ought to be embarrassed. He said one thing then, and he does one thing now.

Mr Dunlop voted 55 times for time allocation, Mr Baird voted 62 times for time allocation, Mr Klees voted 59 times for time allocation, Mr Hudak voted 54 times for time allocation and Mr Runciman voted 52 times for time allocation. And do you know what? They have never voted against it until today.

The Eves government in the last session used time allocation on 83% of its bills. Mr Baird, as government House leader, has the most time allocations as a percentage of total bills of any House leader in the history of this Legislature.

Between 1999 and 2003 the Harris-Eves government used time allocation motions on 67 of the 110 government bills that received royal assent; that is 61% of the time. Under Eves, only once did a time-allocated bill allow for third reading debate. These tactics, which built upon the legacy of the NDP before them, illustrate a complete lack of respect for this institution.

1550

In opposition, as part of the select committee on the Legislature looking at parliamentary reform, I, on behalf of the official opposition at the time, the Liberal Party, advocated that time allocation was in fact an appropriate parliamentary tool, but that it should only be used probably no more than 10% of the time. I'm pleased to report that we have not even come close to using it on that.

We are anxious, however, to get this bill to committee. In eight years the Tories never had more than three days of second reading debate on a budget bill. We will have

had six days, twice as much, on our first bill. Only one quarter of Tory budget bills were ever sent to committee. Only one budget bill in eight years travelled during the Harris-Eves government. I find it rich that the opposition now has trouble with time allocation, when they have time-allocated every budget bill since 1998.

I find it rich that Mr Baird, who voted 62 times in favour of time allocation and never once voted against it, sits in his chair today and complains because we want a budget bill to go to committee and want a budget bill to receive third reading. I can understand why he's opposed to that, because when he was in government he made sure that never happened. It certainly never happened after 1998.

The Tories did not have public hearings on their first budget when they cut welfare by 21.6%, fired one third of the Ministry of the Environment staff, slashed education by \$400 million, cut \$400 million from our colleges and universities and took \$552 million from our municipalities. Within the Eves government's last 50 calendar days in the Legislature, that government and that House leader used time allocation 15 times, 83% of the bills, and they are now going to start complaining about us? The reason they're against it? They have never supported committee at second reading in any of their budget bills, and they never supported third reading in their budget bills under time allocation.

I should also point out, lest they think they are as pure as the driven snow, that it was the NDP that in fact set the trend for the use of time allocation motions. The NDP used time allocation five times more than the previous Liberal government under David Peterson. There were, for instance, no public hearings when the NDP ripped up collective agreements with their social contract, and there was no time allocated for third reading debate on that particular issue.

There were no public hearings when the NDP raised the gas tax 3.4 cents a litre. Out of the 21 budget bills passed by the NDP during their reign, only one of them went to committee for public consultation. I will remind them that on Bill 146, their bill, Corporations Tax Amendment Act, 1994, three days of second reading debate, no committee and no third reading debate; Bill 160, Budget Measures Act, 1994, passed within one calendar month, five days of second reading debate, one day in standing committee and no days of third reading debate; and Bill 48, the infamous Social Contract Act, 1993, three days of second reading debate and one day of third reading debate.

The opposition, both the Conservatives and the NDP, have tried to adjourn the debate on this budget bill—how many times was it? I had better double-check. Let me count: 15 times they trade to adjourn the debate.

They are trying to keep us from taking this bill to committee, and that should be no surprise, because that party, that House leader, who did time allocation more than any government House leader in the history of this province, wants to keep the bill out of committee. The third party that tried to jam its social contract through

with no public hearings, no committee, now wants to try to prevent this government from getting this bill to committee, and get two days of hearings, more hearings than they ever had on their social contract.

This is the first out of 10 bills that we have introduced and passed that has received time allocation, the lowest percentage since way back in the Bill Davis government. We're very proud of that. In addition, there are a number of other bills where there is agreement for passage by all three parties.

We look forward to getting this bill to committee. We look forward to this bill being the first budget bill to committee since 1998. We look forward to this being the first budget bill to get third reading debate since 1998.

I remind the people of Ontario that when they hear the Tories baying like hyenas on this, no government in the history of this province used time allocation more than they did; no government prevented committee hearing debates more than they did; no government denied this Legislature third reading more than they did.

We want to get on with the work. We want to get this bill into committee. We want to pass a bill that will provide an additional 36,000 cardiac procedures by 2007-08. We are anxious to get to committee to talk about the 2,300 additional joint replacements each year by 2007-08. We want to get to committee to talk about the funding of nine new MRI and CT sites, to talk about 9,000 cataract surgeries per year, and to talk about more than \$600 million to support and reform primary care by 2004-05.

While the opposition House leader talks about a sham process, I must remind him that it was his government that changed the standing orders to provide for this process, so if there's a sham in this House, it's that member from Ottawa-Orléans.

Let me conclude by saying that unlike the Tories before us, we want to get to committee with this budget bill and we want to have third reading debate on this bill. I'm proud that we'll be the first government since 1998 to allow that.

Mr John R. Baird (Nepean-Carleton): I say to the government House Leader, he doesn't have the guts to stick around to hear me respond to that drivel. Dwight, you're looking at me in the lounge there. Get back in here and listen to it. Have the guts to listen to the response to that drive-by shooting. I know you didn't write that speech and I know the real Dwight Duncan didn't want to move this time allocation motion. It was Maria Papadopoulos who made you do it, and that's a disgrace. Shameful, Maria, for making him do that.

To say that this is a fair process, Ian Urqhart of the Toronto Star summed it up very well: "They have lost the moral high ground." They have broken virtually every major campaign promise they've made. Only 9% of the people of the province of Ontario think they're doing a good job. This budget—others have said it—is probably the most poorly received budget in contemporary Canadian political history.

Murray Campbell from the *Globe and Mail* said that Dalton McGuinty could be the first man in Canadian history to “bring down two majority governments within a year.” That’s how negatively this budget has been received. People are angry. They are livid. They are furious.

