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Tuesday 16 May 2006

Mardi 16 mai 2006

Speaker
Honourable Michael A. Brown

Président
L'honorable Michael A. Brown

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**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO**

Tuesday 16 May 2006

**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO**

Mardi 16 mai 2006

The House met at 1845.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, 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 109, An Act to revise the law governing residential tenancies, when Bill 109 is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment, and at such time the bill shall be ordered referred to the standing committee on general government; and

That, in addition to its regularly scheduled meeting times, the standing committee on general government shall be authorized to meet at the call of the Chair on May 29, May 31, June 5, and June 7, 2006 for the purpose of conducting public hearings and clause-by-clause on the bill; and

That the deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the clerk of the committee shall be 12 noon on June 7, 2006. On that day, at not later than 5 p.m. those amendments which have not 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 Thursday, June 8, 2006. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

That, upon receiving the report of the standing committee on general government, the Speaker shall 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, on the day the order for third reading for the bill is called, the time available for debate, up to 5:50 p.m. or 9:20 p.m., as the case may be, shall be apportioned equally among the recognized parties; and

That, when the time allotted for debate has expired, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and 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 Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Mr. Bradley has moved government notice of motion number 153. I look to the government House leader to lead off the debate.

Hon. Mr. Bradley: I want to start off by saying that I never enjoy these particular debates. I didn't enjoy them when I was in opposition and I don't particularly enjoy them when I'm in government. But we have a very heavy agenda. I remember in the old days, before any rule changes took place, the first, which I recall vividly, was I believe in 1993, when Mr. Dave Cooke was the House leader. I think that was the time—my friend from Brockville would be able to correct me if I'm wrong—that they started limiting the actual amount of time one could speak. I always felt that before we had that in the rules, we actually had more flexibility and bills probably moved more quickly through the Legislature. But we are stuck with the rules that we have at the present time, which have been amended by various governments. The last two times I can remember was the NDP in 1993, and the Conservative Party once or twice amended the rules. Each time, the government did it because, in the opinion of the government, legislation was being stalled unduly. The opposition never felt that was the case, I'm sure.

1850

What we've tried to do when we put forward a time allocation motion is provide—first of all, I think we've had three days of debate on this bill so far. That is a normal time for a significant bill, and I consider this significant. And I usually try to gauge—this is intuition, because I can't necessarily always get the indication from the opposition House leaders whether or not the bill will proceed. May I say that the motion this evening is not in any way prompted, in my view, by the opposition House leaders. I consider both to be co-operative to the extent

that they can be and reasonable in the approach they take, defending of course the interests of their party.

So I'm not here tonight to denounce the opposition and say they've been constantly disruptive and taking too long in debate, because they haven't. They're just exercising their responsibilities as opposition members. It would be rare that you would hear me say that about the opposition, because I think members in the opposition benches wouldn't even have to do any of their own speeches. They could simply go and get one of my old speeches on time allocation and they would have a speech that would keep them going for some period of time.

Opposition members don't like time allocation, and shouldn't. By the way, I note that this afternoon, when there was a motion for sitting at night, neither of the opposition parties voted for the motion, and that is as I would be were I on that side of the House, because the opposition was knowledgeable of the fact that the government was going to be putting forward a time allocation motion this evening. It is certainly consistent of the opposition to be in opposition to that. I can't recall, let's put it that way, an opposition party voting for a time allocation motion. It may have happened; I just can't recall that ever being the case, because the opposition has a significant role to play in the House.

As I say, it is with regret on many occasions and with reluctance that a motion of this kind goes forward in my name this evening. There's been some good debate that has taken place on this bill. I might add I've heard members of the opposition and the government debate this bill and I think they've both put very good arguments. Some have expressed the view that they would hope there might be modifications made to the bill in committee. Experience over the years has been that in a majority government that doesn't happen as often as it does in a minority government setting, but it does happen from time to time. I think it's valuable for the government to hear from people during hearings. That's why we've made, I think, some significant provision for hearings. I'm not going to get into it. They always give us a list of "You did this, they did that" and things like that. I'm not going to get into that this evening other than to say, because I always have to remind my friend Rosario Marchese—I'm supposed to say "the member for Fort York," I still keep saying, but it's now Trinity-Spadina. My recollection was that there were no committee hearings for the social contract. He may be able to correct me on that but I'm not aware of that.

Anyway, we have a bill that I don't think is overly controversial. There are people who are going to be opposed to parts of it and some who will be enthusiastic about other parts, but it's a bill that tries to strike a balance. That's why we're unlikely to have people really vociferously opposing the bill, I anticipate, as we would, had it been pronounced on one side or the other. In other words, there's provision within this legislation for landlords who have legitimate complaints. I think the member for Leeds-Grenville or perhaps another member—oh, it

was the member for Simcoe. Mr. Dunlop had talked about a personal experience, having a rental property and some difficult circumstances where he couldn't get payment, and perhaps there was damage done to the house. I think we're all sympathetic to that. There's nobody here who's not sympathetic to those situations. On the other hand, there are situations where tenants face some great difficulty because of certain provisions of existing legislation, and we hope this legislation modifies that to a degree that those instances are relatively rare.

If one is totally and philosophically opposed to rent control, then one is not going to be in favour of this bill, or if one believes that there should be rent control that is without any flexibility, that person is going to be opposed to the bill. But I think on balance, and that's what we're trying to achieve, it will be there. I'm not debating the bill itself, though it has many good provisions in it. Others will be talking about those provisions.

There has been extensive consultation. May I mention that? I know one of the complaints of the opposition, and rightly so, was to get up and say, "You people indicated you were going to bring forward a bill in your first year." Well, the fact that there's been so much consultation between various people in this regard I think is an indication of the fact that the government has canvassed opinions from a variety of groups, organizations and individuals even before the bill was presented. If there had not been that, I think, again, the opposition would have a pretty compelling reason for being even more opposed to a motion of this kind. There has been comprehensive consultation with groups that would be most affected by the legislation, and those are the tenants and landlords.

We also consulted with housing experts to ensure that we took into account the current and future health of our rental housing market. The ministry undertook a comprehensive consultation process: approximately 1,200 phone inquiries, 5,000 completed questionnaires, 250 written submissions, and 10 town hall meetings in Toronto, Kitchener, London, Ottawa, Thunder Bay, Sudbury, Kingston and Hamilton.

I guess from my point of view, I'm not getting into the details of the legislation, except I do want to say it has been the subject of considerable consultation. As it finds itself in its present form, it manifests the opinions that have been expressed and the suggestions that have been made and the recommendations from a variety of people.

The motion is before us this evening. I would, of course, speak in favour of the motion, and I would love to see all members of the House support it. First of all, we've had a lot of debate on the bill at second reading, we have made ample provision, we believe, for hearings within committee, and we've also provided for third reading. I can remember in the early days in this House there was never a third reading. It was a rarity. But we made provision for third reading, so there's comment even after any legislation is amended and hearings have been held.

I look forward with anticipation to what my good friend the government House leader will have to say, what members of the opposition third party will have to say on this particular bill and, of course, what my own colleagues will say.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds–Grenville): I appreciate the opportunity to make a contribution—hopefully—to the debate on yet another time allocation motion brought in by the McGuinty Liberal government. There have been a rash of time allocation motions in the last couple of weeks. I think this is three in two weeks.

For those viewing who don't quite appreciate the terminology that we use around this place, time allocation is sort of a polite form of closure. What happens is that the government brings in a motion which sets out the time limits on debate and committee hearings and when votes will occur. Essentially, as I said, it's a polite form of closure.

It is somewhat perplexing, I think, especially with this particular piece of legislation. I don't think there's been any indication—and the government House leader indicated that—from us that we were going to be in any way, shape or form obstructive of this legislation in terms of the official opposition. We certainly think there are some flaws and weaknesses, but we think the current marketplace is working extremely well. We have the highest vacancy rates in memory in virtually every municipality across the province. So the need for this kind of initiative has been the primary focus of our commentary on it.

1900

I'm not quite sure what prompted this, and only the House leader and those who provide him with direction would know what the rationale is, but it does give us an opportunity to talk about a number of things that fit into the fact that the government is proceeding down this road. The government House leader mentioned in his comments that he used to be quite irate about time allocation motions when he was on the opposition benches. I certainly recall that. There were promises made by the Liberal Party, when they ran for office in 2003 and before and after that, where they indicated that there were going to be significant changes, that we weren't going to go down this road in terms of cutting off debate and that we were going to see meaningful democratic reform in this place.

Of course, that has not transpired. Quite the opposite: We see the heavy hand of the Premier, the Premier's office and the unelected advisers impacting on this place on a daily basis. Certainly I see it, recognize it and to some degree criticize it when it comes to small-town and rural Ontario, because essentially that's the kind of riding I've represented for all my career. We see things happening here that have a dramatic and negative impact on rural, small-town Ontario and no one on the government benches is speaking up. Perhaps they say something in caucus; I don't know. But I have to say that if they spoke with one voice, as a unified force—we're talking about 30 or 40 members representing rural, small-town Ontario

in the Liberal caucus—they could turn things around pretty quickly. They could change the positions of the ministers and the Premier's office, who are coming forward with these kinds of initiatives that do not benefit rural Ontario. They could change that very quickly, if they spoke with one voice and stopped worrying about promotion and aspiring to be a cabinet minister. Folks, it ain't going to happen. Between now and the election 16 or 17 months from now, maybe one of you might have the opportunity to go into cabinet. That shouldn't preclude the rest of you from speaking out and speaking up on behalf of the people who put you in this place. That's the sort thing I think we all aspire to.

I remember this conversation: Mr. Wilkinson from Perth–Middlesex was saying, "Okay, it's easy for you guys to say. What have you ever done?" It's nice to have the House leader here on the government side, because he recalls when I was a rookie backbencher here, when I disagreed very strongly with Premier Davis's decision to buy a significant interest in the Suncor oil company, and so I—

Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke): You weren't afraid to buck it.

Mr. Runciman: I won't say that I wasn't afraid; there was some trepidation. But in any event, I did, and on a number of other issues where I went very public and really generated the ire of some of my colleagues.

Mandatory metric: I don't mind mentioning that I was very much opposed to mandatory metric and I said so. I said to the Premier, "I don't think we should be going down this road." The concept of getting involved in metric was that we would be in lockstep with our major trading partner, the United States. That was the whole plan behind that initiative. We had the Liberal government of the day taking a small butcher in rural Ontario and charging him. They were going to fine him or send him to jail for continuing to use imperial measures. That was the attitude of the Liberal government of the day. I spoke out against that, again against the grain of the position of the provincial government at the time.

So for Mr. Wilkinson and others to say, "It's easy for you guys to say"—well, you can't toss that back at me. I have done it, and 25 years later, I'm still standing here to say that I've done it. For the most part, the people who put you in this place will respect you for taking those kind of stands. But I'm not going to hold my breath waiting. I've seen too much of this over the years.

I want to talk about a number of issues. We heard from the Liberal Party that they weren't going to be utilizing time allocation or closure on a regular basis. I call what we're seeing here tonight another broken promise. I think it's at least at 50, at last count, in terms of the 230-some promises made in the election platform. At last count, and this was perhaps a year ago, 50 of them were broken, the most prominent of course being, "I won't raise your taxes and, if I have to raise your taxes, I'll have a referendum." Of course we know that both of those promises were tossed out the window.

There are other elements to this. I think it boils down to the whole issue of not only integrity, sincerity and honesty, but I think clearly it boils down to leadership and respect for leadership, not just province-wide but on a national basis and within the Liberal Party itself. We saw a situation a weekend ago where the Minister of Health made some revelations about his past history, and the Premier was caught off guard by that. The Premier said he wasn't aware of it. I gather that he heard this from a reporter or from press reports. What struck me was the similarity between what happened with the former Minister of Finance, Mr. Sorbara, who knew—he was advised—that he was under investigation by the Ontario Securities Commission and failed to call the Premier and advise the Premier and his office, "I'm the Minister of Finance. The OSC has launched an investigation of me." That says something about the respect within the hierarchy of the Liberal Party and the Liberal government in terms of their leader, the current Premier of the province. I think it speaks volumes. We've never had any justification for any of those failures to fully inform and apprise your leader, your Premier, of what's happening in your life. Certainly if you're a minister of the crown, that has some impact on the reputation and credibility of the government. I think it also seriously damages, if you reflect upon it, the credibility of Premier McGuinty.

I think a lot of these initiatives that we're seeing in terms of time allocation here this evening—and I talk about broken promises—that have generated broken promises are the result of what I describe as a Toronto-centric government. The bulk of the cabinet are members from the Toronto area, and no apologies are made for that. We see the Premier is now, although if you look at the seating arrangement—I guess it doesn't indicate his riding, but he contends that he's still an MPP for Ottawa. We know he lives virtually full-time in Toronto and that the Liberal Party, through taxpayer-paid donations, bought him what I would describe and what most people would describe as a mansion in one of the classier neighbourhoods in the city of Toronto. That's where the Premier lives. He doesn't live in Ottawa anymore. He doesn't mix with people in Ottawa anymore. He has a limousine with a chauffeur and security driving him around. We heard at some point where he's paying \$65 or \$75 for haircuts. I pay \$7.50 in Brockville for a haircut. Maybe it looks like it, but I don't have as much hair as the Premier. Maybe that's the answer.

