

No. 100A



N° 100A

ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly
of Ontario
Second Session, 38th Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario
Deuxième session, 38^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Monday 2 October 2006

Lundi 2 octobre 2006

Speaker
Honourable Michael A. Brown

Président
L'honorable Michael A. Brown

Clerk
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Greffier
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Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services
Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 2 October 2006

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 2 octobre 2006

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe–Grey): Isn't it ironic that Premier McGuinty is marking his three-year anniversary in government by doing a self-congratulatory tour of the province? Here we have the Premier going around, thanking Ontarians for their hard work, when he should be thanking them for putting up with his broken promises and apologizing for his failure to get results for the people of Ontario. This government has completely abandoned any pretence of trying to govern. Instead, we see a government trying to cover its record through a shameful maze of photo ops and political manoeuvrings. This is a government that said anything to get elected and will now say anything to get re-elected.

As even the Toronto Star pointed out on the weekend, "Grand promises to close Ontario's smog-spewing, coal-fired generating plants and keep electricity rates capped at artificially low prices proved unrealistic, while campaigning against 'Americanized' health care and then accelerating private sector involvement in hospitals smacked of hypocrisy."

As John Tory said this morning in Ottawa, parents, seniors on fixed incomes and especially the working poor have felt the stunning impact of Dalton McGuinty's failed promise not to raise taxes. His government's three-year anniversary is marked by a crisis in 20 emergency rooms around the province and no progress on the doctor shortage. Let's be clear: Premier McGuinty's health care plan hasn't helped those waiting in emergency rooms, his broken promises have left commuters stuck in gridlock, and his disregard for community safety has put the security of our streets at risk. With only one year left, Dalton McGuinty should focus on governing, not campaigning, and actually getting some results for Ontarians.

HISTOIRE FRANCO-ONTARIENNE FRANCO-ONTARIAN HISTORY

Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry–Prescott–Russell): Je suis fier d'informer l'Assemblée que le 25 septembre dernier, je me suis rendu à deux événements qui soulignaient la fierté franco-ontarienne.

I went first to the unveiling of the first Monument de la francophonie. This is the first of six such monuments

which will be unveiled in Ottawa. The monuments are in small parks graced with huge Franco-Ontarian flags. In the parks, there are granite monuments on which are written important episodes of the history of francophones in Ontario.

In Ottawa, at the headquarters of le Conseil des écoles catholiques du Centre-Est, over 2,000 people attended the gathering to celebrate our heritage in such a tangible way. Je me suis ensuite rendu à Rockland, où j'ai participé au défilé du 31^e anniversaire du drapeau franco-ontarien. Environ 1 000 élèves des écoles catholiques de Clarence-Rockland ont défilé dans les rues de la municipalité pour célébrer l'occasion. Les élèves de la sixième à la 12^e année des écoles de l'Escale et Sainte-Trinité de Rockland, ainsi que ceux et celles des écoles Saint-Mathieu de Hammond et Sainte-Félicité de Clarence Creek, ont emprunté une tradition acadienne, le tintamarre, afin de démontrer haut et fort leur fierté franco-ontarienne.

This 31st anniversary of the Franco-Ontarian flag is very dear to my heart. As you know, this flag, conceived by Gaétan Gervais, history professor of Laurentian University, was recognized by a unanimous vote in this Legislature on June 21, 2001.

LANDFILL

Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): I understand that the Premier is embarking on his "Thank you for putting up with my broken promises" tour. Yes, this is the man who will say and do anything to get elected. As you are well aware, the Green Lane landfill is about to receive the garbage of the city of Toronto with the blessing of Minister Peters, Minister Bentley, MPPs Ramal, Matthews and Van Bommel, and of course the Premier, who is prepared to sacrifice the London-area ridings.

What is truly interesting is the manner in which the Green Lane landfill received approval to expand. Immediately after the House adjourned for summer recess last June, Green Lane received approval for a huge expansion. A few days later, the site 41 proposed landfill in the township of Tiny also received draft design approval. Wouldn't you think that a Premier who talks about transparency would have had the courage not to hide behind the summer recess? In a sneaky, secretive manner both site 41 and Green Lane received approval, obviously with the intention that any negative publicity would be covered up by many summer activities.

At a time when Ontarians expect their Premier to protect their valuable water sources, Dalton McGuinty

and former St. Thomas Mayor Steve Peters are finding sneaky ways to approve landfills set upon some of the most pristine water on our planet, like the water below site 41. To make matters even worse, the Liberals held committee hearings on the Ontario Clear Water Act, thinking they could actually fool other Ontarians. Dalton McGuinty will say anything and do anything to get elected. I wonder if he will take his “Thank you for putting up with my broken promises” tour to site 41 and Green Lane.

ARTS AND CULTURAL FUNDING

Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity–Spadina): New Democrats believe that arts and culture are a social necessity and that access to cultural resources is a right for all people. We believe that professional community art and culture are vital to society. They enrich the social and economic fabric of Ontario and foster critical thinking in the development of strong local identity. We believe that it is the government’s responsibility to provide stable funding and status to Canadian artists in order to create a climate in which they can excel. What do we mean by “status”? Basically status is about equity, economic and social justice for artists, giving artists the same protections and rights as other citizens—in other words, the same status. In practice it means access to social benefits, collective bargaining rights, health and safety, insurance, training, income protection—bread-and-butter issues for artists to make their lives more secure.

1340

On September 21, we had a meeting at the Ontario College of Art and Design. A hundred or so constituents demanded status-of-the-artist legislation, one that includes and demands collective bargaining rights. In 2003, the McGuinty Liberals promised that within two years, if elected, it would introduce such legislation. Three years later we are still waiting. Call us at 416-603-9664 and let us, together, force the Liberals to keep their promise.

ENERGY CONSERVATION

Mr. Phil McNeely (Ottawa–Orléans): On September 12 Peter Love, the energy conservation officer with the Ontario Conservation Bureau, presented the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board with a certificate of recognition for their energy conservation efforts. The OCDSB’s conservation plan has saved over \$4 million annually for the school board. Through the Ameresco Better Schools Partnership, the board retrofitted a number of schools across the region. Over 100 schools benefited from lighting upgrades that reduce the cost of operating and maintaining their systems.

The board now expects to avoid over \$5 million in annual energy costs for the years to come. It is expected that it will save \$2.6 million in electricity alone each year. That is enough to provide for 5,500 homes, plus enough gas to heat 1,200 homes and enough water to serve 1,100 homes. Not only has the board saved on

energy costs, but I’m very happy to announce that they have cut enough carbon dioxide emissions to fill 11,000 small gymnasiums.

It is through initiatives such as these that Ontario can continue to be a leader in energy efficiency and conservation, which is a commitment that the McGuinty Liberal government has made. Other examples of this commitment can be seen in such programs as the installation of smart meters in all homes and businesses by 2010, as well as through the standing offer program, which will allow hundreds of small local energy producers to get involved in the energy market. I would not only like to congratulate the OCDSB for their efforts, but also the McGuinty government for being a leader in the field of energy conservation and efficiency and promoting these efforts throughout the province.

DOCTOR SHORTAGE

Mr. Ted Arnott (Waterloo–Wellington): This past week, the Minister of Health and newly minted Deputy Premier tarnished the whole government with his disgraceful and appalling performance inside and outside this House. With bombast, bluster and buffoonery, this minister has taken no new constructive steps towards solving the Ontario doctor shortage. Instead, he has acted more like a pit bull, which I thought the Attorney General had banned last year.

First, he blamed the local hospital officials for the emergency room crisis at Grand River Hospital in Kitchener–Waterloo, and then he blamed the members of both opposition parties, even though today is the third anniversary of the election of the Liberal Party as government and he has been Minister of Health for three years this very month. Then, last Thursday on CBC Radio, he threatened all Ontario hospitals with reductions in their operating budgets if they defied his dictates, after he had said that the Cambridge solution was okay for now, but nobody else had better do it.

Then, on Saturday, he was quoted by the Kitchener-Waterloo Record uttering politically slanderous comments against the member for Kitchener–Waterloo in an unprecedented, unjustified personal attack entirely consistent with the Liberal Party’s nasty and failed by-election strategy in Parkdale–High Park.

Having ignored prudent warnings for months about the emergency room problem and the doctor shortage in Ontario, the minister would now want people to believe that he is the hero who kept the emergency room at Grand River Hospital open. However, the Record has it right in their editorial of today when they ask, “Why did he not act earlier?”—all in all, an embarrassing debut for the new Deputy Premier, calling into question the Premier’s judgment in making the appointment in the first place.

ONTARIO FARMERS

Mr. Jim Brownell (Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh): In Ontario, summer is synonymous with the

barbecue season. For many, this past summer wouldn't have been the same without some burgers on the grill and corn in the pot. Beef and corn are but two of the fine products that come from Ontario farmers. Those farmers play an essential role in providing many of the fine foods we look forward to, not just during the summer but all year-round. Ontario farmers deserve our appreciation and attention. This government has done more than any in the past many years to support our farmers, with funding for ethanol plants, agricultural research and direct financial support for Ontario farms.

I would, in particular, like to highlight the recently announced \$110 million in funding, of which nearly \$30 million was earmarked for the grains and oilseeds sector, a sector that certainly can use the support. Recently, the Minister of Agriculture visited my riding and took the opportunity to meet face to face with many farmers from the region, allowing them to express their concerns directly to her. In September, I participated in the Lanark county farm tour for the second year and learned that many of the concerns faced by farmers in that region parallel those in my riding. I would like to thank Lanark County Federation of Agriculture president Dave Campbell and Arnprior Federation of Agriculture president Eve Yantha for inviting me to participate.

This government understands that we need farmers and therefore we must support our farmers and encourage our federal counterparts to do the same.

If you ate today, thank a farmer.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. John Milloy (Kitchener Centre): Over the last several weeks, the Ministry of Health has been working closely with my community's Grand River Hospital to meet challenges facing its emergency department. Despite best efforts, it became apparent on Friday night that there was a possibility the emergency room might temporarily close. To avert such an occurrence, the hospital leadership, government officials and the local medical community redoubled their efforts over the weekend, and I am pleased to report to members that by Saturday night it was clear that the emergency room would stay open.

The Minister of Health personally came to my community to make the announcement and outlined a plan of action to stabilize Grand River's emergency room and begin to address a number of outstanding operational issues at the hospital and within our region's system of emergency care. One such step involved the arrival of a team earlier today from St. Joseph's hospital in Toronto, home to one of the best-run emergency rooms in the country.

I want to personally thank the Minister of Health and all involved for their quick action in resolving the impending closure. Having spent most of the weekend in communication with many of the parties involved, I want to assure members that our government was engaged right from the level of Premier through to the Minister of

Health on down. There was an equal level of commitment at Grand River and within the region's medical community, and all of us owe special thanks to those physicians and other medical personnel who came forward.

There remains much work to be done, but I feel that our community turned a corner over the weekend, and by working together we can ensure full access to emergency services in our area.

EDUCATION

Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough): I rise in the House today to speak about the progress this government has achieved in just three short years in education. But before we talk about where we are, we need to remind Ontarians where we were before.

Under the previous Conservative government, our schools suffered. They took \$300 million a year out of the public education system and put it into private schools. They let class sizes spin out of control and infrastructures crumble.

It wasn't just the Conservatives who left education in a state of disrepair. Under the Rae-Hampton government, class sizes increased due to cuts brought in under the social contract. They also said they would increase provincial funding, and then reduced it.

Under this government, we have invested over \$2 billion in new funding for education. This government has built a new foundation with teachers in Ontario. For the first time ever, we have four-year contracts. What this means is that parents and children can rely on a stable and peaceful environment in which to send their kids to school, something they didn't enjoy under the previous government. Class sizes are down in the all-important early grades. We have provided the funding to put a principal in place in every school so that every school has the opportunity for managing and building success. ESL funding is up; funding for students with special needs is up; test scores are up.

I am proud of this government's achievements, and I look forward to a future of progress in the education system in Ontario.

MOTIONS

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader): I move that pursuant to standing order 9(c)(i), the House shall meet from 6:45 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on Monday, October 2, 2006, for the purpose of considering government business.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1349 to 1354.

The Speaker: Mr. Bradley has moved government notice of motion number 185. All those in favour will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Peters, Steve
Balkissoon, Bas	Fonseca, Peter	Phillips, Gerry
Bartolucci, Rick	Hoy, Pat	Racco, Mario G.
Bentley, Christopher	Jeffrey, Linda	Rinaldi, Lou
Bradley, James J.	Klees, Frank	Runciman, Robert W.
Broten, Laurel C.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Ruprecht, Tony
Brownell, Jim	Leal, Jeff	Sandals, Liz
Cansfield, Donna H.	Levac, Dave	Scott, Laurie
Chambers, Mary Anne V.	Marsales, Judy	Smith, Monique
Colle, Mike	Martiniuk, Gerry	Smitherman, George
Crozier, Bruce	Mauro, Bill	Sorbara, Gregory S.
Delaney, Bob	McMeekin, Ted	Sterling, Norman W.
Di Cocco, Caroline	McNeely, Phil	Van Bommel, Maria
Dombrowsky, Leona	Miller, Norm	Watson, Jim
Duguid, Brad	Milloy, John	Wilson, Jim
Duncan, Dwight	O'Toole, John	Witmer, Elizabeth
Dunlop, Garfield	Oraziotti, David	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Elliott, Christine	Ouellette, Jerry J.	Yakabuski, John

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

Nays

Bisson, Gilles	Marchese, Rosario	Tabuns, Peter
DiNovo, Cheri	Martel, Shelley	
Kormos, Peter	Prue, Michael	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 54; the nays are 7.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

WEARING OF RIBBONS AND BRACELETS

Hon. Mary Anne V. Chambers (Minister of Children and Youth Services): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would like to ask this House for unanimous consent for members to wear either the purple ribbon or the purple bracelet marking October as National Child Abuse Prevention Month.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): The minister has asked for unanimous consent to wear either the purple bracelet or the purple ribbon for National Child Abuse Prevention Month. Agreed? Agreed.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

AGRICULTURE FUNDING

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs): I rise today to remind Ontarians that today marks the beginning of Ontario Agriculture Week. Agriculture Week recognizes the hard

work of Ontario's farmers and the incredible contribution that they make to our province. Ontario farmers produce the best quality food in the world. They and the men and women in their work in the food processing industry contribute to a vibrant world-class industry that generates \$30 billion a year for our economy.

This government is proud to support this important industry. We have increased the budget at the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs—

Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader): Increased.

Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky: Yes, increased—from \$863 million to \$880 million.

We have provided over \$900 million in emergency assistance through farm income stabilization programs.

We have provided, in partnership with the federal government, \$317 million in support for farmers who have been hurt by the repercussions of BSE.

We have invested \$50 million in the tobacco community transition fund.

We are expanding new markets for farmers through our \$520-million ethanol growth fund, which is already helping to construct new ethanol plants in Cornwall, Hensall and Aylmer, and is supporting existing plants in Chatham and Collingwood.

We are working with the agriculture industry to develop a branding and marketing strategy that will encourage Ontarians to buy local food.

We are investing \$40 million each year in research and innovation to create new opportunities for farmers, and we are rewarding innovation with the Premier's Award for Agri-food Innovation Excellence.

1400

At last month's International Plowing Match, this government announced another \$110 million in new provincial funding to support our farmers. With that money, Ontario became only the second province in Canada to provide its 40% match to the federal dollars that were announced in May. Also, we provided an additional \$10 million in support to Ontario's fruit and vegetable growers, support that the federal government has not provided.

This is the record of a government that cares deeply about the issues facing Ontario farmers, and we are investing the resources to prove it. Our record of consultation and investment stands in stark contrast to previous governments, which cut spending on agriculture, closed field offices, and did not consult agricultural stakeholders on key legislation that impacted farmers.

We will continue to invest in the future of our agricultural and rural communities. We will continue to support growth in innovation and the agrifood industry to make sure our farmers and their families find success. We will continue to recognize and support the important contributions that farmers make to our economy, to our health and to the very spirit of our communities.

I ask my colleagues and the good citizens of Ontario to join me in saluting and supporting our farmers, not just as we celebrate Agriculture Week and Thanksgiving, but throughout the year.

HEALTHY EATING
ALIMENTATION SAINTE

Hon. Jim Watson (Minister of Health Promotion):

The McGuinty government is committed to promoting healthy eating in the province of Ontario and to educating all Ontarians about the health benefits of eating fruits and vegetables on a daily basis. Today I'm proud to share the details of one key initiative that we have undertaken to improve the health of children in northern Ontario.

On September 15, I visited Queen Elizabeth Public School in Timmins to announce the launch of the northern fruit and vegetable pilot program. The northern fruit and vegetable pilot program is a key component of our \$10-million healthy eating and active living strategy. Together with the Porcupine Health Unit, the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association, the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, and local schools and school boards in the Porcupine region, we are initiating this pilot program in northern schools.

A project coordinator has been hired, and his first priority will be to recruit schools and review applications for selecting the schools that will participate. There are already a number of schools in the Porcupine region which have expressed interest and want to participate in this pilot project, and delivery of fruits and vegetables is expected to begin in late October.

It's appropriate that I'm giving this statement right after the Minister of Agriculture gave her statement, because this is an opportunity for us to support Ontario produce and Ontario farmers.

Il faut apprendre ou rappeler à plusieurs Ontariens et Ontariennes, les adultes comme les enfants, que la consommation quotidienne de fruits et de légumes est bénéfique pour leur santé. À vrai dire, le Guide alimentaire canadien pour manger sainement recommande un minimum de cinq portions quotidiennes de fruits et légumes, mais des données récentes de Statistique Canada indiquent que la majorité des Canadiens et Canadiennes consomment un nombre moins important de portions que celui qui est préconisé. Sept enfants sur 10 âgés entre quatre et huit ans, et environ la moitié des adultes de 19 ans et plus, ne prennent pas leurs cinq portions quotidiennes.

There's a strong correlation between good health and the consumption of fruits and vegetables. A joint paper by the World Cancer Research Fund and the American Institute for Cancer Research reported that eating an adequate variety of vegetables and fruits may reduce cancer incidence by as much as 20%. Other studies have indicated that eating fruit and vegetables is associated with lowering risks of chronic diseases such as heart disease and diabetes. Chronic diseases can begin in early years, so developing healthy eating habits, including the consumption of fruits and vegetables, is an important part of disease prevention. That's why the Ministry of Health Promotion is piloting this initiative with young people in the north.

This initiative addresses a very important recommendation made by the chief medical officer of health, Dr.

Sheela Basrur, in her 2004 report *Healthy Weights, Healthy Lives*. On page 49, the report identified a need for government to "develop policies and programs that promote healthy eating, ... investigating the potential impact of food pricing options on consumption patterns, especially for communities where healthy foods, such as fruits and vegetables, are particularly expensive" and "building on the Ministry of Agriculture and Food's Foodland Ontario program, which promotes Ontario grown fruits and vegetable, by adding health messages." This program begins to answer that call.

The year-long pilot program will provide students in 20 to 25 elementary schools in selected communities in Ontario's Porcupine region with a serving of fruit and vegetables two to three times a week. Children and their families who participate in the program will gain increased knowledge about the importance of fruit and vegetables as part of a healthy diet.

Les résultats de ce programme pilot à la fin de cette année guideront les apprentissages pour une éventuelle expansion du programme. Notre nouveau plan d'action soutient une saine alimentation et une vie active en Ontario en s'appuyant sur des programmes déjà existants, comme le fonds collectivités actives, et en proposant de nouvelles initiatives telles que le programme pilote pour la consommation de fruits et de légumes dans le nord de l'Ontario.

We now know that the availability of up-to-date, reliable and easy access to information is crucial to supporting healthy eating. That's why we've created a new web resource called EatRight Ontario. You can find it at our website: HealthyOntario.com. This site provides nutrition information advice for healthier eating through programs like the northern fruit and vegetable pilot program. We're taking steps towards reducing rates of overweight and obesity, and we're equipping children and their families with the knowledge they need to live healthier lives.

I also want to thank the honourable member Mr. Pat Hoy. He also made a tandem announcement because many of the fruits and vegetables in fact will come from his portion of the province, as they will from northern Ontario. So it's a win-win for kids, for families, for the schools and for farmers in Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Responses?

AGRICULTURE FUNDING

Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton–Victoria–Brock): Ontario Agriculture Week is the perfect opportunity to rise and thank Ontario farmers for their hard work and dedication. Farming is crucial to the prosperity of my riding and to that of the entire province. Farmers contribute \$30 billion annually to our economy and employ 650,000 people. They provide us with the highest quality of food and continue to be the most effective stewards of our land and water, and that is in spite of the McGuinty Liberal government.

In my riding of Haliburton–Victoria–Brock, the Kawartha Lakes Chamber of Commerce said that 50

farmers went out of business last year. With 50 fewer farmers, we are worse off than we were a year ago. Indeed, the past three years have brought tough times for all of Ontario farmers, despite Premier McGuinty's promise to treat them fairly.

