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(Hansard)**

Tuesday 3 April 2007

Mardi 3 avril 2007

Speaker
Honourable Michael A. Brown

Président
L'honorable Michael A. Brown

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 3 April 2007

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 3 avril 2007

The House met at 1845.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT, 2007
LOI DE 2007 SUR LES ESPÈCES EN VOIE
DE DISPARITION

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 28, 2007, on the motion for second reading of Bill 184, An Act to protect species at risk and to make related changes to other Acts / Projet de loi 184, Loi visant à protéger les espèces en péril et à apporter des modifications connexes à d'autres lois.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Phil McNeely (Ottawa–Orléans): I'll be sharing my time with the member for Huron–Bruce.

I'm very pleased to speak tonight to Bill 184, An Act to protect species at risk and to make related changes to other acts.

Our government has passed many regulations, many pieces of legislation to make Ontario stronger. We're now among North America's leaders on yet another issue, that of endangered species. Some of the environmental issues we've addressed in the past are implementation of the Walkerton recommendations, source water protection and the Canada-Ontario agreement with respect to the Great Lakes basin and ecosystem. The greenbelt legislation here in Toronto, of course, was a major piece of environmental legislation. We've taken steps to double the installed capacity of renewable energy generation. We've made investments in the development of brownfields, clearing up those environmental problems.

This legislation tonight, the species-at-risk legislation, is very important to Ontarians. Ontario is home to more than 30,000 species, all of which are important to the biological, social and economic vitality of our province. Currently, however, 175 species are identified as being at risk and may disappear from our province altogether. Some of these species include the Atlantic salmon, the peregrine falcon and the flower called bird's-foot violet. Even some of the wildlife I encountered as a boy growing up on a farm along the Ottawa River in Cumberland is now endangered. The butternut was a tree we were very familiar with as kids on our farm in Cumberland. I don't know how the barn owl got named, because I don't

think the habitat was there before the barn owl came along. In any case, I remember the barn owls that we had on our farm. Our grandchildren may never see a butternut tree or hear a barn owl. Some species have already been lost to our province; for example, the passenger pigeon is now extinct.

This government is committed to protecting our provincial wildlife before it disappears. We made the following promise to all Ontarians before we were elected in 2003. At that time, Premier McGuinty said, "We will update and strengthen Ontario's Endangered Species Act. Our new act will put in place effective measures to protect species at risk, including a science-based process to list species and help them recover, and meaningful protection for their habitats. Protection of species is virtually meaningless unless there are also protections for the areas where they live, feed and breed." That's what we promised Ontarians, and that's what we're doing.

1850

It is my pleasure to speak today to Bill 184, our government's proposed Endangered Species Act. This important legislation will overhaul the previous outdated act from 1971 and will institute several significant changes.

The first of those changes is that this bill will use a science-based process to identify and list species at risk. No longer will the welfare of Ontario's endangered wildlife be at the whim of political leaders. Second, this bill will require automatic protection of not just the species identified as endangered but also their habitats. We understand that meaningful habitat protection must also be part of recovering endangered species. Third, this legislation includes stronger enforcement provisions and commitment to species recovery. What's more, this bill will also introduce greater transparency and accountability by requiring public reporting.

Overall, this legislation is part of a three-pronged approach by our government toward the protection and recovery of species at risk. The other two components include better programs and policies to implement this legislation and ensure it is effective, and enhanced stewardship programs. This legislation also addresses voluntary stewardship, because the habitat for many species at risk is found, of course, on private lands. That's why this legislation will provide support incentives to groups and individuals who voluntarily participate in stewardship activities to protect essential habitat and green space. This bill also complements our launching of Ontario's biodiversity strategy and the

actions we're taking to protect 1.8 million acres of green space in the greenbelt, which will provide a safe habitat for 66 of the species at risk.

This bill was developed after extensive consultation with the public and various industries. We heard from aboriginal groups, landowners, environmentalists, rural communities, municipalities, resource industry sectors and many others. We heard their concerns and incorporated their suggestions. This bill recognizes aboriginal treaty rights, and our government is committed to ongoing dialogue with aboriginal communities.

This legislation also incorporates a balance between protection measures and flexibility to accommodate other land use considerations. It recognizes that such flexibility with industrial and business partners can sometimes help achieve the desired outcome of protection and recovery, and better habitat. That flexibility will also help our government to better meet the specific needs of particular species and tailor protection and recovery efforts to individual species and their habitats.

This legislation has already been hailed as an important step forward for Ontario's wildlife. For example, Rob Wright, counsel for the Sierra Club, says, "If passed in its current form—and Ontario deserves no less—this will be the best endangered species law in the country." Aaron Freeman, policy director for Environmental Defence, says, "This is a win-win piece of legislation for the people of Ontario and its wildlife." Here is the first line of a press release from the Save Ontario's Species campaign: "With opposition parties now calling for even more delay, Ontario's leading environmental groups today are underlining the necessity for quick action."

I mention this last quote to highlight why we are replacing the old, politically based process for identifying endangered species with an independent, scientific review committee. It is imperative that political agendas do not interfere with protecting Ontario's environment. It is also important to note that quote because it also brings to mind the impact that human complacency has had on Ontario's wildlife. Actions such as building roads, drainage systems and land development are accelerating habitat change and adding to the stress that is placed on many of Ontario's species. In addition, we all know that humans are in large part responsible for climate change and environmental phenomena, which have a tremendous impact on our wildlife.

Recent news reports have said that a one-degree rise in global temperatures, which is expected by 2020, could cause some amphibians to become extinct and also expose millions of people to water shortages and disease. By 2050, scientists are predicting a two-degree rise in global temperatures, which they say will cause 20% to 30% of the world's species to become extinct. Millions of people may also die from disease, malnutrition, heat waves and floods. Climate change may one day put us all on the endangered species list.

These are all reasons why it is so important to pass this legislation. This bill acknowledges the role that humans play in putting species at risk and enables us to

effectively undertake the necessary measures to prevent further loss to our wildlife. I'm confident that this bill will help save many of Ontario's endangered species while working effectively with our public and private partners to find solutions amenable to everyone.

I'd just like to read from a book, *Rescuing a Planet under Stress and a Civilization in Trouble*, by Lester B. Brown: Just looking at what it takes to put the earth back to where it should be and get rid of all the degradation we've seen, reforestation would cost \$6 billion a year, protecting topsoil on cropland would cost \$24 billion a year, restoring rangelands would cost \$9 billion, stabilizing water tables—a very huge problem; so much of our food is dependent on irrigation water—would cost \$10 billion. Restoring the fisheries—I'd like to read what Margaret Wenthe wrote in the *Globe and Mail* today: "We Are Fishing Our Oceans to Death." I'd just like to note a couple of things from there. Just restoring the fisheries would cost \$13 billion on an annual basis. Protecting biological diversity, something this province is very much involved in, would cost \$31 billion a year.

In total, to put the earth back into the shape, to restore our systems, would cost \$93 billion a year—a huge sum. But we can go a little further and look at what we're spending on military budgets. It would take \$93 billion to restore the earth to where it should be on an annual basis. Military budgets: the United States, \$492 billion a year; Russia, \$65 billion; China, \$56 billion; the United Kingdom, \$49 billion—10 countries and almost \$1 trillion a year. So for 10% to 15% of our arms budget—maybe 10% of our arms budget—this planet earth could be put back in the shape it should be.

I'd just like to finish by reading this article by Margaret Wenthe. It basically says we're fishing all the large fish, the predators, out of the ocean, and there are other fish that are taking over.

Interjection: The sharks?

Mr. McNeely: The sharks are gone. I'd like to get the figure for how many sharks on an annual basis, and it's just for fin soup; the rest of the shark is dumped overboard. That's a great article that Margaret Wenthe has in here today, if you want to read it. It really tells us what we've done. It also refers to what we did with cod fishing in the east. We are not very good at looking after our planet earth, and for a small part of our defence budget we could put this planet back in shape.

This is a step forward in Ontario. It's a very important piece of legislation. I hope that it proceeds very quickly. I commend Minister Ramsay for coming out with this very good legislation. It takes Ontario to the forefront of species protection in Canada.

Mrs. Carol Mitchell (Huron-Bruce): Certainly, I want to tell the House that I rise in support of Bill 184. One of the things I want to speak about tonight is, how much has our world changed since 1971? How much time have we lost in protecting—it started in 1971 and should have continued. We've lost three decades.

How many species have we lost in that time? Just to bring this more specifically to the riding of Huron-Bruce,

10 species from my riding are now endangered; to name a few, the spotted turtle, wood turtle, fox snake, queen snake, black tern, cerulean warbler and pitcher's thistle.

We can decide that today we're going forward and bringing a practical application through consultation and working with our many stakeholders. What this bill represents is that process. There has been extensive consultation with our stakeholders, and some of the concerns that were brought forward were the costs. The bill came forward with \$18 million over four years for a stewardship program.

To take it even further, one of the things that I really want to talk about tonight is some work that has happened in my riding without those dollars being there. But that has not stopped our agricultural community from once again leading the way and taking on the stewardship programs.

1900

More specifically, I'm going to talk about my absolute favourite constituent from the riding of Huron-Bruce, my father. One of the things that he has done for the last 50 years is to take his farm and not only make it into a place with walking trails and all of the native species, he's been able to bring them all back. He has also included how to enhance wildlife as well as our waterfowl, as there is a large water area there. Over the years, I have reflected on the work that he has done.

The member from across the way seems to be smiling at this. It's quite interesting that one would have such little respect for a man's work. You may not agree with the work that people have done, but you should respect the work that they've done, in my mind.

Interjection.

Mrs. Mitchell: I didn't say anything.

Interjection.

Mrs. Mitchell: That's right.

I just want to add that one of the things he has given his life for is to make a difference in what we can provide. This bill speaks specifically to giving the flexibility and the enforcement to ensure that there won't be more endangered species going forward, and it talks about understanding that the habitat is part of what we need to protect our species. That is what his life's work has been: protecting the habitat, increasing the habitat, and doing it in a manner that is, I would argue, very much community-oriented and respectful of the industry that's going on in our community.

I know that for the party across the way, whenever we bring forward legislation like this, it's very difficult to support such legislation. I just want to say to the members across the way that as with the Clean Water Act—and I'm confident that the species-at-risk legislation will be supported in the same manner—I've had many debates over the very same issues. There has to be a day when one says, "Today's the day that we're going to make a difference and that we're going to ensure that the future is there for our children," and I believe that what we have and what we have taken for granted—we must ensure that it does have a future. And seeking a

scientific approach and looking at our habitats and coming forward with a stewardship program will go a long way to alleviating the concerns.

One of the other things I want to share with members of the House today: I had the opportunity to speak to a class of grade 11 and 12 students at Kincardine secondary school, and what they chose to talk about—much of the work we've done through legislation, I would say—was what they wanted to see with sustainable development. One of the things the young people talked about with sustainable development was taking into account species at risk, and they talked about stewardship—the stewardship of the land and the stewardship of development. This is a course that the students had developed themselves. What they wanted to see us coming forward with is ensuring that the development we approve is sustainable in the long run. If one does not take into consideration all of the factors such as the water courses and habitat for species and where development would be appropriate and the type of industry allowed—this is what the young students from the Kincardine area were talking about.

One of the other discussions they had that day followed along the agricultural aspect of it and what we can do to make sure that agriculture is also sustainable. I believe that this proposed legislation balances strong protection measures, but also gives a flexibility to encourage greater and more effective stewardship and recovery efforts. We know that over the years the only changes that are supportable are done through stewardship. We've seen that time and time again when we've looked at our watercourses and even our recyclables. We know that the greatest change comes from stewardship because it's a change that the people of Ontario are not only ready to accept, it's a change of their lifestyle, of their habits or of their patterns that happens as well. So that is the change that is the most sustainable and long-lasting and will provide the greatest, I believe, benefit to our species.