What does Sue Whelan, a good friend of Dwight Duncan who represents the constituency next to him, say?

“Ontario Liberal Premier Dalton McGuinty should apologize for breaking his election promise not to raise taxes ... Susan Whelan said Tuesday.”

“I’ve never made the kind of promise that Dalton McGuinty did.... He owes the people of Ontario an apology for what he did.”

I hope the Liberal cabinet will be around to appoint Susan Whelan to something when she loses her job next week. I was down in Windsor. I read the *Windsor Star*: “Local Tories Surge.” Local Tories surge in Windsor: That is how unpopular this budget has been perceived. The other member for Windsor brought me a cartoon with a farmer going out to his barn to see if his pigs had grown wings. That’s how outrageous this budget is.

1600

Conservatives will fight this budget every step of the way. We want to put on the table that these public hearings are a sham. There are six hours of public hearings, and there is not a single minute left, not a minute left—people could come before the committee with ideas, with suggestions for amendments, and people like Kim Craitor, the Liberal member for Niagara Falls, who’s against part of this budget, can’t even have time to listen and then to prepare an amendment to present before this committee.

But do you know what? Another part of this time allocation motion doesn’t even matter. The committee, members of provincial Parliament, could propose and vote on and pass amendments, and then, in one clause in this time allocation motion, they can still ram the bill through even if the committee says it’s bad, even if the committee says it’s poorly conceived, even if the committee says it will hurt working families. That is the real outrage of this bill.

Dalton McGuinty promised a referendum, and not a single thing has changed since he made that promise. When he made that promise, the member for Scarborough-Agincourt stood smiling behind him. Who’s the member for Scarborough-Agincourt? A well-respected man who said there was a \$5-billion risk to this budget. The member for Etobicoke-Lakeshore stood behind the Liberal leader and applauded with a big smile on her face when he signed this pledge promising a referendum.

Well, I’ll tell you, the people of Ontario are fixing to have a referendum of their own, and it’s taking place on tax freedom day, which this year falls on June 28. Tax freedom day will be the opportunity for the people of the province of Ontario to get a little tax relief by going to the federal election booth and voting for people like, in Essex, Jeff Watson, or in Windsor West, people like

Jordan Katz, to send a message to these Liberals that we won’t accept your broken promises, we won’t accept your tax increases, we won’t accept your cuts to health care. People of Ontario should know, if this bill passes, leave your health card at home when you go to some health care practitioners, but bring your Amex card, because that’s the new Dalton McGuinty/Paul Martin style health care.

I don’t believe anything these people say. I don’t trust them. The people of Ontario have never, ever been so distrustful and cynical of government in the past. They don’t believe anything this Liberal government has to say. They don’t believe you. In the next election campaign, the Liberals won’t be able to make any promises because nobody trusts them, nobody believes them.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Joseph N. Tascona): Further debate? The Chair recognizes the member, I believe, from Trinity-Spadina. He’s got his coat on.

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): You believe correctly, Speaker.

First of all, Speaker, New Democrats oppose this strangulation motion, as indeed they opposed the strangulation motions of the previous government.

Interjection.

Mr Marchese: A strangulation motion, Michael Colle, is when you choke off debate because you’re basically afraid to listen to those in the opposition parties who have something to say. So strangulation motions, I don’t like them. I never did.

Secondly, I get awfully tired when some of these Liberals, especially Dwight—he wasn’t here in 1990, so he pompously makes reference to so many things of which he knows so little. What he doesn’t know is that New Democrats had so many hearings on almost literally every bill except the only one that they will mention, and they say, “Ah, but there’s one.” It’s so inane, it’s so infantile, because if there was an error that New Democrats made, it was that we had too many hearings, allowing the enemies to beat us up and allowing our own friends to beat us up. So, please, Dwight, wherever you are, because you’re probably watching television—please.

I get awfully tired with all the Liberals, Dwight included, and everyone else who makes reference to it: When they have no defence whatsoever, they go back into their little histories, not as far as Patti Starr, but they go back into their little histories and they say, “Ha, but the NDP in 1990 had a huge deficit. Liberals would never allow that.” Concurrently they say, “Ha, but the NDP cut or increased tuition fees, or cut something else.”

Isn’t it beautiful? If you’re a Liberal, you can say whatever you like. “Deficits are bad, but you didn’t spend enough over here.” If you did, you would have a greater deficit. For the Liberals, they can go wherever they want, which they do as a matter of something innate to their philosophy, and it’s OK. It’s incredible what you guys can say and do. Do you think you get away with it? I don’t think so, but I thought I would point out that you look awfully bad, when you have no defence, to simply go back into some little history of 14 or 15 years ago and

say, "I got something. Let's attack them on this." Go back to Patti Starr, she wrote it in 1993. Go back to 1989. Check your own histories out.

Then, I say, go back prior to the election of October 2 just to see what Gerry Phillips, the now Chair of Management Board, had to say about deficits. First of all, you made some incredibly stupid promises. You did. It's hard to admit to because it's a problem. You can't defend it.

Here's what you said prior to the election: You are going to increase services by \$7 billion. Gerry knows because he was a finance critic. You're not going to increase taxes. You're going to deal with the deficit, and you're going to balance the budget. Do you understand, good citizens? It's 4:10 in the afternoon. Do you understand what I'm saying about what Liberals said before the election? "More services,"—\$7 billion—"no tax increase, we'll deal with the deficit and we'll balance the budget." Do you realize how inane that was and how stupid it was for you to have made such promises?

So while you attack the Tories, in terms of saying that they didn't quite admit they had a deficit, how can you say that while simultaneously dealing with the problem that Gerry Phillips had, which is that in the committee of that June, prior to the election, June of 2003, he said that the Tories will have had a \$5-billion risk. He gets angry every time I say it, but a \$5-billion risk in my mind, however you might criticize this mind, in my humble view is a deficit.

So Gerry Phillips, well respected by some journalists in terms of his ability to be able to get finance books—it's not here—would show those finance books and read a couple of numbers out every now and then. The media said, "Oh, my God, he's so credible on financial issues." Well, Gerry is a credible guy. Gerry Phillips, prior to the election, said—

Interjection.