The McGuinty Liberals will promise anything to get elected. Unfortunately, Ontario farmers have learned that Liberal promises are not an effective indicator of their behaviour once elected. Agriculture has been dealing with numerous issues and challenges over the last number of years. We continue to see inaction, and have been calling on the McGuinty Liberals to help reduce the uncertainty of farmers by establishing a made-in-Ontario plan to build a secure and sustainable farming industry in Ontario.

Sure enough, the McGuinty Liberals are pleased to try and take credit for funding which they have kept in their own back pockets for months. The CAIS program, the Canadian agriculture income stabilization payments, has flowed in seven other provinces prior to Ontario's agriculture industry getting their portion, so I'm quite certain that no Ontario farmer is prepared to thank Dalton McGuinty for placing Ontario's farm industry on an even playing field and holding onto their cash.

They promised to make agriculture a lead ministry. Sadly, that promise is collecting dust next to their promises to not raise our taxes. The only lead we've seen from the Ministry of Agriculture is that they will lead us to the day where farming, farm families and farming communities no longer have any hope or any future in the province of Ontario. To the Liberals, a promise is a promise and it must be broken.

I, like other members of the PC caucus, had the privilege of traveling to Keene, to the International Plowing Match. It was in Peterborough county this year. One farmer, upon learning of the latest one-time funding announcement, expressed his thanks to the McGuinty government for yet another drop in the bucket. But the bucket is dry for Ontario's farmers. Remember this year's disastrous budget? Remember the 21% cut to agriculture spending? Remember this year's \$100,000-a-year club being expanded by 11% in the agriculture ministry alone? Remember this year's grains and oilseeds funding announcement, which was 52% smaller than last year's? Remember Steve Webster camping in his car? Remember the tractor rally, with close to 10,000 farmers on the lawns of Queen's Park? Farmers won't easily forget the three years of neglect and mismanagement from the McGuinty Liberals.

1410

One of the questions we have to ask is, why are farmers so angry with the McGuinty Liberals? You can see they're not even paying attention across the way. But one of the obvious answers is that they are furious with the years of budget cutbacks, disguised in press releases as good news for farmers. But it goes much deeper than that: It's about respect. In rural Ontario, you treat your neighbours respectfully. For a farmer, your word is your contract. That's why farmers are so mystified by the current McGuinty Liberal regime. They simply fathom

the discrepancy between Premier McGuinty's promises and his actions.

During Agriculture Week or at the plowing match, Premier McGuinty talks a good game, but the farm income crisis is not solved by words of support. It's not solved by pointing the finger at Ottawa. Indeed, if you want motherhood support, the McGuinty Liberals are as good as it gets, but if you want results, you'd better look elsewhere.

Farmers aren't just suffering from the ongoing neglect. They're furious that this provincial government sees them as opponents. This government sees them as enemies of the environment and clean water. They're furious that most were excluded from the hearings of the so-called Clean Water Act. They're angry that the hearings were held in the summertime, which is when most farmers are too busy to travel long distances for a 15-minute hearing, and they're hurt that the McGuinty government would take such a punitive approach to environmental stewardship.

In Agriculture Week, it's important to support our farmers and the entire agricultural community. But support doesn't end with feel-good statements from the minister. Supporting farmers means providing results. It means telling the truth, not promising anything just to get elected. It means treating the entire agricultural community with respect.

On behalf of John Tory and the entire PC caucus, I would like to express our most sincere appreciation to Ontario farmers.

HEALTHY EATING

Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): In response to the statement made by the Minister of Health Promotion, I want to say that the minister and I discussed the government's plan, which the program he talked about today is part of, at great length in the estimates committee. I want to put on the record some of the concerns that I raised then.

First, we want children and young people to develop healthy eating habits, and the school environment is a good place to do that, as children spend so much time at school. But today there are no mandatory food standards in place, for any Ontario schools, that emphasize food with maximum nutritional value. This is a key recommendation that was made to this government in 2004 by the school nutrition work group steering committee of the Ontario Society of Nutrition Professionals in Public Health.

We have recommended nutritional standards only for elementary schools, and only with respect to vending machines. If we're really going to get serious about providing an environment for kids where nutrition really counts, then we need mandatory food standards to support healthy eating environments in all schools.

Second, the steering committee made eight other essential recommendations about how to support healthy eating at school. All but one of those focuses directly on

the supports we need in school to foster that. I urged the minister then, and I urge him again today, to seriously consider implementing those other recommendations made by the steering group in 2004.

But what is key, my third point, is this: What is in a child's lunch bag or, more importantly, what's missing from the lunch bag, has a great deal to do with the level of income at home. I fundamentally believe that most parents want to send fruit and vegetables to school with their children, but far too often they can't afford it.

The reality in Ontario today is that the McGuinty Liberal government's increases to the minimum wage have been pathetic. For the working poor, they are barely making ends meet. The reality is that the increases to social assistance rates are pathetic, and families on social assistance are barely better off than they were under the Conservatives.

Reality today, and this is a really good day to raise this issue, is that the failure of the McGuinty Liberal government to end the clawback on the national child benefit means that so many Ontario families are relying on food banks. They're in no position to buy fresh vegetables and fruit.

If we really want to foster an environment where kids develop healthy eating habits, then we're going to make sure that their families have the income they need to allow them to buy fruit and vegetables in the first place. Then we'll really make a difference at home and at school.

AGRICULTURE FUNDING

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): I want to respond to the Minister of Agriculture. This week is an opportunity to recognize the hard work of our farmers and Ontario's proud farming history, but it's also a time to reflect on the farm income crisis that has left many farm families and farm communities in very dire straits: too many farmers losing their farms, and others forced to work full-time off the farm just to put food on the table and keep the banker away from the door.

With farm incomes at record-low levels, grain and oilseed farmers continue to call on the McGuinty government to implement a financial risk management strategy that provides long-term sustainability and confidence for our farmers, but instead of getting to work implementing a long-term risk management strategy for the farm income crisis, one that protects our grain and oilseed farmers from punishing US subsidies, the McGuinty Liberal government prefers to have piecemeal announcements followed by piecemeal reannouncements followed by a repetition of the piecemeal announcements, none of which does anything to provide some sustainability for our farmers. It's all driven more by the Premier's desire for photo opportunities than by the desire to do something meaningful in terms of hard-pressed farmers.

Quebec and Alberta have acted unilaterally to stabilize farm incomes and protect their farmers, but the McGuinty government prefers photo ops and then to

blame Ottawa. Ontario farm organizations have worked hard to develop long-term solutions to the farm income crisis. The McGuinty government needs to put their cameras away and start getting down to work. New Democrats congratulate Ontario farmers for their dedication to the job. We congratulate our farmers for their perseverance in the face of a McGuinty government that continues to make promises and then break them, and continues to prefer photo ops to real action.

ORAL QUESTIONS

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener–Waterloo): My question is to the Minister of Health. Minister, your government has broken its 2003 promise to unclog emergency rooms. As a result, we have a crisis in 20-plus communities across the province.

It is only thanks to the hard work and dedication of the doctors, the nurses, the board and the administrators of Grand River, Cambridge and St. Mary's hospitals that the people of Kitchener–Waterloo have been able to avoid an emergency-room closure.

Instead of supporting the work of these people, you were quoted as saying that you were "disappointed in the leadership of the hospital." Well, I would say to you, Minister, the people of Kitchener–Waterloo and the more than 20 communities are disappointed in your leadership. Why have you not taken action on this ER crisis in Ontario when you've known about it since at least May of—

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): The question has been asked. Minister?

Hon. George Smitherman (Deputy Premier, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I agree with the honourable member that the function of our emergency rooms is a crucial priority for Ontarians. I would say that when Ontarians are gathering together to apporportion responsibility with respect to circumstances and questions are asked with the word "waiting" in them, I really think that the two individuals who today find themselves sitting side by side have got a lot of explaining to do.

The point is, the honourable member also demonstrates in her question the Conservative tradition, which is to divide circumstances up. What's clear to everyone is that in order to address the circumstances which are occurring at present, to be able to build forward in a fashion which provides people with the necessary confidence, it will continue to take everybody working together. That's what we're doing at present in Grand River and other places and we will continue to move forward on that basis.

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Mrs. Witmer: Minister, the plan that is currently in place is just a stopgap. It's temporary. As you know, the

doctors are already overworked. They're stretched. We have this arrangement; however, it's not sustainable. Indeed, Dr. Daniel Kollek, chief of emergency medicine at Grand River, is quoted as saying, "We don't know what we're going to do after Friday." That's Friday of this week.

So I would like to ask you, Minister, what plan do you have to work co-operatively with my community past next Friday? As you know, next week is Oktoberfest. It is the busiest week of the year for the emergency rooms in Kitchener-Waterloo.

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: Again, the people of Kitchener-Waterloo—as the honourable member has referred to them as her community—would be well-inclined to ask her questions about what she was doing when she served as the longest-serving health minister in the Harris government. The reality is that the necessity of producing more doctors is a very crucial one, of course. The reality is also clear that you can't make a doctor as fast as you can make a pizza. You can make it up pretty quick, but the reality is that Ontarians know of these challenges.

I tell the honourable member that it is true to say that we have more difficult work to do in Grand River. That's why we're on the scene there with a leadership team from St. Joe's in Toronto, which has demonstrated good capacity to address underlying challenges. We know that working conditions are an issue in that emergency room and, accordingly, we're going to continue to work through these issues to put the resources there as necessary and to provide the leadership to stabilize the circumstances in the Kitchener-Waterloo region and, indeed, to move forward doing so in other parts of our province.

Mrs. Witmer: This morning on live radio the Minister of Health said blame is a bit of a counterproductive thing, and yet now in two responses he has tried to assign blame.

I would also say to the minister, your comparison to the pizza maker is an insult to emergency room doctors in this province. They have told me that your response is adolescent and it is trite and they don't appreciate the comparison.

But I'm going to ask you again. Your Premier blames money; Dr. Bach says it goes to poor working conditions. The Premier says, "Hang in there." People in this province are paying the health tax of \$900 a year. You promised in 2003 to unclog emergency rooms. People are now waiting in Toronto, for example, more than 10 hours. Could you please tell the people in the province what is your long-term plan for people in Ontario?

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: I think the honourable member has a difficult time between the idea of blame and accepting some responsibility; that's accountability and that's what this honourable member does every day. She pretends that she wasn't the longest-serving Minister of Health in the Harris government.

When I use a quote that says it takes longer to produce a doctor than it does a pizza, there's no offence intended

there. What's very clear is that it makes the point that doctors are highly valued and they're incredibly highly trained. Accordingly, you don't train them overnight. You don't mint them overnight, and that is what is at the heart of that.

We recognize, of course, the necessity of doctors. That's why our government has worked to increase the size of our medical schools by 23% and to bring 750 new doctors—our foreign-trained doctors—to work in Ontario, with 440 more currently being trained. These are the efforts that we're making to make up for the lost time that was squandered on the watch of the two health ministers who sit side by each.

The Speaker: New question. The member for Kitchener-Waterloo.

Mrs. Witmer: I would say to the minister, you have been Minister of Health for three years. The people in this province have a right to demand that you would be accountable for the—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Member for Kitchener-Waterloo.

Mrs. Witmer: I want to ask you, will you release the report *Improving Access to Emergency Care: Addressing System Issues*, that has been sitting on your desk since at least August?

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: First off, the honourable member is misinformed. The report was received in my office no longer than two weeks ago. But I can confirm for her, and for anyone else who's interested, it is up on our ministry's website. A quick review of it, though, will be an uncomfortable circumstance for the honourable member, because at the heart of the challenge it characterizes the Conservative strategy of closing 22% of the acute care beds.

I'm pleased to be part of a government which is rebuilding acute care capacity. With the construction that we have under way in the province of Ontario, we will be a government that's moving forward with an 8.1% increase in the number of acute care beds. In addition, we've opened 5,000 additional long-term care beds, made unprecedented investments at the community level in things like family health teams, which are about providing appropriate care in the community, and we've worked hard to produce more doctors making up for the lost time of the two health minister twins who sit beside us.

Mrs. Witmer: As the minister well knows, it was his government that in 2003, when they said, "We're going to unclog emergency rooms," also promised that they would add 1,600 beds. Why haven't you done so?

The report also speaks to the need to build more long-term-care beds. It also speaks to the need to expand community care services. There is nothing preventing this minister, who has been there for three years, from taking any action.

Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke): Long years, lost years.

Mrs. Witmer: They have been three long years, as my colleague says; they have been lost years.

Last year you were urged by the Coalition of Ontario Physicians in Emergency to make emergency room wait times your sixth priority. You said no. People are now waiting more than 10 hours in emergency rooms. I ask you today, Minister, are you prepared to release the report and implement the recommendations?

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: I say to the member again, the report that the honourable member has twice asked me about, and I've already answered, is on our ministry's website. The member asked where the 1,600 beds are that we promised; 2,000 additional acute care beds are under construction in the province of Ontario today. She said, "Where are the long-term care beds?" I say again, as I did in my last answer that 5,000 additional long-term care beds, funded and in operation in the province of Ontario. She asked about community investment: 150 family health teams; doubling the number of community health centres; more resources for home care; reinvestment in community-based mental health services; supporting those agencies that provide things like rides and provide Meals on Wheels.

The reality is, the investment pattern of our government, made possible as a result of the health premium, is seeing health care services evolving in a systematic way, not just one thing here and there, but across the board, reflecting that our patients require services working well together. We have more work to do, of course, to make up for the lost time squandered on the—

The Speaker: Thank you. Final supplementary?

Mrs. Witmer: The minister forgets that it was actually our government that had to cope with the problems that were created by the previous Liberal government. Perhaps the minister forgets that it was our government that added 8,000 nurses to the health system. It was our government that added 20,000 long-term-care beds to the system because the Liberals and the NDP hadn't built any. It was our government that invested \$1.2 billion in community care services and long-term-care beds. It was our government that gave you the first family health teams; you simply took ours and gave them another name. It was our government that built the new medical school and introduced it. So for this minister to stand up and say he has taken action on emergency rooms, I would say to you, what action are you going to take today for those 20-plus hospitals that are in crisis? Today, not tomorrow.

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: I like it best when the honourable member manages to dissect eight and a half years, forgetting about the first three or four when they cut everything, when they gored it, when they closed beds by 22%. She talks about 8,000 new nurses, but she forgets to mention that Mike Harris called them hula hoops and fired 13,000 the day before.

The reality is clear. The circumstances that we have in health care are challenging circumstances indeed. They've been made more challenging by decisions that we inherited. The honourable member makes the point, of course, that our health care system is the accumulated contribution of all governments over time. The reality is

that with respect to the issue of physicians, these two parties did dire damage to Ontarians by making sure that our medical schools were inadequate—inadequate in size, and inadequate to meet the needs of a growing population.

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We've increased medical schools by 23%, we've brought 750 additional foreign-trained workers already, our foreign-trained doctors, into communities across Ontario—440 more in production. Yes, we have more to do on behalf of those—

The Speaker: Thank you.

New question. Leader of the third party.

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): To the Deputy Premier: We know that the broken promises tour of Premier McGuinty won't be stopping at the Grand River Hospital in Kitchener, nor will it be stopping at the 18 other hospitals that face emergency room shortages. That's because the McGuinty government's record on hospital emergency rooms is a letdown and a disappointment.

Premier McGuinty was warned about hospital emergency room challenges but did nothing. Then he said that privatized emergency rooms were okay by him. Now, instead of helping hospital emergency rooms in crisis solve their problems, furious George is pointing the finger of blame.

Deputy Premier, the emergency room crisis is systemic across the province and it's putting patient health and safety at risk. When is the McGuinty government going to show leadership, stop blaming and start solving the problem?

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: When is the honourable member going to stand up in his place and use even 1% or 2% of his words to acknowledge that he participated, as a member of a government, as a senior minister in a government—he didn't squeal out of the parking lot on this one like his seatmate there—and stood there or sat on his hands while the size of our medical schools was reduced. This created a problem. It's well known to be a problem, and only the honourable member can pretend his way through it.

The circumstances are clear. Through their working together, one government after the next, Ontario was compromised by about a thousand doctors. There's no doubt whatsoever that a few additional doctors would be of tremendous benefit in Grand River and in other communities. We don't have them because they didn't produce them.

We're working double time to produce a sufficiency of them, and we will continue on that point.

Mr. Hampton: My, my. Now furious George is even blaming the wannabe Liberal leader he's supporting.

Dalton McGuinty's photo op tour won't visit hospital emergency rooms because this is what he would hear. Dr. John Carter is an emergency room physician at Grand River Hospital, and he writes:

“We have been crying out for the past 18 months, ‘More nurses, more doctors, more beds,’ and in reply we continue to hear, ‘Give us more time. Get back to work.’

“We do not have more time. As emergency room nurses and doctors we are tired of the rhetoric and empty promises of a Minister of Health who patronizes us in one breath and then turns around and blames us for the hardships we endure.”

I ask the question again: When are you going to stop blaming even Liberal wannabe leadership candidates and start showing some leadership, and produce a plan—

The Speaker: The question has been asked.

Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: The dearth of talent the aforementioned honourable member was dealing with has been an apparent source of challenge to lots of public policy files.

The reality is that the honourable member offers quotes which are, I think, unhelpful. They’re inappropriate in the sense that, for sure, the honourable member seeks to characterize a viewpoint, but the reality is that we fundamentally understand that doctors are at the heart of the matter.

The point of it is that these two parties are in such a state of denial. They have no sense of obligation to be held accountable at all for a circumstance now playing itself out which, at the heart of it, was related to their decision-making. They do not answer on point to the circumstances which their very actions have created.

Yes, we have more work to do. That’s why we’ve enhanced our capacity to produce doctors in this province. You cannot make them overnight. The honourable member finds that trite. The reality is that—

The Speaker: Thank you. Final supplementary.

Mr. Hampton: The Minister of Health says it’s unhelpful to cite the words of a veteran emergency room hospital physician. I think it’s very helpful, because it shows us just how disconnected and over his head this Minister of Health is.

It’s not about producing more doctors. Manitoba didn’t go out this summer and produce more doctors. They got emergency room nurses, they got emergency room doctors, they got other health care providers together and they sat down and worked out a plan which would help them deal with emergency room pressures. They worked out a plan. So far, the McGuinty government talks about privatized emergency rooms, and you, furious George, talk about blaming everybody you can point a finger at.

Here is what it boils down to—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Dave Levac (Brant): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: We’ve heard it a few times today. I think we should raise and elevate what we do in this House in terms of how we address each other, and I think it should be maintained.

Interjection.

The Speaker: It is a point of order. We should, in here, refer to other members only by their riding names or by their portfolio if they’re ministers of the crown.

The leader of the third party.

Mr. Hampton: In contrast to the finger pointing in Ontario, Manitoba actually had a plan. It didn’t involve privatization.

So I say to you, Minister, when is the McGuinty government going to bring in a long-term plan that addresses an emergency room crisis that has been growing for at least the last 18 months? When will you stop the finger pointing? When will you stop blaming? When will you stop the Dalton McGuinty photo op tour and bring in a plan that addresses the reality for thousands who cannot get access to the emergency room?

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: The closest that the honourable member can come to acknowledging that he created the challenge with doctor shortages in the province of Ontario is to say that they’re not an essential part of the emergency room restabilization. The honourable member’s suggestion is that we can do it without doctors, and this is a very, very odd suggestion indeed. We already have nurse practitioners and others widely deployed across our emergency room infrastructure. That’s known to the member.

Here’s what Dr. John Rapin, the president of the OMA, said in 2004: “As the OMA predicted at the time, 10 years later this decision in itself bears much of the blame for the current shortage of all types of physicians in Ontario.”

That is at the heart of the challenge in Grand River, along with a variety of other things, for sure. Doctors are an important part of the resolution, and accordingly, we’ll be working with them and working to produce more of them.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): Again to the Deputy Premier, we know also that Dalton McGuinty won’t be posing for any photos with children in the Dufferin-Peel schools today. That’s because last Friday the McGuinty Minister of Education ordered the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board to make cuts in the classroom. No amount of feel-good rhetoric, no amount of photo ops can hide the fact that the McGuinty government is now engaging in the same heavy-handed bully tactics that they used to oppose under Ernie Eves and Mike Harris.

You’ve already admitted that your education funding formula is flawed; you promised to fix it, and you haven’t. Why, then, are you forcing school boards to make cuts in the classroom? Why should our students suffer because of another broken promise by Dalton McGuinty?

Hon. George Smitherman (Deputy Premier, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): To the Minister of Education.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne (Minister of Education): I believe I have addressed this issue in the last few weeks. We understand that the education funding formula has needed work, and here's what we've done since we've been in office. We've increased funding: \$2.7 billion—\$1,600 a student across the province. We have put thousands of new teachers into the elementary and the secondary system. We've increased funding for ESL. We have made the funding formula more transparent to families and to parents across the system. We've updated our school operations grant. We've introduced a new school foundation grant that acknowledges that small schools need a principal and a teacher and a secretary. We're working on the funding formula. We know it needs more work, and we're continuing to do that.