Unfortunately I don't have much more time. I have more conservation and stewardship programs that I'd like to talk about, and I know there will be some opposing views. But I would ask the members from across the way that, as one talks about it, one take into consideration what our young people are telling us today. I know sometimes that's not a factor but it needs to be a factor. The discussion, quite frankly, is something they want us to begin, so I encourage you to support this bill.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka): It's my pleasure to add some comments to the speech from the member from Ottawa-Orléans and the member from Huron-Bruce on the Endangered Species Act, 2007, Bill 184. The member from Ottawa-Orléans talked about keeping an election promise. Well, he seemed to be waiting to the last minute to make an attempt at keeping this election promise. I would say that every day I seem to be receiving another e-mail or another press release from another organization concerned about this bill and

concerned about having their say on it. So I say to the government that what they're asking for is public consultations, but that doesn't mean delay. Public consultations should help improve this bill. I am more than happy to sit on the committee that would hold public consultations through constituency week or as many Fridays as necessary so that everyone can have their say on this bill. If this bill really is to gold standard as you say, then take it on the road. You should be proud of letting people talk about how good it is or making their concerns known about the bill.

On paper, the bill seems like an improvement: more flexibility, science-based, focused on stewardship. It all sounds good, but there are obviously a lot of concerns out there, so you should listen to the people and the organizations that have those concerns. And don't forget that election promise you made in 2003 to hold public consultations on all significant pieces of legislation. I would say to you that this is a very significant piece of legislation, so please keep that 2003 election promise.

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay): Here we are in the final days of this government and all of a sudden they woke up and found out that they made a promise in the last election, one I would have hoped this government would have kept much, much earlier than where we find ourselves now. So we now have before us Bill 184. I would argue that probably most members have not had a chance to read this in any detail. I understand that if it's not in your critic portfolio, there's so much legislation that it would be fairly difficult to stay on top of it.

The member across the way gave basically a 20-minute speech, split in two, about how great this legislation is. But if you read this legislation, in the end it really doesn't do what you want to do. I want to say categorically up front that we members of the opposition, both within the New Democratic Party and I believe within the Conservative Party, support the principle of being able to move forward on endangered species legislation. We understand, and I understand far too well as a northerner, the importance of doing so. We've seen many examples in southern Ontario and other built-up areas where various species have been put at risk and we have not had the legislation to protect them. I understand that far too well as a northerner because we live in the environment where we're in constant contact with various species. We understand how important it is to protect them. But if you look at the legislation—and I'll get a chance to go through this in debate later—there are a whole bunch of sections in this legislation that basically allow the minister all kinds of wiggle room to do what's going on right now.

Currently, the minister has the right to enact or to not enact the recommendation banning—in regards to an endangered species. This legislation is going to continue that. On page 11 of the bill, if somebody wants to go back and read it, I believe it's under subsection 11(4), there's a whole escape clause that basically says the minister has the right to not enact any of the regulations

in this bill as long as they post on the registry that they're not going to do so. So what's the point?

1910

Mr. Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): I'm pleased to stand and talk a little bit about what the members for Ottawa–Orléans and Huron–Bruce have put out to the Legislature, because they put this issue in context. More and more, as we learn, finally we're becoming more aware that we are only part of the grand scheme of things and that in fact there is a relationship between various species, various mammals, animals, fowl and fauna, and that we are all part of this. Somehow we have to learn how to protect our environment.

I think what this legislation really says is that it's time we protected our habitats. We've infringed upon them, and ergo we have endangered species by virtue of our movement to continue to eat up wetlands, to continue to eat up forest lands and woodlands. There comes a time, and this is one of the times and moments in which we can do this.

The member for Timmins–James Bay says that this doesn't have enough teeth. When it goes to committee, I hope he makes his point, because I think all of us want to see some teeth in this.

It would be asinine for anybody to put this forward who wasn't sincere about it, and I think most members of the House have a sincere concern about the nature of this legislation and the concept of stewardship, which flies in the face of—I happen to have come from a Christian background, and man has dominion over the fowl of the air and the fish of the sea and all this kind of thing. Well, that attitude is not so good. That's a paraphrase. We think we're the best in the world, that we are the smartest. We are finding out now that we're not so smart, and we had better get in tune with the rest of nature.

Mr. Bill Murdoch (Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound): We're here tonight to talk a bit about the endangered species bill, which I think first came around in the 1970s. There's nothing wrong with updating a bill, but the problem we're having again is that this government wants to ram something through, and it's unfortunate.

If they will agree to put it out to public consultation, I think some of us may even be able to support it over here. Who knows? But we'd like to see it sent out for consultation. I just want to look at the people who have written to us and said they want to see the same thing, because you can't just ram things through over there, guys. I mean, you have no experts over there, and you don't want to talk to the experts.

We have the Ontario Forest Industries Association asking for it to go out. We have the Ontario Fur Managers Federation asking for it to go out to consultation, and this is on the road, not just downtown Toronto here. We want it to go all over Ontario. We have Norm Miller here offering to go on that trip, so I think you'd better take him up on it. The Ontario Federation of Agriculture would like to see it go out, the Ontario Water Power Association and the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters. The Greater Toronto Home Builders' Associa-

tion are on here—that's even downtown Toronto here, folks. The Ontario Mining Association, the Ontario Lumber Manufacturers' Association, and many more would like to see this bill go out on the road for some consultation. Just maybe we can get it right, if this government will listen to the people they're trying to work with. If they don't listen to people and they don't take it out, then I'll have a tough time supporting it the way it is right now. It needs to be out there for consultation.

That's up to the government: If they want to get my support, they're going to have to do that. We have a bit of time here. You have the week off, or you can take it out this summer on Fridays. We do have people who offered to go on that, so hopefully the government listens and takes it out.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you. That concludes the time available for questions and comments. I'll return to the member for Ottawa–Orléans, who has two minutes to respond if he wishes to do so.

Mr. McNeely: I'd like to thank the member from Parry Sound. I'd just like to say that he said it's a very busy four years of environmental legislation from this government. This is a very important piece of that which is coming in our fourth year and we're very proud of it.

The member for James Bay: Again, we're moving this forward as part of a four-year plan. It's very important that it does get through. There has been lots of consultation on it and there has been support throughout.

Certainly, the implementation can be made in ways that can deal with the ramifications. It's extremely important legislation. We see what we're doing to our natural environment. We see what we're doing to endangered species. It's time to act, and I think that's the way we're going with this piece of legislation. It's not ramming the legislation through. The consultation has been there. Some people will not listen, but I'm sure with the stewardship dollars that are involved and with the people with private property, there are going to be ways of working with the Ministry of Natural Resources in making sure that this legislation protects the species, protects the property rights and builds a better Ontario.

We're doing this in our fourth year as part of a huge package, including 1.6 million acres of green space in Toronto, which is extremely important, which is milestone legislation. We had it in Ottawa with the Gréber report in 1948, I believe, that greenbelt. Well, it's in Toronto, 1.6 million acres. With many pieces of new legislation, including this legislation, we are going to have a stronger Ontario and we will be dealing with people in a very fair way.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr. Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie–Simcoe–Bradford): I'm pleased to join in the debate tonight. I think it's pretty clear that all three parties are on the same page here in terms of updating the 1971 statute, because it needs to be updated. I don't think there's any disagreement on that.

There are some issues, obviously, that are a part of this process. That's why we're debating this bill at second reading. That's why we have the minister here to get that type of information. We also have public hearings and I know this bill is going to go to public hearings. It has to go to public hearings, and the government knows that. So after this bill is passed at second reading—and I'm sure it will be—it will be going out for public hearings. The only issue is how broad those public hearings will be and how long they will be. There is no doubt that this is a bill that is going to be a fundamental change in the way Ontario approaches this issue.

I was reading an article today by Murray Campbell, his Queen's Park column in the *Globe and Mail*, and he says, talking about Bill 184, because that's what we're debating here tonight, "The bill changes Ontario's approach to protecting endangered species. Under the current 1971 law, no species is protected until the government decides to do so, which is a cumbersome process. Just 42 species have been granted protection but more than 175 plants and animals are deemed to be at risk of disappearing. The new law, using a 'presumption of protection' rule, stipulates that all species that have been scientifically assessed as being at risk would get automatic protection." I think the key here is the presumption of protection rule, which stipulates that there is a scientific basis for that protection.

The critic for this is Norm Miller. He's the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka, from the PC Party. He indicates in this article that the Progressive Conservative Party will support Bill 184 but wants "full and public consultation to correct its flaws." That's the official position of the Progressive Conservative Party of this province in terms of Bill 184.

1920

To bring to the audience's attention the level of discomfort with respect to stakeholders on this particular bill in terms of the way the government is approaching this issue, I've had very detailed discussions with Mr. Miller, our Parry Sound–Muskoka member, in terms of giving him my guidance in where we should be going on this bill, and he was kind enough tonight to provide me a letter that was dated April 2, 2007. It is signed by Doug Reycraft, president of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario. He sent this letter to the Premier and the Minister of Natural Resources, David Ramsay. It reads as follows:

"The Association of Municipalities of Ontario's board of directors met on March 30, 2007, where Bill 184 was discussed at length following a presentation by the staff from the Ministry of Natural Resources. While the government's objectives of environmental and species stewardship are important, many concerns were expressed regarding the proposed legislation, including concerns about mitigating potential economic impacts on communities where agricultural and resource industries are key to economic sustainability.

"Further concerns were expressed and assurance was sought in respect to municipal decision-making under the

Planning Act and whether or not this proposed legislation would supersede what is currently in place. There is a bevy of legislation that affects land, such as the Mining Act, and some such as the Clean Water Act that contain supersedence provisions.

“The management of land and related processes of the province is becoming more and more complex and without integration and coordination at the province. For these very serious reasons, AMO respectfully requests that the government conduct further discussions with municipal governments and key stakeholders before the bill is referred to a standing committee for consultation. This additional step of discussion with stakeholders would provide the government with an opportunity to better understand the concerns that are emerging and provide communities with an opportunity to learn more about the government’s policy objectives. Good public policy would be better served by some additional time. This step can also be used to inform standing committee discussions when they occur at a later date. This is of the utmost importance to many of our members.

“AMO strongly encourages you to urgently consider our proposal for further discussion before proceeding with the next step in the legislative process.”

This letter, from the president of AMO, was cc-ed also to John Tory, official opposition, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario.

The bill, which changes the existing Endangered Species Act, is very clear in terms of what it’s trying to accomplish. Our position, the PC Party’s position—and I’ve had extensive consultations with the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka on this—is that we want to see the act updated. We also want public consultations across Ontario to ensure that we get it right. The Liberals’ cuts to the MNR budget throw into question the ministry’s ability to effectively protect endangered species. It also begs the question, do the Liberals take this issue seriously? I think what the member is referring to is that in their March 22 budget, their fourth budget, the Liberals cut the Ministry of Natural Resources budget by \$36 million. The MNR, as we know, is already struggling with budgetary constraints, and this will further compound those problems. What’s at stake here, this issue which was put forth in the letter from the president of AMO, is the people who are going to be affected by this, and what is the government really doing with this so-called “stewardship program,” which is under section 16 of the act. It says:

“The Minister may enter into agreements for the purpose of assisting in the protection or recovery of a species specified in the agreement that is listed on the Species at Risk in Ontario List....

“(2) An agreement under subsection (1) may, for a purpose referred to in that subsection, authorize a party to the agreement to engage in an activity specified in the agreement that would otherwise be prohibited by section 9 or 10....

“(3) An authorization described in subsection (2) does not apply unless the party to the agreement who seeks to

rely on the authorization complies with any requirements imposed on the party by the agreement.”

This stewardship approach is designed, I take it, to provide some protection to people who are impacted by this bill but the government really hasn’t allocated many funds, if at all. I understand from my friend from Parry Sound–Muskoka that accompanying the new regulations of the stewardship fund, the species at risk in Ontario stewardship program, which is meant to support the preservation and rehabilitation of habitat, implementation of recovery strategies, public education and outreach and other activities to assist in protection, the McGuinty Liberals have set aside \$18 million over three years. That is not going to be enough, and everybody knows that, especially when you’ve just cut the budget \$36 million for the MNR.