Mr Marchese: John, you're speaking over me—"The Tories are likely to have a \$5-billion deficit." Well, I trusted Gerry.

Interjection.

Mr Marchese: What, Michael?

Interjection.

Mr Marchese: Come on. Michael Colle, the member from Eglinton-Lawrence, let me tell you what we said. Howard Hampton said, "They are leaving us with a \$4-billion deficit." Howard Hampton said that before the election. Gerry Phillips said, "There is a \$5-billion problem." The Fraser Institute agreed with Gerry when they estimated, in their humble right-wing point of view, that the Conservatives were going to leave a \$4-billion deficit.

Interjection.

Mr Marchese: No, I believed Gerry, who said there would be a \$5-billion deficit.

Hon Gerry Phillips (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): You're lying.

Mr Marchese: Now, Gerry. Speaker, did you hear what he said? Come on, Gerry.

The Acting Speaker: The Chair of Management Board, withdraw.

Hon Mr Phillips: Withdraw.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you. Proceed.

Mr Marchese: Do you see how it ticked him off? Gerry wasn't listening before when I said, good listeners, citizens all, Gerry Phillips, the Chair of Management Board, is quite angry when Rosario Marchese said that he said in June 2003, in committee, that there would be a—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: I'm having difficulty hearing the member. Chair of Management Board, member for Nepean-Carleton, if you want a conversation, do it outside.

Proceed.

1610

Mr Marchese: Gerry Phillips, Management Board minister, in committee in June 2003, said in his estimation there would be a \$5-billion—he said—risk. He says if you say "deficit," someone is being mendacious, if you say that. But if you say it's a "risk," then in his view—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Member for Trinity-Spadina, withdraw that comment.

Mr Marchese: Did somebody tell you that that was improper to say?

The Acting Speaker: Withdraw it.

Mr Marchese: I withdraw that "mendacious" word.

The Acting Speaker: It's withdrawn and I don't want to hear it again. Proceed.

Mr Marchese: See, the clerks are listening. That's terrible, when they listen.

Hon Mr Phillips: You're making it up.

Mr Marchese: I am making it up? Gerry, come on. We're buddies under normal circumstances but, please, come on. You said—

Hon Mr Phillips: You check Hansard. You said something I never said.

Mr Marchese: But, Gerry, you said there was a \$5-billion risk. In my humble estimation, risk and deficits are the same. But I will let the good citizens of Ontario decide for themselves whether "risk" is some undefinable word that doesn't relate at all to deficits. I'll leave it to the public. Why quibble about that?

So I am telling you, good citizens, the Liberals made some dumb, dumb promises. Then they get into government and they have to attack the Tories by saying, "They didn't tell the truth about their deficit."

I say to the Liberals, you didn't tell the truth about your own promises, and you could have done that. You had a choice before October 2003 to say, "We cannot keep our promises." Only after you got elected did you say, "We can't keep our promises any more." Then you are stuck with having to introduce a budget that whacks the poorest citizens of Ontario. You understand? You understand how dumb your politics is and was? You are now stuck with a budget that you can't defend, that not even your federal members of Parliament can defend, that each and every one of those federal members is

attacking you for because it's costing many of them their jobs. I know it's hard for you to admit that, but, man, have you caused some serious hurt to your Liberal counterparts in Ottawa, and they're reeling. They are hurting, for good reasons.

You've introduced a budget that introduces a health tax that whacks the most vulnerable citizens of this province. How does it whack them? Under 35,000 bucks, many of them, most of them—originally those who made \$20,000 plus one penny were going to be whacked with \$300 a year. Then, when you realized how bad it was, you changed it. So now, under \$35,000, many will get whacked with \$300 a year. But you understand, if you're earning \$20,000, \$25,000, \$30,000, you're barely existing; you're barely paying your rent, in Toronto at least. It's not enough to live on in Toronto, that kind of money. That kind of individual is going to get whacked with 300 bucks, and if the partner is working, it's another 300 bucks. They're saying they are investing back into health, but you've got to go after the working poor to get that money?

So you have Mr Sorbara, my friend under normal circumstances, saying, "Oh, the NDP is always going after the rich." Sorry. The NDP makes no apologies for going after those who have money. In our humble view, those who have little should not be paying, because they don't have. It's as simple as that. Those who have money, as our leader says often, those who have been the biggest recipients of the income tax cuts under the previous Conservative government, are the ones who should be paying their fair share, not those at the bottom end of the socio-economic spectrum. It's just not good politics. It's not good for Liberals, who often put their hands to their hearts and say, "Yeah, we've got a heart." You guys just don't look good when you do that. It's not progressive at all.

A banker earns 1.5 million bucks, plus other glorious benefits, and he gets to pay 900 bucks. That poor banker is hurting a lot. Why, that poor banker is going to start walking off to the United States, because you whacked him big time with 900 bucks more than he's able to pay. You understand your problem? It's not good for Liberals.

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex): Rosario, why don't you mention the surtax?

Mr Marchese: Member for Essex, I remind you, this doesn't look good on you. It's OK for those of you who are fiscally conservative—and there are many Liberals like that—but it's not good for those who think they're progressive, not good at all.

Interjection.

Mr Marchese: Yeah, you do that. Stand up and do that, member from Essex. Go ahead and defend that budget.

I am telling you, this budget is about socialism for the rich and capitalism for the poor. That's what this budget is all about. I understand that you would want to give the public only a couple of hours, because you people don't want to hear from the good people out there. Why would you give them more time so they can beat you up on a

budget that you can't defend? I understand that. That's why we are opposed to the strangulation motion, because we are the ones here who can defend the interests of the public when they themselves are not able to speak on their own. With six hours of discussion, you're not going to hear much.

I've got to tell you, I am looking with great interest to see how many people the Liberals are going to be able to bring to this Legislature to defend their budget. I am looking forward to that, because it will be fascinating to see how many of your Liberal friends are going to say, "This is a great budget."