We heard a few weeks ago about the Premier going to Hamilton for a meeting or a fundraiser or whatever it was. He took a government plane so he could avoid gridlock. Instead of addressing gridlock and the problems that is causing for all the commuters and people who work in this region, he doesn't have to worry about that. He's now the Premier of the province. He can fly over that problem; he can fly over that particular problem.

It's a reflection of an issue that I raised in this House, I think it was last week, about this Liberal mentality of being "entitled to my entitlements," and it seems to have filtered down to the provincial level. We know that a lot

of the Chrétienites are now behind the curtains here. They escaped Ottawa when Mr. Martin came into office and they're now here pulling the strings.

1910

Mr. Yakabuski: Chrétienites—cretins.

Mr. Runciman: The cretins. The Chrétienites, we'll call them. I think that's a little more polite.

We saw people like David Dingwall. We saw the sponsorship scandal—millions and millions; the revelations today about them hiding millions and millions of dollars of overexpenditures on the gun registry. That's the Liberal mentality and that has now been transferred from Ottawa to Queen's Park.

We see it on a daily basis. We see it here with Mr. Kennedy, and both opposition parties have raised it: "I'm entitled to my entitlement." Last week—

Mr. Yakabuski: Oh, he made it in today.

Mr. Runciman: Yes, a cameo appearance.

I don't know if he was here for the vote, whether we had night sittings or not, but up to last week he had missed 53 consecutive votes, travelling across the country, publicly admitted he was moving to Quebec. Yet as of today he's still drawing a salary, all the perks, the benefits, 1,600 bucks a week or whatever he's being paid while he traipses across the country, campaigning for the leadership of a federal party. Unprecedented, but that is a Liberal mindset: "I'm entitled to this. The taxpayers can fund my leadership campaign when I'm in Vancouver, when I'm in Halifax or when I'm in Charlottetown." When he wasn't running for leadership and he was here, he never missed the votes—very rarely missed the votes. They can try and throw up red herrings but this is unprecedented. This man wants to convince members of the federal Liberal Party that he should be the Prime Minister of Canada.

Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): He's got to learn French.

Mr. Runciman: He's got to learn French for sure, but here he is conducting himself in this manner. What kind of message does this send out in terms of respect for taxpayers' dollars? There's lack of respect for taxpayers' dollars. He's not here. He's not voting here, he's travelling across the country, yet he feels he deserves to continue to receive \$1,600 a week from the taxpayers of Ontario.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: I can barely hear the member for Leeds-Grenville and I'd like to, since he has the floor. I'll return to the member for Leeds-Grenville.

Mr. Runciman: Mr. Speaker, I want to get back to the theme of this being a Toronto-centric government and why I think that has resulted in so many breaches of promises. This is one of them that we're debating here this evening, a time allocation motion, in fact a closure motion.

I'm looking for some direction in terms of how long I have to speak here. I'm looking at our whip.

Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka): As long as you want.

Mr. Runciman: As long as I want. Well, that's good to hear.

I want to touch again on the Toronto-centric nature of this government, the fact that they're consumed by retaining the seats they hold in Toronto and around the areas outside of Toronto. This is essentially their focus. They have abandoned rural Ontario. They've abandoned small-town Ontario, essentially. There was an SES poll that came out recently that said most Ontarians agree that you folks have abandoned rural Ontario. In fact, even urban Ontarians believe that you have abandoned rural Ontario. So you can't pull the wool over everybody's eyes. They understand what's happening, they appreciate what's happening and they don't respect what's happening. They want you to treat people across the province even-handedly, fairly, and that's not happening. Your focus is politics and doing whatever you have to do to retain a majority government, and to hell with the rest of the province which you have written off essentially.

A case in point, which really I think drives this point home—and hopefully some of my colleagues on the government benches are listening to this—is what this government is doing with respect to farmers' markets across the province. This was mentioned in our opposition day motion today on tourism, and I didn't get very much time. I had less than two minutes to talk about it. I wanted to talk about that element of farmers' markets and its impact on tourism. The direct impact in terms of its economic benefit to Ontario is close to \$700 million on an annualized basis. If you look at the spinoffs, the economic benefit to Ontario is around \$2 billion. They have a very significant impact on the economy of this province, and it is a tourism draw. I know that from my local experience in the city of Brockville. When we have a market two or three days a week in the summer, we have all kind of Americans coming across by boat to shop in that market. It's a magnet. And you could say that about communities throughout this province: They are magnets for tourists.

This government, in its lack of wisdom, in its Big Brother approach, in its Toronto-centric mentality, has decided to attack farmers' markets, has decided to attack potluck dinners, has decided to attack church dinners, bake sales. This is true. This is accurate.

Mr. Phil McNeely (Ottawa–Orléans): Sunday schools.

Mr. Runciman: Well, that'll be the next move by you guys.

Those of you who are viewing this, I want to point out that the Liberal backbenchers—they're not on camera—are laughing about this. They're laughing about this.

Interjection: We're laughing at you.

Mr. Runciman: They think this is funny. They're saying they're laughing at me because I'm raising concerns about rural Ontario and about their attack on the traditions and history of this province and rural, small-town Ontario. That's what they're laughing at. That's the contempt they have for the traditions of rural Ontario in this great province. They don't understand the traditions. They don't understand the traditions of church dinners. They don't understand the traditions of farmers' markets.

That's why they want to go in and control them. They want them to have logbooks. They want them to have food handler certificates.

A reporter asked the provincial medical officer of health today, "What are you doing this for? Have you had any complaints over the last 20 years?" She said, "We have not had one complaint in 20 years." Not one complaint. Where do we have the problems? They're in the regulated sector. In Toronto—Mr. Duguid would know this—we had a serious problem last year in one of the restaurants. We found out it was some product coming in from Asia which was causing the food problems. In Hamilton last year we had 130 or so people sick at a catered banquet, a licensed caterer. That's the kind of problems we're having. We're not having problems at church dinners. You're telling people who for generations—they're mothers, they're grandmothers, they're great grandmothers—used to make a pie, used to make a salad and take to it a potluck dinner to raise some money for the church or to have a church meeting, that they can't do that anymore.

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs): Who signed regulation 170.

Mr. Runciman: There's the minister for rural affairs, who's—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Take your seat, please.

I would ask the Minister of Agriculture and Food to refrain from heckling the member for Leeds–Grenville, who has the floor.

The member for Leeds–Grenville.

Mr. Runciman: Mr. Speaker, I'll calm down. It's the interjections from people who shouldn't be interjecting which get me upset, because these are people who are supposed to be standing up for rural Ontario. Maybe they do. But I would think that in situations like this, where the Minister of Health is out in the hallway today in a scrum—here's a guy who represents downtown Toronto, doesn't have a clue, wouldn't know a church dinner from Chuck E. Cheese. That's the reality, and here he is saying, "We can go into and impose these kinds of regulations on farmers' markets. We can go in and impose these kinds of regulations and enforcement, sending out these inspectors."

The Philipsville Women's Institute called me a couple of months ago because the Lanark-Leeds-Grenville health unit was threatening to shut them down. They have had these potluck dinners for the Women's Institute for probably 100 years. It's a main source of income for the Women's Institute. They have never had a problem. They have never had a complaint. But now the health unit is out there telling them, "You've got to have food handler certificates. You can't bring in potluck. You've got to have a licensed and authorized kitchen, and you've got to spend \$50,000 to install that kind of kitchen. You've got to keep logbooks of temperatures" when you're doing this, that and the other thing. There is a whole list of these things that are simply insane.

This is the minister, of course, who wanted to ban raw sushi. Of course, there was such an uproar, but where did that uproar come from? It came from, essentially, urban Toronto, Ontario, and when he got that uproar, he backed away. Now that he and his Toronto-centric friends are going into rural Ontario, they don't care about an uproar, an outcry in rural Ontario, because they've written it off. I've said it here before: They've written off at least 20 seats. That's the best-case scenario for them in the next election. The worst-case scenario is that they're going to lose 35 or 40 and lose government. That's the one I'm predicting.

1920

I'll tell you, he backs off on sushi because of the outcry in Toronto, but all of rural Ontario—and we're going to hear more and more of this. The Minister of Health stands up and says, "Oh, nothing's changed." The minister here says, "Oh, nothing's changed, we've got the same rules." Well, I've seen this 48-page report and the things they want to do. It's a very significant and dramatic change. Maybe the Minister of Rural Affairs hasn't looked at this 48-page report. We couldn't get it out of the government. They wouldn't give it to us. We had to get it through other channels.

That's the kind of open government we're dealing with, the Liberal government, the McGuinty Liberal government of Ontario, who have lost track of rural Ontario, who have lost track of small-town Ontario.

Mr. Yakabuski: They just don't care.

Mr. Runciman: They simply don't care. They've written it off. There's no political benefit to them anymore. They're focusing on what's going to get them re-elected, or hopefully re-elected from their perspective.

I'm going to leave some time for some of my colleagues. I think I've pretty well summed it up from my perspective. I had an opportunity that I didn't have during the tourism debate

I could say a couple of things about tourism. The whip is saying I can take a couple more minutes since I didn't have an opportunity to participate. I represent a riding with the Rideau Lakes and the Thousand Islands. Tourism is a significant factor. This Friday, I'm meeting with Senator Jim Wright, halfway across the Thousand Islands Bridge, to talk about joint concerns and initiatives.

I have to say that—and I can't lay the blame for this at the doorstep of the provincial government necessarily. I have to tell you, and I've said this before, I was in the States last fall on a bus tour. My wife and I were sitting with a group of Americans, most of them from Connecticut. We were having a very nice meal together and they said, "Can you tell us, why do Canadians hate Americans?" They were quite sincere. "Why do Canadians hate Americans?" I have to tell you, there is that sentiment out there, that feeling. It's true—

Mr. McNeely: We love Americans.

Mr. Runciman: Well, I do too. We love Americans. But because of some actions by federal Liberals, essentially, which received widespread publicity on CNN, the Fox network and so on, they drove home a message, and

former Prime Minister Martin's comments and criticism of the Unites States.

I think certainly a portion of the reluctance of Americans to visit this country can be laid at the doorstep of the former federal Liberal government—Prime Minister Martin and Prime Minister Chrétien's government—which was so critical and unfriendly to our great friends in the Unites States. Some of that has come back to bite us. I know there's a reluctance on the part of the benches across to admit that because of their affinity with their federal cousins, but that's the reality.

I think there's a lot of work to be done here. Certainly, I think we can't write off the American market. We have to focus more attention and remind them that we are great friends. I think the Australians are their best friends now. I'd like to see the tourism numbers for Australia from the Unites States. I suspect they've gone up pretty dramatically given the approach of the Australians in terms of their relationship with the Unites States.

I think there are things we can do, certainly at the provincial level, to enhance the relationship and to encourage more of our great friends to visit this wonderful province and this wonderful country.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Toronto–Danforth.

Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto–Danforth): Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Applause.

Mr. Tabuns: I have to say again, it's gratifying to have members of the government applaud me, at least at the beginning. I know that sort of decays as the evening wears on, but I'll take it when I can get it.

I was clearly not here in the 1980s and 1990s when earlier debates went on about closure. I don't remember the details of this perfidy or that sin, so I won't speak to the past history of who did what.

Applause.

Mr. Tabuns: I can see to the great appreciation of the Minister of Tourism. I have to say, I appreciate the very civil and straightforward approach of the minister in presenting his closure motion today. I just, as he correctly predicted, disagree fundamentally with this time allocation or closure motion.

It is closure, and what I find extraordinary is that I don't really see the reason for it. Every party in this House has been addressing this issue. People have been speaking reasonably. We have not been seeing any odd procedural tricks. I may be wrong, but it appeared to me that members of the government party have been speaking under their time allocation as we've gone along. I see a nod from across the aisle. I see other people who continue to work studiously at their particular tasks at their desks. I assume I haven't outraged them. What we have had in this House is a debate that has gone on without being dragged out, without being held up, without people trying to act unreasonably.

So I have to ask, why on earth would the government proceed with a time allocation motion? It just doesn't make any sense, given the performance, the behaviour in

this House. What is the unreasonable behaviour that has made it necessary for the government to come forward and say, "We have to have time allocation. We have to have closure. We have to end this." I don't think it's justifiable, frankly. The business of the House has been rolling on. We've been seeing that with other bills as well. People have debated those bills. People have behaved reasonably. All parties have behaved reasonably in terms of arguing the points that are before this House. Why on earth would we have time allocation? Why not let the parties actually debate the issue?