Back to the consultation issue, which my friend from Parry Sound–Muskoka has been very firm about in terms of the need for that and his availability, which is commendable. We have another news release that I want to read. This comes from a number of groups and is entitled “Provincial Species at Risk Act Ignores Federal Audit Recommendations”—that’s the federal government:

“Resource groups across Ontario are warning that the provincial Liberal government is carelessly fast-tracking endangered species legislation that it knows will be a bureaucratic nightmare, expensive to implement and unlikely to result in the recovery of species at risk. In doing so, they are poised to duplicate mistakes made by the Chrétien government by ignoring the results of an independent audit of the national Species at Risk Act, also known as SARA. The significant findings of the audit appear not to have informed the development of the provincial legislation despite years of experience with the federal act. This is compounded by the apparent failure to provide the Minister of Natural Resources with a copy of the audit, by a failure to share the audit with major stakeholders and by the very fact that it was the stakeholders themselves who unearthed the audit.

“The independent audit, conducted by Stratos Inc. for the federal Department of the Environment, criticized the federal government for passing a bill that is chronically underfunded, overly prescriptive and badly misdirected. By emulating the federal act, the province is set to compound federal mistakes using the same flawed principles identified by the audit, and magnifying these mistakes by adding additional layers to their legislation.

“Other flaws identified in the federal legislation include insufficient science and monitoring, significant delays in developing policy to support implementation of the act, limited aboriginal involvement, a lack of awareness of species at risk by key operational staff and managers, and a critical lack of funding. By failing to correct federal mistakes, adding additional requirements not covered by SARA, and failing to listen concerns raised by their major stakeholders in all resource sectors, the province is setting itself up for failure.

“From 2000 through 2005, the federal government spent over \$200 million on their national strategy on

species at risk. The recent budget added an additional \$110 million over two years, but the total funding is still less than 60% of the minimum needed by the core departments. In contrast, the province only allocated \$4.5 million per year for the next four years in support of the 184 species named under the act.

“As a result of the audit, the federal government has acted to address the recommendations. Key among their responses is an acknowledgement that the species-by-species approach must be changed to incorporate a systemic ecosystem approach in that recovery planning process. Despite this, the province has failed to consider the findings and the federal response into their planning process, threatening to replicate mistakes already made and identified.”

So the questions remain. Why has the McGuinty government ignored the conclusions and recommendations of the independent audit of SARA? Why won't the McGuinty government stop trying to ram through the legislation instead of slowing down the process and listening to the constructive suggestions for change from major stakeholders through extensive consultation and a full slate of committee hearings? Why is the McGuinty government ignoring numerous municipalities that are demanding that the legislation be stopped until they have been consulted?

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That, in a nutshell, is the problem with this government's approach. There's no problem with what the principles are, what's trying to be attained here. The problem they've got here is that they have not developed that scientific basis to develop the species at risk. That's number one. Number two, they have not provided the funding that's necessary to accomplish the task at hand. Number three, they are not consulting with the stakeholders and the public with respect to what needs to be done to make sure this bill does what it says it's going to do.

Now, that's very worrisome because, as I have extensively discussed my views on this bill with the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka, and his views, there are some major challenges with respect to this—

Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough): What about the Barrie Colts? Are the Barrie Colts on the list?

Mr. Tascona: The member from Peterborough, who knows something about hockey, just wants me to mention that the Barrie Colts are playing the Sudbury Wolves on Thursday in the semifinals. Peterborough didn't make the playoffs this year, but maybe better luck next year.

Now, the 2006 audit of the federal SARA program found this, and this is very important: that practitioners are unable to apply habitat criteria consistently or scientifically on federal lands. There is a vacuum of contemporary species-relevant information and data with which to make an informed decision. Provinces are withholding information about critical habitat on private lands until issues of compensation and protection are resolved. This is serious, serious information.

The following are just some of the revealing findings of a June 2006 evidence-based independent audit and formation evaluation of the federal species-at-risk program compiled through 74 interviews with federal employees and key stakeholders, and there are a lot of problems here in terms of what they're trying to do. So there's a problem at the federal level not only in the fact that they don't have the science to do what they say they're going to do; the other part of it, as we heard already, is that they're not funding it properly to make sure that it can be accomplished.

So I appreciate the work that the critic for our party has done on this. He has done a lot of work on this. He's prepared to go to consultations throughout the province, at times that I think are amenable to dealing with this bill in a constructive and productive way, but it's up to the government to really make sure that this bill is going to work. After all, they have the majority. They have waited almost to the end of their mandate to address this, knowing fully well that a lot of this is strictly going to be smoke and mirrors, because if they don't get the bill right, what have they accomplished? They have basically put species at risk as opposed to solving the problem.

Looking at this bill, there are other comments that I want to share with the listening public tonight. There are some non-supportive stakeholder comments, and I want to just read these.

This is from Jamie Lim of the OFIA, a March 26 media release: “It is absolutely essential that the Ontario public be meaningfully engaged in the review and improvement of this legislation.”

Paul Norris of the Ontario Waterpower Association, a March 26 media release: “‘If the past is any indication, the new legislation will be with us for decades,’ offered Paul Norris, president of the Ontario Waterpower Association. ‘Given that reality, it is more important to get this legislation right than it is to get it right now.’”

There are other comments about this bill, but I think the bottom line is that the public is slowly awakening to what the government is doing here, and as they awaken, they want to make sure—because the public does believe in the environment and the protection of our species, just like the PC Party of Ontario believes—that they get it right. If this government is determined to ram this through—the timing of it is obviously conducive to trying to get the public's attention away from the OLG scandal which is going on right now, and some of the breaking news today about the OPP setting up an independent audit through the Toronto Police Association to deal with their dealings with the OLG. It's a very serious situation, and for the government not to be reacting to that particular problem is very disappointing.

But to deal with this particular bill, Bill 184—we're at second reading; we're having debate. There's going to be a free flow of ideas. Though all the parties are onside, it's the process that we're talking about and living up to the blueprint of what the government is trying to do with respect to this particular bill. Of course, the opposition parties are going to hold their feet to the fire to make sure

they get it right. That's what we're here for. There shouldn't be any finger-pointing in terms of what we're here to do.

On that note, I conclude my comments and I look forward to some responsive remarks from the member to my left, Gilles Bisson, the member from Timmins–James Bay, and across the way on this matter.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr. Bisson: I certainly didn't want to disappoint my friend and colleague by not commenting on his dissertation in regard to this particular issue.

I want to repeat something he said at the beginning of this because I think it needs to be said for the debate: Everybody's on the same page here. Nobody in this House is saying that we do not need to do more in order to protect endangered species in this province. That is not the debate here. The question is, is this bill going to do it to the degree that we want, and will it be done in such a way that we don't get tied up in all kinds of bureaucratic red tape that, in the end, doesn't get us to where we want to go?

Part of the problem here is that the government, like other governments—this one probably more so than others—says that it undertook a consultation. Their method of consultation was that the minister went out and talked to a few people. I'm going to talk about this a little bit later in the debate, but nobody has really had an opportunity to look at the final bill to decide, does the bill in fact do what it is that we want, and if not, how can we strengthen it and make sure that it does what we intended it to do in the first place?

I would propose that a bill like this, the way you should do it—because they are technical bills. I repeat: Not many members have had a chance to read this. I've read it as the critic and I've come up with probably about 10 amendments just looking at it. Based on what I've seen, the bill will not do what the government says it's going to do. I've found at least 10 places in the bill where you've got problems with the way the bill is drafted.

I would argue that what the government should have done is brought this in a lot earlier than in the ninth hour of their government's time in office and probably referred it out after first reading, or at the very least brought this thing here last fall. We could have gone out in the intersession for a week or two and consulted those people who are interested in this bill and come back with further amendments. Instead, they come here at the last minute and say, "We've got to rush this bill through," and they're trying to pass it in a rushed way. And what we're going to end up with is a flawed bill, I warn you.

Mr. David Oraziotti (Sault Ste. Marie): It's a pleasure to provide comments here in response to the member from Barrie–Simcoe–Bradford's remarks.

There are just a couple of things I want to touch on. First of all, consultation: Consultation is certainly taking place in the province of Ontario with respect to this piece of legislation. We began our consultation almost a year ago in May. We've consulted widely with key land-owners, conservation organizations, aboriginal commu-

ities, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, and the public through newspaper ads and the Environmental Bill of Rights registry. There's been specific aboriginal consultation. Back on May 10, 2006, MNR sent an invitation to all First Nations to provide input. There's quite a lengthy list of First Nations organizations that were asked to provide consultation. So the consultation is ongoing.

We on this side of the House want to get the bill right. The reality is that the NDP had five years to update this bill and the Conservatives had eight years to update this bill, and neither of them attempted to do anything to improve the Endangered Species Act. We've got 42 on a list of 176 that are endangered. How many grew on to this list on your watch? We're trying to address this issue.

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I also want to address the MNR issue in terms of the budget. The budget under our government has gone from \$541 million to \$726 million. Just this year alone there was an increase of \$44 million to the budget at MNR, representing about a 6.5% increase. Over the term of our government, MNR's budget increased by about \$185 million—very positive news for the people of Ontario.

We need to move forward on Bill 184. It has been 36 years, since 1971, that this has not been updated. We need to do this now so that we don't lose more species in our province.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod (Nepean–Carleton): I'm very happy to be following the member from Sault Ste. Marie, just to give him a little fact check. The budget he was so glowing about a few seconds ago wasn't that overwhelmingly supported by the people of Nepean–Carleton, who got slashed and burned yet again by this government, with the Ministry of Agriculture—by the way, the farmers in our province are going to be impacted by this bill.

He also started talking about previous administrations and how much time they had to perfect this bill. I was on Parliament Hill for the many years that this Liberal government and their little cronies on Parliament Hill were unprepared to put forward a piece of species-at-risk legislation. It took them three times before they were even able to get it done. Here we are today, in 2007, and this McGuinty Liberal government, three and a half years after it took office, is now prepared to put forward a piece of legislation that has been inadequately consulted on. The unfortunate thing is that we probably have six to eight weeks left in this Legislature. Right now, there's a large shroud of controversy with this government, of course. We just found out that the OPP is preparing to investigate them for corruption in the OLG, and we're supposed to be focusing on species at risk with an inadequate bill.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, I'm from Nepean–Carleton, which is in the southwest end of Ottawa, but I'm going to quote Thunder Bay mayor Lynn Peterson, who says, "No one is saying that we shouldn't be taking action"—I agree—"to address species at risk. But we

want to make absolutely certain that we get this legislation right.

"It's going to be with us for years to come and we shouldn't be rushing headlong into it if we don't know what the effects may be."

That's exactly why, under Chrétien and Martin, they had to reintroduce the bill three times. I was a Progressive Conservative, working for John Herron at the time, when you continued to introduce the bills and they continued to die on the order paper, because you really don't care.

Mr. Leal: I did listen very intently to my good friend the member from Barrie–Simcoe–Bradford. Obviously, as a Peterborough Petes fan, I want to get on the record that after the next series, the Barrie Colts will indeed be an endangered species, and I certainly hope that this act will be proclaimed so that we can protect the Barrie Colts.

Getting back to the relevant issue here, I heard my good friend the member from Lanark—she's from the Ottawa area—talk about endangered species. I know that John Baird, who has five green suits in his clothes closet that he pulls out every day, will take the initiative and follow through for the province of Ontario and maybe look at improving the endangered species act for the national government. I know that my friend here will be very supportive when the man with the new green suit takes the time to introduce the legislation.

This is an important piece of legislation. It's about our heritage and about our future. When you take the time to look at Al Gore's movie, *An Inconvenient Truth*, about climate change, and take the opportunity to read his book on the same issue, which I think should be mandatory in every elementary school across the province to study, you know that Mother Earth is changing quite rapidly. It's incumbent upon the people who sit in this Legislature today to take steps to preserve our species and bring about protection from climate change so that future generations will be able to say that Ontario is a great place to live, work and play.

The Acting Speaker: That concludes the time for questions and comments. I'll return to the member for Barrie–Simcoe–Bradford.

Mr. Tascona: I'd like to respond to the four members who had the courage to make comments here tonight. Looking at the member for Timmins–James Bay, I appreciate his comments. We're all on the same page here; there's no doubt.

The member from Sault Ste. Marie says, "We're consulting." The question we're hearing here is, "Are you listening?" It does not appear that they're listening, because we're getting incredible feedback from stakeholders in terms of this situation. You can consult all you want; if you're not going to listen, it's not consultation.