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Mr. Hampton: Now into the fourth year of the McGuinty government, they admit the funding formula is broken, but they say, oh, they're working on fixing it. No, you haven't fixed it. Instead, you're forcing school boards to make cuts in the classroom. In your letter to the trustees, this is what you wrote: "I hereby direct the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board to identify alternate programs with a view to saving \$1.9 million on the reading recovery program." Minister, the reading recovery program has probably saved thousands of Dufferin-Peel students from years of academic frustration.

I say again, tell the parents of these children what the substitute is for the reading recovery program for kids who are having trouble reading. Why should these children suffer from another Dalton McGuinty broken promise?

Hon. Ms. Wynne: I'm not sure who in the education system or who in the population of Ontario it serves to have this oversimplified, disingenuous rhetoric.

What I want to say is that in the letter to the Dufferin-Peel Catholic board and in my remarks to the board the night I went and met with them, what I said was that the reading recovery program is one program. The literacy and numeracy secretariat is going to work with the board to make sure that the students who need the benefit of that program get equivalent or better service. There are different programs in some parts of the province. There are reading clinics, and parents say that we must have reading clinics. In some parts of the province of Ontario, we have reading recovery. The point is that students who need literacy support will get literacy support. That is our promise to the children of Ontario.

Mr. Hampton: I'm not that much interested in what you may say; we already know that the McGuinty government will say anything. What I'm interested in is what you wrote.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Order.

Interjections.

The Speaker: The Minister of Citizenship and Immigration will come to order.

Interjections.

The Speaker: The member for Renfrew is not in his seat. I won't warn him again.

Order. I'd like to be able to go on with question period. I need to be able to hear the leader of the third party place his question.

Leader of the third party.

Mr. Hampton: We already know that members of the McGuinty government will say anything to get a vote. But I'm interested in what you wrote, and you wrote telling them to make cuts.

The reading recovery program, which you're ordering the school board to slash, helps struggling grade 1 students with weak reading skills to catch up to their classmates, and 80% of the struggling students in that program do catch up with their peers. A principal at the board says that cutting this program won't lead to savings because these children will continue to fall behind and need more help later.

You've admitted that the funding formula is broken, but instead of fixing it, you're forcing cuts on kids who are already struggling. Why is the McGuinty government cutting the best remedial recovery program available? Why should these kids suffer yet again from the McGuinty government's broken promises?

Hon. Ms. Wynne: I'll try this again, because the member opposite has already indicated he's not really interested in what we have to say. For the benefit of people who might be interested, I'm going to outline what I said: The literacy needs of the students in the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board will be addressed; they will continue to be addressed. What I said to the trustees was that the particular program that was in place would be worked on with the literacy and numeracy secretariat, that they're going to have extra support, in order to make sure that those kids get the services they need.

On the funding formula, what I have said many times is that the funding formula that was written by the previous government was not one that met the needs of students across this province. We have been changing it; every year we have changed it. We have continued to work on it. There is more money in the system; it is more transparent—

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister. New question.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe-Grey): My question is for the Minister of Health. In 2003, your government distributed this brochure entitled the Ontario Liberal Plan for Change. In it, you promised to increase per resident funding of long-term care by \$6,000 per year. Perhaps we shouldn't be surprised, but three years into your mandate, this promise sits alongside 50 other Liberal election campaign broken promises. It's yet another example of your government and its ability to say anything, do anything and now print anything to get itself elected.

I simply ask you, Minister, when are you going to live up to your promise of \$6,000 more per resident for long-

term-care residents in this province and do what you said you were going to do: treat residents and their families with the respect and dignity they deserve?

Hon. George Smitherman (Deputy Premier, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): It's fantastic to have the inaugural Mike Harris health minister on his feet asking a health question. It gives me a chance to read from a petition that Ted Arnott, the MPP for Wellington, signed in 1996 denouncing Wilson's health care reforms: "We feel that the measures taken by the health minister, Jim Wilson, are precipitating the rapid decline of the health care system, to the detriment of the residents of Ontario." That's his record.

I want to say that with respect to the challenges and opportunities in long-term care, our investment pattern to date is \$740 million. This has brought 3,140 new full-time equivalents to the delivery of health care services in our long-term-care homes. We've brought forward a tremendous range of new action on the front of compliance, and we will very shortly be coming forward with a piece legislation which we'll recommend to the Legislature of Ontario—740 million new dollars invested to date.

Mr. Wilson: If you want to talk about historical facts, the last time the long-term-care sector got significant money from the government was when I was health minister; they got \$100 million. They haven't even had cost-of-living increases during the three years you've been in office.

You also made another promise that you would increase long-term-care beds. You say you've built 5,000 beds. I can tell you that people in the county of Simcoe who I spoke to last week don't believe you. Nobody believes you've built 5,000 beds, and yet you keep getting up here and saying that you have. In 2005, the wait-list in Simcoe county was 864 people; in 2006, that wait-list has grown to 1,084. More people are waiting. In this case, they'll have to wait two additional years because of your Liberal broken promise.

Minister, when are you actually going to live up to your promises, do what you said you were going to do and stop re-announcing beds that we built; in a factual way, 20,000 beds were built under the Conservative government. You're re-announcing many of our beds—

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): The question's been asked.

The Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: Sometimes a minute is hardly enough to correct all the misinformation from the earlier flow. The honourable member characterizes himself as the only one who's made an investment in long-term care—

Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: With all respect, the minister referred to misinformation that was being put forward by an honourable member. In the past, my understanding is that that was not parliamentary, and I would ask you to bring the minister to order.

The Speaker: I appreciate the intervention. The minister may wish to choose a different word.

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: I'd be happy to replace that with "inaccuracies," if that's more appropriate.

Mr. Wilson: It's not inaccurate. Take that away too.

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: If I might just ask for 20 seconds more to make my presentation, then the House itself can judge.

The honourable member said that he was the only one who's ever really made a significant contribution to long-term care. He said that he brought \$100 million. In fiscal 2004-05, we brought 191 million new dollars dedicated to the front line that brought 3,140 new workers to the front line of health care, alongside the 5,000 additional long-term-care beds that we've opened.

1450

NATIONAL CHILD BENEFIT SUPPLEMENT

Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. We know that the Premier is on his photo op tour, but there's another place he won't be visiting any time soon. That is the home of Beverley Halls, a disabled single mother who is doing her best to put food on the table for herself and her two daughters. Yet instead of helping Beverley, you and your government have chosen every month to pocket the \$240 that she gets for her children.

Three years ago you made a promise to Beverley's children and over 170,000 poor children in this province to do something for them. You promised to stop the clawback of the national child benefit supplement.

Minister, this is the third anniversary. I have hundreds of letters here which I'd like to send across to you, asking when you are going to honour that promise.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for franco-phone affairs): I want to thank the member of the third party for his question. I want to tell my colleague what we have done for the children of Ontario since we have been elected.

We are investing \$10.3 billion annually for families and social services in this province. We have raised rates by 5%; the second raise will be this fall, a 2% increase. When we took office, we ended the clawback of the national child benefit supplement going forward. We have made certain that all increases to the national child benefit stay in the hands of the people who need them the most. That's \$56 million more a year.

Mr. Prue: Today the Minister of Children and Youth Services asked us all to wear these little purple bracelets, and they say on them, "To end abuse and neglect of children." I want to know, and you should be asking yourself, what are you doing to end that abuse and neglect?

Your Premier is not out there visiting the home of Jim MacDonald of Manitoulin Island either. You may know him; he's been in the paper. He's a seriously ill father of five who can't put food on his table because you claw back every cent of the baby bonus. Today Jim and

Beverley are begging Dalton McGuinty and yourself to “stop robbing poor children.”

My question to you is very simple. Will you keep your promises, will you end the clawback, and will you do it now in your fourth year of this mandate?

Hon. Mrs. Meilleur: I want to remind my colleague that, yes, we did end the clawback, and all increases to the national child benefit stay—

Interruption.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Order. We'll wait. Order. Clear the galleries.

Minister?

Hon. Mrs. Meilleur: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

That \$56 million more this year: What it means for parents with two children receiving social assistance is that they get \$1,620 more per year than they did in 2003.

I want to remind my colleague on the other side what they did to the children when they were in power. They stopped the Ontario child care supplement for working families, they cut the children's mental health program, they voted against all social assistance increases, and they cut children's treatment centres.

We are investing in child—

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister. New question.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Bill Mauro (Thunder Bay–Atikokan): My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. I know that our government has already invested an additional \$740 million in the long-term-care sector and, unlike previous governments, it is doing so without an increase in copayments. As our population ages, there is no denying that long-term-care beds will continue to be in high demand.

Minister, a council resolution was passed in Thunder Bay to give up the operation of 300 municipal long-term-care beds. This is a concern for me and my constituents, because we need to keep these beds in Thunder Bay. Could you please confirm today that these 300 beds will remain in Thunder Bay?

Hon. George Smitherman (Deputy Premier, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I want to thank the honourable member for his ongoing advocacy on this issue. In fact, both members from Thunder Bay have been very proactive.

Over the course of the summer I had the privilege, with the honourable member, to meet with workers from the CAW, who are the service providers who are helping our vulnerable residents. I want to make this commitment to the honourable member: While we have some work to do yet to determine the most appropriate operator for those 300 beds in Thunder Bay, I'm pleased to give the honourable member the complete assurance on the part of our government that those beds will remain in the Thunder Bay community.

Mr. Mauro: Thank you for that, Minister. It's paramount that our government understand the pressures that

northern communities are under, and today's commitment clearly demonstrates that you're getting it.

Three years ago, the McGuinty government took office with a vision for health care that is accessible to all Ontarians, regardless of their financial status or where they live. Minister, I know you have made a personal commitment to fix the long-term-care sector in this province. Where previous governments cut millions, you have invested millions; where they charged seniors a bigger fee, you have frozen it; and where they cut staff, you've increased it.

Minister, could you please tell my constituents what our plan is to ensure that long-term-care homes will continue to show the progress that has occurred under your watch as we move forward?

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: None of us doubts the necessity of having good-quality, long-term-care services. We've been able to add, as I mentioned before, 5,000 beds. We have about 75,000 of our most vulnerable residents in these beds. We work very hard to create a culture of homes—to call these homes instead of facilities, and to create a culture around that, with much greater enhancement to compliance measures and enforcement around the standards that we would all agree are appropriate in terms of being able to support these individuals. For two years we froze the copayments for our residents. We've introduced a 1-800 action line, which means that prompt response is now the norm in a circumstance where any concerns are reported.

At the heart of it, what we're seeking to ensure is that our most vulnerable residents are able to live in long-term care in a dignified fashion that respects to the greatest extent possible their life circumstances and enhances their quality of life. We are working hard on this, and I look forward to bringing forward legislation soon that will move this initiative even further forward.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): To the Minister of Education: When you were a trustee in 2002, you joined in a lawsuit that challenged the Education Act, and specifically that section of the act that requires school board trustees to balance their budget. You also, as a trustee, referred to cuts to school boards as a crime against children.

Today, as education minister, you are forcing multi-million dollar cuts to school boards across this province.

I ask you this question: Were you wrong then, or are you wrong now?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne (Minister of Education): I'm glad to see that you're consistent, because you were wrong then and you're wrong now.

When I was a school trustee in 2002, we did not have a government in place that was investing billions of dollars in publicly funded education. We had in place a government that was giving tax credits to private schools. And we know that the member opposite fervently

believes in private education. So it's a completely different time. It is absolutely a different circumstance.

What I was worried about at the time, actually, was not the issue of whether school boards should balance budgets, but the punitive measures that the previous government had put in place to punish public school trustees. That whole circumstance has changed.

In the last year, we've been working with the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board to make sure they have a budget in place so they can provide students with the services they need.

1500

Mr. Klees: Minister, this morning the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation held a news conference, and they said this: "While the province added \$600 million to the education budget this year to fund teacher salaries ... it also removed \$391 million from the local priorities amount ... \$120 million from the local opportunities grant" and an additional \$71 million from the declining enrolment component. This is the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation that accused you and your government of removing some \$582 million from school board budgets.

These, Minister, are budget cuts. I'd like to ask you this: Are they wrong or are you?

Hon. Ms. Wynne: We actually put more than \$600 million of new money into publicly funded education last year. What we did on the funding formula—and I've already said, in a number of answers, that we've added money every year into the funding formula for new teachers, for capital improvements. But this is an important point: What we did last year was we changed the way the balance sheet looks so that parents and communities could understand. Those local priority grants and those grants you're talking about were being used for teacher salaries. What boards were saying was, "This doesn't make any sense, because we're using these dollars for teacher salaries, but it looks like it's grant money for other things. So let's straighten that out." That's what that realignment was about. Now it's absolutely clear where the money is going.

FOREST INDUSTRY

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): To the Minister of Natural Resources: Minister, we noticed that on his third-anniversary photo op tour, Premier McGuinty won't be going to any of the hard-hit forest sector towns and cities in northern Ontario. Today, Red Rock's only major employer, the Norampac mill, shuts down and lays off 275 workers. Last week, the Espanola Domtar mill laid off 115 workers. And in Dryden, Patricia Logging laid off 35 workers. That's 425 forest sector jobs destroyed in one week.

While Premier McGuinty is out on his photo op tour, which carefully misses northern Ontario, could you tell municipal and labour leaders in northern Ontario: When is the McGuinty government going to implement a 4.5-cent-a-kilowatt-hour hydro rate, all charges and fees

included, that has been asked for, or are you going to stand by while hundreds more forest sector jobs are destroyed?

Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for aboriginal affairs): It was over two years ago now that I gathered together municipal leaders, labour leaders and industry leaders, seeing that there was a crisis upon us, and asked for their help to give me some direction as to what the government could do. With that, we have acted with a \$900-million support program for the forest industry. We are starting to basically roll that out now as the industry is prepared to make those investments to reinvest in their operations.

We are saddened when we hear of job losses, but we're starting to see some reinvestments that are going to secure jobs for now, and I hope it will create some new jobs in the near future. It is a tough time—we are in transition in this industry—but we're working very hard in partnership with the industry to make sure we sustain the jobs we do have in northern Ontario.

Mr. Hampton: One of the key recommendations of that report was a more reasonable hydro rate that reflected the true cost of generating electricity in northern Ontario. That's what the mayors and union leaders are asking you for, and the McGuinty government has avoided that issue like the plague.

For months, the mayor of Smooth Rock Falls has been asking for a meeting with the Premier—since Tembec shut down the pulp mill there and laid off 300 workers—but the Premier won't answer the call. In July, when asked if the Premier would visit the north over the summer, the Premier's office responded, "Right now, I can't say if he'll be in the north. The Premier is to attend the Dalton McGuinty Golf Tour, which has him playing in three tournaments in Ottawa, Windsor, and Markham near Toronto in July and August." Minister, when will the McGuinty government admit there's a crisis in the second-largest industry in Ontario and across northern Ontario's forest sector? When will the Liberals—

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): The question has been asked. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Ramsay: A couple of weeks ago I met with the mayor of Smooth Rock Falls. I'm working with her economic development team. In fact, they called me about one of the people they are hiring now. We're working together with that team—it's very important. I have to tell you that the Premier, the Minister of Energy, the Minister of Finance and I are working with the industry on coming up with a program that will give a northern industrial electricity assistance program for the industry that would be of benefit to the industry. We're working with them to get it right. The Premier made a commitment to a form of regional pricing for electricity. We're working on something that would be effective for the industry to make sure that we can sustain them and make them profitable and competitive. So we're working with them. I just say to the member to stay tuned because you will hear some very good news from this government.

IMMIGRANTS' SKILLS

Ms. Jennifer F. Mossop (Stoney Creek): My question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. Sixty per cent of Canada's newcomers settle in Ontario, and 85% of Hamilton's growth is due to newcomers moving into that area. Many people know that Hamilton is a gateway for newcomers in Canada. One of the key questions I get from my constituents all the time, newcomers or not, is: Why are so many foreign-trained professionals not engaged in their profession? I have explained to them some of the things that we've done, and they're very supportive of that, but I was wondering, Minister, if you could please, for the record, explain exactly what Bill 124 is doing to help our newcomers.

Hon. Mike Colle (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): I thank the member for Stoney Creek for her question. Before this House we have, really, a revolutionary bill. For the first time in the history of Canada, a provincial government will have oversight over our 34 independent regulatory bodies. Lawyers, architects, doctors—all these regulatory bodies, under Bill 124, if passed, will have oversight to ensure fairness, transparency and accountability. It will also ask for the appointment of a fairness commissioner to help foreign-trained individuals. Thirdly, it will establish, for the first time in this province, an access centre, a resource centre, to help internationally trained individuals navigate through the complex system of licensing and accreditation in Ontario. It breaks down barriers, it gives opportunity and ensures fairness for qualified people, and it's long overdue.

Ms. Mossop: Thank you for that, Minister. I do just want to revisit the issues around Hamilton because, as I pointed out, it's a major gateway for newcomers—key concerns. I know you have come to Hamilton several times recently with some announcements and initiatives, and I'd like you, again for the record, to explain exactly what those initiatives specifically mean for Hamilton and our newcomers in the Hamilton area.

Hon. Mr. Colle: One of the approaches we're taking in my ministry is a regionalization approach to immigration. We're trying to encourage newcomers—we're fortunate to have so many choose Ontario every year—to look at settling in great cities like Sudbury, Hamilton, Windsor—another great gateway for immigrants. We are providing service extension into those areas. We are, for instance, spreading the CARE program for internationally trained nurses in Hamilton so that they can get jobs as nurses. It works very well.

We're also working with great partners in Hamilton: SISO; we're working very well with the association of engineering technologists and technicians to provide employment to 25,000 trained technicians; we're also working with Mohawk College, a great hub of international students and internationally trained individuals. So, in partnership, we're breaking down barriers; we're bridging the gap between their training overseas and the training here. It's a great time to invest in immigrants because when they succeed, we all succeed.

1510

WASTE DIVERSION

Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark–Carleton): My question is to the Minister of the Environment. Minister, your leader promised during the last election to divert 60% of solid waste from landfills by 2008. According to today's Toronto Star, Ontario is diverting only 25% of our garbage. It will now be impossible for you to meet your promised 60% diversion target by 2008. Why have you broken this important environmental promise?

Hon. Laurel C. Broten (Minister of the Environment): It's nice to have an opportunity to lay the blame, perhaps, at the foot of those who should be paying attention to these figures. Regulations 102 and 103 have been on the books since 1994, and one of the reasons this province faces the extensive challenges that we do with respect to waste diversion is that those regulations were not enforced. One of the challenges in your own community, sir, is the fact that the ICI waste is not being diverted. For the very first time, this government is taking steps to ensure that our ICI sector diverts that waste. We're working hard every single day to provide the tools that the municipalities need, and the ICI sector needs to divert that waste, but the first step we needed to take was to turn the page from the history that we received.

Mr. Sterling: If you had kept your promise of 60% diversion, we wouldn't need huge expansions of the Green Lane landfill near London, nor the Carp dump in west Ottawa, nor the Richmond landfill near Napanee, nor the Warwick landfill in Lambton.

Madam Minister, since you have done nothing with regard to regulating industrial, commercial and institutional waste, and in Ottawa you are not enforcing those regulations—your own ministry officials tell us that—will you give the city of Ottawa the right to regulate it? Because at least they will do something to stem this lack of diversion in the ICI waste stream.

Hon. Ms. Broten: I guess I can say to the member opposite that when I got the privilege of this position, I did look in the drawers and I didn't see any waste diversion plan that had been left by the previous government. But I can tell you the steps that we've taken: new programs for household hazardous waste, new programs for bottle return, some 260 enforcement and investigations in the ICI sector, new programs with respect to waste diversion being provided, those tools, to the ICI sector so that they can better divert the waste that they are now currently landfilling.

The Carp landfill expansion in your own community is at the very beginning of the processes. An environmental assessment is beginning. The community is having an opportunity to comment. The Ministry of the Environment is enforcing the regulations that you did not seek to enforce, and that will increase diversion in this province. At the same time, your community will have an opportunity to participate in an EA process around the Carp landfill.

WINDSOR ARENA PROJECT

Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches–East York): My question is to the Minister of Economic Development. Madam Minister, Dalton McGuinty's trail of broken promises tour won't be visiting Windsor today. That's because the working families in that particular city are furious they will lose their racetrack, their slots, their proposed rink—a devastating blow to a community that's suffered a lot lately. The community is going to lose hundreds of good-paying jobs.

A couple of weeks ago, you were named the Minister of Economic Development. Your job is supposed to be bringing jobs in, not letting jobs go away. What do you have to say about this mess and, more importantly, what are you going to do about it?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Economic Development and Trade, minister responsible for women's issues): I'm very happy to address this very clearly. I, too, am disappointed, as the local MPP for Windsor West, to have the raceway move out of Windsor West but stay in the region of Essex county, as raceways are economic engines for the region in which they reside.

