



Legislative Assembly
of Ontario

Third Session, 37th Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario

Troisième session, 37^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Tuesday 14 May 2002

Mardi 14 mai 2002

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

Hansard on the Internet

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

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

Index inquiries

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

Copies of Hansard

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

Le Journal des débats sur Internet

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

Renseignements sur l'index

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

Exemplaires du Journal

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



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 14 May 2002

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 14 mai 2002

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain):

Thousands of Ontario high school graduates have a very serious problem: they're waiting for acceptance letters while the critically underfunded universities and colleges they have applied to are waiting to hear from a government that has delivered nothing but vague promises.

Our colleges and universities are hanging out No Vacancy signs for this coming school year. This is as serious as it can get. Ontario parents are apprehensive about this government's ability to handle enrolment pressures. Due to demographics and fast-tracking of stressed-out students, enrolment projections in Ontario have been shattered. Applications to universities and colleges are up, but the real challenge comes in 2003 with the double cohort. Because of this government's bungling, students will pay the price. An estimated 20,000 qualified students—that's one in four who apply—will be turned away in 2003 because our schools do not have the money to accommodate them: to hire professors, build classrooms, laboratories and residences, and stock libraries.

This government has repeatedly promised to provide adequate space in colleges and universities for every qualified student, including the double cohort graduates, but they have done nothing to back up that promise. Our neglected post-secondary system has a lot of catch-up to do. Decades of underfunding by this government have left our institutions with the largest class sizes, the second-highest tuition and the smallest per-capita operating grants in the country. Time has run out. The future of thousands of Ontario students depends on the Premier acting now. It's time to take post-secondary education seriously and support Ontario's future by supporting Ontario's students.

ST MARYS MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): I rise to congratulate the council and staff of the town of St Marys on 10 years of no tax increases. This is a tribute to the hard

work of the St Marys council under the visionary leadership of Mayor Jamie Hahn.

Several weeks ago, council approved the 2002 budget that included increases in capital spending but no increases in property taxes. Mayor Hahn, who has also become known as Mr Zero, was quoted as saying he refused to dig deeper into the pockets of taxpayers.

It's also important to note that this milestone could not have been achieved without the co-operation and support of municipal staff. I commend St Marys' chief administrative officer, James Timlin, and the rest of the municipal staff for providing exemplary municipal administration.

St Marys is also benefiting from its fiscal responsibility and efficient administration. Last week, St Marys announced that they have issued over \$4 million worth of building permits and that they could get as high as \$20 million this year. Furthermore, St Marys has the highest percentage increase in population growth in Perth county over the past several years, according to recent numbers from Stats Canada.

I would encourage all members of this Legislature to visit St Marys and the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame. Drop in to their beautiful stone municipal building and congratulate them on being one of the most efficient municipal governments in the province.

ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): Yesterday, President Bush signed a new farm bill, described by the Wall Street Journal as one of the porkiest in history. Over the next 10 years, \$190 billion will be doled out to US farmers, an 80% increase.

Our farmers are already facing insurmountable odds in the global marketplace. With this hike the situation has hit catastrophic heights.

Farmers do not have the time to wait for WTO rulings. They need trade injury payments now. All your well-meaning words are meaningless if this government sits by while this industry dies.

Your throne speech called for an agricultural round table. Fine window dressing, but unbelievably there was no mention of money or reference to this long-awaited made-in-Ontario safety net program.

When asked if Ontario planned to step up to the bar like the Quebec government does, the new minister's constituency assistant, Ken Kelly, was quoted in the Valley Farmers Forum as saying, "You're mixing apples

with oranges.” That’s real nice. Meanwhile, Ministers of Agriculture in Ontario come and go like temps in a pool of office workers caught in a revolving door.

I’m calling on this government today to immediately and unilaterally provide payment to our farmers. The precedent was set in 1998 with the hog crisis, and you can do it again today, Minister.

Minister, waiting for the feds to act, I’ve got to tell you, is like waiting for hell to freeze over. Isn’t it about time you took the bull by the horns? Show some leadership and save the farmers of Ontario from destruction. Act now.

INVESTMENTS IN NORTHUMBERLAND

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): I rise in the House today to commend the investment made by our government in the county of Northumberland.

Last Friday I had the opportunity to announce two SuperBuild sports, culture and tourism partnership funding projects in my riding of Northumberland. The municipality of Trent Hills will receive almost a half-million dollars for a new pedestrian bridge over the Trent-Severn waterway to connect Ferris Provincial Park with the Trans Canada Trail. The money will also be used to help build a new 60-slip public marina in the village of Hastings and to redesign the entrance to the village of Warkworth.

In 1999, the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs carried out a pilot project in Campbellford on business expansion and retention. This project provided the community with a focus on tourism that was instrumental in the SuperBuild application. Similarly, the rural job strategy fund assisted the village of Hastings in planning for the marina.

The residents of Port Hope will also benefit from a SuperBuild initiative. The Capitol Theatre renovation project will receive in excess of one-half million dollars to renovate and expand the theatre and nearby Stevenson block. These renovations will ensure that Port Hope has a healthy, viable cultural centre for years to come. It is important that governments at all levels support worthwhile projects, particularly in small-town Ontario.

I applaud the efforts of both the local organizers and the government employees who helped make these projects a success.

WELFARE REFORM

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): For the past year I’ve been calling on the Ontario government to recognize that their punitive welfare policies were threatening the health and well-being of thousands of people across this province as these policies forced many vulnerable people deeper into poverty and despair. No story could better illustrate the horrible reality of that concern than the tragic circumstances that led to the death of Kimberly Rogers this past summer. Ms Rogers, an eight-months-pregnant woman living under

house arrest, died in a sweltering Sudbury apartment as a result of a welfare fraud conviction and the government’s determination to impose a lifetime ban on future assistance for those in her position.

Before her death, Ms Rogers bravely began a charter challenge of that policy, one that we believe needs to be carried forward.

While no one among us should condone welfare fraud, it is vitally important that the government recognize and care about the situation it leaves people in when it decides to impose its draconian lifetime ban. After her death we asked the minister to at least make an attempt to identify how many others may be in a similar position to Ms Rogers. They made no attempt whatsoever to do so.

What is abundantly and sadly clear is that the government’s priority is not to truly help people move from welfare to work. Indeed it would appear that their own goal is to kick as many people off the system as possible, regardless of their personal circumstances.

Ms Rogers’s death was truly tragic and should never have happened. With the coroner’s inquest set to begin this fall, I once again call on the government to review their welfare policy via a social audit, so that we can at least prevent further tragedies from occurring. Surely that’s the least they can do.

1340

LONG-TERM-CARE FUNDING

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): I rise today to thank the staff and residents of Shalom Village and Queens Garden Retirement Home in my hometown of Hamilton for collecting hundreds of signatures from friends and family members of residents in the more than 525 long-term-care facilities across Ontario. I’m going to give these hundreds of cards to Travis, who is going to take that over to the Minister of Health for me.

What the cards say and what Ontarians are saying to this government is that the over 60,000 Ontarians living in long-term-care facilities are older, frailer and sicker and require more care than ever before: 95% require assistance to get dressed; 94% require some assistance to eat; 63% suffer from dementia; 39% are aggressive; 56% have circulatory disease; 59% have musculoskeletal disabilities.

Government funding has not kept pace with this increased resident need. In fact, the current funding only allows four minutes to assist with getting up, washed, dressed and to the dining room; 10 minutes for assistance with eating; 15 minutes of programming per day; and one bath a week. You’ve got hundreds of millions of dollars to give in corporate tax cuts and not a penny for our seniors and disabled citizens who need help.

DURHAM REGION COMMUNITY CARE

Mr John O’Toole (Durham): I rise in the House today to pay tribute and respect to Durham Region Community Care on the occasion of their 25th anniversary.

While Community Care is fortunate in having outstanding staff, it's the volunteers who are the heart and soul of this organization. I'm referring to dedicated people like Chuck Brinkman, Mavis Brodie, Marlene Blain, Marilyn Wallace, Helen Nesbitt, Cameron Crawford, Mary Olaisen, Rika Wygerde and Carol Morrow, who have contributed more than 10 years of service to Scugog Community Care. They are among the volunteers being recognized at a reception tomorrow in Scugog.

Last week I was pleased to attend the 25th anniversary celebration in Clarington. Volunteers with over 20 years of service in Clarington included Enid Austin, Doreen Barrie, Muriel Burgess, Ron Burgess, Marina Canrinus, Marjorie Couch, Isabel Cox, Marilyn Dow, Marion Hoar, Joanne James, Pat Kidd, Betty McGregor, Betty McLenon, Anna Strike, Marg Tippins, Madlyn Wilcox, Alyce Yeo and Keith Yeo, and the list goes on.

Most importantly, Community Care serves 6,000 clients in the Durham region through the efforts of 2,100 volunteers and simply 85 staff. Most importantly, Community Care helps those who are ill or disabled to remain in our communities, close to their families and friends and their support systems.