The MNR budget was cut \$36 million in this year's budget, which says it all with respect to what this government thinks. We call the Liberal Party "the paper environmentalists."

The member from Nepean–Carleton, as usual, is very focused, very to the point, and correct. I don't know what else she can say. She is right with respect to what's going on here with respect to the Liberal government's approach to the environment. This is a last-minute approach in our last session saying, "Let's get this bill through. Let's go get it."

That leaves me with the member from Peterborough. What can I say? The Peterborough Petes were eliminated from the playoffs and he was making those comments about the Barrie Colts. But it's not a laughing matter because I think the Colts are going to go all the way this year in the Memorial Cup.

I'm less confident about what this bill is going to do, whether it's going to go all the way in terms of protecting endangered species, because there's a lack of scientific information, as we know from the federal level; there's a lack of funding at the provincial level; and this government is not listening to the public. That's why there is growing upset.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr. Bisson: I want to say, straight up at the beginning of my time in debate in this legislation—and I want to say it again so there is no misunderstanding whatsoever—that there is nobody in this House, I believe, including myself or anybody in my caucus, who is opposed to drafting legislation that will, in the end, do what it is that the government is asking this legislation to do. Our difficulty is that the government has drafted a bill that has some problems.

I know what they're going to do. They're going to come to us in the ninth hour. This government is at the end of its mandate. It didn't choose to do this in year one; didn't choose to do this in year two; didn't choose to do this in year three. They've chosen to do this in year three and three-quarters. So there we are, with probably about four or five weeks of legislative time left before the next provincial election, and the government comes running into the House and says, "Oh, we made a promise in the last election, my God, and we've got to keep it. Here's a bill." Then they say, "Everybody in the public, just accept it, because we've made a promise and we've got to keep it." I'm saying that I want to help you keep your promise because I think it's a promise that was made that was important, and God knows you've broken enough promises, and anything that I can do and my good friend the member from Ottawa can do to help you keep your promises—we're with you.

Ms. MacLeod: We're with you.

Mr. Bisson: But the problem here is that the legislation has some problems. So I want to put one thing on the record first. The way that legislation like this should be done should be through a proper legislative process where the public have an opportunity to comment on legislation that is actually drafted. Here's the problem. I heard members from the government side get up and say, "Oh, we did so much consultation. Oh, my God. Let me read you the list of how big it was. We talked to these people and we talked to those people and somebody had

a conversation with somebody else, and a letter was sent out by the Ministry of Natural Resources.” A couple of problems: First of all, many of the people you say were consulted are sending me letters saying they weren’t, and I’ll go through those a little bit later. But the problem is that people were being consulted on the general principle. If I call anybody in Timmins–James Bay or Beaches–East—not Beaches–East York—

Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto–Danforth): Toronto–Danforth.

Mr. Bisson: —Toronto–Danforth or in Windsor and I say, “Hi; I’m MNR. Would you like to have some endangered species legislation?” of course everybody’s going to say yes. We’re all on the same page. Did anybody take the time to give individuals in the public who know something about this the actual mechanism by which we’re going to protect endangered species? No. The first time we had seen this bill was when the minister walked into the House last week and tabled it in the Legislature for debate, and there’s the problem. What I’m saying is that you’ve done this kind of backwards. What you should have done—and you had time to do it—was introduce this bill way before the ninth hour in your time in government. You’ve got four weeks, five weeks tops, of legislative time. I’m seeing 10 fingers now, but we’ll see if that actually happens. But the point is that you have very little actual legislative time to be able to deal with a bill like this. It is a substantive bill and a very technical bill. I know because I’ve been around here long enough, like many of you, what a technical bill is. This is one of those, and we need to make sure that we get it right.

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What you should have done—I want to start off this debate—was introduce this, at the very latest, by last fall. Then we could have had a proper second reading debate, three or four days—we didn’t need much, because I think what needs to be said here in the chamber is fairly straightforward—and then allowed the bill to be in committee in the fall and travel a bit last winter. We could have come back here this spring. We could have had a bill amended, and we could have passed a bill that does what the government wants it to do and what the members of the opposition want it to do by this spring. No. Government instead says, “We’ve got our own method of consultation, and that is, dial the ministry at 1-800 and we’ll let you know what we’re doing next week.” People really didn’t get a chance to look at this in any technical detail. Yes, some did. There are certain groups within the environmental community and others who had a chance to look at the basic principles based on discussion papers that were out there, but the actual legislation has not been out there for people to take a look.

I want to say first of all on the consultation issue, I’ve gotten all kinds of letters from First Nations and others, from the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, from the Ontario Forestry Association, from numerous—and I’ve got to say “numerous”—First Nations tribal councils and others in PTOs, who said they’ve really not

had a chance, for the most part, to be able to talk to the government about any of this.

I’ve got a letter here signed by Mike Carpenter, the chief of Attawapiskat. He says that the director of lands, who is in this case Suzanne Barnes, who works for the Attawapiskat First Nation, got one of those letters from the MNR that the member across the way talked about, saying, “We’re looking as doing species-at-risk legislation.” This person from Attawapiskat contacted the MNR and said, “Please come and talk to us. We’d love to sit down and talk to you about this.” And nothing has happened since. The only thing there was was a contact, but there was no reciprocal meeting when it was requested by the First Nation.

And Mike Carpenter, the chief of Attawapiskat writes in a letter dated April 2, 2007: “On our behalf, she invited MNR staff to come and talk to the community and elders about the rare species legislation, but they never accepted our invitation.”

I have had similar letters from other communities. Whitewater Lake First Nation writes to us on March 27: “To date we have not heard about any consultations with Ministry of Natural Resources regarding Bill 184”—in this case, they didn’t know anything about it; nobody has ever even contacted them—“and this issue never even came up during any recent meetings we had with them. If there were consultations going on, they had many opportunities to inform us and we believe this bill could definitely impact First Nations in many areas.” So here’s Whitewater First Nation basically saying, “We’ve had all kinds of meetings with MNR, and never at any time, in any of the meetings we had with MNR, did somebody raise this whole issue of species-at-risk legislation.

You then have another letter from Wapekeka First Nation. This is the typical story that happens to First Nations. I know it’s happened in Winisk, Peawanuck First Nation and the creation of Polar Bear Provincial Park. It’s happened with the waterway provincial park here at Wapekeka. I believe it has also happened at Muskrat Dam and a whole bunch of other First Nations, where the province goes out, creates a park, and you know what? They don’t even bother telling the First Nation when they’re inside the park, and all of a sudden, their traditional access to the land is curbed because a park is created and they lose traditional access to the land.

In this particular case, Wapekeka is saying that they were not contacted. They didn’t get a chance to have input. And what they’re worried about, as many other First Nations are, is that in the end you will end up creating legislation that will restrict their traditional access to land and they won’t have a thing to say about it. Now, I am going to give the government a little bit of credit, because there are sections in the act that attempt to give First Nation some way of protection. I see that in the legislation, but the problem is, as I read the legislation, it really doesn’t go there. What you would have had to have is some sort of non-derogation clause that says, “There is

no way that this legislation will impact on a First Nation's ability to have traditional access to lands."

We've got letters, in this particular case, from the Independent First Nations Alliance, and I believe they're out of Big Trout Lake—or actually out of Sioux Lookout, but they represent Big Trout Lake. Here is a letter, dated April 3, that says, "I have received no communication on the bill from Minister Ramsay. Normally, something of this magnitude would be faxed to our office. Additionally, nothing has been mentioned during the northern table discussions that I have attended." This is Mary Bea Kenny, who is the environment and land use adviser for the First Nation. "I am quite disturbed by the claims of 'exhaustive consultation' because nothing has come through our tribal council office requesting consultation on legislation for species at risk."

This is the tribal council. These are the people who represent many communities. It's not that you just didn't contact and consult First Nations individually; you didn't even talk to the tribal councils. I know, from talking to other tribal councils in northern Ontario, that it's much the same story. So from First Nations' perspective, you need to understand what their concern is. They don't want, all of a sudden, to be restricted from having traditional access to their lands. They are safekeepers of the land; they have been for millennia; they will continue to do so.

They understand the importance of protecting species. They are about harvesting within a sustainable limit. First Nations understand that, at the core of who they are. But what this legislation could end up doing is saying to a First Nation, "You no longer have access to your traditional lands because we've designated that habitat, which happens to be part of your traditional territory, under this legislation." Quite frankly, we should not be going down that road.

The other thing I want to say in regard to some of the technical parts of this bill is, if you read the enactment sections of the bill—and I know my friend Mr. Tabuns is going to speak to that later. People want to have clarity. People who are interested in this issue—and, I would say, there are many of us when it comes to making sure that we protect species and habitats at risk—want to have clarity that when this legislation is passed there's going to be a clear enactment date and that the regulations will be done by a certain time.

You go through sections 6, 7 and 8 of this legislation. It is the most convoluted writing that I've ever seen around enactment. I've seen legislation in this House for some 17 years now, and this is one of the most convoluted enactment sections that I've ever seen. There are all kinds of steps and all kinds of exemptions on when you don't have to do it. There's enough wiggle room in this thing that the minister can take an entire Mack truck and drive it through backwards, sideways and any way he or she would want in order to not enact sections of this bill.

The enactment sections on their own, put short and sweet, give the minister the ability not to enact many

parts of this legislation. For example, there is what I call the escape clause, and I just want to find it. Here we are. This is a beaut; this is really a beaut. This is subsection 11(4), and I'm going to read this:

"Subsection (3) does not apply to a strategy if, before the time limit set out in subsection (3) expires, the minister publishes a notice on the environmental registry established...."—and it goes on. It says in this section—and I'm not going to read it because I don't have enough time; I would have to read a whole bunch of paragraphs here. What it says is this: There have to be regulations drafted on each of the endangered species that are listed in this bill to determine how we're going to protect that species. I agree that that's a good thing. I think, rather than having a one-size-fits-all for all kinds of species by way of protection—that wouldn't make sense. So what the bill tries to do—and I agree with this concept—is to develop a regulation specific to the species we're trying to protect. But what this says in subsection (4) is that if the regulation isn't done by the time the enactment section of the bill says that it should be enacted, which is about five years, all the minister has to do in order to comply with the bill and not have the regulation done is to post that he's not doing so on the environmental registry under the Environmental Bill of Rights.

You've got a piece of legislation here where we're trying to protect species and habitats that are specified in this bill. The minister has a process by which the people who are charged with writing the regulations and giving the information on how to do so have to have regulations written for each specific type of species that is protected by the act within a five-year period. But at the end of five years, if the minister says, "Oh, well, we don't have enough money in the MNR budget to do this on time, so therefore we're not going to do it," or another government comes in or the same government gets elected and says, "We're not interested in this anymore. It's after election time. We don't have to worry about the votes of the people of Ontario on this one," and they decide for whatever reason not to enact the regulation that'll protect a certain species, the minister doesn't have to, because the bill basically gives the Minister of Natural Resources the ability to post on the Environmental Registry that they're not doing so and why, and the whole enactment section is basically null and void. So I say that the bill does not protect species in the way that the government says it will.

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That brings me back to my point. We agree—my friend Peter Tabuns, who I've had many discussions with, my leader, Howard Hampton, and all of us in the New Democratic Party—that we need to have species-at-risk legislation, and we certainly would love to help you get there. But what I'm worried about is that you're going to play a game here and you're going to try to portray the opposition as dragging their feet and not wanting this bill to pass, saying, "We have to have public hearings during constituency week. It's the only time we can do it." I want to say to the people watching that the

government can have public hearings any time it wants. It doesn't have to do it during constituency week. Quite frankly, the reason we have constituency week is for members to get back to their ridings so they can go out and do the things that we have to do, because we're stuck here at Queen's Park four and five days a week. So I just say that if the government wants to bring this bill forward and give it some committee time, that's not a problem; we're all for that. But there's plenty of time to do that outside of constituency week, so let not the government play that game.