What about this cost for the vaccinations? "George Smitherman said the program is 'a very good example of what a health premium does to provide premium health care in the province of Ontario.'" Then he makes another remark and says, "Smitherman acknowledged the province is getting federal dollars for the immunization strategy and is 'dedicating all of it' to the program...."

"An official with the federal Department of Finance said Ontario's share ... is \$155.8 million." These are the dollars that the federal government dedicated to the province. George Smitherman, the Minister of Finance and the Premier said, "This levy we are imposing on the most vulnerable citizens is going to go for vaccinations," and then we learn that the federal government is paying for all of that. But they told us this health care levy, for which many are being whacked, was going to go for these vaccinations, only to discover that the federal government is giving that money. You understand, you can't have it both ways. George can't say, "This health tax is dedicated for vaccinations," and then at the same time learn that the federal government is giving you that money. I'm telling you, it's bad.

That delisting of chiropractors, optometrists and physiotherapists, it's 200 million bucks. For those of you who are believers, why in God's name would you be doing that? It cost 200 million bucks. The pain that you're imposing on so many people—what's the rationale? I have never heard a Liberal talk honestly about why you would take away those services that many Ontarians want and defend—

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): And need.

Mr Marchese: —and need to save 200 million bucks.

Mr Kormos: For whom?

Mr Marchese: For whom? Why would you allow yourself to be beaten up so badly by the public? Why would you do it? Why would you allow yourself? It's like you like to flagellate yourselves. It's like self-immolation. It's like saying, "It's OK, I want to be beaten up." Something's wrong with that, right? Medically, there's probably a term. Masochism, maybe? I don't know.

1620

This is a budget that you can't defend. This is a budget that's going to cause you a whole lot of pain. This is a budget that's going to cause the loss of many federal Liberal MPs. For me, it's too bad, so sad. But you will have to take responsibility for that. It must be awful to have so many Liberal members saying to you privately—

because you can't do this publicly, of course—"Why in God's name would you do this?" Individual members are saying: "I know, I know. We told them so in caucus meeting. We're telling them but nobody will listen to us."

Mr Kormos: It's so bad they've got Bradley going to the casino.

Mr Marchese: Poor Bradley, with the opening of that casino. Some of you are new, but do you remember when Jim Bradley used to say, "We oppose the one-armed bandits"? Every statement he made, he would stand up at every opportunity: "We oppose the one-armed bandits." Well, he went the other day to open one up. Isn't that funny? A lot of fun with that.

We oppose this strangulation motion. We think it's bad. Your budget is bad. It's hurting a whole lot of people. They will punish you. They won't punish you right away, but they will punish your federal friends, and that's OK by me.

Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton): I'm pleased to take part in this debate. I listened to the government House leader talk about what we did when we were in government in this province. Yes, we brought in many time allocation motions. I was always in favour of time allocation because all three parties at that time were diametrically opposed philosophically on the direction that our government was taking and what the other parties in this House believed to be the case. It hasn't changed.

The problem I have with the time allocation bill brought in by the government House leader is that he talked at great length during the election about democratic renewal. That was one of their major platforms, and they railed against time allocation motions. But that was then, this is now. Now you're in government, and time allocation bills are OK. Do you see the problem that I'm having with this? That was then, this is now. What you said then isn't what you're doing now, not only with time allocation bills but with almost every major platform that you had during the last election. You've changed your minds.

One member talked about—

Mr Crozier: Are you still in favour of them?

Mr Chudleigh: Yes, I'm in favour of time allocation bills. I'm not in favour of time allocation bills by parties who go out and tell the Ontario electorate that they're not going to do that; they're going to have a brand-new democratic renewal. They come back into this House and they do exactly what they said they would not do. We never promised we wouldn't do that. You did. And we built 29 new hospitals too. The health care system in this province was one hell of a lot better when we left government than when we arrived.

Hon David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal): That's not true.

Mr Chudleigh: It's true from over here.

I'll give you a quote: "Once again, we have another time allocation motion. I really wish I'd been here at a time when we had democracy working in Ontario and bills were introduced and debated and committees reviewed them, and they went across Ontario and they

listened to people and they brought them back and made changes. That must have been a delightful era. The shame is that it's not here right now." That quote is from one Ernie Parsons, member for Prince Edward-Hastings, and it's in Hansard, June 23, 2003.

Incidentally, I have eight pages of quotes about time allocation and how bad it is. They're from Prince Edward county; they're from York South-Weston; the member sitting in the front row of this government, James Bradley—oh, my goodness, the member for St Catharines. He has a number: "We have yet another time allocation motion. For people who are watching at home, I have to say, that's a motion which chokes off debate on an important piece of legislation." This is the same member for St Catharines who talked about democratic renewal, about listening to what the people of Ontario have to say. My goodness; how times have changed. "What do we have this afternoon? We are dealing instead with a time allocation motion, which the government routinely invokes now to push legislation through." That's a quote from the member for St Catharines, June 17, 2003.

As I said before, I have no problem with time allocation bills. I have a problem with time allocation bills when political parties go to the people of Ontario and say, "We're not going to do that. We're going to renew democracy in this province." Then they come back into this House, they get a large dose of reality and they do exactly what they want to do. It's, "Don't do as I say; do as I did."

It's interesting that all of your defence on this motion and on the entire session that we've had revolves around whether or not there was a deficit that was our responsibility. I would say to you, yes, there's a certain portion of that deficit that is our responsibility—about \$1.5 billion, actually. We brought in a budget in March—an infamous budget, I might add—of about \$71.5 billion.

During the committee hearings that we had on that budget in May—you remember that concept of having committee hearings on a budget?—Mr Phillips talked about the problems that he saw with that budget, and he was quite right. He pointed out, as I recall—I was in that committee at the time—four areas where the government had a problem. One of the areas was the sale of assets. "What are those assets going to be?" was a question he asked, and he put a figure beside that. He talked about the revenue figure, as to whether or not that revenue figure would be realized. At that time, we had SARS to consider. That was before the power blackout and before the West Nile virus, but the West Nile virus had been around the year before. He said, "What effect will that have?" I forget the fourth thing you mentioned, Gerry—the member for Scarborough-Agincourt—but there were four of them.