Let me say this: I think it's very clear that our government has a track record on economic development that puts most Premiers in the history of Ontario to shame. There were months and months and months that went by under both the NDP and the Conservative government, where the Premier never went past London down the 401. Our Premier, on the other hand, has come to Windsor more times in our short time in office than any of the other Premiers combined. I am proud of the record that we have of our Premier coming to our city, and not just to visit, but to deliver for the people of Windsor.

Mr. Prue: The best retort was written today by Gord Henderson, a Windsor Star political columnist. He said, "The truly astonishing thing is seeing ... Dwight Duncan and Sandra Pupatello, wash their hands of this mess.... If you believe" that they knew nothing, "I have an Ungava Bay moose pasture that will surely catch your fancy."

In Ontario, racetrack owners don't just get up and pull up stakes and move the slots wherever and whenever they want to. I am sure this has nothing to do with a well-connected Liberal and former provincial candidate being mayor of the town that has just bushwhacked Windsor. I'm equally sure that it has nothing to do with Tony Toldo, the racetrack owner who is hosting a \$1,000-a-plate fundraising dinner for Dalton McGuinty on November 2. This is the kind of behaviour that wins you your party's much-coveted Patti Starr award of excellence.

Minister, just what the hell is going on here, and what are you going to do about it?

Hon. Ms. Pupatello: I'm sure my residents are impressed by the kind of language that the member opposite addresses in this House.

Our record for the Windsor area is clear, whether it's investment to save the Nemak plant, the expansion of the Valiant plant or the \$400-million expansion of the Windsor casino. Or perhaps it's the project associated with

DaimlerChrysler that helps our paint shop, or it's a medical school, or it's the investment of \$1.2 billion in the city of Windsor since we've become a government. Is that what this member opposite is complaining about?

There's not a resident in my city who would agree with this member opposite, but rather would say that when it comes to the McGuinty government, we deliver for the city of Windsor, and that will not stop.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Mr. Mario G. Racco (Thornhill): My question is for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Ontario is a province with extraordinary potential, and our greatest resource is people. The ingenuity of Ontarians has led to inventions and discoveries like insulin, the electron microscope, the Canadarm, for which my riding made a piece, and the BlackBerry. Many of Ontario's greatest accomplishments have been discovered in our province's universities—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Stop. I would ask the member for Timmins–James Bay to come to order. I won't warn him again.

Member for Thornhill.

Mr. Racco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for controlling the NDP.

Every day, we hear of a new breakthrough from around the globe in medical research or in the development of smaller, faster and better forms of technology.

In order for us to compete with the rest of the world, we need to develop, support and draw upon innovative thinkers and cutting-edge research right here in Ontario. Minister, what are we doing to make sure our universities are able to inspire innovation and create a competitive advantage for Ontario?

Hon. Christopher Bentley (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities): I'd like to thank the member for Thornhill for identifying a very important issue.

Interjection.

The Speaker: I asked the member for Timmins–James Bay to come to order. I warned him.

Minister.

Hon. Mr. Bentley: It's a very important issue that the member from Thornhill raises, one which he's raised quite often, because he has, as we all do, many people in university and college now who are looking at ways to extend their education, because they know the future is all about knowledge and innovation.

That's why, just the other week, the Premier made an announcement that we're increasing graduate student opportunities for September 2007 by 12,000 more spaces from when we started, and 14,000 by 2009-10. For universities in the Toronto area, that means a huge additional capacity to take on students. For example, York University will have 1,100 more opportunities, U of T 2,500 more opportunities and Ryerson 900 more opportunities.

1520

Mr. Racco: I'm very pleased to hear that the number of post-secondary students is on the rise. It shows that our commitment to post-secondary education in this province is working.

However, traffic congestion for all is top of mind these days, including how long it takes to get to work and to school. Minister, I want to know what our government is doing to address congestion in York region and ensure that Ontario students are spending less time on the roads and more time in the library.

Hon. Mr. Bentley: I think this is a question for the Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Donna H. Cansfield (Minister of Transportation): I'm pleased to be able to respond to the member's question. I ought to thank the member as well for his consistent efforts in moving public transportation forward in this province.

Recently, both Toronto and York appointed municipal trustees in the Move Ontario trust, and I'm encouraged that they've reached a cost-sharing agreement on the subway extension funding. We have invested \$1.5 million for an environmental assessment on the TTC Spadina subway extension to York University, we have provided funding for both the EA and construction of the rapid bus transit system to York University, and we have added, through GO Transit, 77 new buses to help move those 65,000 students who attend York University on a regular basis. So I'm proud to say that after years of neglect and underinvestment, we've changed the way things have been done in Ontario, and we're making things better by putting public transit first.

VISITOR

Hon. Sandra Papatello (Minister of Economic Development and Trade, minister responsible for women's issues): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'm happy to introduce another resident from the riding of Windsor West, Lynda Pizzolitto, who is also my sister-in-law and mom to our page, Dominic Pizzolitto. Welcome to Queen's Park.

PETITIONS

CELLPHONES

Mr. John O'Toole (Durham): It's a pleasure to present a petition on behalf of my constituents in the riding of Durham. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the safe operation of a motor vehicle requires the driver's undivided attention; and

"Whereas research has shown that the operation of devices such as cellphones detracts from a driver's ability to respond and concentrate on the task at hand; and

"Whereas close to two dozen government jurisdictions around the world have already passed legislation to restrict the use of cellphones while driving;

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

"That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario enact legislation to curtail the use of cellular telephones proposed in Bill 68, the private member's bill introduced by MPP John O'Toole.

I support this and would encourage the Premier to look into it. I present it to page Stephen.

TRADE DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West): I have a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly. It was sent to me by a number of people in Brampton who work in the auto trade at DaimlerChrysler. It reads as follows:

"Whereas more than 260,000 Ontarians make their living and support their families through their careers in the auto industry in Ontario, which has become the pre-eminent manufacturer of motor vehicles in North America; and

"Whereas Canada imports more than 130,000 vehicles annually from the Republic of Korea, which imports virtually no vehicles or parts from Canada and does none of its manufacturing or assembly in Ontario or in any other Canadian jurisdiction, even though Canadian auto workers make the best-quality, most cost-effective vehicles in the world; and

"Whereas the government of Canada aims for a free trade agreement that would include the Republic of Korea in 2006, does not address the structural trade imbalance in the auto sector, and includes no measures to require Korea to reduce tariff and non-tariff barriers to Canadian-made vehicles, auto parts and other value-added services or components;

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

"That the government of Ontario insist that the government of Canada either cease free trade discussions with the Republic of Korea or make any proposed agreement contingent on fair and equal access by each country to the other's domestic markets in manufactured products such as motor vehicles and in value-added services, and ensure that Korea commits to manufacturing vehicles in Canada if Korea proposes to continue to sell vehicles in Canada."

This is an excellent petition. I absolutely support it. I've affixed my signature, and I'm going ask Mississauga West page Taylor Rodrigues to carry it for me.

PROPERTY RIGHTS

Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark-Carleton): "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms is silent on property rights; and

"Whereas the Alberta Bill of Rights specifically protects the right to the enjoyment of property; and

"Whereas the Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms provides that 'Every person has a right to the

peaceful enjoyment and free disposition of his property, except to the extent provided by law'; and

"Whereas ownership rights should not be abridged or usurped without due process of law; and

"Whereas owners of all lands affected by expropriation should have the right to be included as parties to a required inquiry to consider the merits of the objectives of the expropriating authority; and

"Whereas the decision of an expropriating authority should be subject to judicial review; and

"Whereas, subject to specific limitations of law, the right to peaceful enjoyment of one's land must be recognized by Ontario law;

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

"To pass Bill 57, the Land Rights and Responsibilities Act, 2006."

I sign my name.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a petition from parents with autistic children that reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas children with autism who have reached the age of six years are no longer being discharged from their preschool autism program; and

"Whereas these children should be getting the best special education possible in the form of applied behavioural analysis (ABA) within the school system; and

"Whereas there are approximately 700 preschool children with autism across Ontario who are required to wait indefinitely for placement in the program, and there are countless school-aged children not receiving the support they require in the school system; and

"Whereas this situation has an impact on the families, extended families and friends of all of these children; and

"Whereas, as stated on the website for the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, 'IBI can make a significant difference in the life of a child with autism. Its objective is to decrease the frequency of challenging behaviours, build social skills and promote language development';

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to fund the treatment of IBI for all preschool children awaiting services. We also petition the Legislature of Ontario to fund an education program in the form of ABA in the school system."

This has been sent to me by A. Pap of Kingston, Ontario. I agree with the petitioner and I've affixed my signature to it.

FAIR ACCESS TO PROFESSIONS

Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): I have a petition given to me by skilled immigrants in support of Bill 124. It's addressed to the Parliament of Ontario and reads as follows:

"Whereas the McGuinty government is committed to establishing measures that will break down barriers for Ontario newcomers; and

"Whereas these measures will ensure that the 34 regulatory professions in Ontario have admissions and application practices that are fair, clear and open; and

"Whereas these measures will include the establishment of a fairness commissioner and an access centre for internationally trained individuals; and

"Whereas, through providing a fair and equitable system, newcomers will be able [to] apply their global experience, which will not only be beneficial to their long-term career goals but also to the Ontario economy as a whole;

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

"That all members of the House support the Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act, 2006, Bill 124, and work to ensure its prompt passage in the Ontario Legislature."

I'm delighted to support this petition and I will sign it.

SCHOOL FACILITIES

Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe-Grey): "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the parents of St. Paul's elementary school in Alliston have raised many issues regarding the security, cleanliness and state of repair of their school; and

"Whereas a 2003 condition assessment completed by the Ontario government identified the need for \$1.8 million in repairs to St. Paul's elementary school; and

"Whereas the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board has approached the Ministry of Education with the intention of having the school deemed prohibitive to repair as they believe the school requires \$2.28 million in repairs, or 84% of the school replacement cost; and

"Whereas there are ongoing concerns with air quality, heating and ventilation, electrical, plumbing, lack of air conditioning and the overall structure of the building, including cracks from floor to ceiling, to name a few;

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

"That the Minister of Education immediately deem St. Paul's elementary school prohibitive to repair, secure immediate funding and begin construction of a new facility so that the children of St. Paul's can be educated in a facility that is secure and offers them the respect and dignity that they deserve."

As I mentioned, I went to kindergarten to grade 8 at this school. My mother taught there for 33 years.

I want to thank Milva Biffis and Gaynor McLeary for sending me the petitions.

1530

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a petition regarding this government's P3 hospitals. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas all hospitals since the inception of public medicare in Canada have been non-profit;

"Whereas 'public-private partnership' (P3) hospitals turn over democratic community control to international investors, turning a public service into a commodity sold for profit;

"Whereas worldwide evidence is that private (P3) hospitals lead to doctor, nurse, staff and bed cuts in hospitals in order to make room for profit taking, consultant fees, higher borrowing costs and outrageous executive salaries;

"Whereas private (P3) hospitals hide information about the use of tax dollars by claiming 'commercial secrecy' when they privatize public institutions;

"Whereas the higher costs, user fees, two-tier services and culture of private (P3) hospitals risk the future sustainability of our public medicare system;

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

"We call on the government of Ontario to stop all current and future 'public-private partnership' (P3) hospital deals and return full ownership, operation, management and delivery of hospital services to non-profit hands, and develop a plan to fund new hospitals through public finance, clearly excluding the privatization of hospital services."

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

IDENTITY THEFT

Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): The following petition has been sent to me by Consumer Federation Canada, and it reads as follows:

"To the Parliament of Ontario and the Minister of Government Services:

"Whereas identity theft is the fastest-growing crime in North America;

"Whereas confidential and private information is being stolen on a regular basis, affecting literally thousands of people;

"Whereas the cost of this crime exceeds billions of dollars;

"Whereas countless hours are wasted to restore one's good credit rating;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, demand that Bill 38, which passed the second reading unanimously in the Ontario Legislature on December 8, 2005, be brought before committee and that the following issues be included for consideration and debate:

"(1) All consumer reports should be provided in a truncated (masked-out) form, protecting our vital private information, such as SIN and loan account numbers.

"(2) Should a consumer reporting agency discover that there has been an unlawful disclosure of consumer information, the agency should immediately inform the affected consumer.

"(3) The consumer reporting agency shall only report credit-inquiry records resulting from actual applications

for credit or increase of credit, except in a report given to the consumer.

"(4) The consumer reporting agency shall investigate disputed information within 30 days and correct, supplement or automatically delete any information found unconfirmed, incomplete or inaccurate."

Since I agree with this, I'm delighted to sign this petition.

MACULAR DEGENERATION

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

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the government of Ontario's health insurance plan covers treatments for one form of macular degeneration (wet), and there are other forms of macular degeneration," such as Stargardt's, "that are not covered,

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

"There are thousands of Ontarians who suffer from macular degeneration, resulting in loss of sight if treatment is not pursued. Treatment costs for this disease are astronomical for most individuals and add a financial burden to their lives. Their only alternative is loss of sight. We believe the government of Ontario should cover treatment for all forms of macular degeneration through the Ontario health insurance program."

I affix my name in full support.

COLORECTAL CANCER

Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a petition from the Colorectal Cancer Association of Canada, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas it is incumbent that the Ontario government introduce a population-based screening program for colorectal cancer immediately based on the 2002 report by the National Cancer Commission on Colorectal Cancer Screening and recommendations by Cancer Care Ontario;

"Whereas the Ontario government has not implemented a colorectal cancer screening program, and still has an extra duty to provide the standard of care that is recommended in the treatment of colorectal cancer;

"Whereas the Ontario government has elected not to fund the medications which form the standard of care for the treatment of advanced colorectal cancer, namely Oxaliplatin and Avastin, and that the government should rightfully fund these medications;

"Whereas forcing patients to pay for these drugs constitutes a two-tiered health care system which is unacceptable for the standard treatment of Canada's second-biggest cancer killer;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the government of Ontario to introduce and implement a population-based colorectal cancer screening program and to fund the necessary medications for the treatment

of advanced colorectal cancer, namely Oxaliplatin and Avastin.”

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

HIGHWAY 417

Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke): I have a petition here signed by many, many people from my riding of Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, including Jim Bradley.

Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): No.

Mr. Yakabuski: Yes; it’s right there.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas modern highways are the economic lifelines to communities across Ontario and crucial to the growth of Ontario’s economy; and

“Whereas the Ministry of Transportation has been dealing with the planning and design of the extension of Highway 417 for several years; and

“Whereas the previous Conservative government followed through with their commitment to extend Highway 417 to Arnprior; and

“Whereas Highway 417/17 is part of the TransCanada highway system; and

“Whereas local municipal governments, the county of Renfrew and MPP John Yakabuski have continued to press the Liberal government on this issue;

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

“That the Liberal government move as swiftly as possible to approve the extension of Highway 417 through Arnprior to Renfrew and beyond and that this be included in their next five-year plan.”

Mr. Speaker, I agree with this petition and affix my signature to it.

GASOLINE PRICES

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

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas gasoline prices have continued to increase at alarming rates in recent months; and

“Whereas the high and unstable gas prices across Ontario have caused confusion and unfair hardship to Ontario’s drivers while also impacting the Ontario economy in key sectors such as tourism and transportation; and

“Whereas the member from Superior North and the member from Essex, as well as the current ministers from St. Catharines, Eglinton–Lawrence and Sudbury have introduced legislation to freeze gas prices;

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

“That the government of Ontario considers an immediate, temporary gas price freeze and fair and transparent gasoline pricing by supporting the previous

members’ bills while international gas prices stabilize: Bill 10, the Gas Price Watchdog Act, introduced by the Liberal member for Thunder Bay–Superior North; Bill 18, the Gas Price Watchdog Act, introduced by the honourable Liberal member for Eglinton–Lawrence; Bill 80, the Gasoline Consumer Protection Act, introduced by the Liberal member for Essex; Bill 32, the Petroleum Products Price Freeze Act, introduced by the honourable Liberal member from Sudbury; and Bill 16, the Gasoline Pricing Act, introduced by the honourable Liberal member from St. Catharines.”

I affix my name in support, Mr. Speaker.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLEAN WATER ACT, 2006

LOI DE 2006 SUR L’EAU SAINE

Ms. Broten moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 43, An Act to protect existing and future sources of drinking water and to make complementary and other amendments to other Acts / Projet de loi 43, Loi visant à protéger les sources existantes et futures d’eau potable et à apporter des modifications complémentaires et autres à d’autres lois.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Ms. Broten, you have the floor.

Hon. Laurel C. Broten (Minister of the Environment): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It’s a pleasure to introduce Bill 43, the proposed Clean Water Act, for third reading. I am pleased that I’ll be sharing my time with my parliamentary assistant, the member from Peterborough.

This is a great and long-awaited day for the province of Ontario. Today, we consider a piece of legislation that will fundamentally transform the way we protect our greatest natural resource: our water. As the honourable members know as representatives of the people of this great province, we have a rare and valuable opportunity to truly make a meaningful difference in the lives of Ontarians, not only for today, but for generations to come.

1540

There can be no better opportunity than the one we debate today. Ontario could never have developed into the diverse and thriving province it is today without a constant supply of clean, safe drinking water. But the quality and quantity of our water are not boundless; we must manage our water responsibly. Bill 43 gives us an opportunity to protect Ontario’s environment and also leave an important legacy for our children. I’m very proud to be proposing legislation that has the potential to make such a profound and lasting contribution to Ontario’s environmental well-being and to the quality of life our people enjoy so dearly.

Our government’s vision is of a province where our children can live and play in a strong, healthy, vibrant community, an Ontario that is clean and green, pro-

gressive and prosperous. This is our government's vision, and it is also a vision that is shared by people across our province. We know that Ontarians, when asked, will clearly state their profound belief that the environment is a top priority, along with health and education.

Notre gouvernement a comme vision une province où les enfants peuvent vivre et grandir dans des collectivités fortes, salubres et dynamiques, un Ontario propre et vert, prospère et en plein essor. Cette vision du gouvernement est partagée par les citoyens et les citoyennes de la province.

En effet, les Ontariens et les Ontariennes déclarent que l'environnement constitue une priorité pour eux, comme la santé et l'éducation.

Our government is working on many fronts to realize that vision, and many different ministries and agencies are involved. Unlike some of our predecessors, the McGuinty government understands that Ontarians want effective environmental stewardship from their representatives at Queen's Park. We take our stewardship very seriously. We are committed to upholding the trust placed in us, to managing environmental issues wisely on behalf of Ontarians. As stewards, our role is to ensure that environmental protection is being managed at the most effective and appropriate levels.

I want to take a few minutes today to remind the honourable members of the purpose of Bill 43 and briefly describe how it is designed to work in communities right across the province. But first I want to highlight the extensive consultation process we have undertaken for the bill and how it has helped to make the proposed legislation even stronger and more effective.

Our government consulted with more than 300 groups across the province. We heard from farmers and municipal leaders, large industry, small businesses, conservation groups, health officials, First Nations and property owners. We listened and we took action on what we heard. There is no better example of this than our drinking water stewardship program for rural Ontario. Property owners and small businesses told us that they needed financial help to make changes to implement their plans. We've heard their concerns and we responded. We built our financial assistance program right into the legislation itself. Initially, \$7 million will be available for early action to protect drinking water. What's more, we've promised farmers and rural business owners that this is only our initial funding; there will be more.

To ensure that future funding is well invested and meets the needs of rural Ontario, I appointed an 11-member advisory panel to be chaired by Al Lauzon, a past chair of the Ontario Rural Council. The panel will provide invaluable advice and expertise in designing the program. As communities complete their source protection plans, we'll know better what the costs of implementation are and how to effectively direct sustainable future funding to address those costs. It is actions like these that prompted Ron Bonnett from the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, to say, "The government is clearly listening to the concerns of rural Ontario."

I should also point out that the program has been very enthusiastically received by the Ontario Farm Animal Council, the Ontario Farm Environmental Coalition, Conservation Ontario, Environmental Defence and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario.

This is just one example that demonstrates the value of Bill 43. The legislation is built around a clear vision, but it is also highly responsive to community needs. We have a bill that is clear in its goals but flexible enough to allow local decision-makers to choose their best path. It reflects the desires of environmentalists to take a preventative approach, but also listens to the needs of farmers and property owners who are the stewards of their land.

I know that every member of this House supports the underlying principle of Bill 43, which is that everyone living in Ontario has a fundamental right to safe, clean drinking water. In order to safeguard that right, treatment is simply not enough. Justice O'Connor pointed out in his report on the Walkerton inquiry that Ontario needs a multi-barrier approach for water protection, a system with numerous built-in safeguards that protect our water from source to tap. Protecting our water begins with preventing its contamination. We share that vision.