I think of the history of closure in Parliaments in this country, and closure has been opposed ferociously by all parties in opposition for precisely the reasons that I'm sure the Minister of Tourism has opposed it in the past. Debate, the airing of issues in this House, is a crucial part of democracy. Sometimes our debates are not pretty. Sometimes our debates are not informed. I have heard members read out the list of members of the junior hockey teams in their ridings during debates. I think the members of those hockey teams deserve to be honoured, but perhaps the content of that speech didn't reflect the matter before them.

Mr. Marchese: They named all the lakes.

Mr. Tabuns: Some have named lakes, others have read from dictionaries, I'm sure, but the reality is that in this debate—

Mr. Yakabuski: Peter, you have no lakes in your riding, otherwise you'd be talking about them.

Mr. Tabuns: Well, I have to say that some have alleged that I have no lakes in my riding, but in fact I have shoreline on Lake Ontario. It's fairly large. In any event, I have to say I don't know what it is about evening settings but they seem to create an energy amongst members that one doesn't see earlier in the day.

I would say to the Minister of Tourism, the House leader, who has introduced this motion, that it's not too late to withdraw the motion, to say, "I made a mistake. The reasonable arguments put forward by the member from Toronto—Danforth have moved me." He could stand up and say, "You know, I can see why we need more debate on this issue. I understand why this whole matter is so important that it should be thoroughly canvassed." That is an important point here. This bill is not a minor bill.

Mr. Marchese: It's a biggie.

Mr. Tabuns: It's a biggie. It does not touch on matters that are of small import; it touches on matters that are of import to large numbers of people across this province because it touches on the availability of housing that they can afford. It touches on their ability to build and have decent lives.

As I had opportunity to say yesterday, the average income of tenants in this province is approximately half that of the average income of homeowners. Now, averages mask different points. There are tenants in this province, there are tenants in this city, I'm sure there are tenants within one or two blocks of this building who have high incomes, but a large number of the tenants in this prov-

ince are of low income. For them, preservation of a big chunk, a big stock of affordable housing is absolutely crucial. This bill allows the continued erosion, the continued movement of affordable units out of the universe, out of the market that these people can afford, and that matters profoundly.

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In a society where people are desperate for housing, where you have overcrowding, where you have people whose fundamentals of life are constantly under stress, you have social ills. If you look at some of the problems that we face in this society—violence, teen pregnancy, AIDS—and look at the conditions in which people do not care as much about their lives, commonly you will find situations where people are pressed to the point of desperation. So for us, with this bill—"for us"; my apologies—for this Liberal government to move forward with a bill that essentially continues the legacy of Mike Harris to decontrol units, to continue moving rents up, to continue reducing the availability of affordable units to tenants, is directly contrary to their stated understanding of the world and of how we should be dealing with this society.

All parties try to balance the needs of different parts of society. They look at those who support them, they look at those who don't support them but might be mobilized against them and they think, "How do I make sure that I have a bill that meets the greatest needs in this society? How do I have a bill that really moves forward the social goals that I believed in when I was elected?" I'm going to set aside the promises that were made in the last election. I know I had a chance to talk to a number of members on the government benches over the last 20 years when I was a city councillor. I got a chance to talk to people, I got a sense of their careers and I got a sense of how they saw the world, and I don't believe this bill reflects how they see the world. I don't know what deal was made, because some deal was made. Some agreement was made with landlords to say, "Here's the saw-off. We're going to continue these items, we're going to take a little bit away from you, but the vacancy decontrol, the meat and potatoes of increasing your profit on large rental apartment buildings in this province, is going to be protected." The price for that protection is social disruption. The price for that protection is increased crowding, lower disposable incomes, more difficulty for people to provide themselves with decent food, more difficulty for newcomers to establish themselves.

Interestingly, when you look at the question of overcrowding—and this bill will result in more overcrowding. The Minister of Tourism is proposing closure. The reality, though, is that this is a lot bigger than closure. When you look at tuberculosis—I'll pick one example. In South Africa, tuberculosis was endemic throughout the apartheid times and may well be endemic still. It was endemic in those times, and South African officials would say, "Well, we've got tuberculosis. There must be some genetic disposition on the part of the black population towards tuberculosis." There wasn't a genetic disposition

towards tuberculosis; there was a problem of overcrowding that led to the spread of respiratory diseases, tuberculosis being the most virulent.

I will tell the minister this evening that I have gone through apartment buildings in this city where you have two families packed into a small apartment because that's all they can afford. This bill, with vacancy decontrol, will continue to drive up rents and will continue to make affordability a bigger and bigger problem and, because it's a bigger problem, it will mean that the health of those people in those apartments will suffer. That is contrary not just to the stated, but the interior beliefs of many of the people who sit on the government benches.

The members in this House from Toronto who have large apartment buildings in their ridings are going to continue to face those problems in their constituency offices of people who come to them and say, "I'm desperate. I can't afford to live here," or "I can afford to live here, but the building is so badly deteriorated I have to move, but everything else that's available has gone through decontrol and so I can't afford to move out. I'm trapped in this building. What can you do?" I've dealt with people, when I was a city councillor, facing those sorts of crises in their lives. Affordability of housing, the ability to move, the ability to control your destiny, is a crucial issue in human life. And this bill, by preserving Harris's vacancy decontrol—and that's one of the things I find startling, that that legacy would be carried on by the government party—means that the ability to move and have people retain control of their lives is undermined. I think that, Minister of Tourism, on that basis alone, because of that issue, this government should remove, pull back, their motion for time allocation, for closure, because the issue is so fundamental for the well-being of people in this province.

I've talked about affordability of housing, I've talked about the potential health impacts, I've talked about the social impacts, but I also want to talk about the energy issue, because again I say to those members who represent Ottawa Centre, Ottawa South, Scarborough Centre, Toronto Centre, myself in Toronto—Danforth, Beaches—East York, people who represent the people who live in the Jane-Finch area, that to the extent that landlords proceed with individual metering without first having invested in energy efficiency, they are going to invite on their heads a swamping by phone calls about profound problems with affordability. I want to say to you that if you proceed with a bill that eliminates the incentive for landlords to invest in efficiency, if those efficiency investments are not made before you put in the individual meters, members in this House who represent ridings with large apartment buildings inhabited by people of limited means are going to be dealing with an awful lot of desperate people trying to figure out how to make it all work. And they're going to have tremendous difficulty making it work.

As I said previously, if in fact you have a landlord who puts in an energy-efficient fridge, who makes sure that you have double-pane windows, who makes sure

there is insulation in the walls, weatherproofing in the walls—if you make sure that what the individual meters cover is essentially the discretionary use of power, then it makes sense to me. People will conserve, they won't waste power unnecessarily, they'll turn lights off and they'll save themselves a few bucks. But if you put individual metering on a north-facing corner unit in many of the apartment buildings in this city or in Ottawa, come January and February, those people are going to be facing a very difficult time if that building has not had the efficiency measures put in place. I think that too is a very important issue that this government should consider with this closure motion before us: No question that that will come back to bite every member who votes in favour. If this bill is not amended to protect those people who are going to struggle with those energy bills—not the discretionary stuff but the "How do I keep myself warm in winter and cool enough in summer to sleep" ones—there will be big problems. We have to think about that one. I appreciate the idea of individual metering to reduce the discretionary waste of energy. I believe that the Minister of Tourism feels the same way. He has a long history in these matters. So I understand that logic, but if you don't do the previous step—having managed a social housing complex where people paid individually and having dealt with the profound problems those people had made me cautious about putting the cost of heat to keep them alive on top of their rent. It worries me, and I think the government should be worried, and I think every Member of Provincial Parliament who represents an area with large apartment buildings where this will happen should be cautious—profoundly cautious.

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We will deal with a lot of bills in this House. We'll deal with bills of great import and of lesser import. This is a bill of great import. This bill is going to have an effect on the population of this province for many years to come. When interest rates start to rise, when the condo boom is over, if we should have a recession and a whole bunch of people need to flood into apartments that they can afford, we are going to face some profound social strains in this province.

For those reasons, I think the debate over this bill should not be cut off tonight, because I don't think, frankly, that those issues have been fully thought through by the government. I think that debate on those issues is valuable to the opposition and to the government. Smart government will listen to its critics and, without ever giving them compliments, take on the things that they suggest which are useful to them. I'm not going to flatter myself and say that I will have that impact, but I would suggest to any government that listening to criticism and picking up the useful bits is not a bad strategy. On this occasion, on this bill, listen. Let the opposition continue, let the government benches continue and then let us have a vote. But I think closure on this motion, time allocation on this, is far too premature, is not a reasonable motion to put forward given the behaviour in the House. If it's

within the power of the Minister of Tourism, the House leader, it should be withdrawn.

With that, I will turn the floor over to the next speaker.

Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky: I'm happy that I have this opportunity to stand in the House and respond to some of the comments that have been made, particularly by the member from Leeds–Grenville. I apologize. I did get a little carried away in trying to remind the honourable member from Leeds–Grenville, who very ridiculously would suggest that our government is urban-centric, that our government is very committed to investing in rural Ontario and to considering the well-being of rural residents.

Hon. Mr. Bradley: Who signed that water regulation?

Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky: That was actually my heckle. My colleague the Minister of Tourism asks, "Who signed regulation 170?" This was a regulation that was going to potentially close hundreds, maybe even thousands of halls in rural Ontario—municipal halls, service club halls, community centres—facilities that serve our public. This regulation had the potential to close them, and that regulation was signed into law by none other than the member from Leeds–Grenville, when he was not just a member of government but a member of cabinet and chair of cabinet.

He was also a member of the government that downloaded provincial highways. I'm from rural Ontario, eastern Ontario. Fully 40% of the highways that were downloaded in the province of Ontario were downloaded in eastern Ontario, so I want to know, where was the member from Leeds–Grenville? Was he on the back bench standing up for his people? I think not. Otherwise we would not have had fully 40% of Ontario highways downloaded—and in not so very good condition—in eastern Ontario.

Mr. Yakabuski: Are you taking them back? Are you uploading them?

Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky: The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke asked—

The Acting Speaker: I would ask the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke to refrain from heckling the Minister of Agriculture and Food so that I can hear her make her presentation.

I'll return to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky: Actually, the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke brings up an interesting note. He asks, "Are you taking them back?" Do you know what we're doing? We're going something that the previous government never did for rural Ontario. We're helping them by providing them with COMRIF grants to improve the roads that you downloaded that they can't afford to improve. That has been our commitment, in addition to our investments in health care with family health teams, in addition to our investments in education to ensure that rural schools stay open, in addition to our investments for Move Ontario, which were unconditional dollars that flowed to municipalities across Ontario—a program, by the way, that members of the opposition

have criticized. They've criticized our government helping municipalities improve their infrastructure.

I just wanted the opportunity to remind the people listening and for the public record that our government is committed to investing in rural Ontario. Unlike the previous government, which downloaded and imposed things like regulation 170, we want to work with our rural stakeholders, our rural constituents, and build a better province.

Mr. Yakabuski: It's wonderful to have the opportunity to speak to this tonight. To those people listening and watching tonight, it is kind of sad, actually. For those people in TV land, it is almost as likely that in this House, the storied legislative chamber of the province of Ontario, you are as likely to be debating a time allocation motion as you are to be debating legislation. It was only last week that we just dealt with the most—I couldn't believe it—draconian, Orwellian time allocation motion that I have ever seen in my life, and we're now at it again. Time allocation motions are what we're debating instead of the legislation that the people of the province of Ontario expect and want us to debate so that, at the end of the day, the results and the laws that are passed are in the best interests of the people of Ontario. But no, this government and the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs like to use that statement "committed." Well, this government seems to be committed to subverting the democratic process in this chamber by ensuring that members who represent their constituencies will not have the opportunity to debate legislation in this House.

I can absolutely understand why my colleague from Leeds–Grenville gets a little animated sometimes. He gets a little fired up when he sees what's going on with this government. At the same time, it's the same people. For every person on that side who has a driver and a fancy office we can find quotes, when they were in opposition, that absolutely lambasted the government if they happened to bring in a time allocation motion to deal with a piece of legislation, how they would never do that, how they just thought it was the worst possible thing that a government could do, that it was an insult to the people and an affront to democracy. However, it seems that when they get those fancy cars and decorated offices, they change their tune. All of a sudden now, democracy takes on a different flavour. Democracy is defined completely differently, because then they say, "You know what? My goodness gracious, we're Liberals and now we're the government and we're going to show them because we do everything better. We know everything." Holy Hannah, we can't allow the people to have their way. The Liberals must have their way because they're more intellectual. They understand things better. They've got it all figured out.

All you've got to do is look at the bills coming forward; just look at them. It's about control: "We'll tell you what to do, people, because we know best." It's the "father knows best" mentality, and the father is—well, no, he represents—well, no, he doesn't do that, either. He comes originally from the riding of Ottawa South. Now

he lives in Toronto and we're not sure who he represents. But, anyway, he believes that father knows best, and he's got his little minions lined up in the front row here.