He said there was a risk, and I would point out to the member from Trinity-Spadina that a risk is not a deficit. The member for Scarborough-Agincourt pointed out that there was a risk of a \$5-billion shortfall of funds. As a government, we were prepared to handle that. Because of the power failure, because of West Nile, because of

SARS, because of BSE, our revenues fell short by \$1.5 billion in the budget that we presented. We should take responsibility for that \$1.5 billion, but if we had been elected last October, which is only six months into the fiscal year, we would have changed that \$1.5 billion and balanced the budget. However, from October 2 until the end of March, the end of that fiscal year, your government did next to nothing to address the deficit that was bound to happen in this province. So if there was a \$5.6-billion deficit, \$4 billion of it hangs around your neck.

1630

But the worst part about what we're debating today on this closure motion, this time allocation motion, is how you went to the people of Ontario and you promised one thing, and you delivered another in every major part of your platform. The promises that you have kept have been small promises, almost motherhood issues.

The chiropractors, the physiotherapists, the optometrists—I was interested to listen to the member for Trinity-Spadina, next door, talk about how it was only \$200 million. To an NDPer, I guess \$200 million isn't a lot of money. What's \$200 million? Well, to an NDPer it's a start. It's just a start, and they'll drive it up from there. However, those people are no longer available to the working people of Ontario, and that is a shame.

You are now involved in a two-tier health care system, and that is a slippery slope. One you've started, that's a very slippery slope. When the people of Ontario don't have equal access to the things they need to keep them in a healthy environment, that indeed is a very slippery slope that you've started down. I would warn the members who are sitting here, especially those who are sitting here for the first time, be active in caucus, because your voices can be heard. And when your constituents tell you that they are not happy with the direction that you're going, listen carefully, because those are the same constituents who are going to see you out of here without a pension in the very near future. So be careful. Be careful where you go and be careful what you wish for, because you may be there reaping those benefits.

The Acting Speaker: The Chair recognizes the member for Oak Ridges.

Mr Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): Thank you, Speaker. I'm pleased—

Mr Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East): Tell us the snowbank story, Frank.

Interjection: Where are those two kids?

Mr Klees: At the very outset, honourable members from the backbench of the Liberal Party are asking in jest about the kids in the snowbank. Let me give you the context of their question.

The fact of the matter is that this government continues to introduce legislation into this place in which clearly the right hand doesn't know what the left hand is doing. It's clear that this government—

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): What does this have to do with a snowbank?

Mr Klees: Here's what it has to do with. The fact is that most of the legislation that we've seen introduced is

wrong-headed, has absolutely no sense of purpose or direction, and is contrary—in fact is totally unrelated to anything that's ever been promised by the Liberal Party. The things they have promised to do, they haven't done. The things they are doing are unconscionable. So is it any wonder that the latest poll has 8% of the people in the province saying they believe this Premier? That can't be very comforting for the backbench. It can't be very comforting for those of you friends, colleagues, who have the responsibility to back up the Premier and to back up the cabinet on the direction they are taking. I feel for you.

I'm pleased to enter into this debate, because for those who are listening at home, it's important to understand what it is we are debating. We're now debating a motion to bring closure to the debate on Bill 83. What that means is that this government, having started on a path of first breaking a promise, a promise that was made on the election trail—the first thing they did was to break a promise on the election trail. Premier McGuinty signed a pledge that he would keep the law of this province, namely the Taxpayer Protection Act. He made another commitment at the same time in that same signing of that pledge that he would not raise taxes, not a single penny. People remember well Dalton McGuinty looking into their television screen and saying, "I will not raise your taxes." So the Premier broke that promise. Once he got here as the Premier, he now has decided to break the law, and having broken the law, the people of this province are fed up and calling on this Premier to keep the law.

Interjections.

Mr Klees: I am being asked to move adjournment of debate, and I have to say that I will do that in the interest of demonstrating to the people of this province that we in opposition have no option but to move adjournment of debate.

The Acting Speaker: The member from Oak Ridges has moved adjournment of the debate.

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

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members: a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1636 to 1706.

The Acting Speaker: All those in favour, please rise and remain standing.

All those opposed, please rise and remain standing.

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 12; the nays are 41.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

Further debate?

Mr Klees: On behalf of the people of Ontario, who want to have their input into this budget, I move the motion be amended as follows:

That the last seven paragraphs be deleted and the following substituted: "That the standing committee on finance and economic affairs shall be authorized to travel and meet in the month of August and hold public consultations in Ottawa, Brockville, Pembroke, Lindsay, Bur-

lington, Jordan, Whitby, Kitchener, Orangeville, Newmarket, Sutton, Port Dover, Halton Hills, Fergus, Midland, Parry Sound, Collingwood, Oshawa, Woodstock, Barrie and Clarington.”

Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker: You can't move adjournment of the House until I deal with the amendment to the motion.

Mr Klees has moved an amendment to the motion, which reads as follows:

That the last seven paragraphs be deleted and the following substituted: “That the standing committee on finance and economic affairs shall be authorized to travel and meet in the month of August and hold public consultations in Ottawa, Brockville, Pembroke, Lindsay, Burlington, Jordan, Whitby, Kitchener, Orangeville, Newmarket, Sutton, Port Dover, Halton Hills, Fergus, Midland, Parry Sound, Collingwood, Oshawa, Woodstock, Barrie and Clarington.”

Mr Klees: Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

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

All those in favour, say “aye.”

All those opposed, say “nay.”

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1710 to 1740.

The Acting Speaker: All those in favour, please rise and remain standing.

All those opposed, please rise and remain standing.

Clerk of the House: The ayes are 12; the nays are 37.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

Further debate on the amendment to the motion?

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): I would first like to move that the amendment to the motion be amended by adding the following:

“Clarington.”