The other thing in this bill which is interesting is the section on warrants. I know what the government is trying to do here, and I understand. We want to give enforcement officers the ability to go on to a property or into a building if there is reason to believe—and I've got to say good reason—that there is a species at risk and there's something going on within that property to cause that risk to happen, and the minister has to give, in this legislation, the ability for a justice of the peace to issue a warrant for search and seizure. I understand that. The problem is that when you read this particular legislation, it's one of the heaviest-handed pieces on warrants that I've seen in a long time. What it says is that you have to go to a justice of the peace in order to get a warrant to go and search and seize; fine, not a problem. That's the way it should be. The ministry or whoever the agent is who's wanting to inspect should put their case before a JP so that they don't intrude on somebody's right to privacy. But there's another section in here, under further warrants, subsection 23(4). It basically says that an enforcement officer may enter and inspect any land or other place without a warrant if he or she believes there's something going on.

I don't want to speak badly of inspectors, but it could happen—I think it's a possibility; we're all human—that an inspector is given an improper tip or is led astray and all of a sudden rushes onto a person's property and says, "To heck with it. I'm not going to go out and get a warrant," for whatever reason, and infringes on a person's right to privacy. I think we've got to be really careful about that. Yes, we've got to give the crown the ability to search if we believe there's a problem, but you can't give inspectors or game wardens the ability to go out and inspect without going through a justice of the peace. I think there has to be due process. Yes, there will be times when we think that whatever is happening is happening now and we've got to move, but the way that this legislation is written goes far beyond that.

That brings me to the next point, and that is the issue of who in the end is going to be responsible for enforcing this legislation. Here is probably the bigger problem: If we even pass this legislation in the form that it should be—this bill will get passed. I want everybody to know, at least in its present form, that this bill will be passed before the House rises. The question is, will we have the bill that we want? So let's be very clear: This bill will pass. But here's the problem: Even if we pass the bill that we need—and I would argue this thing is not what we

need—we don't have the money at MNR to make this happen. The budget of the MNR was cut last year. It's been cut severely over the last number of years, and we don't have the capacity within the MNR for enforcement officers or conservation officers, as they're called, to go out and do their job. It's so bad that the workers across this province with OPSEU, the people who represent the enforcement officers, have been holding bake sales to raise money to buy gas to put in the trucks of conservation officers so they can go out on patrol in the bush. There's no longer the amount of enforcement we used to have, because MNR doesn't have the money to put the gas in the truck to allow the people who do the enforcement to do their jobs. It would be like saying to the OPP, "Well, you know what, officers? It's a darned shame that people are speeding on our highways, but we don't have the money today so that you can go out and do your job, patrol our highways and catch speeders. So we'll make it 1-800, report yourself if you're speeding," and somehow or other this is going to fix the problem. My point is that if you're going to have legislation like this, the MNR has to have the capacity to enforce the legislation, and you can only do that if you have proper staffing and the support for staffing. If we're asking enforcement officers to do something in this Legislature, I think it's only right that we give them the ability to do it.

I didn't get a chance to get into this, but the other problem we have is that there's already currently legislation in this province that deals with some of these issues. For example, under the Crown Forest Sustainability Act, forestry companies are, by law, obligated to do forest management plans. Those forest plans are living and breathing documents that are always amended according to current technologies. Part of what they have to do as they're going out to harvest in the forest is make sure they don't impact on any natural habitat that would endanger species. So if there are woodland caribou, moose, owls, mink or whatever there might be, the forest company has to take that into account in its forest management plan and has to show how they're not going to negatively affect those animals in the bush that they're going to come in contact with.

This legislation can throw that out the door, and all the work we do, which is really good work, and our forest management plans may become null and void. That is another reason I believe this bill needs to be looked at seriously, so that we can look at how we make sure that this bill, in the end, does what it is that we want it to do: first of all, that it protects species in the way that is right and, at the end of the day, does it in a way that doesn't become either unable to be enforced because we don't have the capacity to do so or written in such a way that contradicts the very aim of the bill.

I want to thank members for this time in debate and look forward to comments you may have on my little presentation here tonight.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments.

Mr. Oraziotti: It's a pleasure to provide some comments on the remarks of the member from Timmins—

James Bay. A couple of things: First of all, the MNR budget has not been cut. It has been increased by \$185 million from 2003—

Interjections.

Mr. Oraziotti: Come on over here and look at the chart on the MNR budget from the ministry. Right here: \$541 million, 2003-04; today, \$726 million.

I don't understand why the members opposite can't handle good news. The NDP cut the budget \$178 million during their term in office. The Conservatives cut the budget 45% while they were in government. What we've continued to do is move forward with all types of positive environmental legislation and legislation under the Ministry of Natural Resources that will continue to improve the province of Ontario.

When it comes to First Nations consultation under this bill, May 10, 2006, MNR mailed an invitation to all of the First Nations who would be involved in this, and on September 15, 2006, they set up 10 meetings to be held with First Nations throughout the province, and I can read those groups off: Fort Severn First Nation, the Sandy Lake First Nation, Sachigo First Nation, Kee-Way-Win First Nation, Poplar Hill First Nation, Deer Lake First Nation, Pikangikum First Nation—perhaps this will ring a bell for the member from Timmins—James Bay—North Spirit Lake First Nation, Cat Lake First Nation, Fort Hope First Nation, Webequie First Nation, Summer Beaver First Nation, Whitewater Lake First Nation, Northern Chiefs tribal organization, Matawa Chiefs Council, Windigo Tribal Council and the Nishnawbe Aski First Nation. The consultation goes on and on.

The bill is 36 years old. It needs to be updated. I would like to know from the members opposite how many species were added to the endangered species list on their watch. It's time to fix the problem.

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Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): I'd like to respond to the member for Timmins—James Bay. There's nobody in this House who doesn't support legislation that would protect endangered species. That's the first thing. I can't imagine anyone who would stand by and let any species disappear. What he was saying is that there simply is not the money to enforce this.

I heard the comments of the member for Sault Ste. Marie—I guess he's the parliamentary assistant or has some title with the government. Quite frankly, we don't believe a word you say anymore. Your conduct in this House in the last two weeks has been absolutely disgraceful.

Interjections.

Mr. Dunlop: I would like to ask the member from Sault Ste. Marie to visit the Midhurst office of the Ministry of Natural Resources. It's absolutely disgraceful how they've whittled it down. There's nothing left of that office. He is absolutely correct: They're having bake sales. The conservation clubs etc. are raising money to put gasoline in the trucks of the conservation officers, and they're standing there bragging, actually thinking they're doing something to help the Ministry of Natural

Resources. There may be money going into the Ministry of Natural Resources, but it's all going into fancy brochures and Liberal propaganda, like we've seen with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and the Ministry of Health. All of these ministries have fancy brochures, glossy brochures telling how wonderful things are. That's where the money is going. It's not going into helping services in the communities; it's not going into helping real conservation officers protect endangered species. They can speak all they want about all the money they're pumping into the system, but it's going into communications and PR, not into real services that will help the endangered species of the province of Ontario.

I would like him to visit the Ministry of Natural Resources office in Midhurst and tell me that that's a real functioning government office. You have completely destroyed it.

Mr. Tabuns: It's my pleasure to comment on the remarks made by my colleague from Timmins—James Bay.

No one thinks that the old legislation for the protection of endangered species was adequate. I think there is a consensus in this House and in society that effective endangered species legislation is required; it needs to be updated. But we do face substantial problems with a lack of funding for the ministry that's actually supposed to deliver. If you look at the budget—\$762 million in the last budget year, \$726 million allocated in this budget year—I don't know about your math, Mr. Parliamentary Assistant, but that strikes me as a decline in funds allocated.

I have been north of Kingston, I have been in other parts of rural Ontario where people see declines in parks staff and declines in support for the services they need and that this province needs for protection of its natural resources. So I have to ask: Even if this legislation was written perfectly—and there are substantial problems; not problems that will stop it from being passed but problems that would stop it from being effective—if you don't have the dollars, if you don't allocate the resources, then you are not going to have the impact that needs to be achieved. You are not going to have that impact.

Unfortunately, this bill is not perfect, and in my comments I'll get a chance to go over some of the areas where there are clear flaws. My colleague touched on some of those, and I think the one that's most startling to me is the power of the minister at any time to essentially override and disregard the legislation that's before us. So I ask, what is the purpose for this legislation?

Ms. Deborah Matthews (London North Centre): You know, sometimes we accuse the opposition of not being able to take yes for an answer. What I want to talk about tonight is something pretty wonderful that's happening. I heard the member for Timmins—James Bay say that this legislation will pass. I heard the member for Simcoe North say there's no one not supporting this legislation. I heard the member for Toronto—Danforth say there's a consensus in this House. We're making a lot of

noise and yelling a lot about something over which there seems to be general support. I just want to say that I'm really happy that all of us are putting partisanship aside, at least a little bit, to work together to work together to make this legislation among the strongest species-at-risk legislation in North America. Together we are setting a benchmark for the protection and recovery of species at risk, and this is truly the beginning of a new era of heritage protection in our province. So rather than getting carried away about the process and about refinements, all of which are important and all of which we should be discussing, I would like to take my little couple of minutes to say "excellent work," to congratulate the minister for having the determination and the foresight and the vision to bring forward this very important piece of legislation.

You know, we live our lives and we're not always aware of the tremendous biodiversity in this province. We go through our lives and we just don't notice these things. But taken in its whole, we are not doing our job as stewards of our land, and I think this is a big step forward, so to all members I say thank you.

The Acting Speaker: I'll return now to the member for Timmins–James Bay, who has two minutes to respond.

Mr. Bisson: I want to thank all the members for having responded to my comments on this particular speech. We do know how to take yes for an answer; the problem is that we're trying to get you to do what you said you would do in the first place. You promised in the last election as the Liberal Party that you would bring endangered species legislation in, species-at-risk legislation, and that you would actually protect those species. We're saying that if that's your intent, bravo. First of all, why did it take you three and a half years to do it? You're rushing this at the end of the process, and the legislation is flawed. I know that Mr. Tabuns, the member from Toronto–Danforth, is going to get a chance to speak to this later, but there's an escape clause in this bill that allows the minister to exempt anything he wants whenever he wants. So don't come into this House and say, "Bravo, Minister, for being enlightened." It's not very enlightened if you put something in there that has an escape clause as big as what we have in this particular legislation.

I also say, in regards to the budget of the MNR, I don't know, I guess I'm making this stuff up because I read it out of the 2007 budget document that is basically put out by Mr. Greg Sorbara, Minister of Finance, province of Ontario. It says here on page 175, *ministère des Richesses naturelles*—because I have the French copy; I imagine the English one is the same, but maybe you got a different copy and, if so, that's a whole other issue—that in 2006-07 we spent \$762 million. We plan on spending \$726 million in 2007-08, which is less than \$762 million. So I don't know. It must be me making it up because certainly, you know, Mr. Sorbara probably made this up when he put it in the budget and it's a fiction of every-

body's imagination. But the budget at the MNR has been decreased or this document is wrong.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr. Lou Rinaldi (Northumberland): It's great to join this debate tonight to do with Bill 184, to protect endangered species.

I've been here since we came back, and I heard the other members from both sides question the fact of consultation, no consultation, the math. I just want to take a minute—I mean, the member just read from the budget, and he's quite right: Those numbers are correct. But he should read a little bit more. Some of the money was one-time money because of extraordinary fires—

Mr. Bisson: Oh, we're not going to have fires this year?

Mr. Rinaldi: There are fires. Let me tell you, back before my days here, this province experienced an unfortunate incident, SARS, under their watch. They spent \$1 billion on that, and they did a great job; they did a good job. All I'm saying is that the next year I didn't see the \$1 billion added to health. Does that mean the health budget was cut? So all I'm saying is that they spent \$1 billion—well spent, I must say—to protect the people of Ontario. They did a great job. But they didn't include that \$1 million in the budget. I tell you that those folks are using Tory math. They should use proper math.

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Interjection.

Mr. Rinaldi: Yes, the Magna budget. They're using Tory math.

When Mr. Tory was in my riding, he commented on wait times for cataracts at Northumberland's hospital. He could not compare because under their watch there were no cataracts. It's one of the lowest wait times for cataracts in the province of Ontario. He didn't know that but he told the people of my riding that the hospital wasn't doing a good job. So they'd better get some math lessons before they tell us what to do.