I'd like to congratulate Community Care and its staff, and especially the volunteers, for their 25 years of dedicated service to the constituents in my riding of Durham, and I would like the House to recognize that today.

PREMIER'S ATTENDANCE

Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale): Ernie Eves and Mike Harris must be separated at birth. Both of them ignored warnings and made cuts that led to Walkerton. Both of them want to give Bay Street huge tax cuts at the expense of health care and education. Both of them want to support a handout to private schools. They also both love to skip work.

Mike Harris was more likely to be found at the golf course than at his desk, and we've all heard the stories about Ernie. Ernie is always late for cabinet. Ernie likes to skip caucus. Ernie skipped work so he wouldn't lose his table at Bigliardi's—Snobelen said so. I'm no doctor, but it sounds to me like Ernie Eves has an allergy to work. I put forward a bill that would help people like Ernie with their allergies. It was called the Executive Council Amendment Act. I'm sure the government members now regret voting against this bill. If they had passed it, it might have helped Ernie with his allergy to attending caucus. But instead, the Premier's allergy was acting up today. He snubbed them.

My bill was a quick remedy for attendance allergies. If a minister or Premier doesn't attend 60% of the question periods held during the session, they get docked \$100 for every session they missed. Now, that's the kind of cure Ernie Eves can understand, because we all know that he likes financial incentives. If your attendance allergy acts up, it punishes the greed gland and conditions the member into better attendance. Maybe our absentee Premier should get his allergy checked out.

HEALTH CARE INVESTMENTS

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford): As MPP for Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford, I am once again pleased to sponsor on Saturday, June 8, at the Royal Canadian Legion in Barrie, a pancake breakfast in support of women's cancer research, treatment and prevention at the Royal Victoria Hospital.

I'm also very proud of the health care investments in my riding. To mention a few: the new Royal Victoria Hospital MRI diagnostic equipment; a kidney dialysis centre; a women's imaging centre; the expansion of chemotherapy services; and long-term-care beds in such projects as Victoria Village, Grove Park Home, Wood Park Home and the IOOF.

RVH officials also tell me they are pleased with the progress of a regional cancer care clinic and the commitment made by Minister Clement. Also, RVH officials are pleased with the progress of the RVH expansion.

I also want to congratulate Royal Victoria Hospital and the doctor recruitment task force for their success in attracting physicians and the awards they have recently received for their efforts.

I will continue to work hard to bring the best health care services to my riding.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Just before we begin, we have seated in the Speaker's gallery, and today I'm very pleased to welcome to our Legislative Assembly, the Honourable Tony Whitford, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories, and David Hamilton, his clerk. Please join me in welcoming our special guests.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I would also ask all the members to join me in welcoming to the 37th Parliament the legislative pages:

Kelly Berthelot, Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey; David Bigg, London West; Emily Carter, Cambridge; Danielle D'Ignazio, Hamilton Mountain; Sebastian Dalgarno, Huron-Bruce; Ian Delves, Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford; Nicolas DesForges, Ottawa-Vanier; Emmett Fraser, Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot; Richard Gong, Oak Ridges; Vanessa Hazelwood, Timmins-James Bay; Melyssa Kerr, Prince Edward-Hastings; Marissa Leadbeater, Simcoe North; Emma Lehmborg, Thunder Bay-Atikokan; Rachael McKay, Scarborough East; Katie Millan, Kingston and the Islands; Katie Olthuis, Sault Ste Marie; Douglas Sarro, York South-Weston; Jean-Alexandre Sauv , Windsor-St Clair; Jalpa Shah, Brampton West-Mississauga; Naguib Shariff, Beaches-East York; Travis Weagant, Elgin-Middlesex-London; and Daniel Webster, Willowdale.

Please join me in welcoming our new pages.

WEARING OF HOCKEY JERSEYS

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Transportation): Mr Speaker, on a point of order: members of the Legislature know that I am rarely partisan in this place. As I represent the riding of Lanark-Carleton, the home of the Ottawa Senators, and was at their last couple of hockey games where they actually defeated their opponents, and as tonight we are celebrating the battle of Ontario, I want you to consider that I be allowed to wear this very fine sweater. I ask for unanimous consent that I wear this sweater and that the MPP who represents the Air Canada Centre, the home of the Toronto Maple Leafs, also be allowed to wear the sweater of the Toronto Maple Leafs, as a show of our support for both of these fine hockey teams.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): Mr Speaker, on the same point of order: I have nothing to wear because my team has been beaten. Montreal is out.

Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale): Mr Speaker, on the same point of order: As the MPP who has the honour of representing the Toronto Maple Leafs, Maple Leaf Gardens and the Air Canada Centre, I don't need any tacky displays like this to demonstrate my strong and loyal support for the Toronto Maple Leafs, and I think this display is beneath that minister in this House.

Interjections.

Mr Ted McMeekin (Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I just wanted to make the point: a famous song, The Maple Leafs for Ever.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Actually, that jersey, I think, would have fit the minister better than the present jersey he's wearing.

Is there unanimous consent? I'm afraid I heard some noes.

1350

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD
HIGHWAY ACT, 2002

LOI DE 2002 SUR L'AUTOROUTE
SIR JOHN A. MACDONALD

Mr Gilchrist moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 18, An Act to amend the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act to name Highway 417 the Sir John A. Macdonald Highway / Projet de loi 18, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aménagement des voies publiques et des transports en commun afin de nommer l'autoroute 417 Autoroute Sir John A. Macdonald.

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

The member for a short statement?

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): It came as a surprise to me to discover that the Macdonald-Cartier Freeway that we all thought was the alternative name for Highway 401 had never in fact been made a legal alternative to the highway name. So on further reflection, I thought, what better highway to dedicate in the memory of Canada's greatest politician and founding father than the highway leading to the city that wouldn't exist were it not for the decision, the counsel that had been given to Queen Victoria, to make our country's capital the fine city of Ottawa? It would probably be a town the likes of Renfrew or Arnprior. I think it's most appropriate that Highway 417 be renamed the Sir John A. Macdonald Highway in recognition of Canada's greatest politician.

REGISTERED PLAN EXEMPTION ACT
(RETIREMENT SAVINGS
AND EDUCATION SAVINGS), 2002

LOI DE 2002 SUR L'EXEMPTION
DES RÉGIMES ENREGISTRÉS
(ÉPARGNE-RETRAITE
ET ÉPARGNE-ÉTUDES)

Mr Cordiano moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 19, An Act to exempt registered retirement income plans and registered education savings plans from attachment / Projet de loi 19, Loi visant à soustraire les régimes enregistrés de revenu de retraite et les régimes enregistrés d'épargne-études à la saisie-arrêt.

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

The member for a short statement?

Mr Joseph Cordiano (York South-Weston): This bill really attempts to exempt deferred profit-sharing plans, registered retirement income funds, registered retirement savings plans and registered education savings plans from attachment, garnishment or other processes for the enforcement of debt. I think it's an important bill and I urge everyone to support it.

GOVERNMENT REPORT

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): On a point of order, Mr Speaker, and you'll determine whether it is, not the former Speaker, I know, over there: There's a secret report that the government has; you may be able to help me out with it. It's a secret report on ambulance dispatch services in Niagara, and apparently it got leaked to the news media—the government has been hiding it for several months now.

Could you determine whether or not the government is going to table that report in the House today so we can deal with it in an appropriate fashion?

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): You're right, as usual. It's not a point of order. The government can choose to table or not table.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener Centre): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Yesterday during debate I wrongfully accused the member for Timmins-James Bay of not knowing what he was talking about in reference to the federal government's several months ago granting funding for wet macular degeneration. In fact, the federal government has not given any funding toward wet macular degeneration. The person who did not know what he was talking about was the member for Prince Edward-Hastings.

MEMBER'S BIRTHDAY

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I think the members of the House should know that today is Gilles Bisson's birthday, and we should all wish him a happy birthday.

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

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

Hon Mr Stockwell: I move that, notwithstanding standing order 96(d), the following change be made to the ballot list for private members' public business: Mr Christopherson and Mr Sergio exchange places in order of precedence and, notwithstanding standing order 96(g), notice for ballot items 41 and 42 be waived.

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

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): It seems we have consent to move one motion respecting estimates, one motion respecting constituency week and one motion respecting Wednesday night meetings and, further, to move all three motions concurrently, with any debate on the motions restricted to 10 minutes combined total for each caucus.

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

Hon Mr Stockwell: I move that, notwithstanding standing order 58, the main estimates shall be tabled in the House no later than June 17, 2002, and that the standing committee on estimates be authorized to consider estimates for up to 70 hours in total, with not more than 7.5 hours allocated to any single ministry.

I further move that, notwithstanding standing order 6(a)(i), the House shall meet at its regularly scheduled meeting times on Tuesday, May 21, 2002, to Thursday, May 23, 2002, and that standing order 9(c) shall not apply to those days.

I further move that, notwithstanding the order of the House dated Monday, May 13, 2002, the House not meet on the evening of Wednesday, May 15, 2002.