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Mr. Marchese: How many?

Mr. Yakabuski: I don't know how many there are. But they're making sure we follow through with what daddy says. We're going to make sure that the Liberal footprint is all over this province, because we're going to ensure that people no longer have to worry about thinking for themselves. Thinking for themselves is passé. No, don't let the people think for themselves; let the Liberals do it for them. We're going to ensure that that will be something they don't have to worry about anymore, because we know that under the Liberal government they're not going to have to time to think for themselves about legislation. They're going to be too busy working their butts off to pay the taxes that this government has foisted upon them.

It would be nice if we could be in this chamber talking about legislation, but here we are talking about time allocation motions. We're talking about leadership. We're talking about wrong-headedness on the part of the government.

You know, it was almost comical today to see the member from Parkdale-High Park in here giving a statement. He barely got the words out and he was heading for the door, out there telling the people how he wants to be the Liberal leader in Ottawa. You want to talk about an insult to democracy? That's an insult to democracy. He comes in and makes a cameo appearance, gives a statement, and then beats it for the door so he can get back to what he really wants to do, and that's campaign for the federal Liberal leadership. If Dalton McGuinty was a leader, he'd be telling him to pack his bags and hit the road to Ottawa, and don't come walking into this chamber, because he's not interested in representing the people of Parkdale-High Park at all.

I took exception to some of the members of the government telling the member for Leeds-Grenville that he's posturing because he's worried about his seat. I can tell you that the member for Leeds-Grenville has had that seat since 1981 because he has worked his you know what off for those people in Leeds-Grenville, and he'll continue to be the member for Leeds-Grenville as long as he chooses to serve, because he serves like no other in this House.

But I can tell some of those members who are recently elected on the government side that they should be worried about their seats. The way this government is treating the democratic process and the taxpayers of this province, they should all be worried about their seats. They should be worried about their seats because on October 4, 2007, the people will have their say. Democracy will have another opportunity to reign in the province of Ontario, as much as you people over there want to shove it under the table and say, "Forget about democracy. Time allocation is the call of the day." In 2007, the people will get their chance again. Mark my words, folks,

you'll want to be watching that night, because the people will have their revenge on you.

Time allocation: You spoke against it and now you think it's the best thing since sliced bread. Shame on you. Shame on you.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you. The member for Trinity-Spadina.

Mr. Marchese: It's a pleasure to speak to any bill or any motion. I welcome the citizens of Ontario. It's five minutes to 8. We're on live. It's Tuesday, May 16. So if you're watching another hour, we're not on live. That's why I tell you the time.

I'm happy to attack this government when it introduces strangulation motions, and I know why they're doing it. They're doing it because this particular bill affects over three million people. Imagine if three million people could mobilize themselves to fight this government, or indeed any other government. Imagine giving them the time to be able to mobilize against it.

I know my good buddy Mr. Duguid from Scarborough Centre loves this bill. He has been talking to tenants, and they love him and his government for this bill. My suspicion is that there are millions of tenants out there who disagree with Monsieur Gerretsen and Monsieur Duguid from Scarborough Centre, and I'm looking forward to seeing them in committee. I'm hoping they're going to come to committee, whether they're going to be deputing or not, to witness the discussion, the debate that we're going to have between the member from Scarborough Centre and myself and, from time to time, the minister, when he comes at the beginning of the debates.

This is designed to make sure that tenants do not wake up, that they sleep comfortably in their apartments, not having to worry about anything. This bill will simply not change anything. They can just go back, stay asleep and be cozy at night. They're not to worry about anything. It's our intention to wake as many tenants up to the reality of this bill as we can.

I know that the Minister of Tourism talked about the changes we made in 1992-93 around issues of the rules in this place. It is true: Peterson changed the rules. After 42 years of Conservative rule, he probably felt that he had to make changes. Mr. Rae, Mr. Cooke at the time and many of the caucus members of the NDP of the 1990s were unhappy that they weren't able to do much, because the Liberals who just lost their seats in government couldn't stand the idea of being out of office, much less the Tories who had been pushed aside as well for a couple of terms.

For us, it was a real pleasure to be in power. But imagine: You have Liberals and Tories unhappy to be out of power. They did their best to stall, to make sure nothing passed in that Legislature, and the government of the day decided to change the rules. I wasn't happy about that; I've got to tell you, for the record, I wasn't happy about that, because in the early days, prior to my time here, members could debate for as long as they wanted to. It was a good thing. I know for some people it might have been a terrible thing, to be able to go on for hours and hours, because some of the citizens watching might

say, "Good God, can't we get rid of some of those speakers?" I appreciate that. But good or bad, orators or not, the ability to speak as long as you wanted on any bill was a good thing, and we changed that. That was a mistake, and it was wrong, but our government did that. I was trying to give you a rationale as to why they did that, but I didn't support it.

The Tories got into power, and they made more changes to the rules. So every government has had an opportunity—

Interjection.

Mr. Marchese: —including John here, next to me, who's got a very sonorous voice. You notice how the voice rebounds from one end of the room to the other? God bless, John, I'm telling you. It's great when you're speaking, but when another speaker is speaking beside you, it can clash. It can, you know?

Mr. Yakabuski: Oh, I apologize.

Mr. Marchese: Did I say anything wrong?

Mr. Yakabuski: No, and whatever I said, I take it all back.

Mr. Marchese: It's not what you said; it's just that you have a sonorous voice, and it rebounds in this room. So when you're speaking and I'm speaking at the same time, I don't know who's being heard more.

Mr. Yakabuski: So I should only speak when you're not speaking?

Mr. Marchese: Do you think? From time to time, or just whisper it to me. I have no problem with that. I've got no problem with you—

The Acting Speaker: Could I be part of this conversation, please?

Mr. Marchese: I'm speaking through you, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Trinity–Spadina has the floor.

Mr. Marchese: I was speaking through you. My chat with my good friend Mr. Yakabuski is just a friendly chat.

So we changed the rules, the Tories changed the rules after us and the Liberals changed them before us. It was a mistake. We continue to do it.

The Minister of Tourism: Every time there was a strangulation motion, he was first up. He was always there at the ready. He was a true soldier and still is. He should be regarded as the true soldier that he has been for 25 years and moving on—

Mr. Yakabuski: For 29 years, just like Norm Sterling from Lanark–Carleton.

Mr. Marchese: A great soldier. Every time there was a strangulation motion presented by the Tories, he was there, ready for the fight, because he felt there should always be a long debate on every issue.

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New Democrats say this is an important bill that touches over three million people. A third of the households in Ontario are tenants. So when I look at the promise that says, "We will bring back real rent control that protects tenants from excessive rent increases," and they

do not do that—it is a promise that was made, and not keeping it is egregious in nature. I hope the tenants will punish them and the minister. "We will get rid of vacancy decontrol, which allows unlimited increases on a unit when a tenant leaves. It will be gone." How easy it was for the Liberals—McGuinty, Gerretsen and others—to make this promise when they were in opposition. How easy it was.

Then they get into government, and they don't feel accountable for the promises. They don't feel they have to account. They can just move on. "Please, don't focus on the promises. Look at the bill and see whether you're satisfied. The promises? Yes, of course everybody makes promises. Of course they do, but look at what we Liberals produce for you. It's not our promises that count; it's what we produce for you afterwards that matters."

It's lovely to see the Liberals accuse the Tories of having two positions. I've now discovered that the Liberals have three, not two. It's not this or that; they've got three now to account for anything and everything. It's the Liberals that we have attacked for being saponaceous types; these are the people that we attack on a regular basis, because they have no firm foundation. They stand for nothing. So when they attack the Tories for having two positions, it's laughable. You understand what I'm saying, Speaker. It's laughable. It's ridiculous. They crack me up when they say that. Every day they stand up to talk about this, they crack me up. I'm in tears of laughter every day. God bless.

Mr. Yakabuski: Well, the people are crying too.

Mr. Marchese: They said that they could see decontrol, Monsieur Peterson, mon ami, was going to go. "It's gone." That was the promise.

Mr. John Milloy (Kitchener Centre): What's "saponaceous" again?

Mr. Marchese: You'll have to look it up.

That was the promise before 2003. According to the promise, it's a done deal. Vacancy decontrol is gone, does not exist. But this bill keeps vacancy decontrol. Does that sound inconsistent between the promise and the reality of the bill that's before us?

Mr. Yakabuski: Not for Liberals.

Mr. Marchese: That's the point. For Liberals, it's not inconsistent to say something before the election and do something else after. "Look at what we do. That's what matters." I thought promises mattered more than what we end up doing, because promises are presumably the foundations of the bills that we present. You recall that the Tories got rid of rent control by introducing vacancy decontrol. Vacancy decontrol was the way to kill rent control, without saying so. In fact they could say, as they did, that that was the Tenant Protection Act. God bless the Tories too on that issue, in that regard. But we're here to attack the Liberals, not the Tories. You guys are passé; you no longer matter. So my attacks are on the Liberals.

Vacancy decontrol means this—I've said it before and I'll repeat it—when you leave one unit and you go next door to another unit, you get whacked. You don't even have to leave the building. You go to another unit here,

you get whacked with rent increases. You go to another unit here, same building, you get whacked with rent increases. That's what vacancy decontrol means. It means that when you leave your room to go somewhere else, there are no rent controls. You get whacked with rent increases. That's what vacancy decontrol means. It's a way of killing rent control by that simple mechanism.

Recall, ministers present here—there are a few of you—that 75% of tenants move in a five-year period. It's an old statistic, but my sense is that if you were to hire some economist again, they would conclude the same thing applies today, that a whole lot of people move within a five-year span. If it was 75% of the people moving eight or nine years ago it's still the same today, which means that renters who live in buildings get whacked on a daily basis. Tenants should be alarmed by this. I'm alarmed by it, and I know that tenants who are going to come to committee to talk to my good friend from Scarborough Centre are going to agree with me and disagree with him. He's right here. He's probably next to speak.

Interjection.

Mr. Marchese: Pardon?

Hon. Mary Anne V. Chambers (Minister of Children and Youth Services): Can a person actually move if they've been whacked?

Mr. Marchese: Can a person actually move and get whacked? Yes.

Interjection.

Mr. Marchese: No. If they stay, they are protected from disproportionate increases because, you remember, the landlord can charge whatever he or she wants, whatever the market can bear, whatever the landlord thinks he can raise. I hope we're not having difficulty understanding this, because that's what this is about. The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing understands this, because he's the minister. But the point is that when you move, rents can be jacked up as much as they want, and once you stay in place, rent control kicks in. So rent control kicks back in once you resettle in another apartment.

Mr. Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford): We heard that.

Mr. Marchese: Is that clear? Yes, you heard, but I don't know if you understand it or if you know it. I don't know. Liberals keep on asking questions, so we don't know whether they know this or not.

Now, the minister said the other day, "The proposed Residential Tenancies Act would continue to allow landlords and tenants to negotiate starting rents on vacant units so that tenants could continue to benefit from the renter's market." That's what he said.

Hon. John Gerretsen (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): No, I didn't.

Mr. Marchese: Sorry? It's in your speech. You said it. It's your speech. I know the minister would like to take it back.

Hon. Mr. Gerretsen: Is it in Hansard?

Mr. Marchese: Of course it is. You read it. I was reading from the speech by the minister, who has no recollection of what he said.

But imagine, my good friend from Toronto-Danforth, what he just said is that the landlord and the tenant come in, and they sit down and chat. They say, "Okay, what are you willing to pay?" The renter says, "I don't know. I can't afford the kind of rates you're talking about." So the landlord says, "Yes, but let's talk and see what we can agree on, right?" Do you think that kind of discussion is going on?

Interjection.

Mr. Marchese: Was I not speaking through you?

The Acting Speaker: No you weren't. I'm enjoying your speech very much, but I would ask you again, as I'm obligated to do, to make your comments through the Chair.

Mr. Marchese: I beg your pardon. Speaker, I do apologize. That was a serious oversight on my part. So what the minister was saying earlier on is that the two people could just negotiate the rent, not a big deal. He says vacancy rates are so high—do we have a problem?

The Acting Speaker: I'm just informing the member for Trinity-Spadina that we're concerned that your remarks are not going to be recorded by Hansard because you're a little too far from your microphone. Perhaps the cameras might be having difficulty as well. If you could just relax, and take your place and conclude your remarks, we're enjoying your speech.

Mr. Marchese: You guys have to let me know. If you can't pick me up, let me know, okay?

Interjections.

Mr. Marchese: I'm just checking with the technicians, just to be sure that they can hear me. Is that okay? Okay. Good.

So, as I was saying, the minister was saying that because vacancy rates are so high, the landlord and the tenant will just negotiate a fair deal because, you know, it's not so bad. Can you believe that, Speaker? Can you believe a landlord sitting down with a tenant and saying, "Let's talk about it"? Since when has a landlord ever sat down with a renter?