I want to talk about the consultation process. When I hear that there's no consultation, I think the minister made it very clear that there is going to be consultation. Do you know why they say there is going to be no consultation? Because they're not used to consultation. Under their regime, there was no consultation. Since that party was in power, three and half years went by, and now there is consultation. We are going to have consultation so that we won't have that happen again.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: If you could just take your seat for a moment, I'd ask the House to come to order.

I'll return to the member for Northumberland.

Mr. Rinaldi: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm going to talk about the bill. It has been a long time since this legislation has been updated. Other governments—and I know they had busy agendas—maybe just didn't get to it. I guess that raises questions when we get criticized for bringing it in at the last minute, but we're doing it. They just cannot believe that. They could have done it at the last minute and the people of Ontario would

have been happy as long as it got done. But they didn't do it. So we are doing it within our mandate and it's going to happen.

I'll tell you why it's going to happen. It's going to happen because of people that this government consulted prior to it, and we're going to consult again after second reading. We're going to have consultations. Let me tell you some of the comments of the people we consulted with before the legislation. I'm going to read them for the record.

"Conservation Ontario commends the government of Ontario for undertaking a review of the Endangered Species Act which will result in improved protection for species at risk. The province led a very inclusive consultation process during the review and the conservation authorities were pleased to participate." Do you know who said that? It was Richard Hibma, chair of Conservation Ontario.

Let me tell you who else we consulted with. "The new Endangered Species Act is a significant step forward for Ontarians and the natural heritage we all value so highly. This new legislation will provide an inclusive, science-based and effective framework within which to balance different environmental and economic priorities." That was Dr. Rick Smith, executive director of Environmental Defence.

We have experts at the table, these folks we talked about. Let me pick another one here just to make sure that we understand that we talked to people who have an interest in this issue, and maybe that's who those folks on the other side need to talk to.

"This new legislation brings Ontario's protection for endangered plants and animals into the 21st century. The package of incentives and programs will ensure that private landowners, who are responsible for the majority of rare habitats, are valued partners in the delivery of endangered species protection." This is a quote from Wendy Francis, director of conservation and science, Ontario Nature.

I could go on and on quoting these things. But I just want to touch on another base that our friend from Timmins-James Bay commented on: "This is great. We're going to support it, but there's a glitch. There is no funding for it."

Interjection: It's not true.

Mr. Rinaldi: You're right, it's not true, because in the budget this year, the one that they claim was cut was increased by 6.45%, by \$44 million. Let me tell you what part of that increase will help us do. It will help us provide \$18 million over four years to promote stewardship activities, protecting essential habitat and green space.

So we're dealing with the legislation. We're going to pass this legislation because it's the right thing to do, and we put our money where our mouth is to back it up: \$18 million worth over four years. I know that's hard for those folks across the way who don't quite have a concept of numbers. They're really having a hard time,

because it's the right thing to do. But I tell you, we are moving in the right direction. This is long overdue.

I'm sure that after we debate here in the House and it goes to committee, we're going to get lots of input from a lot of interest groups in the province of Ontario. I know there are a lot of groups out there that want to get involved and want to help our government make sure that we have the right legislation out there to protect our species, our environment. As I learned in the last three and a half years, after those consultations sometimes there are a lot of amendments and sometimes there are not very many. But it's the right thing to do to make sure that we have a well-balanced piece of legislation. I know that when we were briefed by the Minister of Natural Resources—in a lot of cases of endangered species, although we need to protect them, some are becoming extinct. So we're able to make sure of those species, even if they have to be relocated to an adjacent piece of land or habitat, so that proper development could occur and our economy moves forward.

When we package all this together, yes, it has taken a little bit of time; we've been in government for three and a half years, but from all accounts we've dealt with a lot of very important legislation in this House. This is just another one of those things that are going to complete the package we proposed to the people of Ontario. It's the right thing to do. It deals with our environment, it deals with endangered species and it's something that's been neglected for a long time.

I neglected to say at the beginning of my speech that I was going to share my 20 minutes with my seatmate, my friend from London-Fanshawe. I know that he wants to add to this. Even folks in urban centres like London have an interest in this.

I want to take the opportunity to thank the folks here for listening. Please, let's get this moved forward.

Mr. Khalil Ramal (London-Fanshawe): First, I want to thank my seatmate, the member from Northumberland, for the details in his speech and his passion about this issue. Of course, I want to speak in support of Bill 184, to protect endangered species.

The member was talking about many different issues. As human beings, I guess we become greedy, to some degree. We want to control the whole earth, the whole of the environment. We want to build highways, we want to build roads, we want to build buildings. We don't leave anything for other species that share this life with us.

Interjection: Mother Earth.

Mr. Ramal: Mother Earth. We have to protect it. We have to create an environment to allow others besides ourselves to live on this globe. It's an important issue.

We on this side of the House, the government, are not just thinking about building homes, schools, hospitals and infrastructure. We also have to protect the future of nature. I want to commend the Minister of Natural Resources for his great job and his effort to maintain our province green by creating the greenbelt, which I guess is the biggest in history, not just in Canada but on the whole earth.

Interjection: Yes, 1.8 million acres.

Mr. Ramal: How many acres?

Interjection: It's 1.8 million.

2030

Mr. Ramal: It's huge, Mr. Speaker, just a very good indication of our direction and our determination to protect the environment, to create a green zone for our generations in the future.

Interjection: It's a legacy.

Mr. Ramal: It's a legacy, of course, 100%. The member from Peterborough is a great advocate on behalf of his riding and also on behalf of nature and protecting species in the province of Ontario.

I think this issue is very important. I listened to many speakers who spoke before. I know the opposition—the Conservatives and the NDP—still have a doubt about our commitment to this file. I think that introducing this bill at this time is a great indication of our commitment to protect the environment, to protect our species, because we have to continue no matter what. People think, “Look, it's at the end of your mandate that you're doing it, that you brought it to the Legislature to deal with it.” We don't care. We are here to serve till the last minute. We're going to get it done because we promised to do it, and we're going to do it. I know the Minister of Natural Resources' commitment, especially in this budget: two million trees to be planted across the province of Ontario. Last year he gave us 5,000, and we planted them in many different areas in London, in conjunction with, and with the support of, the Scouts, and the green earth people of London. Many different people came to help us plant those trees, because it's very, very important to protect our environment.

I want to tell you this story. I have a conservation area beside my office. It divides Adelaide North from Adelaide South. In that spot, we have a pond, a lot of trees and a lot of endangered species, and I think great numbers of my constituents work very hard to protect it and not allow connection of the street, because if we connect it, we're going to lose the pond and we're going to lose some birds, which won't exist anymore. It's a beautiful area, and this area will remain a place for many of my constituents to take their dogs for a walk and to enjoy nature. It's a beautiful area. This is part of our commitment to support those activities, not just in London–Fanshawe, not just in the London area in general, but everywhere in the province of Ontario.

I know that some people think this is a light issue, that it's not an important issue, but it is important, as well as health care, education and infrastructure, because as human beings we are in charge of the whole of nature; we're in charge of the whole province. We have to take care of every element of our province, because in the end, as many of my colleagues mentioned, it affects us all. All the species—it doesn't matter if we like them or not—play a pivotal role in cleaning the area, in cleaning the environment, and in the cycle of life. If we start eliminating this kind and the other kind, we are going to be in danger in the future.

I know that many spoke before me, and I was listening to them. They thought this was not going to see the light; it's going to be jammed through, with no consultation. I was listening to the member from Sault Ste. Marie, the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Natural Resources. He's a great member, a very active member, and he gave me enough information about this issue. There was a wide consultation that went before this bill to construct its direction, because it's important. As my seatmate, the member from Northumberland, mentioned, we consulted experts in that field—professors and doctors and activists in that area—to enlighten us, to tell us what we were supposed to do.

Mr. Ted McMeekin (Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Aldershot): We wanted to get it right.

Mr. Ramal: It's very important to ask specialists in this area in order to have a good bill, because we want to get it right, as my friend the member from Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough mentioned. It's very important.

I know the member opposite was talking about this issue. Hopefully, when she gets the chance, she can tell us what she thinks about it. Hopefully, she can stand up and support this initiative, because it's an important initiative. I know that many people think, “Why are we talking about species here? Why don't we talk about different issues? Why don't we talk about health care? Why don't we talk about education?” I know we're doing a great job on those files. I think we are under control by investing more money in education, investing more money in infrastructure, investing more money in our children, because we believe strongly that all elements of our society have to work together to create a strong province.

In the meantime, we have to pay attention to our environment, we have to pay attention to our species, which are something beautiful. When we open a geography book about nature and the natural resources of our province, we see a lot of beautiful species flying, walking, giving us beautiful images. Our job is to protect them. Our job is to create a good environment to host them and also nurture them. And we—

Interjection.

Mr. Ramal: You're right: It's very good for the habitat. The member from Peterborough is always a great supporter of this issue and always advocating on behalf of this, because he lives in a beautiful area. He has a great interest in not polluting his lakes and his forests, because they all play a pivotal role in our life to give us clean air and a beautiful environment. It's our job to keep protecting them.

This is an important bill, as many people mentioned. This bill is going to a committee, to travel the province of Ontario. We're going to listen to different people: the farmer, the experts, the opposition—people who like it and people who don't like it. We are willing to listen to them; we are willing to learn more, because we want to get it right. It's important to get it right by going to committee, by consulting other people, by listening to other people. It's the right thing to do. That's what we do

on this side of the House. Whatever bill we propose, we don't just bring it to the House and debate it a little bit and force the vote. No. We take it to committee; we take it on the road. We listen to people from the north, from the west, from the east, from Toronto—from any area—and then we come back with good information and pass it, if it gets support from the majority of the House.

I think it is a great bill. I want to thank the Minister of Natural Resources again for his leadership in this area, and all the people working in his ministry to create such an important direction to protect our species that are endangered. I think it's our duty, our responsibility as a government, to keep working with all the people to create protection mechanisms. It's important because in the future, when our kids grow up, we want to have a future for them. We don't want to just read in a book that we had a certain kind of fish or a certain kind dog or certain kinds of flies or whatever. They have to see it too. Exactly as we're enjoying it, they have to enjoy it in the future.

Mr. Rinaldi: We'll make it better.

Mr. Ramal: We'll make it better. We can enhance it. By not protecting it, we're going to create just history, where they go to a book and, "Yeah, we had a butterfly that we used to enjoy in this area. Now we don't have it anymore because we killed it."

Mr. Leal: You'll have to see it on Discovery TV, right? You haven't experienced it.

Mr. Ramal: Right. Life experience: This is a very important thing. The intent of the bill is to maintain it for the present and for our future generations to come. It's important, as a government, to take the direction, to take leadership, and create whatever mechanism to protect endangered species and make a good environment for them to grow and nurture, and not kill them, by eliminating all the obstacles that destroy these species. I think it's a good bill. That's why I'm speaking in its support.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Ms. MacLeod: Few things in this Legislature make me smile more than the members for Northumberland and London–Fanshawe, particularly when they have to split their time in a 20-minute interval on a piece of contentious legislation that every member of this Legislature should be taking a very big interest in. They talk about the interest in this bill at this time and all the consultation. Of course, we've seen the lack of interest on their side when they can't finish 20 minutes.

I want to talk a little bit about the vice-president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, Paul Misteale, who said, "A fast-track approach to this legislation will not give us the ability to inform and involve the thousands of farmers who may be affected. It is imperative that the government put the emphasis on engagement, not expedience." Yet this is exactly what we're seeing on the other side of the Legislature.

I also want to talk a little bit about funding. Earlier, my good friend from Timmins–James Bay was talking about the massive cuts in the Ministry of Natural Resources, which we're seeing in everyone's riding right

across the province, although they'll tell you that this year there's a four-points bulletin: There will be no forest fires. The McGuinty government proclaimed that earlier tonight. But we, on this side of the House, are not going to proclaim that. In fact, they haven't really fully understood the nature of the bill they've put before us. Not even SARA, the federal species-at-risk legislation—during the 2006 audit of the federal Species at Risk Act, the \$200 million the federal government is putting in is not doing the job.