The Speaker: Mr Stockwell moves that, notwithstanding standing order 58—

Interjection: Dispense.

The Speaker: The House leader for the third party wants to hear it.

Notwithstanding standing order 58, the main estimates shall be tabled in the House no later than June 17, 2002, and the standing committee on estimates be authorized to consider estimates for up to 70 hours in total, with not more than 7.5 hours allotted to any single ministry.

Mr Stockwell also moves that, notwithstanding standing order 6(a)(i), the House shall meet at its regularly scheduled meeting times on Tuesday, May 21, 2002, to Thursday, May 23, 2002, and that standing order 9(c) shall not apply to those days.

Mr Stockwell also moves that, notwithstanding the order of the House dated Monday, May 13, 2002, the House not meet on the evening of Wednesday, May 15, 2002.

Is there any debate?

1400

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): I start by saying that we obviously will be supporting the motion.

I find it unfortunate that, here we are, the largest province, and we still do not have a clear view of our finances. Every other province has presented a budget.

I remember in 1995, as soon as you were elected, you had a study done on the finances of the province that said we should have a budget presented before the fiscal year starts, we should have our finances in order, we should have one set of books. This province still has two sets of books. It was Mr Eves, Premier Eves, in 1995 who said that we were going to get rid of the two sets of books. These were all promises that were made to get our fiscal house in order. As I say, every single province now has a budget; we still do not have one.

I was frankly astonished yesterday that the Premier of this province, who only two weeks ago said, "We are going to proceed to sell off Hydro One"—had it not been for the courts, it would have been a done deal by now. We were asking him yesterday, "Tell us, how are you going to handle the proceeds from this sale of Hydro?" He had no idea. This is the largest privatization in the history of Canada, and the Premier yesterday said, "I'll take that under advisement. I'm not sure how the finances are going to be handled." This is the Premier who said, "Elect me as the leader because I know how to run the finances," and he did not have a clue yesterday about how the largest planned privatization in the history of this country was going to be handled. He said, "I'll have to

get back to you.” Think about it: for five and a half billion dollars you were going to sell Hydro One just a few weeks ago, until the court stopped you, and the Premier yesterday—and Hansard can confirm this—had no idea how the proceeds were going to be used. He said, “I’ll have to get back to you.”

So I say to the people of Ontario, you are looking at the people who say they know how to run the finances of this province. We still do not have a budget, and we are well into the fiscal year. It was in 1995 that the then-Minister of Finance, Mr Eves, said, “I’m going to fix all of this. I’m going to get rid of the two sets of books.” Here we are now seven years later and we still have two sets of books. The auditor said to us last year, “This is no way to run the province. You’re showing a billion dollars of expenditures in one fiscal year, and in another set of books a billion dollars in another year.” We still do not have a budget for the province of Ontario. You say, “Well, they went through a leadership.” Yes, you have the right to hold a leadership, but you also have an obligation to run the finances of the province, and so you should have planned for these things.

I would say to Ontarians that nothing could have shaken the faith of Ontario more than the Premier himself, who has just returned to us from Bay Street, whose job it was, I gather, to handle these big deals; he had no idea how \$5.5 billion of revenue was going to be handled. He said, “It will go to pay down the stranded debt.” That’s not the case. If this thing sells for \$5.5 billion, perhaps \$1.5 billion will go to pay down the stranded debt, and we forgive an enormous amount of annual revenue. He had no idea of that. It’s like this is a government that has suddenly taken over from another government. There are three new ministers; the rest are all the same. You simply inherited the books of, dare I say, the former Minister of Finance, Mr Flaherty, and Mr Harris, and you have no idea how you’re going to manage the finances.

Here we are and we are prepared to do this. We should have had the estimates by now, although I might add that the estimates are still prepared on a completely different basis than are the finances of the province. It’s shocking, and it’s different by billions of dollars. This is what Mr Eves promised several years ago he was going to get rid of.

The Liberal caucus and my leader are very prepared to co-operate with the government to allow the estimates to be tabled weeks later than they should have been, but Mr Eves should have prepared himself better. We should not be here in this Legislature with no budget. As I say, every other province in this country now has prepared its budget. It was Mr Eves himself who seven years ago said, “Yes, we’re going to now move to having budgets presented before the fiscal year starts.” I see in the speech from the throne, finally, eight years later, that he’s now promised it. We’ll get that next year. We should have had it this year. We should have had from the Minister of Finance and from the Premier a clear idea of how we are going to deal with Hydro One. As I say, the business community is shaking their heads today because just

yesterday we found that this huge undertaking by the province of Ontario—and it was Mr Eves who said, having thought about it for several months, “Yes, we’re going to proceed to sell Hydro One. We’re going to have an initial public offering.” We would now be seeing shares in Hydro One sold, had it not been for the court of this province. Yet that was going to proceed. I dare say that the Minister of Energy had an equally unclear view of how the finances were going to be handled.

I say to the people of Ontario that the new Premier, I gather, won the leadership race on the basis of saying, “Elect me because I’m the person who knows how to manage the finances of this province.” I would simply say this: here we are now. They were elected in 1995. The debt of this province—you can check the books—is \$20 billion higher than when they took office. The credit rating of this province is still two points lower than it was 10 years ago. Here we are, the only province without a set of books. It’s ironic because this is the same government that says if you’re a school trustee, you’re going to lose your job. You could be subject to fines if you don’t prepare a budget before the school year starts. In fact, you’ve got to prepare it three months before the school year starts. That’s the standard they hold trustees to. But here we are now, two months into the fiscal year, and we will not even see estimates until well into the third month of the fiscal year. Frankly, it’s a myth that this is a group that knows how to manage the finances of the province.

The auditor pointed out, “I’m not going to sign the books again if you keep proceeding with these multi-year funding programs. I want you to stop having two sets of books.” He pointed out in his last report that—as I say, we’re now seven years, heading into eight years, with this government with two sets of books. We also, I might add, are adding up a substantial amount of debt off our books. So, yes, we are co-operating with the government to allow them to change the way we run this place, to present estimates two and a half months after the fiscal year starts. I always say to my business friends, “If you tried to run a company like this, you’d be fired. If you were a public company, the shareholders would tell you, ‘Listen, I don’t want anybody running my company who can’t even prepare a fiscal plan before the fiscal year starts and who keeps two sets of books.’”

Here we are now two months into the fiscal year and we still do not have a financial plan. We are prepared to allow the government to delay for another, I gather, several weeks. I would just say that Ontario demands solid fiscal management of their resources. They pay large taxes. They are right to demand that we manage our finances properly. It was 1995, and it was Mr Eves himself who appointed a commission to look at how we should report our books, and still we do not have them reported the way he promised we would have in 1995.

So our party will be supporting this resolution. We will do what we can to help the people of Ontario have a clear look at the finances of this province. But I would simply say to the government something I always say to the public: don’t listen to what they say; watch what they

do. They say they know how to manage the finances, but watch how they mismanage the finances.

1410

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): First of all, New Democrats are supporting all three of these motions.

But I do for the briefest of moments want to comment on my pleasure at reading this morning's newspapers and discovering that some weeks ago the Prime Minister had called several by-elections across the country and, while commending all of the candidates—who campaigned, and campaigned hard, in Windsor West, down in south-western Ontario—being particularly pleased and wanting to congratulate Brian Masse, who was the New Democratic Party candidate, who won an astounding victory in Windsor West. Knowing Brian Masse and knowing the team that worked with him during that campaign, I'm confident that the folks down in Windsor West are going to be well represented.

I've indicated that we're going to support these three motions, and I've got tell you that it's not out of any desire to co-operate with the government. Quite frankly, it's out of our concern about the clear confusion that this government, its cabinet, indeed its caucus clearly is in, and it surprises us. First, what has been going on in government ranks for the last four and a half months? The leadership campaign—not much of one—certainly hasn't stirred any passion out there among the electorate. In view of what we understand to be the close and intimate relationship between the former Minister of Finance, now the Minister of Opportunity etc, and the new Minister of Finance, we wonder why there couldn't or wouldn't have been a cleaner flow, a cleaner transition between these two people, both of whom are people with talents that some might want to enumerate, both of whom are people who are committed to their former ministries and are committed to their current ministries.

As I say, it causes us some concern that in view of the rapport which those two personalities clearly have enjoyed historically, the mere fact that they sit beside each other—their caucus whip has chosen to seat the former Minister of Finance side by side with the new Minister of Finance, and I trust that it was at the request of both of them, so that, again, the transition from the former Minister of Finance, now the Minister of Opportunity etc, to the new Minister of Finance would be a smooth one and that the former Minister of Finance could be supportive of the new Minister of Finance, that he could offer her his advice from time to time and that she in turn would turn to him with the intimacy that they have, side by side, to call upon him for his guidance and his counsel.

I do note that for the second day now the two of them have not appeared simultaneously, and that may lead to speculation of Michael Jackson proportions, but I suspect there may be other reasons for it. Of course, far be it from me to speculate about that. It has been suggested that perhaps they're sharing duties, they're sharing responsibilities, that the closeness, indeed the affection,

between these two people permits them to effectively share the job.