Prevention is the fundamental goal of the proposed legislation contained in Bill 43. The passage of this bill will mean that 12 of Justice O'Connor's recommendations will be fully addressed, but more than that, it will start a whole new chapter in the history of how we manage our supply of water. It all comes down to trust. People need to be able to trust that their water is safe to drink and that the water sources they rely on are free from pollution. If this public confidence is lost, the results can be devastating. With the passage of the Clean Water Act, communities in Ontario will start developing and adopting a watershed-based approach to prevention. Just as importantly, they will not have to develop water protection measures in isolation. They will plan prevention measures across the watersheds they share. Under Bill 43, communities would form committees to look at the vulnerability of their drinking water sources and to evaluate existing and potential threats to local supplies. The committees would then develop source protection plans designed to reduce or eliminate those threats.

When these plans are implemented, communities would begin to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the prevention measures. Over time, the plans themselves will be reviewed and updated to enhance the protection they provide against existing threats and ensure that they respond to new ones.

For some communities, these source protection planning activities they carry out may well be the first opportunity they have had to identify threats to their water supplies. In other communities, source protection activities may represent the continuation of work that has already been started. Either way, it is clear that local communities are in the best position to develop and implement effective protection measures to safeguard their water supplies.

We heard the concerns of property owners and farmers. They agreed that it is important to reduce threats

to our drinking water but they were concerned about what it would mean for their land, and we have taken their concerns to heart. Many threats to drinking water can be managed locally through voluntary efforts, and we've replaced the system of permits and permit officials that was originally proposed with a negotiated risk management approach. This change recognizes the tremendous work that's already being done on a voluntary basis and it is similar to the stewardship activities that are now common in a number of regions.

Risk management officials will be required to have appropriate training and qualifications to develop plans with property owners. For instance, an official working with farmers would need to have training in biosecurity and health and safety protocols.

We also know that source water protection plans need to be based on sound scientific principles and good research, and they must be developed in consultation with all members of the community.

We've already committed \$120 million for planning to help communities and their partners study and assess their watersheds, undertake water budgets and ensure that they get the science right. A great deal of work is already under way, and the magnitude of what's being accomplished is truly remarkable. There is no doubt that it is the largest scientific exercise ever undertaken in Ontario to better understand our water resources.

To protect drinking water supplies effectively, we first need to know how much water we have, how much is in reserve, how our water replenishes itself and how those supplies could be threatened both now and in the future. Right now, right across Ontario, conservation authorities and municipalities are using leading-edge research and technology to build comprehensive maps of their surface and groundwater resources. This research will help them develop local source protection plans for watersheds across the province.

1550

We recognize that there will be implementing costs involved with this work, and because every region of Ontario has its own unique characteristics and challenges, it's difficult to say precisely what the cost for each community will be. The need to adapt prevention measures to fit local needs is one of the greatest strengths of the proposed Clean Water Act. Instead of opting for a central model that would impose the same set of protection measures for everyone, we are relying on the communities themselves to tell us what they need to implement their local protection plans. Local source protection committees represent a broad spectrum of stakeholders, including municipalities, businesses, the health sector and the public. Each committee will need to look carefully at the research findings, technical studies and risk assessments to come up with prevention measures that deal with the vulnerable areas they've identified.

It is clear that the cost of implementing these plans will vary somewhat from one community to another across the province, but we already have two excellent examples of what we can expect in this regard. Waterloo

region and Oxford county were early advocates of source protection planning. These municipalities are now working to implement the plans they have developed to protect their drinking water sources. I'm pleased to report that at this stage, their implementation costs appear to be quite manageable and moderate. Implementation costs to homeowners in these communities range from about 75 cents per household in Waterloo region to around \$1.50 a month per household in Oxford county.

The government is very much aware that Bill 43 is vital legislation for people and communities throughout the province. As a result, we have taken the time and effort to undertake extensive consultation to get it right. We've taken Bill 43 through committee hearings line by line. We've also taken it on the road, from a historic town hall in Walkerton to the chambers of Queen's Park, from a church hall in the town of Bath to convention centres in Cornwall and Peterborough. We also had an extensive legislative debate on this bill during second reading, and that debate resulted in a number of very useful suggestions from members of both sides of the House.

Since I introduced this legislation last December, I've visited many communities around the province. I've spoken with people about the proposed Clean Water Act and listened to their views and concerns about the best ways to protect our drinking water. I've seen the excellent local efforts that are under way first-hand, and whether I was speaking to the mayor of North Bay, the councillors of Essex county, farm groups in Waterloo or conservation authority staff in Belleville, the message I heard was consistent and clear: People right across Ontario agree that water protection is a shared responsibility and that the most effective way to protect local water is through local involvement.

Our government has listened to people's comments and heard their concerns, and to respond to the extensive feedback received from stakeholders, we have worked hard to amend the bill to make it even stronger. We have expressly recognized that incentives, outreach and education programs may be used as source protection tools. We extended the period for property owners to appeal risk management plans from 15 to 60 days. We removed the limit of 16 members on source protection committees so that they can be more flexible and more representative of the local watershed community.

We designed the bill to afford better protection of Great Lakes water quality. As members may know, the Great Lakes supply about 70% of our people with their drinking water, and Bill 43 requires policies to be included in source protection plans to help achieve Great Lakes targets established by me.

Bill 43 also breaks new ground by recognizing First Nations communities and their need to have their water sources protected by allowing First Nations drinking water systems to be considered as part of the source protection planning process, should the First Nation want to participate. Over the past several months, my staff has worked with First Nations on ways to protect their drinking water sources under the proposed Clean Water

Act and on how First Nations who want to participate can play an active part in developing source water protection plans across their watersheds. Consultation with First Nations regarding their participation in watershed source protection plans will be important as we move forward.

I believe the amendments we have made will result in stronger, more effective legislation. I want to take the opportunity to thank the hundreds of people who participated in the consultation process, including members on all sides of this House, for the high level of interest they have shown in the legislation and their commitment to protecting Ontario's drinking water sources for future generations.

The passage of Bill 43 will put Ontario in the forefront of drinking water protection across North America. It will help safeguard the quality of our environment and the health of our people. Bill 43 represents a significant step forward to protecting our water resources on which we all rely and preserving the tremendous quality of life we all enjoy. It's what the people of this province want and what they deserve. I would therefore like to invite all members to join me in supporting the speedy passage of this historic and tremendously important piece of legislation. I can think of no better birthday present that I could give Zachary and Ryan this week, in the week that they turn one year old, than the Clean Water Act.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough): It's certainly a pleasure for me to have this opportunity to outline to my colleagues some of the highlights of Bill 43, the Clean Water Act. This is a significant piece of legislation that will play a major role in fulfilling our government's commitment to ensuring that all Ontarians have access to safe drinking water. We believe, along with Justice O'Connor, that protecting water at its source is the first vital step in providing safe drinking water. To ensure that protection, we need to prevent pollution from contaminating the lakes, rivers and aquifers that supply the water that comes out of our taps.

We also recognize that the best way to plan and carry out water protection measures is by viewing the entire watershed as a single, coherent entity. Moreover, the science of watershed protection has come a long way over the years. We are committed to capturing the benefits of the new knowledge by ensuring that Ontario's source water protection efforts are planned and implemented on a sound scientific basis. We believe that everyone in Ontario has the right to safe, clean drinking water.

We also believe that protecting our water resources is very much a shared responsibility. But because each community and indeed each watershed is unique, we are convinced that local authorities are in the best position to plan and implement the protection measures that will ensure the safety of our drinking water.

These fundamental principles are at the heart of Bill 43. Under the provisions of this groundbreaking legislation, local communities, for the first time, will be able to work together to create and implement plans that protect the sources of our drinking water.

The Clean Water Act will accomplish three key objectives. First of all, it will require local communities to look at any activities that could threaten their water quality and water quantity and take action to reduce and remove that threat. Secondly, it will give local authorities the power to take preventive measures before a threat to the local water supply can develop. Third, the proposed legislation will allow the whole community an opportunity to participate in the process of developing practical and effective solutions through a full and public consultation on every source protection plan. Under Bill 43, public consultation will be a critical component of the source protection framework.

I said that local water source protection plans must be based on sound scientific principles. To ensure that communities have the resources they need to complete the required studies, we have committed \$120 million over the next four years to support this vital and crucial work. Members should also be aware that through Bill 43 and its accompanying regulations, technical guidance and director's rules, a framework is provided that communities can follow as they prepare their local source protection plans.

Conservation authorities, such as the Otonabee Region Conservation Authority in my riding, and municipalities will firstly map out local drinking water sources that need special protection. This includes areas immediately around wellheads and water intakes, recharge areas and aquifers.

In step two, source protection committees will use a science-based approach to measure and assess the threats to water quality and quantity. These threats will be ranked to determine if they are indeed significant. Source protection committees will make decisions on threats that require immediate action, threats that simply need to be monitored to ensure that they don't become more serious, and threats that can simply be managed over time through what I stress is voluntary action. Local partners will be brought together to deal with these threats identified and municipalities would work with conservation authorities, farmers and other property owners, industry, community groups and the public to develop workable, effective plans to deal with local threats to drinking water sources.

1600

Lastly, the local source water protection plans will be put into action. Implementation will be accomplished through official plans, zoning bylaws, provincial approval schemes, municipally issued permits, negotiated responses and voluntary actions. Under the bill's provisions, local municipalities will receive special authorities to take action on significant threats to the most vulnerable drinking water supplies. Of course, there will be a careful and continuous monitoring of each source protection plan. This will be done to measure the effectiveness of the actions taken to protect drinking water sources and to ensure that local drinking water supplies continue to be adequately protected into the future.

As members can see, communities across the province will have key roles to play in the process proposed under

Bill 43. Municipalities would generally be responsible for developing and implementing risk management strategies for local supply wells and intakes. Conservation authorities would play a broader coordinating role. They would generally be responsible for supporting source protection planning across the entire watershed, specifically source protection committees, by gathering information, assessing and ranking threats to the water supply, consulting and integrating municipal strategies into larger watersheds.

Prior to the official committee touring of Ontario, I did take an opportunity to visit with many rural parts of my riding and had discussions with many farmers, including my good friend Dave McNeven. I clearly said to Dave that the introduction of the bill, the way it was set and its initial part, was something that I couldn't support without, certainly, the inclusion of a stewardship fund enshrined in the legislation to make sure that that principle is in there, which couldn't be taken away by another government down the road. That was my bottom line. In direct contacts with both the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and indeed the Premier and my colleague the Minister of Environment, we made sure that government members got the stewardship program enshrined in that legislation. That's an important step going forward. Previous legislation, like the Nutrient Management Act, did not have any such fund enshrined in that legislation. It's an important step forward, and indeed it's supported.

I want to quote Ron Bonnett: "This first-stage financial assistance goes a long way toward addressing the concerns of the farming community. The government is clearly listening to the concerns of rural Ontario." That's Ron Bonnett, the president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture. Indeed, Mr. Bonnett wrote in the editorial of the Ontario Farmer of September 12, 2006, "It is gratifying to see the provincial government respond positively on proposals put forth by the farming community on the issues such as the Clean Water Act. It is proof that a clearly articulated message from the farming community can be grasped by our government representatives and turned into meaningful legislation." I rest my case on Bill 43.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr. John O'Toole (Durham): What a load of hooley, technically, in responding to this bill. I want to say, first of all, let's put on the record what is the truth here. This is nothing but a shell game of downloading to the municipalities and the conservation authorities. They haven't given them the resources to actually do this. But also I want to put on the record the great work the member for Haliburton-Victoria-Brock, our critic, did tirelessly on this bill to try to improve it. They didn't listen to one possible amendment that she, on behalf of stakeholders, put on the record.

So the message is out now. We know now that—even the member from Peterborough knows this. He could barely get on a farm because they know that once these so-called water people get on the farm, you're in trouble.

They are not leaving without an order on that farm to do a risk assessment plan. Who's paying for it? There's no money here. The \$7 million won't cover the amount to put the new letterhead out for your department. It's a shame. It's a shame that you haven't been prepared to work with the people of Ontario and to phase this thing in. Even the drinking water advisory committee recommended that you work progressively through, first of all, the municipal drinking water systems, and then add the private wells and other systems. There isn't a member in this House, of any stripe, who doesn't agree with the purpose here of ensuring that all water is safe and capable of being used appropriately to drink. We're in support of that. What's wrong here is the process. Read section 79, "Powers of entry." This is what this bill is really about. I'm going to read it: "Subject to ... (4), an employee or agent of a source protection authority or a person designated" by the authority "under subsection (2) may enter property, without the consent of the owner or occupier and without a warrant...."

There are other intimidating sections here. Why don't you just learn to work with the people of Ontario instead of trying to intimidate the people of Ontario? This is not a bill I can support.

Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto-Danforth): I think it's quite tragic, in fact, that the government has missed an opportunity with this act. Walkerton was a terrible, terrible calamity. People lost their lives. People had their health damaged. People were ill. There was a huge economic impact on that town and a huge human impact on the people in Walkerton and the area around it. When such events occur, it's time for a society to step back and think: What does this really mean about how we function? What does it really mean about what we have put in place to protect our health and our environment?

This bill is a whisper of what should be there. In the course of the presentations by the public, we heard calls consistently for application of the precautionary principle. That was not recognized in the act. That leaves us outside the direction that's being taken in international treaties regarding environmental protection. It leaves us outside the direction that even the government of Canada is taking. It means that we are not keeping up with the current best standard in protection of the population—a huge missed opportunity.

There was an opportunity here to bring in water conservation plans, to make that part of source protection. There was support across the spectrum: environmental groups, farm groups, conservation authorities. Everyone understood that conservation would make a difference, that conservation would reduce costs, freeing up funds to enforce this plan, but would also reduce demand on water so that there would be less fear of contamination.

Mr. Khalil Ramal (London-Fanshawe): I have the privilege to serve on a committee as a Chair, where I get the chance to tour the province of Ontario with my colleagues from both sides of the House.

First, I want to commend the minister for the great job she is doing on behalf of all of us in this place. I believe,

if this bill is passed, it will be not only a birthday gift to her twins but also a gift for all the people of Ontario, because it is very important to protect our water that comes from the lakes, rivers or aquifers.

I was listening to the member from Durham region. I guess he heard about the bill from whatever. He didn't get the chance or the privilege to tour with us. I listened to many people who came to us, who presented before our committee and told us about the bill and how important implementation of this bill is. We listened to their concerns. They came, and they have a lot of concern about who is going to pay for the expenses it might cost them if the bill passes. I was privileged and honoured to hear the minister talking about this section. We listened to people. We said that we can invest money to address their concerns and address their issues, which is very important for many people, for farmers, for landowners who came to us and told us, "We want to support you. We want to pass this bill because it is important to us, important to our drinking water. But some costs might occur. Who is going to support us?"

Our government, in a responsible way, came out and said, "We can invest—invest in the science, invest in the conservation authority, invest with the municipalities, invest to make sure that all the people, the landowners and the people who drink the water, will be in good shape, will be protected," which I think shows how much the minister and the government have taken full responsibility to deal with the people of this province.

1610

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments? Response?

Hon. Ms. Broten: I'm very pleased to have a chance to respond to the comments that have been made and to emphatically state once again how proud I am to be part of a government that is moving forward with such a historic piece of legislation.

I want to suggest to my friends opposite that you can't simply wish to deliver clean, safe, abundant drinking water for future generations. You have to take action. You must take steps. I would suggest to my friends opposite that our historic scientific investment of \$120 million on the science of water is one of the biggest uploads that we have ever seen a government undertake.

We believe in the science of drinking water. We know that we need to have that information to ensure that we have clean, safe drinking water for generations to come, and we are putting our money where our mouth is: \$7 million with respect to implementation and the stewardship program, a down payment with respect to those communities that will be ready to take that early action.

As we've said in the past, this is a long process. We need to get that science collected, but some of those communities across the province will be ready to take early steps, and we will be there with them to take those early steps. That is why we have received the support from those in the agricultural community, those in the environmental community, those in the municipal community.

This act is inherently precautionary in nature. That is the premise of the Clean Water Act: to prevent contamination to drinking water in the first place—hard lessons our province has learned in the tragedy in Walkerton, lessons that we don't want to see repeated. The Clean Water Act is one part of our overall government, Ministry of the Environment and other ministries' strategies to ensure that we have clean, safe drinking water for generations to come.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton–Victoria–Brock): I'm pleased to have the opportunity to rise and to speak on Bill 143, the Clean Water Act, on third reading. It was first introduced on December 5—for those watching at home, a little update—and we've been in second reading, and then we were out on committee. I know a lot has been said about the committees and the hundreds of submissions that were received, both oral and written, on Bill 43.

We want to say, and the member from Durham has said, that John Tory and the PC caucus fully support the concept of clean drinking water. What we clearly do not want to see is more bureaucracy, more downloads from the McGuinty Liberals on the backs of municipalities, landowners and rural Ontario.

The government certainly heard and saw the same submissions that we did. Protecting our water supply is vital to everyone. We all want clean water. But, as the minister stated, there are some municipalities that are further ahead in their source protection plans, because they've been doing them. In the estimates of the environment the other day, we heard that the conservation authorities and municipalities had been studying source water protection before the bill was even introduced, so the fact that they say the bill was needed in order to do source water protection plans is not correct. They had the tools in the Environmental Protection Act and the Ontario Water Resources Act, and some of the municipalities and the conservation authorities were doing this already. Sure, they needed more funds, and that was set up and some funds were flowing from the government before the legislation was introduced in order to aid them to do this study.

So three years into the mandate, the McGuinty Liberals introduced legislation, provided no basic details, passed this responsibility to municipalities, and provided property owners with no security that they won't be required to cover the cost and to implement the work of protecting watersheds.

My colleague the member from Oxford, Mr. Harde- man, introduced a resolution last week, on Thursday, in private members' business, and it read as follows: "That, in the opinion of the House, the proposed provincial-municipal fiscal and service delivery review, which will not be completed until February 2008, after the next provincial election"—please note the timings of all the announcements by the McGuinty government; it's not till after the next provincial election—"is needlessly drawn out and that a full review to balance the delivery of ser-

VICES with the ability to pay should be completed much more expeditiously, in order to avoid hitting Ontario taxpayers with unsustainable property tax hikes or significant reductions in service.” The resolution is in perfect and significant relation to the impact that Bill 43 does have on municipalities.

So as towns and cities throughout Ontario, especially rural Ontario, are struggling endlessly to maintain services—they’re fighting to keep taxes from rising—there’s a desperate need for the provincial-municipal relationship to be reviewed, we agree, because at the end of the day, Bill 43 is a clear abdication of responsibility on the part of the McGuinty Liberals and the Ministry of the Environment. It’s an abdication of responsibilities and a placement of the implementation of this legislation, which they have every intention of taking full credit for, on to the backs of municipalities and landowners. That’s why this legislation was brought up. They had the tools within existing legislation. This is all about downloading on to municipalities and landowners.

What’s worse—and that’s what’s terrifying municipalities. I was at the convention of the regions and counties and single-tier municipalities up in Haliburton county. It’s being hosted at the Pinestone inn in beautiful Haliburton county. I asked them, and they are terrified. They’re terrified of the unknowns, of the costs, and I’ll get into that further on down the road. They don’t have any idea what the proposal of costs and implementations might be, and I think the better way to do it was to use the existing tools, work with municipalities, work with the conservation authorities and see where the risk areas are. That would have saved a lot of confrontation and a lot of anger in rural Ontario. But they chose not to do it that way. Justice O’Connor said it was a provincial responsibility. So I firmly believe it’s abdicating provincial responsibility in this essential service of source water protection.

So the government sees no problem in dictating new regulations, only then to disappear from the picture when it comes time to pay the bill. That’s the download that is occurring. This is the pattern we’ve seen from day one of Bill 43. Whatever the policy merits are in any piece of legislation, it’s unfair that the province is going to impose new requirements on municipalities and then not do anything to help them pick up the bill. Seven million dollars is an insult. I’m going to read into the record some of the testimonies later on about the costs that different organizations brought to our attention, and \$7 million—you couldn’t even hear that sound in the bucket. Not at all.

Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka): It’s billions.

Ms. Scott: Yes, the price tag is billions, but they don’t know. Again, they’re downloading without knowing the cost, but it’s got to be billions, and that’s according to some of their own ministry’s estimates and their reviews. Anyway, it’s the pattern of the government with this legislation to dictate, abdicate, procrastinate and—I forgot one other thing—to take credit for. This type of

irresponsible attitude is corroding. The municipalities can’t do this. It’s unrealistic that you think municipalities and landowners can bear the burdens of these costs. It’s unrealistic. So you’re leaving all of us in rural Ontario, and that’s where we went on the committee travel. We didn’t go to as many places as we should have gone. We didn’t go to northern Ontario. We didn’t go to south-western Ontario. The farthest we got that way was Walkerton. But there was no shortage of people doing presentations to us, and those who could make it—as I said, we didn’t go to two areas of the province that we really should have gone to, to hear the views there.