The Ministry of Natural Resources fish and wildlife division in the province of Ontario needs another \$35 million each year just to get by, yet this year their budget was cut. Did I mention that this bill before us is inadequately funded? All we are looking at is \$4.5 million, a pittance, for species at risk. You should be ashamed. You should all be standing up and taking part in this debate. This is not agreement; this is debate.

2040

Mr. Tabuns: The members from Northumberland and London–Fanshawe have spoken in favour of this bill. The member from London North Centre said there is consensus in the House; virtually, why are we even debating?

The simple reality is that for those who care that we actually protect our species, there is concern that an act be adequate, that resources be provided, that it be written in a way that will ensure it will deliver the goods and be put forward politically in a way that will have support in the population.

I'm very disturbed around the question of First Nations consultation. I'm not saying that because I think the bill should be derailed. I'm saying that because First Nations are generally ignored, and because I went through this on the Clean Water Act and talked to First Nations who had not been consulted about the Clean Water Act. That is a fundamental problem, and at some point it will come back to bite this government and bite this particular Legislature.

When we want to pass legislation that has the necessary impact, we have to develop discussions with those affected parties that have constitutional rights. So don't undermine legislation that you believe is necessary, that you believe has to come forward, by neglecting substantial pieces.

As the member from Timmins–James Bay said, this bill is going to pass—the governing party has a majority in the House. We know that we need new endangered species legislation, but don't do stuff that undermines the foundation for actually protecting those species. Don't put things in the act, or fail to put things in the act, that ensure that actual delivery is not going to be as advertised.

Mr. Oraziotti: It's a pleasure to respond to some of the very positive comments by the members from Northumberland and London–Fanshawe, a couple of excellent members in this Legislature; we're very pleased to have them here.

I need to set the record straight yet again. The Ministry of Natural Resources budget has gone from \$541 million in 2003-04 to \$726 million for 2007-08.

Any discrepancy in the budget book that has been mentioned by the opposition, they clearly know, deals with outstanding expenses such as forest firefighting—one-time dollars. They know they're misleading Ontarians by suggesting there was a cut to the Ministry of Natural Resources budget. The budget has gone up by \$44 million, 6.5%, this year alone.

This is a fantastic bill. It's supported by Ontarians across the province. Nineteen seventy-one was the last time this bill was updated. It's 36 years old. There are only 42 species that are protected out of 176 currently endangered species. I'd like to ask the opposition parties tonight, how many species had to be added to this list on your watch while you dithered and did nothing to update this legislation?

If we have consensus, let's move forward. Let's stop the posturing, the political rhetoric and move along with this bill, because we know it's a good bill for Ontarians. This is not much different from other aspects of protection for endangered species under the Forestry Act, the Crown Forest Sustainability Act, the Places to Grow Act and the greenbelt legislation. There's a host of legislation in this province that this legislation will help to codify and ensure that we take important steps forward in protecting endangered species in the province of Ontario.

I want to commend the Minister of Natural Resources for his leadership on this issue. Consultation will continue. We want to make sure we get this bill right. We're proud to move forward with it.

Mr. Dunlop: I'm pleased to rise to make a few comments on the comments from the members for London–Fanshawe and Northumberland.

I think we said earlier, and I think most of the members in our caucus at least agree, following the leadership shown by Premier Bill Davis 30 years ago, we understand there's a need to update the legislation, and we fully support that. What we're saying is you have to have the resources behind it.

I mentioned earlier the Midhurst station of the Ministry of Natural Resources. It has basically been disassembled under this government. They may talk about all the money that's flowing, but I tell you, you know where it's flowing? It's coming in the form of fancy brochures, glossy brochures, fancy communications, fancy press releases. Take this thing: Strong Rural Communities, update 2007, from the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. What kind of a joke is this supposed to be? It actually says the farmers are happy in here. The farmers aren't happy with this government.

Then there's this thing here called the Monitor, Ontario Health Quality Council. That went out to every home in Ontario. It's Liberal propaganda; that's all it is. They can't even get their logos right. On one, of course, they have the old logo, and then on the health quality council one, they have that new Mickey Mouse one that they spent \$2 million or \$3 million redeveloping.

All I'm saying is, if you're going to have species-at-risk legislation, you have to have the resources to follow it, and \$18 million over four years is a complete joke. It's going to cost \$163 million to clean up Lake Simcoe alone, and that's the aquatic end of it. They haven't even talked about the aquatic end of it. They're talking about a penguin or a red-winged blackbird or something like that. They're not talking about fish at all, which will cost hundreds of millions of dollars.

Interjection.

Mr. Dunlop: Who knows what they call it? Who knows what they actually mean over there? No one believes a word they say. It's all a joke over there; it's all a joke.

The Acting Speaker: That concludes the time for questions and comments. I'll return to the government side and recognize the member for Northumberland, who has two minutes to reply.

Mr. Rinaldi: I'm encouraged, after I heard comments from the members for Nepean–Carleton, Toronto–Danforth, Sault Ste. Marie and Simcoe North, that they all agree that this legislation needs to go through.

The member for Simcoe North is right, because since Bill Davis, they did nothing. He's right. Since Bill Davis, that government did nothing. So I'm happy to follow in Mr. Davis's footsteps.

Interjections.

Mr. Rinaldi: We touched a nerve, we really touched a nerve. Under Bill Davis, they got things done; under their government, they got nothing done. I'm delighted to hear that they're going to support it, because it's a good bill.

The member from Simcoe North says there's nothing here for Lake Simcoe. Lake Simcoe is a mess. Why is it a mess? Because they did nothing.

The member for Nepean–Carleton talks about me and my neighbour sharing time. To us, that's consultation. That's participating in a debate.

I think the Minister of Natural Resources took his time and did the right thing. We've got this piece of legislation. We've consulted, and we're going to keep on consulting. It's really tough for the members of the opposition to agree with something that's good. They are really struggling, we can tell, but I guess that's their job.

I know we are doing the right thing. We are going to pass this legislation, and the nature of Ontario is going to be a lot better for it down the road.

Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order: I listened very carefully. I would only hope that you will be able to rein in the rantings of the opposition.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you very much. That was not a point of order, but I appreciate it nonetheless.

2050

Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant): I'm happy to speak to Bill 184, the Endangered Species Act. I would like to touch on a few things: the need for public hearings, the track record of the PC government in the past, property rights, the ALUS program, and the Carolinian area down in my neck of the woods.

As a member of the PC caucus, as a landowner, as a former teacher of environmental science, I unabashedly support the protection of Ontario's natural environment and those inhabitants therein. I think it's very important to make it known that the PC caucus supports the protection of endangered species, and much of this was articulated in the excellent lead speech from our MNR critic, Norm Miller.

However, equally, we support the creation of the best legislation possible. That's why we're calling for full, open, extensive public hearings. It doesn't matter to me whether they're on Fridays or during constituency week or over the course of the coming summer. As we've heard this evening, it was a PC government, over 30 years ago, that first introduced legislation protecting endangered species, and our commitment remains steadfast. That's why it's so important to get this legislation right.

My approach is to ensure that a balance is struck between protecting species, while respecting property rights and ensuring that any changes do not put an undue burden on any person or group in Ontario. Farmers and rural communities have a strong historic role as stewards and protectors of natural resources. As legislators, we must ensure that plant, bird and animal species are protected through co-operation with landowners, rather than heavy-handed prosecution or enforcement measures; I certainly don't want to see that coming forward in either this proposed bill or in any regulation. Rural residents should not be expected to shoulder the entire burden for the intent of this bill without the support of society at large, and given Premier McGuinty's past history of placing huge responsibilities and liabilities on rural people without adequate assistance—we saw this with source water protection; we saw this with greenbelt legislation—we're very concerned about any aspect of that in this legislation.

So we need a co-operative approach. We have to start working with those people who can provide that co-operation by offering incentives rather than any punitive approaches.

I think it was last year that I proposed a litmus test or a standardized way to evaluate legislation like this. We have to ask ourselves a few questions:

- (1) Will this legislation adequately accomplish its stated intentions?
- (2) Is this legislation the fairest it can be for stakeholders?
- (3) Have those stakeholders been properly consulted to bring in their perspective?

If the answer is no to any of these questions, it's back to the drawing board, because it's so important to get this done properly, not necessarily to get it done quickly.

We know the stated intentions of this proposed law: (1) to identify species at risk based on the best available scientific information, including information obtained from community knowledge and aboriginal traditional knowledge; (2) to protect species that are at risk in their habitats; (3) to promote the recovery of species that are at risk.

So, going back to that litmus test, will it accomplish the goals? I can say tentatively that it may be successful. Is it the fairest approach? Maybe it will be if we give stakeholders an opportunity to let us know what they need in this particular bill. I do hope this government has fulsome public hearings; I've seen little indication of that as yet.

That's why I think that we need to be cautious before moving forward. Stakeholder input is key if we're going to get this one right. I hope this government will show a true desire to hear from farmers, from outdoorsmen, from rural landowners, from foresters. Take this to their backyards as opposed to what we've had to date with respect to debating it here in the House.

As we know, we've heard from a number of groups, a variety of groups who want to see public consultations. Resource groups, for example, across Ontario have provided us with a warning. This is in a media release from April 3, signed by the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, the Ontario Fur Managers Federation, the Ontario Forest Industries Association, the Ontario Mining Association and the Ontario Waterpower Association. The warning is that, "The provincial Liberal government is carelessly fast-tracking endangered species legislation that it knows will be a bureaucratic nightmare, expensive to implement and unlikely to result in the recovery of species at risk. In doing so they are poised to duplicate mistakes made by the Chrétien government by ignoring the results of an independent audit of the national Species at Risk Act.

"The independent audit, conducted by Stratos Inc. for the federal Department of the Environment, criticized the federal government for passing a bill that is chronically underfunded, overly prescriptive and badly misdirected. By emulating the federal act, the province is set to compound federal mistakes, using the same flawed principles identified by the audit and magnifying these mistakes by adding additional layers to their legislation."

Consultations don't have to mean a delay in passing this legislation. They can be arranged—we know that in this House—in northwestern Ontario, obviously, north-eastern Ontario, eastern Ontario, the GTA, and south-western Ontario. We would be pleased to co-operate and facilitate these consultations. The way can then be cleared for any amendments in committee.

Murray Ferguson, in the March 30 edition of the Thunder Bay Chronicle-Journal, said, "Habitat needed for protection of a species is not well-defined in this legislation, nor is the economic and social impact of habitat protection considered in listing of a new endangered species or providing more protection for one currently on the endangered list." He goes on to point out that the legislation, "assigns 'an extreme amount of power' to an appointed scientific panel...." So in that newspaper, the Thunder Bay Chronicle-Journal, it points out that municipal leaders, business, agriculture, and non-governmental associations are also calling for this government to take a sober second look at this piece of legislation.

I have the privilege of representing one of the most ecologically diverse regions of Ontario—North America, for that matter. It's also probably the most diverse riding in Ontario as far as agriculture. I'm referring to our section of the Carolinian zone, that zone south of an imaginary line from Grand Bend to Toronto, oftentimes referred to as the banana belt. The moderate climate in this area and in my riding of Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant: Why is it part of the Carolinian zone? It's largely in my area due to the influence of Lake Erie. It stores heat in the summer and releases it in the winter.

As many will know, the Carolinian zone boasts a greater biodiversity of flora and fauna than any other ecosystem found anywhere in Canada. There's an estimated 2,200 species of herbaceous plants, including 64 fern, at least 110 species of grasses, 130 sedges, 70 species of trees. Many reptiles and amphibians make their home in this Carolinian zone. I'll list a few: the eastern spiny soft-shell turtle, the eastern fox snake, the queen snake, the Fowler's toad, and the eastern hog-nosed snake. We always refer to that as the puff adder. I know many years ago we caught one. It got loose in the car and about a month later—my mother was driving, actually—it crawled out from under the dashboard. Everyone was well, including the snake.

There are 400 species of birds in the Carolinian zone. That's more than half the species in Canada. One third of the species at risk found in Canada are associated with this Carolinian zone, and 65% of Ontario's rare plants are found in that region, plants including pawpaw, blue ash, flowering dogwood—something well-known in Norfolk county—the Kentucky coffee tree, yellow mandarin, swamp rose mallow, the eastern prickly pear cactus and the tulip tree. There's a very large tulip tree at the top of the hill at Normandale. I always make a point to take a look at that tree when I drive up that hill.