The Acting Speaker: Mr Bisson has moved an amendment to add the following:

“Clarington.”

Mr Bisson: As you well know, it's very important that we recognize that the government is moving time allocation here today.

Mr Kormos: Shame.

Interjections: Shame.

Mr Bisson: Shame on them, as my good friend from Niagara Centre and others have said. This is the government that while in opposition used to rail against governments that moved time allocation motions on many opportunities. In the last election I ran, like everybody else, all the candidates in the last election—the Liberals said to us, “If we form the next majority government, we're going to reform the way democracy is made in this House.” They said, “We're going to make sure we're going to have greater democracy inside the Legislature,” and that they wouldn't deal with time allocation in the way other governments had before.

It's another broken promise that we can add on top of the list of promise after promise that this government has broken since being over there. I've got to say, I'm a little

bit disappointed; as a matter of fact, I'm greatly disappointed, because they decided to do it on one of the most fundamental things, the budget.

Budgets are basically the most important things we debate in this House during the course of the government and the calendar year. It sets out for the government what they plan on doing when it comes to expenditure and policy over the next fiscal year. The government, in this case, is doing some things in this budget—most of them I don't agree with, but a couple of them particularly.

First of all, they've decided to impose the most regressive tax measure we've seen in Ontario in many years. We have a tax measure on the part of this government that's going to say, if you're a \$30,000-income earner in the province and you're working hard to pay your bills, “It's OK, you can pay 24% more in taxes in Ontario.” But if you're a \$100,000-a-year income earner, the government's saying, “Two per cent, 3%, that's fair. After all, people with more money should pay less taxes.”

I say we should have a system of taxation that's fair, that says we should recognize the ability of people to pay, not overtax people. I don't argue that for a second as a New Democrat. I just say that it's important we make sure people pay their fair share.

What's even more regressive: Do you remember those insurance companies that jacked up insurance costs to motorists across this province, who were refusing to insure hard-working people when it came to their homes in some communities? They made record profits last year and this government's giving them a gift. They're saying, “You can have a tax reduction,” and the hard-working people in this province have to pay more taxes.

Nobody argues that we need money to pay for health care, but the argument is that we have to do it in a progressive way, and this tax measure is probably one of the most regressive tax measures I've seen, certainly in the time I've been here and probably in a long time in this Legislature.

To top it all off, this government then says, “We're going to delist essential services such as services that are provided by health care professionals in our communities across Ontario.” For example, they're going to delist chiropractors. They're going to delist eye doctors. They're going to delist physiotherapists and others. What a dumb move. The person who has a bad back and has to see his or her chiropractor ends up in a situation where it's not covered any more. They're going to say, “Well, I guess I'll stay home. I can't afford to go.” What's going to happen to them? They will get into a crisis. All of a sudden that person will have to go either to the doctor's office or to the emergency room, where (a) it's more expensive, and (b) it's already taxed.

I spent an entire morning and afternoon on the phone dealing with an issue in our community, where our hospital system is overcrowded and we're discharging ALC—alternate level of care—patients into communities across the region. We know we're in a crisis in health care, and this government is saying, “We're going to

remove health care professionals from the health continuum in places like Timmins.” It makes absolutely no sense. In an area where we’re underserved by physicians, where we’re underserved by services overall, the government says, “We’re going to withdraw from the health care continuum all those other professions that are really important to the whole health continuum when it comes to providing services.”

I really have to say that this is one of the most regressive things I have seen in a long time in this Legislature. I think the government would be well served to allow this bill to go to committee so that at the end of the day people have an opportunity to present. Then they can see, as they are seeing in this provincial government and in this federal election, that they are in a position where the voters are pretty unhappy. It’s a really interesting time we have here.

With that, I would like to move adjournment of the debate.

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

All those in favour, say “aye.”

All those opposed, say “nay.”

I say the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1747 to 1817.

The Acting Speaker: All those in favour, please rise and remain standing. Members, please be seated.

All those opposed, please rise and remain standing. Members, please be seated.

Clerk of the House: The ayes are 9; the nays are 36.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

Mr Bisson has moved that the motion be amended as follows: by adding the word “Clarington.”

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

All those in favour, please say “aye.”

All those opposed, please 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 1820 to 1830.

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

Ayes

Bisson, Gilles	Hardeman, Ernie	Wilson, Jim
Chudleigh, Ted	Kormos, Peter	Witmer, Elizabeth
Churley, Marilyn	Sterling, Norman W.	

The Acting Speaker: All those opposed will please stand one at a time and remain standing.

Nays

Arthurs, Wayne	Duguid, Brad	Qaadri, Shafiq
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Duncan, Dwight	Racco, Mario G.
Brotten, Laurel C.	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Rinaldi, Lou
Cansfield, Donna H.	Hoy, Pat	Ruprecht, Tony
Caplan, David	Jeffrey, Linda	Sergio, Mario
Colle, Mike	Kular, Kuldip	Smith, Monique
Cordiano, Joseph	McMeekin, Ted	Van Bommel, Maria
Craitor, Kim	Meilleur, Madeleine	Watson, Jim

Crozier, Bruce	Mitchell, Carol	Wilkinson, John
Delaney, Bob	Mossop, Jennifer F.	Wong, Tony C.
Dhillon, Vic	Parsons, Ernie	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Di Cocco, Caroline	Peterson, Tim	
Dombrowsky, Leona	Phillips, Gerry	

Clerk of the House: The ayes are 8; the nays are 37.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the amendment to the amendment lost.

Mr Klees has moved an amendment to the motion, which reads as follows:

“That the last seven paragraphs be deleted and the following be substituted:

“That the standing committee on finance and economic affairs shall be authorized to travel and meet in the month of August and hold public consultations in Ottawa, Brockville, Pembroke, Lindsay, Burlington, Jordan, Whitby, Kitchener, Orangeville, Newmarket, Sutton, Port Dover, Halton Hills, Fergus, Midland, Parry Sound, Colingwood, Oshawa, Woodstock, Barrie and Clarington.”

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

All those in favour, say “aye.”

All those opposed, say “nay.”