Only a McGuinty Liberal would not understand that it is patently unfair to delegate such a massive administrative undertaking to municipalities without being straight about how much these required new initiatives will cost. Is the province going to step in, in any way, to help them? I mean, sure you had some comments about the stewardship fund which we all heard about. It was announced. But \$7 million to go with that stewardship fund—like I said, it doesn’t make any sense, and it’s more of an insult than anything else.

All across every place we were, it was financial participation by the province. Justice O’Connor said the province should have a lead. They say they meet some of Justice O’Connor’s recommendations. They far from meet all of them. I don’t know how you can expect municipalities to plan on a go-forward basis within their budgets. Sure, it makes sense to do the watersheds and work with the municipalities to plan together. We’re not disputing that. But it’s how it’s being done. That’s why we’ve been standing here opposing the bill, getting stakeholders to come to the meetings to say, “This is how this is going to impact us, and it’s impossible. We all want clean water, but you’re not giving us the tools to do that.”

1620

My colleague from Oxford put forth his resolution last Thursday and, despite government opposition, it actually passed. Good for him. We got the numbers and it passed, so I congratulate the member for that. I suppose the interesting thing will be to see how this government responds to the passing of that resolution. But the point is very clear: For local governments to plan and manage effectively, they must have some certainty with respect to financial arrangements.

Bill 43 does nothing to ease municipalities’ minds when it comes to that burden of responsibility. If something is deemed to be in the provincial public interest such that a law or regulation is required, then it is worthy of provincial financial support in furtherance of that public interest objective. So if we all want clean water, we should all contribute to it. Bill 43 does not provide that, and that is absolutely critical in order to achieve source water protection.

The last study of municipal services was nearly 10 years ago. So we now have a resolution from my colleague from Oxford, passed in this very Legislature, that’s requesting that this government not dodge and

weave this matter until after the next election—they've put it down to February 2008—but take some responsibility and get this done before the next election.

The fiscal gap between the municipal transfers and the cost of services is estimated by the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, AMO, to be over \$3 billion.

Laughter.

Ms. Scott: That's what they say. My colleague's laughing, but that's from the Association of Municipalities of Ontario. The Minister of the Environment says, "Hey, let's throw Bill 43 on top of that. We don't know how much it's going to cost you, but it's going to be your responsibility. We're going to download that to you."

Who knows what that estimated number from AMO is going to be, should that legislation take effect? Who knows what type of services municipalities are going to need to reconsider in order to deal with this government download for the responsibility of source water protection without the proper financial support? Who knows what the tax base will increase to for rural Ontarians who are tax-burdened to death? Many of us are already struggling to keep farms on the land.

I said earlier today that in the city of Kawartha Lakes chamber of commerce, which represents about two thirds of my riding in the Kawartha Lakes area, 50 farms went out of business last year. This is more regulatory burden on them, more costing on them, more land that could be taken out of their use to try to make a living off the land. There's no way that farmers and landowners are prepared, without financial assistance, to implement what this government is requiring them to do. You're taking the club instead of giving them the carrot. They want to work with you. There are no better stewards of the land than rural landowners and farmers. You're beating them up on it. It's punitive charges, a draconian way in which to deal with them. They can't. They just cannot.

Putting the municipalities in the middle between the property owner and expropriation of land without compensation is totally unfair. It threatens family farms, the landowners, it threatens cottage owners in my area, agriculture businesses and municipalities at a time when they cannot afford any more cost burdens. We're just driving them out of business. Farmers are small businessmen and we're driving it. The province of Ontario has created an environment that's driving small businesses out.

The minister knows what was brought forward during the review stage in the committee. She knows the concerns and the anxiety in the farming communities—the landowners, the mining communities—all across rural Ontario. I could go on and on—the presentations. You could palpate people's anger in the room. The parking lots were overflowing. The signs were out. These people are not protesters by nature. They didn't want to come out and take time away from their land to do that, but it's survival. You're taking away their ability to have a livelihood from the farm.

It's clear from the vote on my colleague from Oxford's resolution that the members of this House want

this municipal services review to take place and not put off until after the next election. There is no way that a piece of legislation such as Bill 43 should be thrown onto the backs of municipalities. The municipal services review resolution must be implemented, and I challenge the members of the House opposite to do that. The House leaders are listening; put it on the agenda and move it forward. If that's what you want done—a municipal review—move it up, because all the municipalities want to see that take place before the next election, and what you're going to do about the imbalance between the municipal and the provincial governments. I challenge the Premier and the Minister of the Environment, even before considering Bill 43, to move on to that review.

A very good friend of this Legislature, Hazel McCallion, who comes and sits on one side and on the other side, comes often. She said that the review is needed now. Hazel has got a lot of respect on all sides of the Legislature. There is just no way that Ontario municipalities can withstand this heavy-handed approach to downloading responsibilities by the McGuinty Liberals.

The agriculture impacts of this so-called Clean Water Act are viewed in much of rural Ontario as—and we heard it—the end of their way of life. That's pretty serious when statements like this are used. It's seen as one of the most serious threats to property ownership and rural independence. It's being credited as the single greatest threat to prosperity for Ontario's already struggling farmers. Farmers unequivocally support clean water, but they oppose this Clean Water Act and we oppose the name. You made it a political name instead of doing the right thing, which was using existing legislation, doing a study of source water protection and working with municipalities, land owners and conservation authorities, because the Clean Water Act is not going to result in cleaner water. It's all about the heavy-handed approach, about regulations, permits, enforcements and penalties.

As I said, the agriculture community has been working with managing their land and watersheds for years now. Who better to work with? There's no good in their doing anything to harm their land; they make their living off it. They have been doing it for generations. They want to preserve their land for the next generations of their family to work with. So we should be saying as legislators, "How can we improve the quality of our water supplies and who is responsible for paying the cost?" The answer is that improving the quality of water supplies will benefit us all, so we all should bear the cost. We heard that time and time again in the committee. But the McGuinty Liberals have, certainly, a different agenda. Farmers are going to bear the cost; urban areas will enjoy a lot of the benefits, if there are any.

Under the Clean Water Act, McGuinty proposes to create source water bureaucracies which will regulate private land, tell farmers what they can and cannot do on their land and then penalize them for failing to comply. The farmers don't get a say. These people have worked with environmental farm plans, nutrient management plans before. They all want a co-operative approach to the environment.

I'm going to read in some of the stakeholders who were worried about the punitive nature of the Clean Water Act.

In Walkerton, which was our second day of hearings, we heard from David Murray of the Dairy Farmers of Ontario, who told us that Bill 43 is "overly punitive and not a positive improvement over existing legislation to improve Ontario's drinking water quality or risks."

The Christian Farmers sent Glen Duff to the Walkerton hearings to warn the McGuinty Liberals of the costs associated with the proposed legislation. According to Glen Duff, "One of our major concerns is the fact that the proposed act calls for the development of a plan without ensuring farmer participation or, for that matter, participation of other landowners."

Allen Hughes of the Grey County Federation of Agriculture states that "the goals of the Clean Water Act can best be met by education about water quality and quantity protection and preservation for all users and by providing financial support to the landowners affected by restrictions." Allen Hughes makes a good point: Education and preservation, combined with financial support, make an excellent formula for clean water.

1630

Bill Wymenga of Ontario Pork provided committee members with a well-reasoned criticism of Bill 43: "First, it is our view that the current legislation is overly punitive and does not make a positive improvement over existing legislation to improve Ontario's drinking water quality or risks. All impacted business and landowner groups agree that it is vital to have a safe and reliable source of water in this province. At the same time, it is important to bear in mind that high standards for drinking water are already in place in Ontario. Further, there are laws in place to regulate and punish polluters. In this context, it is difficult to understand the business case and administrative need for additional rules, regulations and enforcement protocols."

He went on to say, "Our concern is that the bill goes beyond what is reasonable and shifts the burden of proof to the landowner. In our view, provincial regulators currently are charged with the responsibility to scientifically demonstrate an adverse effect from an existing normal farm practice. Under Bill 43, the process is reversed and the agricultural landowner must satisfy the municipal permit official"—now it's "risk management"; we don't know what the difference is, but I'll go on to continue with the quote—"that the normal, legal farm practice does not cause harm.

"Rather than creating a predictable and scientifically sound framework for managing legitimate risks, the proposed Clean Water Act establishes an ill-defined regulatory process that will likely result in overly risk-averse municipal permit officials inappropriately applying the precautionary principle to place an unfair and unnecessary burden on the landowner. Placing this level of technical responsibility and legal liability at the municipal permit official level is inappropriate."

That's not from me; it's from Bill Wymenga of Ontario Pork.

In Bath, Kim Sytsma of the Ontario Cattlemen's Association said, "It is our concern that the government is attempting to be all things to all people and nobody's going to be happy."

She goes on to say, "In order to get environmental groups to endorse Bill 43, the minister tells them what she thinks they want to hear: that the precautionary principle is integral to the act and pending regulations. In order to appease farmers and landowners, the minister figures the establishment of a safety-net-like hardship fund for those in need is what we want to hear. The government might think this is forward progress; in fact, it is backwards."

The Ontario Flue-Cured Tobacco Growers' Marketing Board, Chris VanPaassen: "To impose land use restrictions or require modifications on the basis of an assessment report alone constitutes a lack of due process that would result in landowners implementing practices that are unnecessary or inappropriate. There is ample protection currently offered through the Environmental Protection Act to deal with situations that are identified in the assessment report as providing an imminent threat to groundwater or surface water."

As you can see, the fierce opposition to the Clean Water Act is coming directly from impacted stakeholders. It's not just farm groups that are worried. You don't have to be a farmer to be a rural landowner, and rural landowners are worried as well.

It is the reverse onus. It's terribly unfair. It's a pattern of this government: You are guilty until you prove that you're innocent. It's totally inappropriate and is not conducive, again, to achieving what we all want, which is source water protection.

Jacqueline Fennell of the Leeds and Grenville Landowners Association charges that Bill 43 is "targeting rural Ontario individual property owners" and "creating a whole new bureaucracy of people who are going to be permit officials who are going to be coming on to our property whether we like it or not, possibly excavating and changing the layout of our property...."

She goes on to say, "I would suggest that you already have legislation to keep our water clean, if you would only use the legislation you have: a section of the Environmental Protection Act, which clearly protects all water in Ontario. In essence, there is no greater protection for the environment than what is already legislated in the Environmental Protection Act."

That's what we've been trying to say, and that's what Justice O'Connor said in his recommendation: You have the tools already. Get on with source water protection planning. Don't bring in more legislation, create more levels of bureaucracy.

But you didn't listen to him. Instead, you brought in Bill 43 and you downloaded it onto municipalities as an unfunded liability to them.

The Ontario Landowners Association says, "Bill 43 targets individual, private landowners as the villain for clean water, as a danger to our environment." He goes on to say, "Section 14(1) of the Environmental Protection

Act—people should all read that. Under the present Environmental Protection Act, no contaminants, no pollutants can be put into water or air. The Ministry of the Environment has full authority and jurisdiction to prevent any contamination or pollution of our resources, and it is a broad, sweeping and all-encompassing section, section 14(1).”

So the tools existed there. The province was avoiding responsibility, and they just download it to the municipalities and the landowners. You could have done source water protection in existing legislation. That’s what they’re all trying to tell you. You didn’t need to bring this in, and especially the way you brought it in, with the heavy-handed approach in rural Ontario. They’re livid. If anyone was at the International Plowing Match in Peterborough county, you could hear it, loud and clear: “Rural Ontario is under attack by the McGuinty Liberal government.”

Other landowners groups:

“The Clean Water Act is a dream come true for conservation authorities who will be given enormous powers under this law. As source protection authorities, the conservation authorities will appoint unelected and unaccountable source protection committees which will write source protection plans. These plans will have the legal authority to override any decisions made by municipal councils, planning boards, even the Ontario Municipal Board. If a municipality’s official plan or zoning bylaws don’t suit the source protection commissars, they will be overruled.”

They further point out, “Once the source protection plan is in effect, the committee will tell residents which activities will be prohibited unless carried out in accordance with the bureaucrats’ weapon of choice.”

I just can’t believe that we live in that type of a society—these heavy-handed, do-as-I-say officers who are going to come in and not work with our rural property owners, our agriculture community. We have nutrient management. One of the things that many farmers have been asking is, “We are already complying with nutrient management so why did we need the confusion, why did we need the duplication?” They’re already doing due diligence.

My colleague from Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant, Mr. Barrett, personally chaired at least 18 days of hearings on the nutrient management regulations. But the Clean Water Act—the minister said there was a lot of consultation from first reading. It certainly didn’t look like it. By the time it got to second reading here in the Legislature, it was a mess, further proven by the fact that over 240 amendments were introduced in clause-by-clause.

So the farmers are already doing due diligence, and they’re going to have some more rules and regulations you’re going to force them to implement that they are going to have to pay for. I mean, they’re farming now. You don’t hear stories of great polluters out there. If there’s a problem, MOE comes in. Maybe there’s something wrong with the Ministry of the Environment,

then. Do they have all the proper tools? I think they do in legislation. Maybe they don’t have the resources.

It’s interesting to note that nutrient management used to be co-administered by the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture, but the McGuinty Liberals made it the exclusive domain of the environment. They did not listen the agriculture community. I remember when that took place—a huge amount of uproar within our agriculture community. They wanted it kept under the Ministry of Agriculture and Food because they understood their industry. They could work with them. They knew how farming practices went. So once again, it’s a broken promise by the McGuinty government. They didn’t make agriculture a priority ministry.

The Ontario Farm Environmental Coalition—OFEC is its short name—did a great job of analyzing the bill and putting recommendations forth. They actually did meet with the minister prior to the introduction of the bill—they admit that—when the minister said she had consultations. But they also said that, as the bill was presented, that was not what they had spoken to the minister about, not the changes they had wanted to see. They took a lot of time and made a lot of good suggestions. I introduced them as amendments. Sad to say, none of them got passed at the committee. But they say, as indicated by Justice O’Connor, there’s an expectation of public funding to support such endeavours as source water protection, and making public funding available to farmers for environmental improvements is good public policy.

1640

On the topic of public infrastructure renewal by Minister Caplan, when he spoke recently at the Rural Ontario Municipal Association conference, he indicated there was a need for \$30 billion to \$40 billion to upgrade municipal water and waste water systems. It’s imperative that the infrastructure renewal relating to wellhead intake protection recognizes the potential off-site impacts associated with the municipal drinking water supply and adequately compensates impacted landowners.

Municipal water supply systems serve the general public, therefore public funding should be available to provide the level of protection appropriate for raw water being destined for municipal use. The government’s own Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal already indicated the need for \$30 billion to \$40 billion to upgrade municipal and waste water systems, so that’s why we say the stewardship fund of \$7 million is a drop in the bucket. There are other studies out there—and I’ll mention them later on—from other groups on the amount it’s going to take.

The Ontario Sewer and Watermain Construction Association does studies to maintain the pipes so that the pipes are clean to deliver the water. That’s essential. They’re saying it’s billions of dollars to update. So when you say source water protection, you’ve got to take into consideration the aging infrastructure that’s out there, the studies that say billions and billions of dollars are needed

to update that system so that the pipes are there to bring clean water to us and so that the waste water is taken away and there are no leaks from them. That's why we say this is a ridiculous amount of money, this \$7 million. It's not even going to touch anything. You have to put it in perspective. I can't explain enough the laughability of just \$7 million. You think you've made stakeholders happy? Come on. You're not even close.

The Ontario Farm Environmental Coalition goes on to ask for other definitions, and a lot of this legislation has been put in regulation, so we're not going to know what it's like. Again, it's the unknown. They make suggestions for the definition of "risk": "Risk = Hazard + Pathway + Exposure." This distinction is critical for the farm community.

It says that they prefer the word "hazard" rather than the term "significant drinking risk." They use the example that "storing 100,000 litres of fuel may be viewed as a significant threat, whereas storing only 10,000 litres of fuel is not. In our view that is not the intent. The intent is to distinguish between a threat that is a managed one and one that is not."

Again, the rural community, the farm community, was not listened to. They're concerned about the definition of "adverse effects" and "significant groundwater recharge."

We talked a lot about the composition of the source protection committees, which are given an enormous amount of responsibility. They want a better understanding of how these committee members are going to be selected and how the committees are composed with regard to representation—agricultural community, municipal. Is it going to be fair? Are we going to have qualified people? Are they going to represent the six sectors that are in the source protection area? We're going to have to wait and find out a lot of things in regulations. Again, legislation by regulation—defer, defer. When are the regulations going to come out? Is there going to be enough time to comment? Are you going to have public hearings on them?

Also absent from the legislation is the clearly defined role of the source protection committee after the source protection plan is submitted. They feel the source protection committee has an important oversight role and should not be abandoned.

The consultations: They were very concerned with many sections of the bill, and I have to tell you that in committee some sections were totally rewritten. The government introduced 100 amendments on its own, so I think that speaks for itself to how flawed the legislation was initially.

Landowners should be notified of the requirements for consultation and submission of concerns. I've been telling you, and I think all of you know, that we all want to work together collectively for source water protection, but you've got to have a communication system so people know when they're going to have inspections. They can work with someone—we don't know who that is going to be and what qualifications they have, but

someone who's going to help them develop a good environmental plan. It's not clear how this is going to be done. Again, what's not in the bill has created a lot of fear and anger in rural Ontario. So impacted landowners have to be given that opportunity for terms of reference in the assessment report, because there could be mistakes and they have to be corrected, and if you don't know, you can't correct the mistakes. So landowners need to be notified.

Interim progress reports—like I said before, the Ministry of the Environment exists there now, so an interim report should not be the basis that people can be charged upon. Until the final source protection plans are brought out, there should be just what's with the Ministry of the Environment now and the implementations and the oversight that they have now. Again, there could have been problems and no one has had enough of an appeal process in place.

There are so many parts of this bill that—the Ontario Farm Environmental Coalition said that if farmers are required to incur additional expenditures just to meet the requirements of the act, they must be eligible for funding. We have a stewardship fund set up now, a little bit of money to start. We know some of the advisory panel members. We don't know what qualifications the members—will everything, will engineering be represented? Should they be represented? We see that Ron Bonnett now has a new position as an advisory member on that panel, so we're hoping that the farm community has good representation on there.

In situations where negotiations between the landowner and the risk management official break down, the Ontario Farm Environmental Coalition says that there should be some form of mediation. The members who represent rural Ontario know the Normal Farm Practices Protection Board works well. It's again people who know the industry, who can talk with the affected landowners. So you can work co-operatively. This process is going to be taken away from them and decisions made by people who may not know the agricultural industry as well.

It goes on that the inspection process—the environmental farm plan that exists on a practice be taken into consideration, but confidentiality has to be maintained. So the process of how that's going to be implemented and worked with is creating a great deal of anxiety in rural Ontario. They recommend that appeals be done at the existing Normal Farm Practices Protection Board, not the Environmental Review Tribunal. Again, it makes a lot of sense.

Subsection 88(6), expropriation without compensation—well, did we hear a lot about that, and rightly so. The Ontario Farm Environmental Coalition recommended removing it entirely. We tried that in committee, in clause-by-clause, and that didn't work. But we put that forward, to remove it entirely, because expropriations, whether named or not, require appropriate compensation. Expropriation can mean 20 acres, 50 acres or 100 acres that the farmer can't use any more, so the land use is gone. His ability to work that land and derive livelihood

from it is gone, and there has to be appropriate compensation.

We've heard time and time again that subsection 88(6) is offensive, lacks due process and lacks accountability, and there's no question that it does that. Why the government would want to bring in that heavy-handed approach I don't understand. The government says, "Don't worry about it. Everything will be fair. We'll take care of it." Why would we believe anything they said? Broken promises trails just continue all the time.

The \$7-million buyout program that was introduced after much flak—I don't think the government really thought there would be that much pressure on the Clean Water Act, even though we tried to tell them before that this is bad, "Change it now, go out even after first reading, after the introduction of the bill, on a tour of rural Ontario and hear for yourself." But this \$7-million buyout, as I said, is a drop in the bucket. It doesn't even get close to what the needs are going to be for the municipalities and the landowners in order to implement this so-called Clean Water Act. Really, I just have to say that it was a public relations exercise.

1650

The numbers we heard from such people as the Ontario Sewer and Watermain Construction Association at the public hearings—allow me to quote from Mr. Frank Zechner's comments:

"To the best of my knowledge, no cost-benefit analysis has been done," which we've been saying. "The cost of doing all these studies"—just the studies—"may ... be \$1 billion over five years, I don't know, or maybe \$200 million. I don't know what the cost is for everyone to comply with the new requirements in Bill 43, but there is a cost there. If the people of the province of Ontario agree we should spend an extra \$1 billion of our scarce resources on source water protection, fine; that's a priority and there's going to be less money available for treatment plants, less money available for inspectors, less money available for the piping systems. I think you have to move with a balanced approach. You have to look at all of these needs, and if you only have \$1 billion available over five years, don't put it all into one. Have it measured out. If there are fewer reports, maybe the cost of complying with Bill 43 could be reduced to \$200 million instead of \$1 billion. I don't know what the dollars are, I haven't seen anything, and certainly I'm concerned about, when you're establishing basically an entirely new bureaucracy, what the cost of that might be."