Interjection.

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Mr. Marchese: Joe, are you a landlord? Because I don't want to offend anyone.

Interjections.

Mr. Marchese: Okay. I'm just worried. I just don't see landlords sitting down and discussing with the renters what is it they would pay. No, the landlord is going to say, "By the way, Mr. So-and-so, here's a notice." They don't even talk with you: "Here's what you've got to pay. If you don't like it, sayonara." That's just the way it works.

Minister Gerretsen, you've got to stand up and tell me how that works, because I've never seen that happen. I've never seen it.

To repeat the line of the minister, "The proposed Residential Tenancies Act will continue to allow landlords

and tenants to negotiate starting rents.” It cracks me up, you understand? I can’t stop laughing when I read stuff like that. They know, and he knows, it isn’t true. Now, it’s quite possible that some guy who owns a house might discuss this with a renter or perspective renter coming in.

Hon. Mr. Gerretsen: Aha, there you go.

Mr. Marchese: Yes, aha. I suspect that most people live in big apartments, right? There are people living in houses, no doubt about it. But the real gouging, I suggest to you, Monsieur Gerretsen, happens in the big rental apartments—20, 15, 30, right? That’s where I think it’s happening.

Now, if I’m wrong, you’ve got to let me know, Mr. Gerretsen; I need to be corrected. I want tenants to call me. Call me and call Mr. Gerretsen. Call both of us.

Hon. Mr. Gerretsen: Call you.

Mr. Marchese: No, call him and call me at the same time. Send him a letter and send me a copy saying how wonderfully this system is working between—kind negotiations and even fair negotiations between landlords and tenants.

Send the letters in real quick, because we’ve got time. This is going to committee very soon, and I need for you to send your letters.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti (Scarborough Southwest): Phone number.

Mr. Marchese: Do you have a number for Mr. Gerretsen?

Mr. Berardinetti: No, for you.

Mr. Marchese: You don’t have a number.

Listen, you call me up at my office. It’s 603—I was going to give you my private line, but that wouldn’t work. Here, let me give you my public line: 603-9664 is the public line, area code 416. You call me and let me know. I will send a copy of your letter to Mr. Gerretsen, because I can get his phone number and address. Don’t you worry. Share this information with all the Liberal members across Toronto because, man, do they want to hear from you. The member from Scarborough Centre says, “Oh, no, my tenants are happy.” I want you from Scarborough—

Mr. Brad Duguid (Scarborough Centre): The best protection in 10 years.

Mr. Marchese: Are your folks okay too?

Mr. Duguid: They want you to get on with this, Rosie, so they can get their protection.

Mr. Marchese: The member from—

Mr. Duguid: Scarborough Centre.

Mr. Marchese: Scarborough—

Mr. Yakabuski: Lorenzo is Scarborough Centre.

Mr. Marchese: No, the other one is Scarborough Centre.

Lorenzo, he’s not telling the truth: Scarborough Southwest. He was trying to—you understand.

The member from Scarborough Southwest is happy to hear from you because he thinks his tenants are really happy about this bill. He believes that vacancy decontrol is something that you asked for. Even the member from Scarborough Centre said, “You asked for it.”

I want you to send in the correspondence saying—to me, Marchese, “Yes, we asked for vacancy decontrol because we think it’s great.” Go to your Liberal members, sit down in their offices and talk to them about this bill. Make sure you get an appointment for Fridays, because every member is available Fridays. Every Liberal member is available Friday; if they’re not, they don’t want to meet with you.

You make sure, and if you’ve got a problem with that, you let me now so I can raise it in this House as to which members refused to meet with you because they got no time. The time they have is on a Friday when we have no legislative sitting. That’s their time to meet with you.

I’m looking forward to your correspondence for those of you who are watching, and if you’re watching this show, I want to send you my notes, the notes from Toronto–Danforth, send you the notes of the Liberals who have spoken on this bill, so that you can compare what we’re saying and what they’re saying, because there is so, so much to say on the vacancy rates in particular.

On the vacancy rates, the theory goes like this: The theory is that with an increased supply of units, the market will drive rents down. The reality is this: that rents have been increasing across Ontario whether the vacancy rate is high or low.

Rents for two-bedroom apartments in Kitchener increased by 26.5% between 1998 and 2005, while the vacancy rate mostly increased.

London rents and vacancy rates: What we have seen in London is that the vacancy rate for two-bedroom apartments fluctuated between 1998 and 2005, yet the rents for two-bedroom apartments increased by 21.6%. It fluctuated every year from 1998 to 2005, but the rents kept going up. No matter what the vacancy rate was, low or high, the rents went higher and higher every year. So when Liberals and some of their spokespeople and some of the media people tell you it’s okay—as one paper said, “Fortunately, it should not be a major concern for most tenants, given the current high vacancy rate.” You’ve got even major papers agreeing with these guys. It’s amazing. I wish we had a newspaper in Toronto that would help the New Democrats out. You’ve got major newspapers helping these people out, saying that vacancy rates are so high they don’t have to worry. Yet the examples I have given you for Kitchener and London show that, irrespective of vacancy rates high and low, the rents go up.

Interjection.

Mr. Marchese: Cherry-picking? Member from Scarborough Centre, in the city of Toronto, where 45% of Ontario’s tenants live—

Interjection.

Mr. Marchese: Listen to this, because you missed it the last time. In the city of Toronto, where 45% of Ontario’s tenants live—half of Ontario tenants live in Toronto—between 1996 and 2005, the average rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Toronto increased by 30%, while the average rent for a one-bedroom apartment increased by 32%. The overall rate of inflation for that

same period was 21%. The rates go up every year. It doesn't matter whether the vacancy rates are high or low; tenants get whacked. They were whacked by the Tories before them and they're getting whacked by the Liberals today.

I'm looking forward to the debate in committee. Kathy Laird, director of legal services at the Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario, says the following: "Rent increases will continue to be unregulated when a tenant moves, creating an incentive for landlords to evict and raise the rents. We have an affordability crisis in this province, with rising rents and fewer units." I'm sure the member from Scarborough Centre disagrees with her. In fact, there were just 1,575 vacant three-bedroom units in multi-residential buildings in October 2005, according to Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp.'s most recent rental market survey, and most of those units clearly are beyond the reach of low-income families. There were 124,785 low-income households across Ontario on the active waiting lists for social housing at year-end of 2004.

These statistics ought to make Liberals worry because of their claim that they represent the very wealthy but, oh, also the very poor. Let me give you some other statistics about tenant households. In 2001, 32% of all households in Ontario were renters. That's 1,351,000 tenant households in Ontario; that's a whole lot. Two thirds of low-income people in Ontario lived in tenant households in 1996. Of Ontario's 1.2 million low-income tenants in 1996, 36% were children, 27% were parents, 30% were non-family persons and 7% were spouses or common law partners. Also, 96% of Ontario Works beneficiaries are tenants, but only 17% of these Ontario Works beneficiaries who rent live in subsidized housing. The majority live in rental housing. Most of these people can't afford the rent in the buildings they live in.

Another statistic: Tenant household incomes are declining. The average income of an Ontario renter's household is about half that of a homeowner household: almost \$78,000 for a person owning a home versus \$40,000 for someone who rents. This fact was reinforced by the member from Toronto—Danforth. It clearly shows that those who own homes are much better off than those who are tenants, and those who are tenants are struggling to pay their rent. The median income of Ontario's renter household is less than half of homeowners' households: \$62,000 for the homeowner versus \$32,000 for the renter. In Ontario, the income gap between the median income of homeowners and renters grew by 22% over 15 years, from \$21,000 in 1984 to \$25,000 in 1999.

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Let's talk about affordability. The cost of adequate shelter should not exceed 30% of total pre-tax household income, yet 42% of Ontario's tenant households pay 30% or more of their household income on shelter costs, and 20% of Ontario tenant households—that's 265,000 people—pay 50% and over of their household income on shelter costs. Close to 300,000 people pay over 50% of their income, while the threshold should be 30%. We're talking about people who can't afford to pay these kinds

of prices in our rental buildings, and the minister says, "It's okay. Things are just fine. The vacancy decontrol issue is not an issue. Renters will be able to go and talk to the landlord and negotiate." Those people paying over 50% for their rent—that's close to 300,000—can go now and sit down with their landlord, because the minister said, "You can go and negotiate."

It's not going to happen. Poor people have no negotiating power. They don't have the resources nor the power to negotiate. The person who's got the power is the landlord, not the tenant. They're in no position to bargain.

The CMHC's housing market forecast data predicted a need for 16,000 starts annually between 1996 and 2001, and over 20,000 after 2001. Here in Ontario, we're facing an affordable housing deficit of over 80,000 units. The minister says, "We're building thousands of affordable housing units." The reality is, as of 2003-04, they have only created 63 affordable units. The minister and his government have not published any data since 2004, and I'll tell you why you haven't done that, Minister: because the facts say you have created little affordable housing and you're too embarrassed to publish the numbers.

Look at this. I've got something that comes from Nancy MacMillan of CMHC, the mayor's office of St. Catharines, and Denise Papaiz of Niagara Regional Housing. They say that they're going to create 19 units of affordable housing—19 units.

Hon. Mr. Gerretsen: That's one town.

Mr. Duguid: That's just one place. You can make up any number you want.

Mr. Marchese: No, member from Scarborough Centre. What I want you and the minister to do to help me is to bring these to me to show me how many units you're building. Just bring the facts to me like this, as I'm doing with you. The minister and the member from Scarborough Centre say, "You're just making it up." Well, I don't want you to make up anything. Bring me the facts.

Mr. David Zimmer (Willowdale): Calm down.

Mr. Marchese: And you, member from Willowdale, you've got thousands and thousands of tenants in your riding. You bring me the facts. Bring me the tenants in your riding who are saying they love vacancy decontrol. Member from Willowdale, bring me your tenants. If you guys could bring me more than a couple, I would just sit down and be quiet. Bring me a couple, at least, who will say that vacancy decontrol is good for them.

Mr. Duguid: If you sit down, I'll speak to that.

Mr. Marchese: Member from Scarborough Centre, you're going to have your opportunity in two minutes and 49 seconds to stand up and show us your facts and your brilliance at the same time.

Mr. Duguid: I can't show you that. I don't have any. I'll give you what I have.

Mr. Marchese: Show it if you can. Give us your best.

In terms of affordable units, I want him to produce these facts. Maybe Bill Wrye—you're back there behind the Speaker—can get him some facts on affordable housing. Bring it to them, because you've got the facts in your

head. Just write it down. Bring them to me. Send them over so I can read it for the record. Then show me how many affordable units you've built, because you claim you've built 3,000 to 5,000 units of affordable housing. Bring them to me and read them out for the record. I wait with eagerness for the member from Scarborough Centre to give me the facts.

Mr. Berardinetti: You can't handle the facts.

Mr. Marchese: "You can't handle the facts." You guys crack me up, day in and day out.

The member from Toronto–Danforth talked about the submetering issue. Because I don't have much time to talk about it, people can refer to my previous speech or the speech made by the member from Toronto–Danforth. The reality is that in non-electrically heated apartments, which make up about 70% of the stock, the cost of installing and operating the meter outweighs the possible savings. Fully 70% of the stock is non-electrically heated apartments, yet these people are going to waste millions of dollars. The tenants are going to have to pay for having meters in their apartments. You've got to wonder about the intelligence of this government. You've got to wonder.

What I'm asking you tenants to do is to call me, call the Minister of Housing, call the members from Scarborough, call the member from Willowdale and call all the members of Toronto, because 45% of all the tenants are here in Toronto. If you love vacancy decontrol, please tell me so I can feel good and not say any more. But if you don't, you've got to let the Liberals know, because they're so cocky and so proud of themselves, so full of hubris that they will explode at any moment. Come to committee. If you want to speak, call me so we can make sure you're put on that list. If you can't get on the list, tell the government why you couldn't: because they've got a limited number of days to speak to this bill.

I'm looking forward to debate on this bill. I'm looking forward to debate with my friends from Scarborough and looking forward to debate with my friend the member from Willowdale and all the Toronto members who are so proud to support Minister Gerretsen's bill. I'm looking forward to it.

Mr. Duguid: I must say, I did enjoy the speech given by the member from Trinity–Spadina. I didn't agree with a lot of what he said, but it's always enjoyable. He's really beginning to wear a little bit of a crease in the carpet here. It's starting to wear out from his walking back and forth, so I'm glad you called him to order and got him to settle down and stay in his seat.

It's important that people know what we're talking about here. We are talking about a time allocation motion. We're always reluctant to bring these in. We don't have a history of bringing them in at every opportunity. We could bring them in a lot more often if we wanted to be like the previous government, but we've chosen not to do that. But there comes a time, and we feel this is the time for this bill, after close to seven hours—in fact, I think it's over seven hours—of debate. Mr. Marchese has probably spoken for almost two hours himself on this

bill. I think we've heard as much as we can hear on this bill in this chamber.