Look, I'm here speaking for this caucus. We don't have concern about any antipathy between one caucus or cabinet member and another because we don't believe that could possibly exist. We for the life us couldn't believe there is any discord or lack of unanimity among the government cabinet, because we know that these people are committed to reaching consensus and to cabinet discipline. Indeed, that cabinet discipline, I read, was demonstrated yesterday evening at George Bigliardi's, over on Church Street, where the Premier and his Minister of Opportunity etc enjoyed a tête-à-tête over what I know to be very good red meat, and undoubtedly a bottle of Niagara wine. I say to the folks in the press gallery, there's an FOI to submit: last night's rendezvous at Bigliardi's. My interest is in, (1)—

Mr Gregory S. Sorbara (Vaughan-King-Aurora): Who paid for it?

Mr Kormos: Of course, who paid for it, and (2) whether in fact it was Niagara wine, or at the very least Pelee Island.

The problem here, and reference has been made to it already, is that these guys simply haven't got their act together. In four and a half months of clearly anticipating this moment—look, standing order 58 is there. It acknowledges that you may not have a budget prepared in time, but then it says, "Well, the solution"—and these are the standing orders that were so thoroughly reviewed by the now caucus whip, and revised and amended. So surely when the government reviewed these standing orders, they also addressed standing order 58, and they contemplated scenarios where a budget might not be available and they created the scenario wherein standing order 58 requires them at least to table estimates.

I'm not suggesting anything that would amount to acts of culpability on their part. I'm not suggesting that they're refusing to table estimates. I'm not suggesting that they're refusing to produce their budget in a timely way. I'm not suggesting anything akin to contempt of this Legislature. I'm suggesting incompetence. I'm suggesting a clear inability to do the very fundamental and basic work, which has been done before. The templates are there; the defaults are already in the PCs, spread throughout a huge Ministry of Finance. I'm suggesting incompetence.

I'm also suggesting some real concern. Look, government caucus members clearly are coming back to Queen's Park after a weekend in their ridings, those who are inclined to still return to their ridings on weekends—because I'm convinced that more than a few find that increasingly difficult, and increasingly attractive to book themselves into events, oh, let's say here in Toronto or in some remote part of the province, as far away from their constituents as they can possibly locate. But government caucus members clearly are coming back to Queen's Park on Monday mornings or afternoons somewhat bruised. I know what people are telling them, because people are telling them the same things that people are telling us.

People are telling government backbenchers that they don't want to see Ontario Hydro privatized, neither the transmission lines nor the generating stations. People are telling Tory backbenchers and Tory cabinet ministers, those who are inclined to listen, those who will step out of the limousine and step into the Tim Hortons or the local lunch bar and listen, the same thing they're telling us: that the people of this province want to see a publicly owned, publicly controlled Ontario Hydro system persist, survive, improve so that people can continue to receive electricity at cost here in Ontario, so that jobs can be protected, so that people—consumers, small folks, little people, people like the seniors who live in my riding, who had the daylight hours kicked out of them during the winter last year because of huge natural gas increases, who now are witnessing increases in kilowatt rates for electricity that are exactly what the leader of the New Democratic Party told the public three months ago and six months ago and nine months ago, that they're going to be double and triple what the historical rates were for that same kilowatt hour of electricity.

So I understand the disarray in government and among government benches. I understand that notwithstanding the strong affection that the former Minister of Finance and the new Minister of Finance clearly have for each other and have demonstrated, somehow they still haven't been able to get their act together.

So our support of these motions is not based so much on co-operation as it is on pity and on the fact that at some point, somebody has to show some kindness to this Tory government. So this is one of those gratuitous acts of kindness where we're trying to bring some smiles to the rather glum, long faces that have been appearing in this Legislature since last Thursday, the date of the throne speech included, maybe bring a little bit of sunshine into the lives of those government members, and certainly give them a little respite from the incredible pressure of a standing order that would require a budget—what?—only four and a half months after the House last sat.

1420

Hon Mr Stockwell: Gratuitous acts of kindness—I'm certainly not used to them from the House leader for the third party.

Having said that, we get back to work here and I think everyone was looking forward, including the Liberals and this caucus, to putting in some time, getting the work done, putting our shoulder to the wheel. Surprisingly, here we have the third party coming back to this negotiation. We waived standing order 58, I admit, because the estimates were delayed simply for a change in finance ministers and the process that took place during the inter-session. I think any reasonable person would have a reasonable understanding of the change of finance ministers and the process the party went through that created this situation.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): Especially if you don't sit for five months.

Hon Mr Stockwell: The member opposite is catering about the leadership process and how long it took. That's the process that was put in place.

I guess the surprising thing is, what did you think would be coming out of the NDP and their—what was it?—"gratuitous act of kindness"? The first thing they wanted to negotiate when we talked about standing order 58 and how we'd move it out of the way was, "Well, we've got to start negotiating how many days off we get." Here we are, shoulder to the wheel, ear to the ground, nose to the grindstone and Mr Kormos, my friend from the third party, says, "We, the NDP, are adamant that we need more time off." So they came here and said, "Boy, I'm not sitting at nights. I'm not sitting Wednesday nights. I'm not going to sit nights in constituency week. We're not working, for heaven's sake."

So here we have it today, we put a motion before the House that allows us to not sit nights in constituency week, not sit nights on Wednesdays. Why? Because the first thing you want to negotiate is time off. You complain and wail about getting back to this place and the first thing your union mentality says is, "Let's negotiate time off. Let's not go back to work. Let's get out of here. There's no point in working for the public, no point in getting down to business. Let's get out of here and go home." So I was surprised, Mr Speaker, shaken and surprised. The same folks who tell us, "We've got to go in and get back to work," are the first guys at the table negotiating time off.

Interjection.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I didn't even mention the Liberals. I made an agreement not to mention the Liberals, because they wanted to work, I admit. The mistake was the nine members, lowering that limit to be an official party. We know next time what we're going to do, when they come back with four members, I'll tell you. We'll have to make it low enough that you don't qualify but the Liberals do, because we'll need an opposition somewhere.

I say to the member for Scarborough-Agincourt, weren't you part of an administration in 1990 talking about fiscal management and sobriety of budgeting and factual numbers? Weren't you part of that administration in 1990 that went on the campaign trail declaring a \$60-million surplus? And lo and behold, after you lost the election, the poor socialists went into office and that \$60-million fiscal surplus that you said you had was a \$3.5-billion debt. Now, is that what you're talking about when the public deserves fiscally sound assessments and fiscally sound budgets? "I would have presumed so," he says; "They would have fired the lot." Well, do you know what? In 1990, after that, they did fire the lot. You got fired in 1990 because of the fiscal improprieties that you took with respect to the budget.

So yes, we're taking our time. We're going to set the estimates properly. We're going to do a good budget and we're going to balance another budget for the first time in the history of the province of Ontario—more succes-

sive balanced budgets under a Conservative government of Mike Harris, and under a Conservative government under Premier Ernie Eves.

The Speaker: We will do the motions separately.

Mr Stockwell moves that notwithstanding standing order 58, the main estimates shall be tabled in the House no later than June 17, 2002, and that the standing committee on estimates be authorized to consider estimates for up to 70 hours in total, with not more than 7.5 hours allotted to any single ministry.

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

Mr Stockwell has also moved that notwithstanding standing order 6(a)(i), the House shall meet at its regularly scheduled meeting times from Tuesday, May 21, 2002, to Thursday, May 23, 2002, and that standing order 9(c) shall not apply to those days.

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

Finally, Mr Stockwell moves that notwithstanding the order of the House dated Monday, May 13, 2002, the House shall not meet on the evening of Wednesday, May 15, 2002.

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

EDWARD GOOD

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): Mr Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent for each party to speak for approximately five minutes on the passing of Mr Edward Good.

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

Hon Mrs Witmer: I rise today on behalf of the government to join all members of the Ontario Legislature in recognizing the passing of an esteemed former member of this assembly who passed away in my community of Waterloo on March 28, 2002.

The headline in the March 30 edition of the Kitchener-Waterloo Record read, "A fine, upstanding gentleman in all things"; Former Waterloo North MPP and founder of funeral home, Edward Good dies at 83."

"A fine, upstanding gentleman": those of us in this place and those of us who knew Ed Good on a personal level can attest to the accuracy of these words.

He served as the representative for Waterloo North from 1967 to 1977, the riding I was proud to be elected to in 1990.

He was born and grew up in Kitchener. He served our military and our country with distinction. He attained the rank of second lieutenant with the Royal Canadian Artillery during the Second World War.

Following the war, he founded the Edward R. Good Funeral Home in Waterloo in 1946 and he maintained his daily business participation for more than 50 years. That thriving business is now managed by his son Paul, along with his long-time business partner, Jim Erb.

I can tell you that Edward Good was known as an individual who always took the time to listen to all points of view and then make well-informed decisions. He was well noted for his integrity, his strength of character and his conviction. He embodied those qualities that we all aspire to be remembered for.