The minister thinks \$7 million is going to do the job. Let's get in the real world here. Infrastructure needs alone say that it's just a paltry amount.

I'm going to go on with other groups that quoted monies they would need to accomplish source water protection. I know that the Ontario Ground Water Association argues that "there is little to assist with the problem of rural abandoned wells and those still in use that are in need of upgrading"—which all affects source water protection. "The Ontario Ground Water Asso-

ciation continues to advise the Minister of the Environment that the province has vast numbers of abandoned wells that could once again act as direct conduits for contamination to enter Ontario groundwater aquifers. The release creates the illusion"—this is the Ministry of the Environment release from September 19 about the \$7 million—"of funding to protect all drinking water. The \$7-million provision does not cover privately owned wells."

The government has paid no attention to abandoned wells or upgrades to wells that are not up to code with regulation 903 of the Ontario Water Resources Act. You have no idea. You just plucked \$7 million out of the air and said, "That's good. That'll do." We've heard and heard from people that it couldn't even be anywhere near close to what's needed. They're not even looking into abandoned wells: where they are, if they're providing contamination to municipal wellheads. We have no idea. "We'll ignore that sector because we can't deal with that right now." So source water protection just isn't going to include abandoned wells.

What that funding really is—we've seen this type of action many, many times before—is just a smokescreen. It's another attempt by the government to buy off important action until after the next election, to say anything to get elected, that it's okay. You've got some quotes, people saying that it's a good first start, but the government says, "No, no. That's good. Everybody's happy now." But it's not even close to being a good first start. It just puts a smokescreen over this huge download onto Ontario municipalities and rural communities. That's why you brought in this legislation. It isn't because you needed to bring this legislation in. You had the tools to do it under existing legislation but you chose to try and bring Bill 43 in, to kind of sneak in that little unfunded liability to municipalities and landowners—"You guys take care of source water protection"—and you got caught. You got caught in the committee hearings and you got caught as we travelled out across Ontario. But the \$7 million—we're not buying it. It's a smokescreen, and it's not even close to what's going to be needed. But we don't know what's going to be needed, because you guys didn't do your homework before introducing the legislation. It's like putting a toonie aside: "We're going to build that hospital over here later, but we'll start with this toonie in the piggy bank." It's just laughable, as I said.

I mentioned the huge amount of amendments. There were over 240 amendments that were brought in. It was a tough couple of days of clause-by-clause. It's unfortunate. I think there was only one NDP amendment that got passed. None of ours got passed.

The Chair himself, the member from Etobicoke North, made a startling statement at the end of day two when he said: "I would like to thank all members of the committee and staff for their endurance and patience. This, I am told, is the bill that contained the most amendments in this, the first McGuinty mandate, and possibly in the history of parliamentary democracy."

That's a quote at the end of the clause-by-clause from the member from Etobicoke North. I don't think that's something to be proud of, but he thought it was of a great thing. I would say that the legislation was horribly flawed. This proves it was horribly flawed, not something to be proud of, when their own McGuinty government brought in 100 amendments.

Why didn't you listen to the people before? Why didn't you listen to the consultants? Why didn't you go out and talk to more members of the farm community, and if you did, as you say you did, why didn't you listen to them? Why didn't you change the legislation before you brought it in for second reading?

Everybody wants clean water. The way you brought it in, we're not going to get to source water protection. As I said, you didn't even need to bring the legislation in. You could have used the existing tools that are out there in the Ontario Water Resources Act and in the Environmental Protection Act.

Even the Premier himself said it best at the plowing match in Keene: "We put this legislation out the door, and it made its way around rural Ontario through committee, and it became pretty obvious that we didn't get it right." Big surprise there. "We got a whole lot of push-back from farmers saying, 'It would impose undue financial hardship on us,' and we understand that."

We on this side of the House could not agree more. That's what we've been trying to tell you since you introduced Bill 43—the fundamental flaws within the legislation. They shoved it out the door as quickly as possible before any real form of consideration.

Another thing: It's the front-line people that this bill's going to affect. Go talk to them before you bring this in.

There are more amendments to this bill than there is content—a 35-page bill with over 240 amendments. It's amazing how quickly the government can draft a bill on the fly. It was changed immensely. It's still the biggest download onto municipalities and landowners. You still can't get away from that. That's what you are doing, and that's why you had to bring in the legislation. When you say that you consulted before you brought in the bill and then you make over 100 amendments, before then you didn't listen or didn't really do the consultation you should have done. Legislation by amendment is certainly no way to govern the province.

There were no public hearings after the clause-by-clause. When you change the bill that much, you should go back out in public hearings. Let's give people time to digest. Let's give the stakeholders time to digest what was in the bill and get some more feedback from them.

They disregarded every amendment from our caucus, the Progressive Conservative caucus. These amendments were put forward following direct consultation with stakeholders: the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, the Rural Ontario Municipalities Association, the Ontario Cattlemen's Association, the Ontario Environmental Farm Coalition—as I said before, we put forward all their amendments. You voted them all down over

there. That's just to name a few of the amendments that came forward.

From what I can see, consultation has a very different meaning in the McGuinty Liberal caucus. It's telling people how to do things, telling them to do it and pay for it themselves, then going to the public and saying, "Hey, look what we did." You guys are good at making those press releases, making everything sound wonderful, but you don't do the implementation. You don't help the municipalities. You don't help the landowners in this case provide source water protection. It's abdication of your responsibilities.

In the well water sustainability report, which is the expert panel report of January 2006—of which I don't believe anything has been implemented. You guys are good at getting reports, and they sit on the shelf and get dusty. They say in the expert panel report, "Land users need to be assured that any alteration in land use beyond normal due diligence will be compensated as the alterations are done in the interest of the public good."

1700

Even from the Canadian Environmental Law Association, CELA:

"It is essential that there be a sustainable and reliable approach to funding the implementation measures contained in source protection plans, which includes a mechanism for the equitable reallocation of funds.... We would prefer that there be a dedicated fund that is not subject to competing priorities of general revenue in the annual budget-setting exercise.... Other models could include a source protection fund, such as the Manitoba water stewardship fund," which we've heard used many, many times as an example by stakeholders who made presentations. So this government didn't have to reinvent the wheel. We were already pointing out the Manitoba stewardship fund, which is in operation in their legislation, and you could go by that. But I'm sure that even in Manitoba, \$7 million wouldn't go very far.

The Ontario Mining Association made a presentation to the committee. They recommended clarification of the terms "drinking water risk" and "significant drinking water risk."

They said, "This industry has for many years had in place regulation of water use and quality that meets or exceeds worldwide standards. Therefore, the creation of a new regulatory structure—that is, the creation of source protection committees with the power to identify members of our industry as significant drinking water threats, whatever that may come to mean—was not encouraging news.

"I would ask you to put yourself in the shoes of our industry for a minute. After decades of development involving various government agencies, an efficient and impressive standard of water protection is now in place. We are now being told that this will be overlaid with a new and, as designed, overriding authority granted to members of a new committee and new designated provincial authorities. Many of these players will have no experience with our industry, no expertise in water

protection issues and no appreciation of the regulatory structure already in existence. These persons are given extraordinary powers to create uncertainty and delay in our activities by identifying potential significant drinking water threats to source protection, raising issues that will doubtless take years to resolve. We are disappointed that this government does not recognize that for major industry sectors where water regulation is well developed and successful, handing over authority to those new to these issues poses an unnecessary risk and may not succeed."

He addressed three specific matters within the legislation. He was "concerned about the vagueness of the definition of a 'significant drinking water threat,' as well as the lack of timelines inherent in a process that could take years for the resolution of such a designation. Ultimately, such a threat could be found to be not significant or, even if significant, the issues could be dealt with by reduction of the risk.

"While the OMA welcomes public participation under existing structures, it can be anticipated that such a designation could be used as a tool by some to oppose, delay or negotiate changes to existing or proposed mining operations. Again, I would ask you to put yourself in the shoes of our industry, as you pick up your national paper one morning and find that your company or operation has been identified as a significant drinking water threat, knowing that it is in full compliance with all federal and provincial legislation. Further complicating matters is the knowledge that the resolution of whether this designation is appropriate will take years to unfold. You must recognize the chilling effect of the path that you are considering, particularly given that you are putting such a determination largely in the hands of non-experts."

Industry is scared. Businesses are scared of this legislation. You're going to drive them out of Ontario. The CFIB, the OCC—they all made presentations to us about the impacts of this.

Don't Forget About Small Business was the title of the presentation by the CFIB, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, on the Clean Water Act. They make the point that more than 60% of small agribusinesses are not satisfied with the way the government has communicated Bill 43 and almost 20% have never heard of the act. Certainly they didn't want to hear about it when we informed them that they'd better have a look at this and what impact it would have on them.

Where were your communications to tell them? Where were your consultations with them? Is the McGuinty government against small business? Are they ignoring Bill 43's negative impact on small businesses? In its survey it says that small agriculture-based businesses "have little or no confidence in" the ability of "the Ministry of the Environment to regulate source water protection."

I think you guys should have a heads-up on that. If they're saying that to you, they have no faith in the government to protect agribusiness. You better pull up your

socks. You better do a better job. I would be embarrassed if I was a government and I couldn't work with the CFIB on legislation—and such a download to municipalities and landlords, driving business out of Ontario.

In Kawartha Lakes, the Lindsay and District Chamber of Commerce came to appear before us. It's an unfair cost burden for land users. Bill 43 threatens to "put some businesses and farmers at a competitive disadvantage. While one business that has been operating under currently acceptable standards is unaffected by the legislation, another will find itself burdened with additional costs, simply due to its proximity to a water source."

Some existing businesses and agriculture producers are doing due diligence under today's laws. I can't say that there are headlines saying that the businesses aren't up to practice. The Ministry of the Environment is out there. There are already laws. There are already reviews. There are already inspections going on.

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay): Really?

Ms. Scott: They probably need more resources. Yes, I think they need some more help.

I think we should do something about the loss of faith from the general public in the Ministry of the Environment. I think the government should listen to that, because we need to do better. We need to have the Ministry of the Environment to be strong and for people in the communities, like the small agriculture-based businesses, to have more confidence in the Ministry of the Environment. So I think we have to look at that seriously.

Bill 43 threatens to put this additional cost on farmers and landowners when they can least afford it. I was even surprised at how many farmers have left my riding in the last year because they just can't make ends meet;+ they can't stand the regulatory burden. It's sad, and it saddens me. The process isn't moving fast enough. The environment is not conducive. They're moving to other provinces. They're telling their kids who had wanted to get into the family business, "You can't go in it. You're not going to make a living. I can't see what the future of farming is for you."

We have statistics from the Dairy Farmers of Ontario on how much quota has left my riding and several other ridings. It's a crisis in my riding. At the plowing match, you had the opportunity to meet so many farmers in a casual way, and they could talk to you and tell you of their problems. It breaks your heart. I can't see that in Ontario we would want to lose more farmers, we would want to lose more of our rural economic livelihoods. Our people within that community will see rural communities go down, and it's because of bills like Bill 43 that you're bringing in. It's like one more nail in their coffin. You don't want us to succeed in rural Ontario. We can't wait and hope it gets better when the government goes out and we get a government that is more sympathetic and more supportive of rural Ontario, because without a strong rural Ontario, there is not a strong Ontario.

They're not getting that message. The farmers are here all the time. They're not happy. I can't believe that you, the government over there, think that you're co-operating

with the farmers. They are barely hanging on. They're a very proud group of people.

When you bring something like the Clean Water Act down upon them, no wonder you got so many people out at the committee hearings, no wonder you heard a hundred people who came out, no wonder you had more than that in submissions. They are fighting to say, "What are you doing to us? We all want source water protection, but the way you've brought this in, my gosh, you'll never be able to achieve your goal and we'll never be able to stay in business or survive." So it is a huge reality.

I'll go into the costs again. I wanted to try and bring some figures in from my municipality, the city of Kawartha Lakes. Since 2001 alone, the city of Kawartha Lakes has spent in excess of \$25 million for upgrades to the various plants to bring them in line with existing legislation, which is the Safe Drinking Water Act. In many cases, the costs on a per customer basis exceeded \$30,000. I'm trying to bring this in perspective to you of how much it's going to cost in rural Ontario. We all want clean water, but this is the burden that the municipalities are under. Before, they were able to get some OSTAR grants, but there's no way you could ask a household to pay \$30,000 in order to comply with the Safe Drinking Water Act. They have to have assistance. There's just no way they could do that, unless, I guess, they sold up and moved over. But I know the city of Kawartha Lakes has done its best. They had to take over 28 drinking water systems and upgrade them, and it's just an enormous amount of cost. As we've said, we all want to provide clean water, but the burden on rural municipalities is just—it's impossible that they would be able to cope with the costs for doing that.

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I know, Mr. Speaker, I've almost used my hour up, which is a lot. But there's a lot to deal with in terms of implementation of this legislation. Like I said before, municipalities, rural communities, landowners as well as the farming, the agriculture communities, are in a position where they are going to be held accountable for implementation of a provincial responsibility. Again, Bill 43 is a provincial avoidance of responsibilities. My colleague from Durham has stated that the legislation is by regulation. The regulations are what will hold the key to this legislation. The government has done a good job of pushing it off until after the next election probably, but that's where the next big debate is going to be, in the regulations, what they're going to mean. It cuts the general public out of that process.

The Ontario PC caucus put forward a series of amendments that would have better publicized any regulation changes and would have provided the option for public hearings around the significant regulation changes, like what went on with the Nutrient Management Act. That's what I'm trying to put forward, but the Liberals voted against that and the amendments that we brought forward at committee. Bill 43: expropriation without compensation, reverse onus on to the landowner to prove that he is not guilty—a horrible way to do this in our society. I

don't think the Liberal government and, "Don't worry, trust us" is going to work. We'll be voting against this legislation.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr. Tabuns: I appreciate the efforts of the member for Haliburton–Victoria–Brock. I know that this is a complex bill and a complex issue. I disagree with her in part. I don't think that this bill will be disastrous for rural Ontario. But I have this to say: She is entirely right when she talks about the movement of substantial portions of this bill into the regulations. So we, as legislators, are asked to vote on a bill within which very crucial definitions are left undefined. They're a blank cheque. In committee I referred to them as a pig in a poke. We don't know what "significant drinking water threat" is going to be defined as.

I'll talk to that at greater length in my leadoff, but you have to ask, what happened to this government that three years into its mandate, going into its fourth year, four months after first reading, we still don't have a definition for a key element in this legislation? So not only do we in the opposition not know what the vote is about, the government doesn't know what they're voting for. The members on the government benches don't know what this bill will actually mean in practice.

That problem of undefined terms came up time and again in the debate and it came up when we were out hearing from the people, hearing their testimony. They wanted to know what this meant. There was a lot of lack of clarity. People asked, is this a drinking water act or a clean water act?—two very different things. Is it a municipal water protection act or a general water protection act? Well, I can tell them, the broadest scope is a safe drinking water act, not the term that's used to define this bill.

Mr. Ramal: Thank you for giving me a chance to respond to the member from Haliburton–Victoria–Brock. I think she's the critic for the opposition party for that portfolio. I was listening to her carefully, what she was saying, and I agree with the member from Toronto–Danforth. That bill is not that bad for rural Ontario. This bill came to protect the drinking water. We listened to many fine people who came to speak to us and they were okay with it. They brought some concerns to us. We sat; we listened to them. That's why we brought forward 100 amendments, to adjust the bill in such a fashion as to please the people who live in the farming communities. We believe strongly that we're supposed to support the farming community because the farming community supports us, feeds us on a daily basis. That's why our job as people who get elected to this position, is to protect the people of Ontario, especially the farming communities.

She was reasonably good in the committee when we were trying to discuss many different issues, unlike other members from her caucus, because I think she understood the issues and she saw the government coming forward with a lot of adjustments, a lot of regulations, a lot of amendments to please the people or to listen to the

people who came to us from the farming community and asked us for some kind of support. So we came with the funds, \$7 million, as a good start to invest in conservation authorities and \$2 million for scientific studies in order to launch good education material for farmers on how to protect water sources, whether rivers, aquifers or the lakes. Because it's important, not just for the farming community but important for all of us in the province of Ontario to make sure every community—it doesn't matter how small or large—should be protected by our government, by our laws.

Mrs. Christine Elliott (Whitby–Ajax): We all agree that we need to have a safe and reliable supply of clean drinking water, but frankly this legislation misses the mark. This was tacitly recognized even by the minister, who tabled over 100 amendments to this act; in some cases, a wholesale rewriting of pages of the act. Yet, despite all of these amendments, there still has not been a significant way to deal with some of the concerns that have been raised by our farming and agricultural communities. The voices of many members of our communities have been ignored, but this is a particularly important group. The Dairy Farmers of Ontario have expressed concerns at committee hearings, and I'm paraphrasing them, to say that, "Our concern is that" Bill 43 "appears to shift the burden of proof to the agricultural landowner.... The process puts the onus on the agricultural landowner to show ... that the normal ... farm practice will not cause harm. Rather than creating a predictable, uniform and scientifically sound framework for effectively managing legitimate risks," the bill "establishes a regulatory process that could result in overly risk-averse municipal permit officials applying the precautionary principle to place an unfair and unnecessary burden on the landowner."

Farmers in Ontario are already under significant pressure. Bill 43 imposes requirements that they cannot manage on their own. If we, in a society, want a safe and reliable system of clean drinking water, as we all do, then there should be some shared responsibility for this. Farmers should not be left to manage the financial requirements under this bill alone. I know that the response to this is to suggest that the stewardship process and fund will manage this, but to suggest that a multi-million dollar problem can be solved with \$7 million is laughable and, frankly, it's an insult to our hard-working farmers.

Mr. Bisson: I've got to say this issue has been around for a while. It has been a thorn in the side to many people, I think, in rural and northern Ontario, either in the farm community or people who have to operate businesses, trailer parks or whatever it might be, because we all agree with what needs to be done, that we need to make sure that our drinking water is safe. I think we've learned through the tragedies of the past that in fact we need to have tougher water regs.

But one of the basic problems here is that if you're going to demand these higher standards, which I think most of us can agree with, we need to find some way to fund it. It's a little bit unfair to come on to some of the

owners of some of these individual properties and to put them in the position of having to spend a lot of money in order to meet water regs on water that is already safe. There are a number of areas that I represent where people are drawing water from wells. That water is tested, there's nothing wrong with it, but we want to maintain a higher standard. The real challenge the government has is to basically figure out how it's going to do this in a way that's affordable to the taxpayers and the citizens and the people that this bill will affect. I think the goal is fine; the problem is, this bill is not going to get them where they want to go, because at the end of the day you're going to have a lot of people who are going to be out of compliance.

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I want to put on the record again, because it's an opportunity to talk about water, that I'm a big advocate that we should take over all water testing and regulation on reserves. I think it's a terrible record we have with our federal government, where community after community—about 80% of them—is not able to drink water out of the tap of their communal systems, and about 60% of all water systems on First Nations in Ontario are under a boil-water advisory. If people think that Kashechewan was just one example of how bad the water situation is on reserves, I'd invite people to come to a whole bunch of other communities across the north, like Marten Falls, to find out the exact same thing is happening. The quicker we bring that responsibility to the province, I think the faster we're going to be able to find a solution.

The Deputy Speaker: Member for Haliburton–Victoria–Brock, you have two minutes to respond.

Ms. Scott: I appreciate the comments from the members for Toronto–Danforth, London–Fanshawe, Whitby–Ajax and Timmins–James Bay.

You're right. The issue of source water protection has been around for a while and we all need, as legislators, to get it right. We had the tools. The government had existing tools to do source water protection planning, to work with municipalities. Justice O'Connor said you have the tools in the Environmental Protection Act and in the Ontario Water Resources Act. That would have been a better first step: Use the existing tools, define where the high risks were, work in a more conciliatory approach, use the carrot not the stick. We heard it time and time again from people and stakeholders that presented: "We all want clean water."

This bill is all about avoiding provincial responsibility for clean water, downloading onto municipalities and landowners without sufficient funds. This \$7 million is a joke and we've heard all day why it's a joke. It's a joke. You didn't do it the right way. You've created a lot of anger and confrontation in rural Ontario. You proposed 100 amendments yourself. It was flawed legislation from the start. Does it fix it all? It's not even anywhere close. Is it better? Well, I guess a little bit better. But it's not going to achieve source water protection, which we all want. It's another example of the government saying, "Put it in regulations. We'll deal with it later, maybe

sometime, we don't know when. Trust us. We'll handle it."