We want to hear from the people out there. We want to go to committee so we can hear from tenants, so we can hear from landlords, so we can hear from the public. We know that this is the most effective protections brought forward for tenants that we've seen in Ontario for over 10 years. We know that. Yes, we're humble about it, but we're also proud of the fact that this bill is going to provide better protection for tenants, so we want to get to committee where we can hear directly from tenants and talk to them about the importance of this bill. It will improve the quality of their lives.

I'll go through that in a second, but first I want to talk a little about this time allocation motion and the fact that the previous government allocated about 50% of their bills to time allocation, one of every two bills. We allocate about 10% of our bills. We'd like to do less, but at the end of the day, we have to move forward and get the process going. We have to move forward so we can get bills like this to committee to give the public an opportunity to have their say. Then it comes back here. Contrary to the previous government in their last year in office, we'll probably have debate here at third reading as well, where we'll hear from Mr. Marchese and his colleagues again on what they have to say about the bill. I hope that after it goes to committee maybe they'll be a little bit more positive.

If I'm a tenant out there listening, I'm wondering, "What's in this bill for me?" Well, let's talk a little bit about why this bill is certainly on the side of tenants. There was an eviction process brought in by the previous government in the Tenant Protection Act, which we all know was nothing but a—it was really the tenant eviction act, in a lot of ways. Under the Tenant Protection Act, they brought in a five-day period of notice. A tenant had to determine within five days of getting an eviction notice whether they were going to dispute it. The Ombudsman himself said that was unfair to tenants. Tenants told us that was unfair to them. We made a commitment in the previous election to improve protections for tenants, so we went from one end of this province to the other, to 10 different cities, to hear what tenants had to say. We heard from thousands of tenants and we heard from hundreds of landlords as well, so we heard from all sides, all stakeholders. This is one of the things that tenants right across the province were concerned about, so we decided we'd go beyond what we committed to do, which was really to fix up this process and try to improve it, maybe expand the notice periods. We didn't just do that; we scrapped the default system altogether. We scrapped it because we felt it was unfair to tenants, that tenants deserve to have a public hearing, that tenants deserve to go to the tribunal and have a hearing. They were being kicked out of their homes, and they deserve a hearing. I think landlords recognize as well that they will have an opportunity. Quite often, it's not going to take any longer for them to get a tenant who's not paying their rent out of there; it won't take any longer. But at least

tenants will have the opportunity to have their say at a hearing. We think that's fair protection. It goes, frankly, well beyond the original commitment we made. We've gone well beyond that commitment for tenants.

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When we look at the original guideline that was put forward, the guideline was based on a formula, and that formula could change in an election year, could be manipulated, and I'm sure that at times it was. We've brought forward a transparent guideline for tenants based on the cost of living, something that's fair. Landlords can live with it. They might have preferred the previous guideline, but they can live with this because they know what they're getting. It's transparent, and I think it's fair. It's based on the cost of living. Tenants will benefit as well. If we had had that guideline in place for tenants between the years 1997 and 2003, instead of increasing rents by 21%, the guideline would have increased rents by 15%, a fair amount based on the cost of living, a cost of living that tenants have to live within as well.

We're also looking at renewing the mandate of the tribunal. That's one of the things we heard right across the province from tenants, and we heard it from landlords too. Neither one really liked the way the tribunal worked. We wanted to be more customer-oriented. We wanted to show greater respect for both landlords and tenants when they appear before them. We've changed the name of the tribunal to the Landlord and Tenant Board, but it's more than just a name change; it's a cultural shift that we want to see in this board to make it more customer-oriented. To do that, we're making the forms easier to use and understand. We're ensuring that when an eviction is notice sent to a tenant, the new Landlord and Tenant Board will also send notice to the tenant—they're starting to do that already at the request of the minister—so the tenant can understand what's going on. That's important, because tenants across this province deserve to understand how the eviction process works.

But it's not all about an eviction process. There are other benefits, other reasons why, if I were a tenant, I'd be very pleased with this legislation and would want this legislation to move from this chamber to committee and onwards to approval so that those protections can be available for me.

I look at above-guideline increases. Above-guideline increases were probably the biggest concern that most tenants had when it came to increasing rents. We've brought in a number of measures that are going to improve above-guideline increases and make them fair for tenants. To begin, when a capital item is applied for and an increase is warranted and awarded to a landlord, when that capital work is finished and paid for, the tenants' rent will now come down. Rather than have their rents increased and then stay increased forever, the tenants will then have their rents come down. That's fair and it's balanced.

It's the same thing when we look at the caps for above-guideline increases. Tenants were concerned about wanting some real and improved rent control. We've

done that through the capping of above-guideline increases. Now you'll have a cap on the amount that a landlord can get for an above-guideline rent increase. It used to be that they'd get a guideline award of 4% per year and that could go on forever until that asset was paid for. Now it's going to be 3% a year maximum and it's going to be for a maximum of three years. It's a real cap. That will be fair to landlords. They'll still get a decent return on the investments they make and it won't dissuade them from making those investments. But at the same time, tenants won't have to pay above-guideline increases over and over again, year after year after year, something that tenants will be very, very pleased with indeed.

When we look at the guidelines for utility increases, as it is now, if a utility increase takes place, if there's an extraordinary increase in energy costs—electricity—a landlord can apply for an above-guideline increase, and that increase will stay on the tenant's rent forever. We're saying that's not really fair. If energy costs go down, tenants should benefit from that too, because the landlord's cost is going down. What we're doing is ensuring that tenants can now benefit from energy cost decreases. The tenant's rent will have to go down when the energy costs go down.

There are some protections and improvements in here for landlords too. We heard from landlords when we were out there across the province, and one of the things that they told us was that when a tenant wilfully damages their unit—punching a hole in the wall and things like that—they want to get that tenant out of there as quickly as they can, because they're afraid that tenant is going to continue to damage the unit. There's a real problem there: They have to go through a whole long process before that tenant can go out. So we're providing a fast-track process to allow landlords to get those tenants out. If there are other tenants who are involved or who are living in nearby units, it's going to benefit those tenants as well. It's very, very important that we move on to committee so that we can debate this legislation and so that that good protection for landlords and good tenants will get in there as well.

The changes also benefit small landlords; there are a lot of small landlords out there. We heard a number of things from them. They were concerned about the costs of applications before the tribunal. Those costs are going to be diminished as a result of this legislation. Small landlords are going to benefit in that respect.

They're also concerned because many landlords rent out units to tenants within their own house. That's a good thing: It provides a base of affordable housing for us right across the province. If a tenant impacts on the reasonable enjoyment of that landlord's home, then the landlord will be able to apply for a fast-track eviction, as they should, because it's important. Just because you're renting a unit out to a tenant doesn't mean that your quality of life should be diminished as a result. That's fair to landlords. There may be other tenants involved in those units to whom it will also be fair.

The legislation before us is fair and balanced. We're looking forward to taking it to committee so that we can hear more from landlords and tenants to ensure that we've got it completely right. We think we've got a fair and balanced piece of legislation. We've worked very hard on it. It has taken some extra time to get this right.

The member from Trinity–Spadina talked about the vacancy rate. He made this insinuation: During a five-year period of time, from the beginning to the end, vacancy rates went up, and the fact that rents also went up during that period of time means that the vacancy rates going up doesn't mean rents come down.

What he didn't tell the public in his speech today was that in the last two years, the vacancy rates have been coming down. Prior to that, they weren't. The last two years is when the vacancy rates have been coming down. Lo and behold, in the last two years rents have been static or they've risen very, very slightly, below the rate of inflation. That means when the vacancy rates are up, rents, for the most part, are either static or, if they're going up, they're going up just below the rate of inflation. That's healthy; that means a healthy rental market. That's why we've brought in this balanced piece of legislation, because for the sake of landlords and, in particular, tenants, we don't want to mess up a healthy rental market. We want to make sure that what we bring forward will ensure that landlords continue to invest in rental housing in this province, not only building new rental housing but investing in the maintenance of their housing.

Within this legislation, we've brought in greater protection for tenants to ensure that landlords have to invest in the maintenance of their units, because if they don't, tenants will now have the option to apply to the tribunal and have their rents frozen—both the guideline and above-guideline increases. There'll be a financial incentive for landlords to ensure that they maintain those units, maintain them well and see that there are not serious maintenance deficiencies. Otherwise, they're going to lose money, they're not going to be able to increase their rents, and tenants, as a result, have greater protection.

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As I said, there are many other protections in this legislation, but it provides tenants with the best level of protection they've had in this province in well over a decade. I know that tenants want us to get on with this debate. I know tenants want us to get this bill to committee where they can have a further say, and I know tenants want us to get this bill passed in the Legislature by the summer so they can get these protections in place. They've been waiting a long time for this bill. The bill is now before us, and it's fair and balanced. I'm proud of it. I think the government is humble in what we're bringing forward, but we're proud of what we're bringing forward, because we know it's in the best interests of tenants.

I thank you and look forward to continued debate.

Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): I'm pleased to join this debate on this voluminous piece of legislation. What we are to debate here during this time is the motion

before us which relates to this legislation. Just for the purpose of those who are observing the proceedings here, I want them to know why we are debating not the bill, because the bill is not before the House, but we are debating a motion by Mr. Bradley, the House leader for the government. It is a motion that effectively short circuits the legislative process.

The way that this House should work, and I think the way that most people expect this House to work, is that we have before us a piece of legislation and members participate in the debate to speak to the essence of the legislation before us. That would take a reasonable period of time, and any member who chooses to speak to that legislation on behalf of his constituents should have the right to do so and would bring forward items for consideration by the government that perhaps, in the drafting of the legislation, they haven't considered or contemplated. Surely that's the reason why we come to this place as members. However, the government has chosen not to respect the right of individual members of this House to have their say on the legislation.

So Mr. Bradley, as the Liberal government House leader, moved this motion that is before the House now, and it reads as follows:

“That, pursuant to standing order 46 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 109, An Act to revise the law governing residential tenancies, when Bill 109 is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment and at such time the bill shall be ordered referred to the standing committee on general government.”

The motion goes on to say the following:

“That the committee shall report the bill to the House not later than Thursday, June 8, 2006. 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.”

I'm sure that members of the public who are looking on must be scratching their heads and saying, “Wait a minute. Are you saying that what the government is doing by way of this motion is pushing this bill through the Legislature, notwithstanding the fact that members of this House, be they Liberal, NDP or Progressive Conservative, would want to make a point and add their contribution to this debate?”

Notwithstanding that, this government, this House leader, no doubt under the direction of Dalton McGuinty, said to add this part to your motion: “That, regardless of what the committee has decided, regardless of who we have heard from or, by the way, regardless of what members of the public want to come forward and make their contribution to the committee, that notwithstanding any of that, the bill will be reported to the House no later than June 8.” That's a couple of weeks down the road. In the event that the committee fails to report, the bill will be deemed to have been reported. It goes on to say:

“That, upon receiving the report of the standing committee on general government, 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, on the day the order for third reading for the bill is called, the time available for debate up to 5:50 p.m. or 9:20 p.m., as the case may be, shall be apportioned equally among the recognized parties.”

On one hand, regardless of how much additional input the public may want on this bill, the government will deem that this bill has been passed. It will allow a couple of hours of debate until the end of the day, regardless of how much debate may be required based on what took place in committee.

Then, “That there shall be no deferral of any vote allowed pursuant to standing order 28(h).” So even that part of the procedure in this place, the House leader and his government have decided to turn on its head.

Finally, “In the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to 10 minutes.” He’s not even going to allow a normal 30-minute bell so that members in the Legislature have an opportunity to come in and to cast their vote.

I know the Clerk can’t even enter into this discussion with me and he can’t even, by any indication, signal that he would. He himself is confounded by what’s taking place here in terms of the usurping of the standing orders. But I know what he’s thinking, because as someone who respects Parliament, as someone who respects how business should be done within our parliamentary system, he must be confounded by the way this Liberal government is conducting its business.

I know, Speaker, you are very concerned, because your responsibility is to ensure that business is done in an orderly way here, but this government is taking away the privilege of every member in this House to debate this very substantive piece of legislation. I believe the electorate will remember that. This is a government that has disrespect for the electorate. It has demonstrated that very clearly by having made hundreds of promises during an election campaign. Once they were elected, they forgot the promises and they do as they choose to do. Now, through closure motion, they disrespect the members of this very place. They will be judged for their actions. It’s regrettable that we’ve come to this in the Legislature of Ontario.

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Mr. Mario Sergio (York West): I’m delighted to join the debate at this particular hour.

First, let me say I truly want to congratulate every member of the House, especially those from the opposition benches, who, when presented with a closure motion, have said exactly what I said and I would have said if I still were in opposition. So I don’t blame them at all, because in this House, when the government has to do business, and do business in a way that is progress for the people of Ontario, it’s quite normal for the opposition to jump on the bandwagon and say, “We didn’t have time to

speak, to address the particular issues of the bill.” Yet I have no idea which particular member spent about 20 minutes debating why the closure and forgot completely to debate the content of the bill.