Indeed, former Ontario Liberal leader Robert Nixon said, "I thought the world of Ed Good. He was a very effective spokesman on all provincial issues and was well respected by the people in all political parties."

Another long-time friend and former member of this place, Mr Jim Breithaupt, who served as MPP for Kitchener Centre, said, "Good made a strong, lasting impression on just about everyone he met. He was a fine, upstanding gentleman in all things, and a very effective MPP for Waterloo North."

Our community has a well-regarded reputation as a generous and inclusive community, a community founded by hard-working, honest and resourceful entrepreneurs. In fact, it is a community where the contributions of community-spirited individuals like Edward Good have had a lasting and profound impact and established the foundations for the wonderful quality of life that we enjoy today.

Mr Good was widely known for his service as president of the Waterloo Lions Club, the Central Ontario Funeral Directors Association and as a member of the Royal Canadian Legion.

He won three elections in a row to this House with relative ease, a challenging feat that I think all of us here can appreciate, and during that time he was in the opposition benches. He made himself an expert on municipal law and served as the critic for municipal affairs for most of his time here.

Mr Good's commitment and dedication were always to do the best in serving the people who had elected him. He represented those people in my community with pride, dignity and effectiveness.

I was able to attend Mr Good's funeral and I heard about the tremendous impact that he had on our region as a father, as a friend, as a member of provincial Parliament and as a business person.

Mr Good was predeceased by his wife, Rhea, in 1997, and our sympathy is extended to his three sons, Paul, David and John, as well as to his five treasured grandchildren, Cheryl, Heather, Steven, Aaron and Joshua.

His record of outstanding public service to our community and to this province will always be remembered.

1430

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke): I am pleased to rise on behalf of the Ontario Liberal caucus and Dalton McGuinty to join in the tribute so eloquently begun by my friend the Minister of Education in tribute to the late Edward R. Good.

We're going to be doing a fair bit of this in the next few days, because we've lost five former colleagues in the intersession, and this might be a good time, I suppose, for me to say to all assembled that this day will come for all of us. You know, we might ask ourselves the question,

what is it we would like to be remembered for in this place decades from now when some successor Legislature will do what Mrs Witmer has done so ably just a few moments ago? I want you to think about that. I think we should all think about that. I'm sure as politicians with healthy egos we do, from time to time.

I'm the only one left who served with Edward R. Good, and I must say when I think of Ed Good I think about hard work, good sense and incandescent, luminous integrity. He was, as our friend from Waterloo has just observed, a really wonderful person, not just here but in his community.

I was thinking as I prepared these remarks this afternoon that he was an undertaker. In my experience over eight Parliaments we've had a relatively small number of funeral directors. We've got two present now: one from our bench, and my friend from Peterborough who is a step or two removed from the business. In my experience, the undertakers I've known here by and large were very good politicians and members of the Legislature.

Ed Good sat about where my friend Phillips now sits. There was something else that I think he did probably better than anyone I know, and I say this as both a private member in the opposition and as a former minister. Ed Good was the ablest legislator I have ever known. He actually took the time and the care to go through legislation very, very assiduously.

He used to sit where our friend Phillips is now seated, and Darcy McKeough, the legendary Duke of Kent, minister of just about everything in the 1970s, sat about where Mrs Witmer is now seated. I can remember the two of them over many hours working their way through very complicated municipal legislation. I was a new member sitting on the back bench and I was astonished at this exercise, because the minister had obviously read the bill, but so had the opposition critic, with a greater care and attention than I have ever recalled or seen in any other opposition member and, quite frankly, with a greater care and a greater attention than I saw in most ministers, myself included. At the end of those exercises there always was the Eddie Good amendment, or two or three. He was an extremely able legislator. It is a breed long gone, but as a new member sitting here I was always struck by how careful he was in that not always rewarded exercise.

In caucus he was a man of straight talk and good judgment. It was, as I think about his career, a real tragedy: though he won, as Mrs Witmer rightly observed, three easy elections to this Legislature, he served 10 years in opposition. He would have been an absolute gem in government. He is the kind of person that political parties want to recruit and need to recruit to this business.

I am honoured to stand in my place today and say, as a former colleague and friend, that we extend to his family and we join the government caucus in conveying to his family our thanks for his illustrious public service, not just here but in the theatre of war in Europe in the 1939 to 1945 period and in so many community activities,

whether it was the Lions Club, the Legion or the business community.

Edward R. Good: hard work, good judgment, incandescent integrity. I hope someone decades from now can say a quarter as much of me and probably the rest of us.

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): I am honoured to be able to speak on behalf of the New Democratic Party caucus in commemoration of Edward Good, in commemoration of his life, which was a full one, and included the terms here in this Legislature on behalf of his riding of Waterloo North.

I've got tell you that, unlike the previous speaker who acknowledges having been here in the Legislature as an elected member at the time when Mr Good sat, I had to rely upon others who have sat in this caucus. I called Mel Swart and spoke with Mel about Ed Good, and Mel spoke highly of Ed Good. He spoke highly of Ed Good as a member of the Legislature; he spoke highly of Ed Good as a human being, as a personality, as a person who was honourable and as a person who had regard for the practices of this House and for this institution.

I spoke with Elie Martel, and Elie Martel recalls Ed Good as a good MPP. Indeed, after pausing, he had occasion to note that he had never had a fight with Ed Good, at least not a bad fight. In view of the personality of the source, to wit, Elie Martel, to speak of a former colleague as having been one with whom he may have fought but it wasn't a bad fight certainly put Ed Good into a rather exclusive and indeed very small club.

As well, I took a look at Mr Good's—as he referred to it then and as has been referred to—maiden speech. Ed Good spoke proudly and enthusiastically about his community and the residents of his community, a community that was growing as a centre for the university that had been located there. The university was maturing and growing. I was so pleased, when reading the Hansard, when reading the transcript of Mr Good's remarks during his so-called maiden speech, to hear the frequent references he made to the New Democratic Party. He spoke about the NDP campaign, of course, which he had to take on during the course of his first election in 1967. The maiden speech wasn't until 1968. But he spoke of the New Democrats' campaign for affordable housing and for rental controls. He spoke of the New Democrats' campaign to change the voting age to 18. Mind you, he didn't speak uncritically of those New Democratic Party positions but he certainly, and it's clear from a reading of the speech, emphasized them.

Also understand that Mr Good was a member here in an era which was far different than it is now. I'll not speak to the obvious, but I'll speak to this and this alone. It was a time when MPPs, be it Edward Good or Elie Martel or Mel Swart or others to whom we are paying tribute this week, did not have the budgets and the staff, either here at Queen's Park or in their communities. Indeed, when Ed Good did constituency work, it was more than likely at his kitchen table, over the home phone. And when Ed Good and others of his era did constituency work, it was dependent upon enlisting the support

of a spouse—in his case, his wife—and, as often as not, kids as well, if they were old enough to answer the phone and, at the very least, take messages. That's true. These were people who did constituency work and built the fidelity their voters had for them in their communities in a way that required incredible tenacity and, quite frankly, a fortitude that many of us might find daunting were we required to do it the same way without the supports we have.

1440

Mention has been made of his early history, his distinction as a lieutenant in the Canadian army during the course of the Second World War, his involvement in the community and so many of those things that make communities stronger and healthier—in the Lions Club where he was a past president; in his profession as a funeral home director-operator-owner; with the Central Ontario Funeral Directors Association; elected three times to this Legislature—cut from a very unique cloth and I say worthy of the respect that is inherent in the tributes being paid him today.

So on behalf of New Democrats, I salute Ed Good as a good Ontarian, a good Canadian, a strong entrepreneur, a good husband and a good father. We extend our sympathies to his children, his grandchildren, others in his family, his business colleagues and, I am sure, his many, many friends in Waterloo and beyond.

The Speaker: I will ensure the very fine comments of the members get sent to the family.

ORAL QUESTIONS

HYDRO ONE

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My questions today are for the Minister of Energy. Minister, one of the most important reasons that you and other members of the government are telling us that you have to sell Hydro One is to pay down the stranded debt. Yesterday, you said that if you sell Hydro One for \$5.5 billion, for example, all of the proceeds would go to paying down the stranded debt. Last week, our party received a briefing from officials in the Ministry of Finance. You will be interested to learn that they told us that the vast majority of the sale proceeds will not in fact go to paying down the stranded debt. They said that if Hydro One were sold for some \$5.5 billion, roughly only \$1.5 billion would be applied toward the stranded debt. Can you tell us who it is we should believe, the Ministry of Finance officials or yourself?

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): There's stranded debt. There's residual stranded debt. There's debt that Ontario Hydro has acquired over the last number of years. That debt has accumulated on the books. That debt was acquired by Ontario Hydro. We have said all along that the proceeds from this sale will be applied to that

debt. Whether it's residual stranded debt or stranded debt is academic. It has to be paid. We've said the proceeds will be applied to pay down their debt.