Why would they trust the present Liberal government, with their litany of broken promises? I can tell you, my riding does not feel comfortable with the changes in Bill 43, deferring to regulations. They wanted more in legislation and that's why this legislation is wrong.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Mr. Tabuns: The issue that we're dealing with here today is quite significant: significant in terms of human cost; significant in terms of financial risk, both to communities and individuals.

We're debating this bill today because in May 2000 the drinking water system in Walkerton, Ontario, was contaminated and that contamination led to death; it led to long-term debilitating illness; it led to illness that was transitory but substantial for a few thousand people; and it led to costs in the millions of dollars for the people of Walkerton and the surrounding community.

It was clear in the hearings that we held in Walkerton that people are still suffering from the after-effects of those events. I reread this weekend the summary of Justice O'Connor's history of the events and I just want to read it here, because I think people have to have in their minds while they're debating this issue precisely what's at stake. Justice O'Connor writes:

"The first indications of widespread illness began to emerge on Thursday, May 18, 2000. Twenty children were absent from Mother Teresa School, and two children were admitted to the Owen Sound hospital with bloody diarrhea. On Friday, May 19, there was an enteric outbreak among residents of a retirement home. People began to contact the Walkerton hospital, other nearby hospitals, and local physicians to complain of symptoms of enteric illness, including bloody diarrhea, stomach pain, and nausea. Most students stayed home from school.

"Over the next several days, illness spread quickly in the community. The Walkerton hospital was inundated with telephone calls and with patients visiting the emergency department. Patients were air-lifted from Walkerton to London for emergency treatment. The first person died on Monday, May 22.

"The story of the outbreak involves much more than a description of the clinical symptoms of the illnesses, the medical treatment, and the numbers of people who became ill and died. Most important are the stories of the suffering endured by those who were infected; the anxiety of their families, friends, and neighbours; the losses experienced by those whose loved ones died; and the uncertainty and worry about why this happened and what the future would bring."

Think about your own home. Think about your own community. Think about your family and the schools in your neighbourhood. Think about the nursing homes in your community and the impact that this sort of event would have on you. Think about the worry, people wondering, asking, "Why is this happening? What's going on? Why is everyone sick?" The human burden of

this calamity was profound, and the human impact of this calamity was huge.

But it went beyond that. It went to affect the economic status, the economic well-being of these people. In fact, a study was done during the course of the Walkerton inquiry to look at the costs, because we've been talking about costs today, and we'll be talking about costs for a while when we debate this issue. I'll read the concluding remarks:

"The terms of reference for this study were to estimate the tangible costs of the Walkerton crisis." There are more than tangible costs, but let's just look at the tangible costs: "I present a conservative estimate of these costs of approximately \$64.5 million. The actual tangible costs could well turn out to be higher, since I attempt to be conservative whenever it is necessary to make assumptions.

"The conclusion to be drawn from this study is that approximately \$64.5 million in tangible costs are at risk from any future water contamination incident of a magnitude similar to Walkerton's. Knowing the probability of such an event would help us to predict the likelihood of incurring such a cost."

When we talk about the cost of protecting the public, when we think about what it will take to actually put in place these systems, we have to recognize that failure to act—failure to act thoroughly, failure to act in a way that's well thought out and has the substantial impact that we want—means human costs, including death, that failure means substantial remediation costs and substantial direct economic costs.

These sorts of incidents are ones that all societies sanely, logically seek to avoid. The incident, the calamity, made us realize that in this province, all was not well with environmental protection, with public health, with the state of our water. It opened for us and for this government the question of the value of clean, uncontaminated water in Ontario. It's a fundamental need of any human society, of any human economy, to have clean, uncontaminated water, and that's what's before us today. How do we deal with this basic issue in this society?

Justice O'Connor was mandated to examine the Walkerton calamity, catastrophe, and to make recommendations on action needed to prevent its recurrence. His report, in turn, was examined by an expert panel. That expert panel was a bit shorter in its text than Justice O'Connor, but it touched on some vital points that I feel have not been addressed properly in the legislation before us.

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The implementation committee's report calls on the province to ensure that sufficient authority and sufficient financial ability exists for the relevant jurisdictions to implement their responsibilities. Now, that was something that came up time and again when we heard testimony in Cornwall, in Walkerton, in Peterborough, in Bath. That question of, "How will we pay for this?" came up time and again, and I don't think it's been adequately addressed in this act.

The implementation committee recommended that the province proceed with the introduction of volume-based water-taking charges to fund a portion of source protection implementation—an opportunity not dealt with, not grabbed, not taken advantage of in this act.

Now it also noted that the McGuinty government in December 2003 had declared its intent to apply water-taking charges. I would say 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006—it's had time to actually draft the legislation. It's had time to actually put that requirement in this legislation so we don't find ourselves fighting about who pays for what, so we find that we have a source of revenue that's related to those who benefit from the investment we will make in this province to keep our water clean and safe.

The implementation committee called for full participation of First Nations. They felt it was crucial to ensure that sources of drinking water in the province were protected. All of these elements—the catastrophe itself, the inquiry by Justice O'Connor and the implementation report—brought us here today for consideration of this legislation. Profound human tragedy, calamity, puts this on this floor today: What are we going to do about it? What are we going to do to make sure that we don't face this again?

When this bill was introduced in April, all the parties present in the chamber today spoke to this bill, and I want to go back to some of the comments I made at that time because at the time I expressed concern that the bill didn't really come to grips with the scope of the problem before us. I tried to make it very clear to the government what I felt was crucial, and I heard back from the parliamentary assistant that the government was listening, was concerned and would be addressing the concerns of all parties in the bill when it finally came back.

I said the bill lacked clear definitions for key terms. The bill didn't provide long-term funding to ensure proper administration and renewal of source water protection over time. That was a key issue. I expressed concern that the bill lacked time frames for implementation. We're looking at—what?—something like five years before this bill would be fully implemented. That's a long time: half a decade, well beyond the life of this government. Who knows what will happen in the elections in 2007? We could have two governments before the implementation of this bill fully plays out. Five years is much too long to wait for this bill to be in effect.

I expressed concern that Dalton McGuinty's commitment to water-taking fees—a promise he'd made in the 2003 election—was not addressed in the bill. I saw a further oversight—a major oversight—and that was the lack of the incorporation of the precautionary principle into this act, and I will address that at greater length. But those were a number of the most significant concerns that I expressed at the beginning of this process in this House. I've had a chance now to explore those issues in committee and in public hearings in a number of towns and cities in this province.

Before I go to my concerns, I want to first thank the citizens of this province who came and spoke before the

committee. Democracies thrive. Democracies must have the oxygen of public participation. People came out, they spoke, they were eloquent, they were passionate—they had prepared well. I can't say I agreed with everything every person said—I didn't—but I was extraordinarily pleased and happy to see that people took advantage of those hearings and that opportunity.

I want to thank my colleagues, and then I'll get on to the less friendly stuff. I want to thank my colleagues who came along on those hearings. I thought people listened well, participated well and showed respect for the citizens.

I want to thank the civil servants, the staff who came, put up with us and made sure that everything functioned smoothly. They were great; they deserve a lot of credit.

Having said all of that: There were a lot of amendments that were made to this bill, that we considered over two days on clause-by-clause, and I was very concerned that the overwhelming bulk of amendments by myself—by the NDP—and by the Progressive Conservatives were simply rejected. I disagreed with a lot of the Progressive Conservative amendments, but there were a number that I thought were pretty solid and should have been accepted but were rejected. There were a lot that I put forward, as I had said, at second reading that bore on the substance and the quality of this bill and its ability to actually deliver the goods, and I'm quite concerned that they were not dealt with.

Now let me start into some of those major issues.

The first is the incorporation of the precautionary principle into the act itself, an act that the minister, earlier today, said was inherently precautionary. I moved two motions in this regard. The first was to define the precautionary principle, and in defining it I used what I think is a pretty good source: I used the definition that was used by the Supreme Court of Canada. I'll take their wording—we just inserted the drinking water section: “The principle that, where there is a threat of serious or irreversible damage to an existing or future source of drinking water, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent the threat.” That's a definition that the Supreme Court found workable, useful and acceptable in a recent ruling.

Then I moved that the minister, the government, the bodies subject to provisions of this act, would be shaped in their decision-making, given a direction in their decision-making, by that principle of taking precaution to heart when making a decision.

Let's simplify the language, because there are people who find the term “precautionary principle” a bit too fancy. There's a very simple English phrase: “To err on the side of caution.” All of us, at one time or another in our lives, have opened our refrigerators. Here and there we've found things that my partner refers to as “science experiments.” I think it's a fair comment on her part on some of the things that are found there. But there are things that are on the borderline—chicken that's not quite right. So you always have a choice: Are you going to take a precautionary approach and put it in the compost,

or are you going to do an experiment with yourself to see if it's really bad? I don't recommend doing the experiment—that is, eating the chicken to see if it's really gone bad—because it's highly unpleasant.

Mr. Leal: You don't put chicken in the compost, do you?

Mr. Tabuns: Sure. In any event, most people take a precautionary approach to food that smells a bit off. They don't eat it. It's a fair, logical, sane approach.

Over 20 years ago, I was a property manager in a housing co-op in Toronto. It was relatively recently built. Actually, it was quite newly built. We'd just moved people in, and I had the variety of construction problems that you have to deal with after new construction.

One of those problems was that people were telling me they were having electrical difficulties, so I sent my maintenance worker out. She came back and said, "You know, some of that wiring in those circuit breaker panels doesn't look good. We've got three or four of them in different parts of the complex. That's a worry."

I called the architect who designed the building—a good guy, Bob Mutrie, if you ever a chance to meet him. He's quite a competent architect; done a lot of work in this city, good work. He knew a thing or two; he'd been around. I described the problem to him and he said, "You know, Peter, you really should bring in an electrician and just check a lot of those circuit breaker panels, because if you've got a problem there, you might have a fire." This was a 150-unit housing complex. That's pretty costly, fairly disruptive, and I said that to him. "Do we have to check the lot?" He said something that stuck with me to this day: "There are two things: One, you know, it's always better to err on the side of caution when you're dealing with electrical fire; and if you don't want to do it, think now what you're going to say at the inquest after the fire."

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So the next day I had the electrician go through the whole complex and, in fact, over a week or two we found that there was dangerous wiring in a large number of the units. The electrician, I'm sure, must have saved like five bucks on each circuit breaker panel by messing around the way he messed around, but he'd set it up so that we'd get sparking and fires, no question about it. I erred on the side of caution; I applied the precautionary principle.

Justice O'Connor, in his commentary, notes that there were residents of Walkerton who applied the precautionary principle themselves. They hadn't received a boil-water order but people were getting sick or had sickness in their family and decided to stop drinking the tap water because something was wrong and started drinking bottled water. They used precaution. They didn't think that the cost of bottled water was that high compared to the cost of getting sick. A precautionary approach was used on a practical basis by everyday folks trying to keep themselves healthy.

Justice O'Connor had some comments directly on the precautionary principle. He said: "One way to overcome the difficulties of purely rationalist risk management is to

err systematically on the side of safety." I like this guy. "A refinement of this approach is the precautionary principle, a guide to environmental action that has now been recognized in international law and cited with approval in a Supreme Court of Canada decision. This principle, which has been formulated in many ways, says that the absence of scientific certainty about a risk should not bar the taking of precautionary measures in the face of possible irreversible harm."

He goes on: "Recommendation 19: Standards setting should be based on a precautionary approach, particularly with respect to contaminants whose effects on human health are unknown."

In his additional comments, he talks about effectiveness; a principle for guiding decision-makers is the first principle of effectiveness.

"The second principle, a precautionary approach, flows from my view that decisions should be made with a view to the significant health risks that can result from improperly treated drinking water."

We've got, I would say, practical experience that people have in their everyday lives. We have Justice O'Connor, who had a chance to actually look at this event, a justice who had a sense, very directly from testimony of those affected, of what happened to their lives and their town when their water was not protected.

There are others who have had to face this problem. In 1997, the final report of the commission on the tainted blood scandal was released. A commission was conducted by Justice Krever, who commented on the management of the Canadian blood supply and the steps needed to avoid such a public health disaster in the future. He was interesting in his comments. I want to read a few of them to you, because I think they bear directly on whether or not public policy with regard to protecting the health of the population and keeping people from dying should have a precautionary approach written into it. He writes on assessment of risk, page 294:

"The Red Cross did not carry out risk-reduction measures assiduously. It did not appropriately weigh the competing concerns. Rather, it consistently used the absence of 'definitive proof'—ah, sound science—"of a line between AIDS and blood transfusion as a justification for maintaining the status quo. Its employees or officials repeatedly expressed the view that the threat from AIDS to the blood supply was not sufficient to require a significant change in its donor-screening measures."

He writes further, "The Red Cross should not have required conclusive evidence before taking strong action to reduce the risk of AIDS. It was given sound advice by its honorary counsel, Michael Worsoff, as early as 29 March 1983"—and he writes:

"The evidence of possible unacceptability of the blood does not have to be conclusive—the decision can be made on the basis of "reasonable doubt" as to its suitability. With reference to the AIDS problem in particular, the premise is not that Canadian Red Cross has to justify beyond any scientific doubt that there is a link between

the designated "high risk groups" and the development of AIDS since, if there is even a possibility of transmission via blood, Canadian Red Cross has the moral and legal obligation to protect the blood recipient above all." He goes on in that vein.

The establishment of the precautionary principle is the cornerstone of public health protection throughout the world where its effective precautionary approach is incorporated into it. This act is not only an environmental act; it is an act with regard to protecting the public health of people in this province.

In the course of going through committee hearings, in the course of talking with my colleagues, in the course of listening to those who have provided testimony, I've heard a comment regularly that all decision-making should be based on sound science, and I have to say that sound science makes a lot of sense to me. I think that these decisions should be made based on sound science.

But after a while, I began to understand that sound science didn't mean necessarily an assessment of evidence, the use of scientific principles that are used in other public health jurisdictions. Sound science, I think, is often used to say, "Unless there's a body, unless we know there's going to be a body, unless you've got conclusive proof that somebody's going to die, don't do it." In that instance, the term "sound science" is not used to advance the protection of people in this province; it's used to block the protection of people in this province. It's a smokescreen.

In 2001, Ken Ogilvie, head of Pollution Probe, authored a paper on the Application of the Precautionary Principle to Standard Setting. He noted that Health Canada had recognized the duty "to act in the face of scientific uncertainty and the potential for serious or irreversible harm." Frankly, I think drinking contaminated water that will kill or maim people is substantial and irreversible harm.

So Health Canada has published a decision-making framework for identifying, assessing and managing health risks. That's August 1, 2000, so it's not that recent. The headline in one section of their framework is "Use a precautionary approach.

"A key feature of managing health risks is that decisions are often made in the presence of considerable scientific uncertainty. A precautionary approach to decision-making emphasizes the need to take timely and appropriate preventative action, even in the absence of a full scientific demonstration of cause and effect."

They note that, "This general concept has been expressed in a variety of contexts, especially in the area of environmental protection. The most widely quoted is principle 15 of the Declaration of the Rio Conference on Environment and Development (1992). In the Canadian context, the Canadian Environmental Protection Act (1999) provides that 'the government of Canada is committed to implementing the precautionary principle that, where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation.'"

Erring on the side of caution, on the side of safety, is simply common sense. Incorporation of the precautionary principle into an act that's meant to protect our drinking water, our lives, our health, is scientifically sound and it should have been part of this bill. It is a major error, mistake, misstep on the part of this government to set aside the growing body of knowledge that sets a standard for adequate protection of large populations, even small populations.

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I want to note who called for incorporation of the precautionary principle into this act, because we're not talking about fringe elements. The Association of Supervisors of Public Health Inspectors of Ontario: pretty straightforward, businesslike people who deal with keeping people alive and free from disease; Concerned Walkerton Citizens: They saw up close, really close, what it means when you mess up on this file. They called for application, incorporation into this act of the precautionary principle; the municipality of Brockton, which includes Walkerton; Clean Air Bath; Friends of the Tay Watershed; Canadian Environmental Law Association; Friends of the Earth Canada; Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy; Friends of the Rouge Watershed; Friends of Rural Communities and the Environment; Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations.

So we had environmental groups, people who have been directly affected by the Walkerton calamity, cottagers, people who can picture the contamination of the water in their area.

People who spoke against incorporation of the precautionary principle were primarily farm groups. I want to digress for a moment and talk about the farm community, the agricultural community, and what they had to say to us, because some of the most powerful testimony that we had came from farmers. Many spoke very strongly against the application of the precautionary principle. As I listened to them, their concern was that there would be capricious application of the law against their interests by governments using this principle. These are people facing extraordinary difficulties—farmers. Farmers in eastern Ontario who came to speak to us talked about declining farm incomes, talked about falling crop prices, talked about depopulation. As an area depopulates, the value of real estate that people are sitting on that they hope to sell for retirement declines. These are people under tremendous stress. They feel threatened; they feel, and appear to be, under siege.

We have to address that larger question of rural survival, of survival of an agricultural community in this province. My leader, Howard Hampton, earlier today asked questions about the piecemeal approach to protecting rural areas. Continuing that piecemeal approach, continuing an approach that does not solve their fundamental problem, means that when they are confronted with what they see as just one other cost, one other backhanded approach by government, they will reject that, even if it is in their best interest to protect the quality of water that their families depend on, that their

livestock depends on, that their crops depend on. That whole issue is beyond the scope of today's debate, but that whole issue is bubbling out there. It's a very real issue, and we in this Legislature are going to have to address it, because if we don't address it, we will not be able to address many other issues that are crucial to those people and to city people.

It does come to one issue, though, and that's the question of incentives and assistance to farmers for changes they may have to make to protect our common heritage of water. It's not clear to me the extent to which they will have to make changes, and I think that's part of the difficulty they have. They don't know the scope of changes they'll have to face. I'm very concerned that although some funds have been assigned to deal with assistance and incentives, there is not a commitment to ongoing funding, and because we haven't dealt with or addressed the issue—"we"—frankly, because the McGuinty government has not addressed the issue of water-taking fees to provide an ongoing source of income, we are going to have these costs dumped on municipalities, on rural areas, ultimately on farmers, or nothing will be done—one or the other. That issue has to be addressed.

The question of the impact of this bill on rural communities, something raised very strongly by the official opposition: I think they overstate the negative impact. I felt that in the hearings; I feel it now. My worry actually is that this bill will leave farmers and other people in rural Ontario unprotected—not that it will disown them financially, but it will not give them the protection they need. I don't think we will be seeing seizures and catastrophic costs, as some have predicted. I just can't see that happening either in theory, based on the bill before us, or frankly in practice.

This bill has been substantially weakened since it was first introduced in the House. The official opposition is quite correct when they say that it was heavily rewritten at clause-by-clause stage: You bet it was, and I don't think that rewrite was to the advantage of rural Ontario; I don't think it was to the advantage of small-town Ontario. But I agree, there was an awful lot of shuffling going on in that particular instance.

The question of definitions came up with the official opposition. I raised it when we were at second reading. We have very substantial definitions left to regulation. Let's look at this again. In April of this year, as I said earlier, I raised this question of "significant drinking

water threat." What's the definition going to be? April, May, June, July, August, September: You know, time passes. There are some bright people in this building; there are some bright people in this province. They could have been assigned the task of writing a definition for "significant drinking water threat" so that all of us here would know what we would be voting on.

Interjection.

Mr. Tabuns: I see some curiosity on the part of a member opposite who says, "So where are these bright people?" There are a lot of them.

Mr. Dave Levac (Brant): Some here?

Mr. Tabuns: No, I didn't say they were in the Legislature, Mr. Levac. There are people. In any event, we have been given a bill where a keystone definition is left without any words that we can read to see whether or not it actually is of consequence.

So what does it mean? How does it apply? When do you have a significant water threat? Ontario Power Generation is going forward with a hearing for a deep underground dump, a DUD, for low and intermediate radioactive waste, close to the shores of Lake Huron. If a deep dump holding radioactive waste, low and intermediate, that will be radioactive for tens of thousands of years is not a significant water threat, I don't know what is. But I don't know if, under this act, it will be so recognized, so designated.

What's a significant water threat? If we have a hog barn sewage lagoon beside a creek that flows into a town where water is drawn for drinking water, is that a significant threat? We don't know. Or is a manure pile on rock that's fractured near a municipal well? I don't know; we don't know; no one in this House knows. If someone on the government benches does know, they aren't releasing that information so that we can make a decision. This lack of definition is substantially problematic for the government and for ourselves.

You've been very subtle and discreet, Mr. Speaker, in your signals. I understand we're coming up to the end of my speaking time. I gather I will have some time on another day to complete my comments on this bill?

Interjection: All of it.

Mr. Tabuns: All of it. I look forward to continuing.

The Deputy Speaker: It being 6 of the clock, this House is adjourned until 6:45 of the clock.

The House adjourned at 1800.

Evening sitting reported in volume B.

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