Mr. Klees: You’re not supposed to.

Mr. Sergio: You’re not supposed to. I completely agree with the member.

Let me address the bill. I would like to add a few supportive words about our government, which has now achieved Bill 109 and brought it to the House, the proposed Residential Tenancies Act, 2006.

As parliamentary assistant for housing, I am pleased that we are moving forward on our agenda to improve housing choices for Ontarians and, with this legislation, make rental housing in Ontario much fairer. The proposed legislation is not simply about improving Ontario’s rental housing policies; it’s about improving people’s lives. It adds another piece to our integrated housing strategy to improve the availability, affordability and quality of housing across our province.

As Minister Gerretsen mentioned, we are making progress with our integrated housing policy. Together with our municipal and federal partners, the Canada-Ontario affordable housing program has funded to date 5,450 rental and supportive housing units, 938 home ownership units and 200 units under our northern housing component. We are also helping families afford housing through rent supplements. To date, the rent supplement program is assisting some 6,670 low-income households.

We have also taken action to help families in short-term rental arrears avoid eviction through the \$14-million rent bank program. Since 2004, provincially funded rent banks have helped some 4,177 Ontario households avoid eviction and keep their homes.

The proposed Residential Tenancies Act would take a further step in helping Ontario families by doing what the Tenant Protection Act has never done before: offering real protection to tenants while promoting investment in the rental housing market.

Many of my constituents are tenants. Sometimes we debate, we challenge ourselves in this House, and we challenge ourselves even as members of our own caucus: Who has the most tenants? I say, “You know, folks, I represent the wonderful area of Jane and Finch, the four corners, the four corridors, and I think I have the most tenants.” Then another member says, “No, no. I have the most tenants.” Well, maybe so, but I think I have the most senior and low-income rentals in perhaps the entire GTA, and I’m very proud. The reason that I have no problem walking into my community and supporting this bill is because I have not received one concern saying that this bill is unfair and unjust to the tenants in my area. When I speak on behalf of my tenants, let me say that they are vociferous when something doesn’t appeal to them. So I’m very proud to walk into my area and present this particular bill. I know first-hand the challenges tenants have faced under the current act.

Maintenance is an ongoing issue for many tenants in my riding and in some of the other ridings as well.

Tenants have the right to live in a clean, well-maintained building regardless of income. Of course, landlords should be able to make a fair return on their investment as well. Our government is achieving a balance between the interests of landlords and tenants with the proposed Residential Tenancies Act. Under Bill 109, both tenants and landlords would be properly protected. Tenants would have fairer rent increases and better-maintained buildings. Landlords would be offered incentives to invest in and maintain their buildings. And both would have better protection from bad landlords and bad tenants, respectively.

This bill would also encourage investment so that we would continue to have a sustainable supply of well-maintained rental housing.

The proposed legislation is balanced and fair, and it's not just our government that thinks this. Canaccord Adams released a report on May 4, 2006, commenting that the proposed legislation would not impact investment that large investors like CAP REIT and InterRent are making in our rental market.

The city of Toronto represents half of the Ontario tenant population. Toronto Mayor David Miller had these words to say about Bill 109: "The current legislation is very anti-tenant and there are significant improvements in the proposed legislation that will increase tenants' rights and make the system much, much fairer for them."

The Toronto Star, in its May 5 editorial, stated that our proposed new rental rules find the right balance: "The proposed Residential Tenancies Act is a reasonable compromise that rolls back some of the excesses of the previous Conservative government, while protecting the health of the residential rental market."

Passage of Bill 109 would be an important step in our commitment to building stronger communities across our province. It does what it aims to do: protect both tenants and landlords while promoting a healthy, vital rental housing market. I urge members of the Legislature to pass Bill 109 and help to build stronger communities that will make our province even stronger.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the time.

Mr. Tascona: I'm certainly pleased to speak on this bill for the time that I have. I remember that when the legislation was brought in by the PC government back in 1995, vacancy rates were low, rents were increasing, and we hadn't had an increase in the rental stock in many, many years. Today, based on the information provided by the government, Ontario's vacancy rate is high. In 2005 the rate was 3.7%, and it is projected to remain high until 2009.

As well, vacancy rates are highest at the low end of the market. In Toronto, the 2005 vacancy rate for the least expensive apartments, the lowest 20% of the housing market, was 5.5%. At the same time, average rents are static or falling, increasing by only 0.7% in 2005, and, for the least expensive units, as above, the 2005 average rent was just \$1 above the 2004 average.

The purpose of the bill that was set forth to get the housing market better for tenants has achieved what it

was supposed to achieve, and yet here we have the Liberal government bringing in a change of the rules when the market has responded and provided more rental stock, a more stable environment and more choice for tenants. The Liberals are doing that because it's part of their philosophy. The philosophy of the Liberals is, "If you have an industry that is doing well, regulate it, then tax it to death, and then subsidize it." That's their philosophy with respect to business.

What this bill is going to do—because the Minister of Municipal Affairs really doesn't understand what's going on out there with respect to the rental market, and the housing market in particular—is kill the condo market as we know it in this province. The condo market right now is not as stable as it should be, but this bill will certainly make sure that the condo market in this province is dead. It will also make sure that any incentive to go into new apartment construction is going to be non-existent, because this bill is going to ensure that landlords have no interest in making sure that there's more housing stock out in the market, which was the purpose of the bill that was brought forth by the PC government back in the 1990s. The Liberals are changing the rules, as they always do, to make sure that they can achieve what they want to do, which is anti-business legislation here.

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You want to talk about fair tenancy? The minister from Kingston is a lawyer. You've got to look at this thing. I went to Queen's law school and I was a tenant in Kingston. I was looking tonight at one of the biggest jokes I've seen on this bill. It's based on the Liberal policy, and it says:

"Utilities—Fair Treatment for Tenants: The current act does not contain provisions to reverse rent increases for higher utility costs, if prices later decrease. This means tenants may continue to pay higher rents long after utility costs have declined." What planet are we on? Has anyone ever seen utility costs decreasing in this province, especially under the Liberal government? People are paying more for natural gas, people are paying more for electricity. If you think you're going to get a decrease in utility costs, you've got another think coming. But under this proposed legislation—because this is just a sham—it says, "Sitting tenants whose rents were increased would receive rent reductions when utility costs decrease, if their landlords had received an above-guideline increase for higher utility costs." Everybody in this province knows that utility costs are not going down, they're going up, and they're going to stay up under this government. Every six months the Ontario Energy Board is going to look at the price of electricity and natural gas, and you know as well as I do that in one way or another, natural gas and electricity costs are going up in this province. So that's a really great provision, Minister: "I'm going to protect you against lower utility costs." That would be nice if it happened, but it isn't going to happen under this government.

Regarding the bill, they say, "We're balancing what's going on with respect to landlords and tenants, because

we're going to make sure you get a hearing if you get an eviction order." Well, whoop-de-do, you're going to get a hearing. What is going to happen to the landlord with a tenant who's not paying the rent, who has handed them an eviction order but they still don't pay, and then they have to deal with them down at the Landlord and Tenant Board? There's got to be some fairness and recognition with respect to both sides of the equation. If a party is served with the notice and knows they're going to be evicted, what are we doing, when they fail to honour the eviction notice, saying, "You're going to have a hearing," or, "You're going to have a mediation, because we think you should have that?"

Talk about a joke with respect to protecting tenants' rights. What tenants want is fair rent and that the building is kept in good condition. They want a place to live with their families that they can say is a fair and a safe place to rent. That's what they want, and they want choice, and that's what they were given under the PC bill back in the 1990s, because what we accomplished is exactly what they're trying to kill. They want to make sure that the vacancy rates are tight and that the rents are going up. How do you do that? You make sure that the housing stock decreases.

It's a very sad day for the housing market in this province with respect to this bill. The Liberals know exactly what they're doing. They're going to kill the condo market and they're going to kill the new building construction market for apartments. They're going to do it by saying, "Oh, we're balancing." Who else would say, "We're balancing it down the middle for you"? Only a Liberal would say that. They have no solution in terms of how to deal with this, because they want to change the rules in the middle of the game. It's not fair to people who invest in this business and it's not fair to tenants, because the choice is going down and the rents are going up.

Hon. Mr. Gerretsen: Let me start by saying that this has been a very difficult topic to deal with, as it was difficult to deal with for governments over the last 31 years. You may recall that rent control was first brought in by Bill Davis back in 1975 as the result of an accord he reached with the NDP at the time. Ever since, there have been struggles about how to deal with the rental market and what controls, if any, there should be.

I can tell you that we first of all did an extensive amount of consultation on this. My parliamentary assistant, Brad Duguid, went to at least 10 different cities, listened to literally hundreds of depositions on all sides of the issue—landlords, tenants, mobile homeowners, people who lived in care homes, etc. Those are the provisions, by the way, that we haven't dealt with at all in any of the discussions to the changes we're making: the rights that people who own their own mobile homes will now have that they didn't have before with respect to the mobile units they live in on somebody else's property, the park owner's property. It's the same thing with respect to people who live in care homes. What happens if the particular kind of care is no longer required for

them? What happens to the various costs they can be charged for? I think that those groups, which aren't the main groups we're talking about, will be extremely happy.

I don't even want to talk about the time allocation aspect of this motion. I realize that a government should not be doing this, and in a perfect world, you wouldn't be doing this. On the other hand, I know we learned a great lesson from the last government on that. I understand from the records that they time-allocated on about 75% of all the matters that came before this House during the Eves days, and before that, during the Harris days, it was over 50%. So they don't have to give anybody any lessons about time allocation motions.

As has already been mentioned, this bill has been debated here for three solid days for upwards of 8 to 9 hours. It really is time to get the bill out into committee, to hear from the different groups before the legislative committee and to make any amendments that may be necessary. This government is always open to good ideas, good suggestions made during the legislative hearing process and to translate that into amendments that will make a bill better. So we look forward to that approach.

Let me just deal with some of the main aspects of the bill that I think are really going to help both good landlords and good tenants. Those are the people, after all, who need the protection. They need protection from bad landlords and bad tenants. It sounds like a very simple thing to say, but that's the reality of the situation. That's why we put laws into effect to basically deal with the relationship between these two groups.

Let's deal with the whole notion of vacancy control first of all. I will be the first to admit, and I think we all realize, that there has been a tremendous change in the vacancy rates of apartments clear across this province over the last three to four years. CMHC keeps very accurate statistics of this on an ongoing basis in something like 50 housing markets, different communities in this province. In just about each and every one of them, if not in every one of them, over the last three to four years the vacancy rate has been anywhere between 3% to 5% or 6%. That goes for all units on the market, from units at the lower end of the rental market to units at the higher end. As a matter of fact, for the Toronto rental market, in the lowest 20%, the lowest quintile, where the average going-in rent is about \$725, we currently have the highest vacancy rate anywhere in Ontario of something like 5.5%; last year it was 5.1%. It's the same thing for Ottawa: In the lowest quintile, the vacancy rate currently is 4.6%, last year it was 4.9%, and the year before that it was 3%. You could just go on and on. That is the reality of the situation.

We can all argue about how this came about and why there is such a large vacancy rate. There are probably a lot of reasons for that. Number one, CMHC has made it a lot easier for young couples to own their own homes; the down payment required is a lot less than it used to be. Certainly mortgage interest rates are a lot less. There is a

whole variety of reasons, and you can't really point to any one, as to why vacancy rates are high. But the reality is that they are high, and as a result of that high vacancy rate, the going-in rents haven't gone up by any amount at all.

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Look, for example, at the lowest 20% quintile in the city of Toronto. In 2003, the average going-in rent was \$725, in 2004 it was \$725, and in 2005 it was \$726. In Ottawa, the going-in rate in 2003 was \$625, in 2004 it was \$624, and in 2005 it was \$623. CMHC has determined—and they are, after all, the leaders in this field in terms of statistics for housing in this country—that they expect these vacancy rates to remain at these levels, if not higher, for at least the next three to four years. So the rental market is working as far as the going-in rate is concerned, and people do have choices.

I know my friends, particularly within the NDP, will say, "How about the people at the really low end of the rental market, people with limited incomes?" Yes, they have a major problem. I'll be the first to admit that. That is precisely why we put into place programs such as the affordable housing program, whereby charitable groups, non-profit groups, for-profit groups, can in effect create new affordable housing, and they're doing so right now in the market. We have set up a housing allowance program where we're trying to work with the landlords to utilize the vacant units out there to assist the individuals who need help, who are at the low end of the economic scale, so they will in effect be given a housing allowance to rent units that they otherwise couldn't afford. There are many of these people in the province, and I don't for a moment deny that.