Mr McGuinty: You're changing your tune on this, Mr Minister. You have been saying all along, and other members of the government and the Premier have been saying all along, that the principal purpose behind selling Hydro One is to pay down stranded debt. There is a difference. If you're not aware of the difference, then you'd better quickly talk to your officials and find out about it. If you don't believe the Ministry of Finance officials, perhaps you will listen to the Provincial Auditor, who also says that you cannot use the proceeds from the sale of Hydro One in the way that you are purporting to. It will not in fact be applied to reducing the stranded debt. Only a very small percentage, a fraction, of the proceeds will be applied to stranded debt. This is a very important part of the business case that you're trying to make to the people of Ontario.

So tell us again why it is that suddenly now you are changing your tune. You've told us that the very reason for selling Hydro One was to pay down stranded debt. Now for some reason you are telling us that you cannot or will not in fact do that. Tell us why you've changed your tune.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I ask the member the difference between residual stranded debt, stranded debt and acquired debt by Ontario Hydro. It's all debt and it all has to be paid. Whether you pay residual stranded debt or stranded debt with the proceeds matters not; it must be paid. We've said all along that the proceeds will be applied to the residual stranded debt, stranded debt or whatever debt Ontario Hydro has created.

I say to the leader of the official opposition, if you see a difference between residual stranded debt, stranded debt or other debt, stand up in your final supplementary and tell me what the difference is.

Mr McGuinty: Minister, I just want to remind you of what you said yesterday in response to questions during the scrum. They asked you if all of the \$5.5 billion would go toward stranded debt, and you said that yes, it would all go toward stranded debt.

The purpose for selling Hydro One, you've been telling us, is to pay down the stranded debt. Stranded debt apparently is this huge issue, it's a runaway train that's going to run us down—some \$21 billion in debt, and the reason we've got to sell Hydro One is to pay down the stranded debt.

Why is it that today you're singing an entirely different tune? I thought the reason behind selling Hydro One was to pay down the stranded debt, but it turns out that only a fraction of the proceeds will be applied toward stranded debt. Why are you changing your tune when it comes to the purpose behind selling Hydro One?

Hon Mr Stockwell: Mr Speaker, the reason he didn't answer the question is that there is no difference, none whatsoever. I appreciate the fact that the member for Scarborough-Agincourt is—you should have had this

question, because he doesn't know what he's talking about.

The difference between stranded debt, residual stranded debt and debt acquired from Ontario Hydro is absolutely nothing. It's all debt acquired by Ontario Hydro. This government has said, "If sold on an IPO or an income trust, the proceeds from that sale, or income trust or lease or whatever, will be applied to Ontario Hydro debt." Whether it's debt, stranded debt or residual debt, it all has to be paid.

The only thing you're arguing, I say to the Leader of the Opposition, is whether you pay your MasterCard or Visa. It matters not. It all has to be paid. We said we will pay the debt. Stranded, residual or any other, there is no difference whatsoever. You're simply splitting hairs.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): New question.

Mr McGuinty: Let's continue with the same minister on the same subject matter and highlight the total absence of a business case for selling off Hydro One.

We've now made it perfectly clear that in fact the minister has no intentions of using all the proceeds to be applied against the stranded debt. That is now clear.

Here are some very important facts, Minister: Hydro One turns out to be a real money-maker. It's a cash cow. During the last three years, Hydro One earned us over \$1.3 billion net: \$656 million in dividend payments and \$668 million in payments in lieu of taxes. So can you help us and Ontario families better understand the business case behind selling off a most valuable piece of our infrastructure that during the course of the last three years alone brought in over \$1.3 billion?

Hon Mr Stockwell: Only the leader of the official opposition would classify a company that has \$38 billion in debt and \$17 billion in assets as some kind of cash cow.

We consulted to ensure the efficient supply of energy to be competitive in the international marketplace; to provide the necessary capital for restructuring the generation and distribution of power in the province of Ontario; to bring private sector discipline to Hydro One and prevent, I also emphasize, any possibility of the recurrence of a current \$38-billion debt while eliminating it. To achieve these goals, we will also protect the consumer.

Hydro One, through political decision-making over the last number of decades, has been allowed to run amok: \$38 billion of debt; \$17 billion of assets.

Yesterday the member opposite suggested, "Why don't you do the easy thing?" The problem is that for three or four decades governments and politicians have been trying to do the easy thing, and this is the kind of mess we're in. We need to make a decision and protect the consumers, apply the private sector market to it and have a firm supply of power to the public at a reasonable cost. We will go to whatever lengths we have to to ensure this necessary product is produced in Ontario.

1450

Mr McGuinty: Minister, you will go to whatever lengths you have to to give expression to your narrow

ideology and to help out your pals on Bay Street. That's what this is all about.

Where's the business case? Do you know what you told the folks over at the Kitchener-Waterloo Record? "He admits the government has no study or report on how much money will be saved with a private sector owner over a publicly owned utility." That's you.

Something you also mentioned in your response was that one of the other reasons that we've got to sell off Hydro One is so that we can have some money to invest in capital improvements. Take a look at the facts once again. You should know that Hydro One has been continuously investing large sums of money in capital improvements. In fact, during the course of the past three years, they've invested over \$1.5 billion in capital improvements. Hydro One is not only turning a substantial profit year in and year out; they are investing in our future by continuing to upgrade our single most important piece of infrastructure.

So tell me again, Mr Minister, if the sale proceeds are not going to be applied to the stranded debt, and if there is in fact enough money for capital improvements, and if it's turning an annual profit, what's the business case for selling off our Hydro One?

Hon Mr Stockwell: Back to the original question, debt is debt. The money is owed and it was incurred by Ontario Hydro. We have committed to take the proceeds to pay the debt that was incurred by Ontario Hydro. Why don't you listen to the Power Workers' Union? That's the union that told us, told the province and told my friend over here that previous governments didn't invest in the infrastructure. We're billions and billions of dollars behind in maintaining the infrastructure, and if we continue to be behind, we're going to be in a colossal fix in the next couple of years. They also suggested they're up to three quarters of a billion dollars behind in training new staff to maintain the infrastructure.

Let me tell my friend opposite that the fact is simply this: this company has been badly managed for three or four decades, it has serious debt, it has very little in the way of assets, and the public needs a good supply of power. The best approach to take is to do what this government has said it would do. It will consult, it will listen to the people of the province of Ontario and it will act. It will act decisively with the consumers at the top of mind. No one else but the consumer will be at the top of our agenda.

Mr McGuinty: Minister, once more, the problems connected with Ontario Hydro are connected with generation, not with transmission. We haven't seen this kind of gross fiscal incompetence since your government sold off the 407. This is what you had to say in that regard more recently. In fact, on February 28, 2002, you said, in reference to the 407, which has perfect application with respect to your proposal to sell off Hydro One, "It's like selling your horse to buy a cart. There's no value to this. In fact, you put yourself further behind."

What we are waiting for is the business case. You have failed to make a business case supporting the sell-

off of Hydro One. We've now established that only a fraction of the proceeds will be applied to the stranded debt. We've also established that Hydro One is bringing in hundreds of millions of dollars annually to the treasury to help support programs like health care and education. We've also established that Hydro One is maintaining ample improvements in capital projects.

Why don't you just admit that this has nothing to do with a business case made out on behalf of the people of Ontario? This has everything to do with your narrow ideology and your plan to supply your pals on Bay Street.

Hon Mr Stockwell: They spent months telling us that we didn't consult enough. They spent months telling us that we had to hear from the public. Their suggestion at the time was, "You're moving too quickly and this is all for your Bay Street friends with respect to the IPO." We have now said that we'll bring a piece of legislation into the House. I went out and consulted in 10 cities. We've undertaken a strike committee to go out and consult, and you tell us, "No, you shouldn't do that, either."

The fact remains, we have suggested to you in the opposition and to the public that we are prepared to consult and hear their concerns and issues. We will consult by committee. I have consulted. When the time comes, when the legislation passes this House, we will take a decision. I don't think you can accept the fact that we're consulting. We're damned if we don't consult and damned if we do consult. The one who's got few positions on this is you. One moment you're telling us, "Go out and consult," and the next moment you're telling us, "Make a decision." You come to a conclusion what your policy is as a party and tell us what you think we should do, because we're going out to consult, we're talking to the public and we're going to take a decision.

ELECTRICITY MARKET PRICE STUDY

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Deputy Premier. Deputy Premier, the Globe and Mail revealed today the secret electricity price study that undermines your entire—

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West): Big suck.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Please take a seat. Member for Windsor West, withdraw that, please.

Mrs Pupatello: I withdraw. I meant to say—

The Speaker: Sorry for the interruption.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Thank you very much. I heard her. I'm the one who needs to hear. She withdrew it, thank you very much, and I can't hear when you're yelling when she's trying to withdraw it. I thank the member for Perth-Middlesex; I will be the one who needs to hear her.

Sorry for the interruption.