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Rare birds found in the Carolinian zone: The Acadian flycatcher, the tufted titmouse—one of my favourite terms—the Louisiana waterthrush, the prothonotary and the hooded warbler.

Two weekends ago, our local Long Point foundation auctioned off a Robert Bateman, an artist's proof of a prothonotary warbler. It was actually purchased by my father. I'm going to mention his name—I know someone's father was mentioned earlier this evening—Harry B. Barrett, someone who has dedicated his life to date, essentially, to conservation and habitat restoration. This fundraising group, the Long Point foundation, does point out, as part of their vision, that private landowners are doing their part by conserving habitats and rare species on their own properties. Conservation within this Carolinian zone depends on the commitment of both public and private interests. Again, much of the land is private land, apart from, say, in my area, the St. Williams Crown

Forest. Most of it is not crown land and hence it's so important to work with private landowners and to be proactive; certainly not to be punitive.

Within our area, I think of the flying squirrel. I know we used to have flying squirrels in our woods. I have not seen any. I haven't read anything in this legislation—I believe it was last year that we heard about the increased funding for research on the sexual habits of the flying squirrel. As I recall, Dalton McGuinty squirreled away about \$150,000 on that one last year. It was about this time last year.

Within the Carolinian zone, within the riding of Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant, we have the forest cover of Six Nations. You can see that from satellite images: the marshes at the lower Grand River; the Long Point marshes, of course; and Backus woods, 651 acres set aside on the Norfolk sand plain, all of which support a constellation, a true diversity of flora and fauna. Within that Backus woods—if you'll bear with me, I'll go through another list: the hooded merganser, the pileated woodpecker, the barren owl, which are primarily northern species which mingle with southern species in this very large tract of bush. They mingle with species like the Acadian flycatcher; the yellow-billed cuckoo; Dalton McGuinty's flying squirrels, as I mentioned; the eastern hog-nosed snake—that's the puff adder I was talking about; and the southern woodland katydid, a species I had actually never heard of until I did a bit of research on this.

In essence, the Backus woods alone—it's only 600 acres, the equivalent of a section, if you were out west—is unique, because that northern boundary of unique species overlaps with the southern boundary, and hence we have dramatic biodiversity within that relatively small area.

Last Saturday afternoon, I attended my niece's wedding. She got married in Backus woods. On this side of the House, the NDP were calling for hearings. Why not a day of public hearings in Backus woods? The facilities are there. Or just downstream, down Dedrick Creek, we could go to Bird Studies Canada in Port Rowan at Long Point. As far as hearings, that's my offer. That's what I'd like to put on the table for that part of southern Ontario.

I'd like to make mention of a bit of Ontario's Living Legacy, truly a legacy of the previous government. It reflected a commitment to protecting natural resources, protecting habitat and parks, and it was a reflection of the very clear commitment to public consultation. Those hearings covered northern Ontario, north-central Ontario—very significant citizen participation in that public consultation process.

In May 2000, I recall questioning the Minister of Natural Resources about progress at that point with respect to Ontario's Living Legacy, and I pointed out at that time that the Living Legacy strategy was the greatest increase in the history of Ontario's system of parks and protected areas. I pointed out something that's common knowledge today, that Ontario's Living Legacy was, in

my view, anyway, by far one of the best initiatives of any government to safeguard, to protect, natural heritage at that time. If this government would put a few more resources into what has been established north of here, it would protect that legacy for many generations to come.

The Living Legacy was a culmination of an extensive, extensive public consultation process. That was the strength, that was the anchor for that land use planning process, albeit most of it for crown land, both in central and mid-northern Ontario, back in the late 1990s. From that historic consultation process—I stress consultation—we developed Ontario's Living Legacy land use strategy. We also developed the Ontario Forest Accord, an accord that essentially put an end to what was referred to as the war in the woods, demonstrating a determination to bring together not only the forest industry and government, but also to bring together environmental groups that were involved in the north and get everybody around the same table to talk about a new approach, to achieve a new approach to protecting, conserving and ensuring the sustainability of not only the forest industry but the habitat in that part of Ontario.

The previous government recognized that due to immense bounty of our natural areas, it's natural that there is occasional conflict between various user groups. That's why it's important to get people around the table. That was a challenge that we faced, that we responded to directly. With a diverse group of interests teaming up to talk about this particular piece of legislation, it's important that one and all are given some consideration; in other words, consultation.

Property rights: I do wish to make mention of this in the few remaining minutes. One of the reasons that Dalton McGuinty is reviled in areas across rural Ontario and eastern Ontario is his inability to recognize and to respect the rights of rural landowners and farmers. In October 2006, this Legislature debated Bill 57, the Land Rights and Responsibilities Act, an act to restore property rights to the province of Ontario. I'm very pleased that the NDP and MPPs from my caucus voted in favour of that piece of legislation; Liberal MPPs voted against.

One of the concerns I'm hearing with regard to Bill 184 is that while we're pursuing a public good—in other words, attempting to protect endangered species, obviously a public good—we might be placing the cost on private landowners and farmers. Rather than asking these people and society to foot the bill, I favour having the public pay for projects that are in the public interest, a very simple user-pay principle. Private landowners are not expected to pay for hydro corridors across their land and should not have to pay for any government action for any other reasons that would essentially be a taking of the utility of their land. Compensation is in order when that happens.

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The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr. Tabuns: It's interesting to listen to the comments of the member from Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant. In many ways, his talking about Long Point and the Carolinian forest reminded me of my childhood. We spent a lot of

time in the summers when I was a kid going down to Long Point camping. It's an extraordinary wilderness, a gorgeous place.

In the larger picture, we need nature not only for the beauty and comfort that it gives us—and it gives us a huge amount of that—but because, frankly, the economic foundations of our society rest on a stable, healthy, dynamic biological world.

There's a chief executive officer, Ray Anderson, who runs a company called Interface that makes carpeting. Anderson actually was one of the pioneers in bringing in carpeting as a leased good rather than a sold good, a piece of merchandise. What he found was that doing it that way he was actually able to recycle his materials quite dramatically, quite substantially, and reduce his impact on the world. Anderson has had a chance to talk to business groups before, and he talks about human economy as a wholly owned subsidiary of nature, and he's right. If we don't take care of that foundation, things come apart for us, which is part of the reason that discussion or debate tonight is of consequence because, although I would say all support the idea of a new Endangered Species Act, there are concerns about flaws, failings, shortcomings in this act.

If we look at what's happening in the United States, the die-off of bees, which is having a huge impact on crops, we realize we don't stand alone. We depend on others. I'm sure I'll have another chance to speak.

Mr. Oraziotti: It's a pleasure this evening to respond to the comments of the member from Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant.

Bill 184, it has been said, has widespread support by Ontarians right across this province. I want to thank those individuals who participated tonight in the debate in lending their constructive comments to the process. On this side of the House, we're certainly listening to those comments. Consultation began almost a year ago, in May 2006, with landowners, with conservation organizations, with aboriginal communities throughout Ontario, with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, through public ads as well as on the Environmental Bill of Rights registry. Consultation has been going on, and it will continue to go on through this process. We're very pleased with that.

The reality is that the bill has not been updated in 36 years. There are aspects of this bill that are in place in Ontario today through the provincial policy statements, through the Crown Forest Sustainability Act and other pieces of legislation that encapsulate some portions of the legislation. This legislation is designed to more permanently codify and consolidate those pieces of legislation and move forward with the very important task that we have in this province of protecting our endangered species. Only 42 of an identified 176 are currently on the endangered species list. We need to ensure that we capture all 176 in a process that Ontarians can be proud of and ensure that we protect their habitat and protect those species so that they will be here for generations to come. Our government has introduced a litany of en-

vironmental protections throughout our mandate. We're proud of those, and we're going to continue to move forward with Bill 184.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr. Miller: It's my pleasure to add some comments to the speech from the member from Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant, who I know has over many years demonstrated concern for the environment in the province of Ontario.

The parliamentary assistant just referred to groups that have been consulted. He mentioned AMO, so I thought I should really quote from a letter from yesterday from AMO addressed to the Premier and the minister. In it—I won't read the letter—it says, "For these very serious reasons, AMO respectfully requests that the government conduct further discussions with municipal governments and key stakeholders before this bill is referred to a standing committee for consultation."

It goes on to say, "Good public policy would be better served by some additional time ...

"This is of the utmost importance to many of our members. AMO strongly encourages you to urgently consider our proposal for further discussion before proceeding with the next step in the legislative process."

So I think it's pretty clear that AMO is looking for an interruption in the process, but they may be satisfied by public consultations.

Another media release today from the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters and a whole group of other organizations: In it they state, "Resource groups across Ontario are warning that the provincial Liberal government is carelessly fast-tracking endangered species legislation that it knows will be a bureaucratic nightmare, expensive to implement and unlikely to result in the recovery of species at risk. In doing so, they are poised to duplicate mistakes made by the Chrétien government by ignoring the results of an independent audit of the national Species at Risk Act (SARA)."

They go on to say, "The independent audit, conducted by Stratos Inc. for the federal Department of the Environment, criticized the federal government for passing a bill that is chronically underfunded, overly prescriptive and badly misdirected."

I see I'm out of time, so I can't talk about the money aspect of that.

Mr. Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward–Hastings): I'm pleased—

Applause.

Mr. Parsons: Please, you're using up my time.

I'm pleased to rise to speak to this bill. I think that as I get older, I get more conscious of the fragility of life, whether it be human or whether it be nature. I can think of species in this country that used to exist in huge numbers and that now are diminished and virtually disappearing.

While I appreciate the comments and criticism of the bill that come from the other side, I recognize that we're the first government that has taken the initiative to protect animals that are at risk. At the same time, I think

we need to consider that while some animals are at risk because they're short numbers of them, there are other animals that exist in such huge numbers that they present a risk to nature and to our environment. I'm thinking specifically of cormorants.

Interjection: No.

Mr. Parsons: Yes, indeed. The cormorant, which was a native bird but in very few numbers in this province, is now overrunning parts of our country. I can speak for my community where they literally are devouring the fish. I respect the fish and I think there's a need for us to preserve the various species of them. They're destroying the foliage on our islands and they are driving other native birds out of the area. So as we are supporting this bill to protect those at risk, I call on the members from the other two parties to support our government and support my private member's bill to—

Interjection.

Mr. Parsons: Why, thank you, Mr. Miller. I do appreciate your support.

They are literally flying gillnets in my community: 75,000 of them come in and devour a pound of fish a day, taking more fish out of the Bay of Quinte than sport fishing, commercial fishing and poaching all put together. I think if we're concerned about the environment and we're concerned about animals at risk, we need to work together to protect the other bird species and the fish that these cormorants are presenting problems for.

Mr. Runciman: You're a government member, aren't you?

Mr. Parsons: I am at the moment. Do you know something I don't know?

Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds–Grenville): Well, I know that if you're in government, you should be able to get it done.

Mr. Parsons: I appreciate your support on it.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant has two minutes to reply.

Mr. Barrett: I appreciate the comments from various members on the presentation. I'm actually very proud to be part of a party that got the ball rolling back 30 years ago, in 1971. I was teaching environmental science in 1971, and the public opinion at that time was very much on top of the environmental movement. The first Earth Day commenced around that time, in 1970 or 1971. A great deal of ideas and a significant amount of legislation was passed then. I think the challenge now is to ensure that we have tactics and strategies to go beyond debating legislation and to really accomplish some of the goals inculcated in the legislation and the regulations, beyond rules and regulations and red tape and fining people.

I made mention briefly of the ALUS program. That stands for alternate land use services. It's a farmer-driven program developed in Manitoba by the Delta Waterfowl group, a program I think just as effective as some of the programs that have come forward from Ducks Unlimited, for example. Farmers, landowners, are compensated, are paid essentially for providing environmental services. It's truly a carrot approach as opposed to a punitive approach. It

has been analyzed and tested out. It meets Canada's international trade obligations. It complements the policies of the agricultural policy framework and the emerging environmental policy framework.

The Acting Speaker: It being close to 9:30 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

The House adjourned at 2121.

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

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

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

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