I'll go even further than that. Within our ministry, we are disappointed that all these various programs, which were basically a result of the agreement we signed with the federal government last year, just about a year ago last week, for some \$700 million in our affordable housing program—we're disappointed that there hasn't been greater take-up on that, more quickly, across the province. You've got to remember that nowadays, as a result of the changes that were made to so-called downloading of social housing, particularly to the local level, all the housing programs that the ministry offers, that the government offers, are being administered through the local housing service providers, basically the housing departments of the various municipalities out there. We have by now signed a contract and an agreement with each and every one of these housing providers to get out both the affordable housing program—in other words, where they go out and deal with the different groups to build the new affordable housing etc.—and the housing allowance programs so the housing providers will go out and deal with the landlords that have excess units so the low-income individuals can take advantage of those particular programs. We hope that over the next little while there will be a much greater take-up on the program.

There were some numbers thrown around here earlier that only 63 units have been built. Quite frankly, that's

absolute nonsense. So far, under the Canada-Ontario affordable housing program, we have funded 5,450 rental and supportive housing units, 938 home ownership units and 200 units under the northern housing component. The rent supplement program in the housing allowance program is helping some 6,670 low-income households already. And those numbers will increase. The money is there and we want to get that funding out as quickly as possible.

Time is always moving on quickly. Let me just talk about some of the major benefits of the new legislation that we have here.

The first item is this idea that a tenant cannot be evicted without a hearing. The reality is that under the current law, a tenant can be given notice, for non-payment of rent, to appear at a hearing some 10 or 12 days from the date that tenant is served, and if that tenant has not filed a notice of dispute or whatever within five days of the date they are served, an eviction order can be issued. We have the situation where an eviction order in effect can be issued before the hearing date set out in the notice that the tenant gets. It is unfair, simply unfair, for that to happen. We're basically saying that in any landlord-tenant relationship, obviously the landlord is entitled to the rent, but the tenant is also entitled to a unit that is in a good state of repair and maintenance. If a landlord brings in an application for non-payment of rent and that tenant can bring up issues with respect to maintenance, repairs, work orders that have been ignored by the landlord or have simply not been looked after, there is a set-off with respect to that. The main thing we have done in this piece of legislation is to say that all of those issues that affect the landlord and tenant relationship should be dealt with at the same time. That is the fair way to deal with it. Of course, in most court cases that's what happens currently. In most court cases between two individuals, whether small claims court or a higher court level, the issues that come out of the same relationship are dealt with at the same time. We are saying that's exactly what should happen in this situation as well.

With respect to capital improvements to a building or utilities costs, which were spoken about earlier, we're simply saying this: If a landlord applies for an above-guideline increase as a result of capital improvements the landlord has made to a tenant's premises—putting in a new kitchen, maybe doing something else that is really a capital improvement to that unit—once that cost has been paid for by the tenant in the increased rent on an amortized basis, then that amount should come off the rent. We heard over and over from tenants that they feel very strongly about this. We agree with them on that.

We've said the same thing with respect to utilities costs. I totally disagree with what the last member said: There are times when utility costs do go down, particularly as smart meters get placed in the units. By the way, the smart meters are going to be paid for by the utility companies so we all pay for it in our rates; it's not going to be paid for by the individual tenant who has the unit installed within their apartment. We're saying that

once a smart meter is in place and has operated for a year so you've got something to compare it to with respect to the bulk rate the landlord was paying before, only then will the tenant be obligated, in a lot of cases, to pay the smart meter costs and have that amount deducted from the rent so that the tenant will not be paying anymore. Obviously, if the tenant is more energy-conscious than the previous tenant, they're going to pay less in total rent and utility costs than the previous tenant would have.

I notice that my time is quickly running out. There's so much more to say about this bill that we're bringing forward. The rules for both good landlords and good tenants are definitely improved under this bill. We look forward to the debate that will take place before committee. We look forward to hearing from all the deputations of people from all sides of this issue. If there are some good ideas that come out of that that will make this particular bill better, I assure you that those ideas will be taken into account by way of amendments.

I urge all members of this House to support this bill, because it's good for both landlords and tenants.

The Acting Speaker: Mr Bradley has moved government notice of motion number 153. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 2119 to 2129.

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

Ayes

Arthurs, Wayne	Mauro, Bill	Racco, Mario G.
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	McMeekin, Ted	Ramal, Khalil
Bradley, James J.	McNeely, Phil	Rinaldi, Lou
Chambers, Mary Anne V.	Milloy, John	Ruprecht, Tony
Delaney, Bob	Mitchell, Carol	Sandals, Liz
Dombrowsky, Leona	Oraziotti, David	Sergio, Mario
Duguid, Brad	Peters, Steve	Smith, Monique
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Peterson, Tim	Van Bommel, Maria
Gerretsen, John	Pupatello, Sandra	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Levac, Dave	Qaadri, Shafiq	Zimmer, David

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

Nays

Barrett, Toby	Miller, Norm	Tascona, Joseph N.
Klees, Frank	Runciman, Robert W.	Yakabuski, John
Marchese, Rosario	Tabuns, Peter	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 30; the nays are 8.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

It being past 9:30 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

The House adjourned at 2131.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. Brown
Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers
Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffière: Deborah Deller
Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Algoma-Manitoulin	Brown, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (L) Speaker / Président	Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant	Barrett, Toby (PC)
Ancaster-Dundas- Flamborough-Aldershot	McMeekin, Ted (L)	Haliburton-Victoria-Brock	Scott, Laurie (PC)
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Bramalea-Gore-Malton- Springdale	Kular, Kuldip (L)	Hamilton Mountain	Bountrogianni, Hon. / L'hon. Marie (L) Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, ministre responsable du Renouveau démocratique
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Brampton West-Mississauga / Brampton-Ouest-Mississauga	Dhillon, Vic (L)	Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington	Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (L) Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Brant	Levac, Dave (L)	Huron-Bruce	Mitchell, Carol (L)
Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Kenora-Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Burlington	Jackson, Cameron (PC)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (L) Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Milloy, John (L)
Chatham-Kent Essex	Hoy, Pat (L)	Kitchener-Waterloo	Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)
Davenport	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	Van Bommel, Maria (L)
Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Caplan, Hon. / L'hon. David (L) Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy government House leader / ministre du Renouvellement de l'infrastructure publique, leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement t	Lanark-Carleton	Sterling, Norman W. (PC)
Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Wynne, Kathleen O. (L)	Leeds-Grenville	Runciman, Robert W. (PC)
Dufferin-Peel- Wellington-Grey	Tory, John (PC) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Matthews, Deborah (L)
Durham	O'Toole, John (PC)	London West / London-Ouest	Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (L) Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Eglinton-Lawrence	Colle, Hon. / L'hon. Mike (L) Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration	London-Fanshawe	Ramal, Khalil (L)
Elgin-Middlesex-London	Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (L) Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail	Markham	Wong, Tony C. (L)
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Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Crozier, Bruce (L) Deputy Speaker, Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-Président, Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative	Mississauga East / Mississauga-Est	Fonseca, Peter (L)
Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Cansfield, Hon. / L'hon. Donna H. (L) Minister of Energy / ministre de l'Énergie	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Peterson, Tim (L)
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Qaadri, Shafiq (L)	Mississauga West / Mississauga-Ouest	Delaney, Bob (L)
Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	Broten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (L) Minister of the Environment / ministre de l'Environnement	Nepean-Carleton	MacLeod, Lisa (PC)
Guelph-Wellington	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	Kormos, Peter (ND)
	Sandals, Liz (L)	Niagara Falls	Craitor, Kim (L)

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Nickel Belt	Martel, Shelley (ND)	St. Paul's	Bryant, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (L) Attorney General / procureur général
Nipissing	Smith, Monique M. (L)	Stoney Creek	Mossop, Jennifer F. (L)
Northumberland	Rinaldi, Lou (L)	Stormont–Dundas– Charlottenburgh	Brownell, Jim (L)
Oak Ridges	Klees, Frank (PC)	Sudbury	Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (L) Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Oakville	Flynn, Kevin Daniel (L)	Thornhill	Racco, Mario G. (L)
Oshawa	Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Mauro, Bill (L)
Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Patten, Richard (L)	Thunder Bay–Superior	Gravelle, Michael (L)
Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (L) Premier and President of the Executive Council, Minister of Research and Innovation / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif, ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation	North / Thunder Bay–Superior- Nord	
Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Watson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim (L) Minister of Health Promotion / ministre de la Promotion de la santé	Timiskaming–Cochrane	Ramsay, Hon. / L'hon. David (L) Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs / ministre des Richesses naturelles, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Ottawa–Orléans	McNeely, Phil (L)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	Bisson, Gilles (ND)
Ottawa–Vanier	Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (L) Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones	Toronto Centre–Rosedale / Toronto-Centre–Rosedale	Smitherman, Hon. / L'hon. George (L) Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Oxford	Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Toronto–Danforth	Tabuns, Peter (ND)
Parkdale–High Park	Kennedy, Gerard (L)	Trinity–Spadina	Marchese, Rosario (ND)
Parry Sound–Muskoka	Miller, Norm (PC)	Vaughan–King–Aurora	Sorbara, Greg (L)
Perth–Middlesex	Wilkinson, John (L)	Waterloo–Wellington	Arnott, Ted (PC) First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Peterborough	Leal, Jeff (L)	Whitby–Ajax	Elliott, Christine (PC)
Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge	Arthurs, Wayne (L)	Willowdale	Zimmer, David (L)
Prince Edward–Hastings	Parsons, Ernie (L)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (L) Minister of Education, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre de l'Éducation, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	Yakabuski, John (PC)	Windsor–St. Clair	Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (L) Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / ministre des Finances, président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement
Sarnia–Lambton	Di Cocco, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (L) Minister of Culture / ministre de la Culture	York Centre / York-Centre	Kwinter, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (L) Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Sault Ste. Marie	Oraziotti, David (L)	York North / York-Nord	Munro, Julia (PC)
Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Duguid, Brad (L)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	Cordiano, Hon. / L'hon. Joseph (L) Minister of Economic Development and Trade / ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Scarborough East / Scarborough-Est	Chambers, Hon. / L'hon. Mary Anne V. (L) Minister of Children and Youth Services / ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse	York West / York-Ouest	Sergio, Mario (L)
Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	Berardinetti, Lorenzo (L)		
Scarborough–Agincourt	Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (L) Minister of Government Services / ministre des Services gouvernementaux		
Scarborough–Rouge River	Balkissoon, Bas (L)		
Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Dunlop, Garfield (PC)		
Simcoe–Grey	Wilson, Jim (PC)		
St. Catharines	Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (L) Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader / ministre du Tourisme, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées, leader parlementaire du gouvernement		

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

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

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Estimates / Budgets des dépenses

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Garfield Dunlop
Wayne Arthurs, Bob Delaney,
Garfield Dunlop, Andrea Horwath,
Cameron Jackson, Phil McNeely
John Wilkinson, Jim Wilson, David Zimmer
Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Finance and economic affairs /
Finances et affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Pat Hoy
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Phil McNeely
Ted Arnott, Wayne Arthurs, Toby Barrett,
Pat Hoy, Judy Marsales,
Phil McNeely, Carol Mitchell,
Michael Prue, Liz Sandals
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

General government / Affaires gouvernementales

Chair / Présidente: Linda Jeffrey
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Jim Brownell
Jim Brownell, Brad Duguid, Kevin Daniel Flynn,
Linda Jeffrey, Jean-Marc Lalonde,
Jerry J. Ouellette, Peter Tabuns,
Lou Rinaldi, John Yakabuski
Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

Government agencies / Organismes gouvernementaux

Chair / Président: Tim Hudak
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Gilles Bisson
Gilles Bisson, Michael Gravelle, Tim Hudak,
John Milloy, Ernie Parsons,
Laurie Scott, Monique M. Smith,
Joseph N. Tascona, John Wilkinson
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

Justice Policy / Justice

Chair / Président: Vic Dhillon
Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente: Maria Van Bommel
Bas Balkissoon, Lorenzo Berardinetti,
Vic Dhillon, Christine Elliott, Frank Klees,
Peter Kormos, Ted McMeekin,
David Oraziotti, Maria Van Bommel
Clerk / Greffière: Anne Stokes

Legislative Assembly / Assemblée législative

Chair / Président: Bob Delaney
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Mario G. Racco
Bob Delaney, Ernie Hardeman, Rosario Marchese,
Ted McMeekin, Norm Miller, Jennifer F. Mossop,
Tim Peterson, Mario G. Racco, Mario Sergio
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

Public accounts / Comptes publics

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente: Julia Munro
Shelley Martel, Deborah Matthews,
Lisa MacLeod, Bill Mauro, John Milloy,
Julia Munro, Richard Patten,
Norman W. Sterling, David Zimmer
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**Regulations and private bills /
Règlements et projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

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Social Policy / Politique sociale

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Khalil Ramal
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Shafiq Qadri, Khalil Ramal, Kathleen O. Wynne
Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

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Chair / Présidente: Caroline Di Cocco
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Norm Miller
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