Mr Hampton: My question is for the Deputy Premier. The Globe and Mail revealed today the secret electricity price study that undermines your entire Hydro privatization scheme. For 18 months your government tried to cover up this study because it reveals the harsh truths

about Hydro privatization that you don't want the public to see. I can quote from the study: massive rate hikes of up to several thousand dollars per megawatt hour, Hydro electricity rates that will be higher than under a public utility system, and electricity rates driven higher because privatized Hydro profiteers will sell as much power as possible into American markets.

Minister, why did your government withhold this important study of Hydro deregulation and privatization from the people of Ontario for 18 months?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): The Minister of Environment and Energy.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): Let's be clear. There were four studies. Three studies were by us, which we released immediately. The study you speak about wasn't contracted by us, it was contracted by the IMO. That was the company that asked for the study to be done. The proponents who did the study told the IMO and us and the privacy commissioner that it contained very important financial information they didn't want released. They requested that it not be released. The reason it was released recently was because the study is now two years old. The financial information that was provided in the study isn't as integral or relevant today as it was when the study was done.

Furthermore, with respect to the study, the study suggested that in those American markets where the spikes were, they were there because they were undersupplied. The difference between those American markets that were undersupplied and the Ontario market is that we are oversupplied. Because we're oversupplied with power, we will not have the same kind of spikes that will drive the price up in that range.

I say to the member opposite, we have continued to bring power on line. We're going to have Pickering up, we're going to have Bruce up, we're going to have another plant out in Sarnia, because we want more supply which will drive down the price, and—

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

Mr Hampton: The minister must be confused about his studies because this is a study of electricity markets in the US Midwest—Michigan, Ohio, Illinois—and in the US northeast—New York, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts. This isn't a study about California; this is a study about the very states where your hydro privatization scheme for Hydro One would want to move more electricity to. The study is very explicit.

The minister gave something revealing in his answer. This is the minister who is supposed to be looking out for the public of Ontario. This is the minister who is supposed to be making sure that the people of Ontario don't get gouged. But what does he cite as his reason for not turning over the study? He wants to protect the corporations. He wants to protect their competitive ability. Minister, that's the whole problem here: from day one you have been looking out for your Bay Street friends

and you've been trying to keep the information from the public of Ontario. That's the whole problem.

My question to you is this: since this information has just become available to the public, will you cancel your plans for further deregulation and privatization so people have a chance to—

The Speaker: The member's time is up. Minister?
1500

Hon Mr Stockwell: It wasn't my study; it wasn't the government's study. I don't know why you're laughing. It was a study by the IMO; you know that, IMO. It wasn't a government study. The freedom of information request—and I'll spell it for him: I-M-O—came through them. They had sensitive information in there.

I spoke about the northeast and the Midwest because at the time the study was done they had a supply problem; today they don't. They built more generation in those areas so they built up their supply, and so they don't have the same supply problem that caused those spikes.

The fact remains that we didn't have that study. It wasn't done for us. The request was made to provide all the studies done for the government. We released three studies; the fourth they asked for wasn't commissioned by us. We had it; it wasn't commissioned by us. The company that commissioned it, the company that did it, said, "It's got financial information. We don't want it released." That's a reasonable thing to say. So the IMO released it April 30, I believe, when the information wasn't as integral to their operations. It's not an unreasonable way to do business. It's not an unreasonable approach.

Furthermore, the information in that study dictates what we thought all along: with a good supply of hydro—

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

Mr Hampton: In fact, I raised those very questions in this Legislature. I put it to your colleague, your former Minister of Energy, that in fact all of these things were being predicted by situations elsewhere. I pointed out to your Minister of Energy that in fact last summer Ontario's demand for electricity during a very hot summer exceeded the supply, and your government said from the beginning, "Oh, this is all nonsense. There are no studies showing this. There's no information showing this." Well, there was, and your government covered it up for 18 months to keep it from the public of Ontario.

Now that we know that last summer Ontario peaked out, its demand exceeded its supply, that there isn't a surplus of energy, that as soon as you privatize you then have to supply Michigan, Ohio, New York, New Jersey and you can't control exports, since you know that all of those things are now on the line, will you be open with the people of Ontario, after hiding the information for 18 months, and cancel your scheme to privatize and to fully deregulate our electricity system?

Hon Mr Stockwell: If there's a single accurate statement in there, I may respond. Not one thing you said was accurate, not one thing. You said you've said a lot of

things in this House; yes, you did. You said on May 1 prices were going to double. That's the first thing you said. Well, they didn't double. In fact, they're below what it was when the market opened at 4.3%. You also said in this House, "When you open the market on May 1, we're going to have blackouts and brownouts all across the province." It hasn't happened, Mr Leader of the Third Party. That's another thing that didn't happen.

You've been travelling this province providing inaccurate information to all the citizens and people of this province in order to convince them, Mr Little, that the sky is going to fall. Well, the sky hasn't fallen, prices haven't doubled. All I can say to you, the leader of the third party, is that there wasn't one bit of information you provided in this House that has turned out to be accurate or true. Every bit of fear-mongering you've done has been just that: fear-mongering. Nothing you have said has been accurate or has come to pass, so why would I believe you now, when no one could believe you over the last five months?

BRUCE GENERATING STATION

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): To the Minister of Energy: you might want to remember the words of your predecessor who said, "We should follow the example of California with electricity privatization and deregulation."

The Globe and Mail information speaks for itself. The government used every manoeuvre possible to keep this information from the people of Ontario for 18 months.

But that's not all. About a year ago, New Democrats filed a freedom-of-information request to find out what information this government had about the Bruce nuclear station lease and how much that lease and the station were worth. This government, for one year, has refused to turn over any of that information. And what is their excuse again? They are not looking out for the people of Ontario. Their excuse is that they want to protect the competitive position of British Energy and Ontario Power Generation. So privatization and deregulation are used to keep information from the public again.

Minister, will you finally release the studies and the analysis of the Bruce nuclear deal so that people in Ontario will know exactly how much you undersold it by and if in fact you gave it away for less than half price?

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): I don't know why you won't listen to the brothers and sisters in the Power Workers' Union, leader of the third party. The brothers and sisters in the Power Workers' Union, the ones who work hard, who, like Kormos would say, sweat it out day in and day out in that industry, have forgotten more than you know about the power in the province of Ontario. They are the people who stood in their place at the committee that I travelled to and said, "You should move to privatization." Why? Because it's going to get us capital from the market. It's going to turn the thing

around. It's going to produce. It's going to generate jobs and union jobs, the same way it did at Bruce.

The Power Workers' Union, the brothers and sisters who work at Bruce, are damn proud of Bruce. They are damn proud of the British company that bought them, and so am I. Of the two plants that weren't operating at anywhere near capacity, one today is near capacity and the other one is going to open up.

Jobs, prosperity, investment, taxes: that's what this government wants, and that's what we got from Bruce hydro.

Mr Hampton: If the government thinks it's such a good deal, why won't you release the documents? Why won't you release the documents so that people in Ontario can decide for themselves? Instead, these are the manoeuvres you have to go through: going back over a year to the Information and Privacy Commissioner; notice of inquiry; representations of the Ministry of Finance; reasons why Ontario Power Generation wants to exclude the information.

When you sort it all out, the reason that the government doesn't want to provide the information is that they want to protect the private corporations. You're more interested in those private corporations than in what's going to happen to the electricity ratepayers of Ontario.

If this is such a good deal, as you've just tried to tell people, then simply release the information so people can decide for themselves.

Hon Mr Stockwell: You live in a conspiratorial world, Mr Hampton. It's unbelievable. You are going to find capitalists under rocks tomorrow.

You don't like the Power Workers' Union. You don't think the brothers and sisters know what's good for them and good for the industry, and they are the union folks.

What don't you like about the auditor? The Provincial Auditor has conducted a value-for-money audit for the Bruce lease. He's got all the information. A final report is expected to be tabled with the public accounts committee in May. We have turned that information over to the auditor. Why do you not think the auditor will do a fair and honest job in representing the facts about the Bruce lease? We have faith in the auditor. You keep telling us you have faith in the auditor. Let's see the auditor's report.

You know why you don't have faith in the auditor? I'll tell you why. Because the Bruce lease was a good deal—a good deal for the Power Workers' Union, a good deal for the brothers and sisters, for the workers, for the management, for the communities, for Kincardine, for the government, for taxes, for prosperity. What have you got against prosperity? You're never, ever going to win this debate, because you are opposed to prosperity.

HYDRO ONE

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): I have a question for the Minister of Energy. Minister, you continue to tell us that it doesn't matter where the proceeds from the sale of Hydro One go as long as they go

against some kind of debt, whether that be stranded or, as you call it, residual. As Minister of Energy, are you not aware that the only debt for which hydro users are responsible is in fact stranded debt? I'm wondering if you are aware that it is in the interests of hydro users to pay down the stranded debt as soon as possible—that's the debt that's reflected on their bill—and I'm wondering whether or not you understand it is your responsibility, Minister, to protect hydro users in the province of Ontario.

1510

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): I tip my hat to Liberal research. Thank you for getting that note in there to the Leader of the Opposition that he understands there's something besides stranded debt, residual stranded debt and other debt. And I appreciate you guys trying to help him out. Maybe he talked to Gerry, I don't know, but I guess he got a note in from the side.