In my opinion, the nays have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1833 to 1843.

The Acting Speaker: All those members in favour, please rise one at a time and remain standing.

Ayes

Bisson, Gilles	Kormos, Peter	Wilson, Jim
Chudleigh, Ted	O’Toole, John	Witmer, Elizabeth
Hardeman, Ernie	Sterling, Norman W.	

The Acting Speaker: All those opposed, please rise one at a time and remain standing.

Nays

Arthurs, Wayne	Duguid, Brad	Qaadri, Shafiq
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Duncan, Dwight	Racco, Mario G.
Brotten, Laurel C.	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Rinaldi, Lou
Cansfield, Donna H.	Hoy, Pat	Ruprecht, Tony
Caplan, David	Jeffrey, Linda	Sergio, Mario
Colle, Mike	Kular, Kuldip	Smith, Monique
Cordiano, Joseph	McMeekin, Ted	Van Bommel, Maria
Craitor, Kim	Meilleur, Madeleine	Watson, Jim
Crozier, Bruce	Mitchell, Carol	Wilkinson, John
Delaney, Bob	Mossop, Jennifer F.	Wong, Tony C.
Dhillon, Vic	Parsons, Ernie	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Di Cocco, Caroline	Peterson, Tim	
Dombrowsky, Leona	Phillips, Gerry	

Clerk of the House: The ayes are 8; the nays are 37.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the amendment lost.

Mr Duncan has moved government notice of motion number 146.

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

All those in favour, say “aye.”

All those opposed, say “nay.”

I declare that the ayes have it.

Call in the members; a 10-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1846 to 1849.

The Acting Speaker: All those in favour, please rise one at a time.

Ayes

Arthurs, Wayne
 Berardinetti, Lorenzo
 Broten, Laurel C.
 Cansfield, Donna H.
 Caplan, David
 Colle, Mike
 Cordiano, Joseph
 Craiton, Kim
 Crozier, Bruce
 Delaney, Bob
 Dhillon, Vic
 Di Cocco, Caroline
 Dombrowsky, Leona

Duguid, Brad
 Duncan, Dwight
 Flynn, Kevin Daniel
 Hoy, Pat
 Jeffrey, Linda
 Kular, Kuldip
 McMeekin, Ted
 Meilleur, Madeleine
 Mitchell, Carol
 Mossop, Jennifer F.
 Parsons, Ernie
 Peterson, Tim
 Phillips, Gerry

Qadri, Shafiq
 Racco, Mario G.
 Rinaldi, Lou
 Ruprecht, Tony
 Sergio, Mario
 Smith, Monique
 Van Bommel, Maria
 Watson, Jim
 Wilkinson, John
 Wong, Tony C.
 Wynne, Kathleen O.

The Acting Speaker: All those opposed, please rise and remain standing.

Nays

Bisson, Gilles
 Chudleigh, Ted
 Hardeman, Ernie

Kormos, Peter
 O'Toole, John
 Sterling, Norman W.

Wilson, Jim
 Witmer, Elizabeth

Clerk of the House: The ayes are 37; the nays are 8.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

It being past 6:45 pm, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 pm, Monday, June 14.

The House adjourned at 1851.

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

Estimates / Budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Cameron Jackson
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Vacant
Wayne Arthurs, Kim Craiton,
Caroline Di Cocco, Cameron Jackson,
Kuldip Kular, Shelley Martel, Phil McNeely,
John Milloy, John O'Toole, Jim Wilson
Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

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

Chair / Président: Pat Hoy
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: John Wilkinson
Toby Barrett, Mike Colle,
Pat Hoy, Judy Marsales, Carol Mitchell,
David Oraziotti, John O'Toole, Tim Peterson,
Michael Prue, John Wilkinson
Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

General government / Affaires gouvernementales

Chair / Président: Jean-Marc Lalonde
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Vic Dhillon
Wayne Arthurs, Marilyn Churley, Bob Delaney,
Vic Dhillon, Jean-Marc Lalonde, Deborah Matthews,
Jerry J. Ouellette, Ernie Parsons,
Lou Rinaldi, John Yakabuski
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

Government agencies / Organismes gouvernementaux

Chair / Présidente: Elizabeth Witmer
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: David Oraziotti
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Gilles Bisson,
Michael A. Brown, Michael Gravelle,
David Oraziotti, Ernie Parsons,
Laurie Scott, Monique M. Smith,
Joseph N. Tascona, Elizabeth Witmer
Clerk / Greffière: Anne Stokes

Justice and Social Policy / Justice et affaires sociales

Chair / Président: Jim Brownell
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Jeff Leal
Jim Brownell, Kim Craiton, Brad Duguid,
Peter Fonseca, Tim Hudak, Frank Klees,
Peter Kormos, Jeff Leal,
Ted McMeekin, Kathleen O.Wynne
Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

Legislative Assembly / Assemblée législative

Chair / Présidente: Linda Jeffrey
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Mario G. Racco
Donna H. Cansfield, Bruce Crozier,
Ernie Hardeman, Linda Jeffrey,
Jeff Leal, Rosario Marchese,
Bill Mauro, Norm Miller,
Mario G. Racco, Mario Sergio
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

Public accounts / Comptes publics

Chair / Président: Norman W. Sterling
Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente: Julia Munro
Laurel C. Broten, Jim Flaherty,
Shelley Martel, Bill Mauro, Julia Munro,
Richard Patten, Shafiq Qaadri,
Liz Sandals, Norman W. Sterling, David Zimmer
Clerk / Greffière: Anne Stokes

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

Chair / Président: Tony C.Wong
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Khalil Ramal
Bob Delaney, Kevin Daniel Flynn,
Rosario Marchese, Jerry Martiniuk,
Phil McNeely, Bill Murdoch,
Khalil Ramal, Tony Ruprecht,
Maria Van Bommel, Tony C.Wong
Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Jeudi 10 juin 2004

AFFAIRES D'INTÉRÊT PUBLIC ÉMANANT DES DÉPUTÉS

Loi de 2004 sur le gel du prix de certains produits pétroliers, projet de loi 48, <i>M. Tascona</i>	
Adoptée	2799

PREMIÈRE LECTURE

Loi de 2004 modifiant la Loi sur les permis d'alcool, projet de loi 96, <i>M. Watson</i>	
Adoptée	2803
Loi de 2004 sur le partage avec les Premières nations des recettes tirées de l'exploitation des ressources, projet de loi 97, <i>M. Bisson</i>	
Adoptée	2803
Loi de 2004 modifiant la Loi sur la planification et l'aménagement de l'escarpement du Niagara, projet de loi 98, <i>M^{me} Churley</i>	
Adoptée	2803
Loi de 2004 sur la transparence des questions d'intérêt public, projet de loi 99, <i>M^{me} Di Cocco</i>	
Adoptée	2803

DÉCLARATIONS MINISTÉRIELLES ET RÉPONSES

Permis de vente d'alcool	
M. Watson	2804
M. Runciman	2806
M. Kormos	2807

DEUXIÈME LECTURE

Loi de 2004 sur l'expertise comptable, projet de loi 94, <i>M. Bryant</i>	
Adoptée	2807

TROISIÈME LECTURE

Loi de 2004 sur l'expertise comptable, projet de loi 94, <i>M. Bryant</i>	
Adoptée	2808

QUESTIONS ORALES

Formation d'apprentissage	
M. Lalonde	2816
M ^{me} Chambers	2816

CONTENTS

Thursday 10 June 2004

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS		
Petroleum Products Price Freeze Act, 2004, Bill 48, <i>Mr Tascona</i>		
Mr Tascona	2783, 2790	
Ms Di Cocco	2784	
Mr Hardeman	2785	
Mr Prue	2786	
Mr Bradley	2788	
Mr Arnott	2790	
Mr Dunlop	2790	
Agreed to	2799	
Great Lakes protection, private member's notice of motion number 20, <i>Ms Mossop</i>		
Ms Mossop	2791, 2798	
Mr Ouellette	2792	
Mr Prue	2793	
Ms Di Cocco	2795	
Mr Barrett	2796	
Mrs Van Bommel	2796	
Mr Tascona	2797	
Mr Flynn	2797	
Mr Wilkinson	2798	
Agreed to	2800	
MEMBERS' STATEMENTS		
Tree planting in Wellington county		
Mr Arnott	2800	
Time allocation		
Mr Bisson	2800	
Soccer		
Mr Berardinetti	2800	
Dialysis		
Mr Hardeman	2801	
Markhaven Home for Seniors		
Mr Wong	2801	
Niagara Fallsview Casino Resort		
Mr Craitor	2801	
Ontario budget		
Mr Klees	2802	
Portuguese Canadian community		
Mr Fonseca	2802	
Kyoto Protocol		
Ms Marsales	2802	
REPORTS BY COMMITTEES		
Standing committee on general government		
Mr Lalonde	2803	
Report adopted	2803	
FIRST READINGS		
Liquor Licence Amendment Act, 2004, Bill 96, <i>Mr Watson</i>		
Agreed to	2803	
First Nations Resource Revenue Sharing Act, 2004, Bill 97, <i>Mr Bisson</i>		
Agreed to	2803	
Mr Bisson	2803	
Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Amendment Act, 2004, Bill 98, <i>Ms Churley</i>		
Agreed to	2803	
Ms Churley	2803	
Transparency in Public Matters Act, 2004, Bill 99, <i>Ms Di Cocco</i>		
Agreed to	2803	
Ms Di Cocco	2804	
MOTIONS		
House sittings		
Mr Duncan	2804	
Agreed to	2804	
STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES		
Liquor licensing		
Mr Watson	2804	
Mr Runciman	2806	
Mr Kormos	2806	
SECOND READINGS		
Public Accounting Act, 2004, Bill 94, <i>Mr Bryant</i>		
Agreed to	2807	
THIRD READINGS		
Public Accounting Act, 2004, Bill 94, <i>Mr Bryant</i>		
Agreed to	2808	
ORAL QUESTIONS		
Ontario budget		
Mr Baird	2808	
Mr McGuinty	2808, 2809	
Mr Klees	2808	
Taxation		
Mr Hampton	2809, 2810	
Mr McGuinty	2809	
Mr Sorbara	2810	
Cancer treatment		
Mr Jackson	2811	
Mr McGuinty	2811	
Children's immunization program		
Ms Martel	2812	
Mr McGuinty	2812	
Liquor licensing		
Ms Wynne	2812	
Mr Watson	2812	
Community reinvestment fund		
Mr Wilson	2813	
Mr Sorbara	2813	
Autism services		
Ms Martel	2814	
Mr Bryant	2814	
Employment standards		
Mr Qaadri	2814	
Mr Bentley	2814	
Civilian oversight of police		
Mr Dunlop	2815	
Mr Bryant	2815	
Ministry intervention		
Ms Churley	2815	
Mr Bryant	2815	
Apprenticeship training		
Mr Lalonde	2816	
Mrs Chambers	2816	
PETITIONS		
Taxation		
Mr Hardeman	2816	
Mr Klees	2818	
Mr Kormos	2818	
Mr Chudleigh	2818	
Chiropractic services		
Mr Prue	2817	
Mrs Cansfield	2817	
Mr Kormos	2818	
Mr O'Toole	2818	
Recreational trailers		
Mr Ouellette	2817	
Transition benefits		
Mr Kormos	2817	
Pension plans		
Mr Kormos	2819	
Property taxation		
Mr Flynn	2819	
Traffic signals		
Mr Wilson	2819	
GOVERNMENT MOTIONS		
Time allocation, government notice of motion 146, <i>Mr Duncan</i>		
Mr Duncan	2820	
Mr Baird	2821	
Mr Marchese	2822	
Mr Chudleigh	2825	
Mr Klees	2826	
Mr Bisson	2827	
Agreed to	2829	
OTHER BUSINESS		
Visitor		
The Speaker	2802	

Continued overleaf