It's all debt. It was all debt acquired by—

Interjections.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Oh, yes. All that debt was acquired by—

Interjections.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Calm yourself. All that debt was acquired by Ontario Hydro, whether it's stranded debt, residually stranded debt or debt otherwise. All that debt was acquired by Ontario Hydro. We have said all along we will apply the proceeds of a sale, if there is a sale, to the debt that was acquired by Ontario Hydro. Whether it's stranded debt or residual debt, it will be applied to debt. The difference you're arguing is such hair-splitting of whether you pay your MasterCard or your Visa. It doesn't matter you owe them both. I don't really care which one you pay, and that's where it's applied.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Supplementary?

Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's): The minister wants to bluff and bluster his way through the 21st-century equivalent of selling Manhattan Island for 21 bucks. It's a serious issue, obviously, selling Hydro One. The government says it's open. You say you're open, consulting. Tell me this: are you open to keeping Hydro One in public hands?

Hon Mr Stockwell: Yes.

GRAPE AND WINE INDUSTRY

Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls): My question is for the Minister of Consumer and Business Services. As the member for Niagara Falls and Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario's grape and wine industry is responsible for countless jobs in my constituency and is one of the—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order.

Interjections.

The Speaker: In fairness to the member, we will allow you to start over. You were interrupted, so take your time and start over, if you would, please.

Mr Maves: Thank you, Speaker. I don't understand the animosity the opposition party has toward their own leader leaving the building.

My question is for the Minister of Consumer and Business Services. As the member for Niagara Falls and Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario's grape and wine industry is responsible for countless jobs in my constituency and is one of the major economic engines for the entire region. However, unfair competition from the international markets has affected the success of Ontario's world-class wines. What are you doing to ensure that this industry grows and prospers in the future?

Hon Tim Hudak (Minister of Consumer and Business Services): I thank the member for Niagara Falls and Niagara-on-the-Lake, a very strong advocate for the grape and wine industry in Niagara. In fact, on this I'd like to welcome the students from Niagara Christian College who have joined us here today from Fort Erie.

I think anybody from Niagara, like ourselves, those who have visited the beautiful peninsula or Pelee Island or Prince Edward county, know the value of the grape and wine industry in those communities and the jobs it creates and the hundreds of millions of dollars of investment. Under Ministers Runciman and Sterling, we created an Ontario wine strategy to poise the industry for greatness: a \$1.1-billion contribution to our economy by 2020. It involves a number of strategies including marketing, boosting sales through the LCBO and other outlets, and a wine and culinary tourism strategy that is also underway. I want to congratulate my predecessors, Ministers Sterling and Runciman, for their great work. I look forward to working with the Ontario wine council to further that and make sure we achieve those goals set out in the wine strategy.

Mr Maves: It seems clear that domestically this government is on the right track to ensure the long-term success of Ontario's grape and wine industry. It is also important to keep in mind that Ontario's wines are garnering a great deal of international attention but don't always have fair access to international markets around the world. Of course, limited access means our world-class wines don't receive all of the exposure they deserve.

While I hesitate to ask once again for this government to do the job of the federal Liberals, what is this government doing to aid with the international success of Ontario wines?

Hon Mr Hudak: The member makes an excellent point. Ontario wines are increasingly winning international awards and recognition and prestige but are not gaining enough access to European markets. There is a fundamental imbalance. We sell about \$400 million in European wines but we only sell about \$40 million of Ontario wines in the European market. In short, European wines enjoy free and open access to Ontario markets but that is not reciprocated for Ontario wines despite their increasing international prestige.

Under Minister Runciman we fought for and won access and derogation for Ontario ice wines, resulting in

increased sales. That's a big step forward but there are more steps to be taken. I look forward to working with the wine council and our federal trade negotiators to make sure that European consumers have full and fair access to the award-winning great Ontario wines.

MINISTRY SPENDING

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): My question is to the Minister of Environment and Energy. Minister, over the last couple of months you have taken the opportunity to travel across this province and you've talked a lot about fiscal responsibility and accountability. As is the case in the cost of cabinet offices, your government says one thing and does another, so it's my responsibility to hold you accountable for your actions. My question concerns your office expenses.

You and your staff spent over \$25,000 in just over a year on food and drink, and over the course of one evening a few held what you called staff meetings in different bars. People of this province deserve to understand how you justify this blatant misuse of public taxpayers' dollars.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): During that time they put three or four bills through the House. The staff was working many hours. They also did the regs and all the work that went with the meetings. They worked very hard and they worked many hours. In my opinion, they work hard to do their job. With fairness to the staff, they did their jobs and they did incur expense. It was over 18 months that this was done. I think they did good work to get those bills through the House. It did cost money. Yes, it did, because they worked very late and they worked afterwards as well.

Ms Di Cocco: In fact, Minister, you were in violation of your own government's guidelines on expenses. Under section 11 of the ministry expenses guidelines it states, "Costs incurred for alcoholic beverages will not be reimbursed." You and your staff violated your own government's guidelines over 44 times. You had taxpayers pick up your bar tabs after midnight at least 44 times.

Minister, given that you are in clear violation of your government's policy, what have you done to ensure that this money is repaid and what disciplinary action have you taken to ensure this misappropriation of funds doesn't happen again?

Hon Mr Stockwell: I met with the staff. We discussed it. I asked them, in the future, to deal with it in an appropriate fashion and submit the bills to me. I will approve the bills as they come in.

Let me be clear: they worked very hard. They produced a lot of work during that time. They worked very late. They went out, they had dinner afterwards. You're right. As far as I'm concerned, they did good works. In future, they will submit bills to me. If they are appropriate charges, I will approve them. I'm not going to stand here and suggest to you that they didn't do good

work. They did do good work. They worked very hard and put many bills through the House at that time.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): New question.

1520

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke): My question is to the Minister of Energy responsible—

The Speaker: I'm sorry. In the rotation it now goes to the NDP.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Yes, but they didn't stand up. It goes to the leader of the third party. They missed a rotation. I looked—

Interjections.

The Speaker: No, you didn't. I looked. Sorry. The leader of the third party.

Interjections.

The Speaker: I saw standing the member for Brampton Centre. I gave you lots of time. That's why I moved to the other side. Leader of the third party.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is to the Deputy Premier. Ontario's highest court, the Court of Appeal, has ruled that your government's spouse-in-the-house law discriminates against people who must rely upon social assistance. I'm going to ask you today that you respect the ruling of the court. It was a unanimous decision, where they ruled yesterday that the law strips women of their dignity by forcing them to become financially dependent on men. The court said very clearly that the considerable negative effects, including reinforcement of dependency, deprivation of financial independence and state interference with close personal relationships, far outweigh any money that you might take from these women.

Your government brought in this discriminatory law that the court now says is illegal. Your government is not above the law. Will you obey the law now?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): I know that the Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services is dealing with the issue. I would ask her to respond.

Hon Brenda Elliott (Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services): We are obviously very respectful of the law. We are carefully considering the court's finding before making any further decisions. We are reviewing the decision. We are considering the implications that will come from a decision like that.

Let me be very clear, though. Our government does believe that social assistance should be directed to people in need. We believe that if a couple is living together but not married, the income and the assets of both should be considered when deciding if they are eligible. When two couples are living in identical circumstances, except one couple is married and the other is common law, we believe that it is only fair that the assets of both should be considered when applying for social assistance. We believe this is common sense. We believe, most important-

ly, that social assistance assets should be given first and foremost to those who are truly in need.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Supplementary.

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): Minister, I just came back from a rally in Sudbury in memory of Kimberly Rogers. Kimberly and her unborn child died last August while under house arrest, criminalized by your government because she had the audacity to collect student loans while she was on welfare, something that thousands of people have done in this province successfully over the years to improve their lot in life. Kimberly Rogers is just one example of how your government's discriminatory policies against people collecting social assistance can have tragic and dire results. You act as though you are above the law and can treat the poor like criminals.

My request is simple: will you immediately bring all your regulations into compliance with the court's decision and confirm today that you will not appeal this case?

Hon Mrs Elliott: As I just indicated, the Court of Appeal has just released its decision regarding the family benefits definition of spouse. We are carefully reviewing the decision. We are carefully assessing the implications of such a decision. We are going to consider that before we make a decision on how we should move forward.

Again, I say that the government believes social assistance should be directed to those most in need. We do not support defrauding the system. The reason we do not support allowing fraud in welfare is because it deprives benefits from those who truly need it.

COMPETITIVE ELECTRICITY MARKET

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke): My question is for the Minister of Energy. It deals with consumers in this new electricity world.

The other day, the throne speech said that one of the government's primary concerns is consumer protection. With that as a backdrop, I want to share with him a concern that many of my constituents have raised with me in recent weeks. In the months leading up to the opening of the electricity market in Ontario on May 1, 2002, Ontario Hydro Energy, the subsidiary of the crown-owned Hydro One, went out and signed up almost 200,000 electricity contracts. They did so in many cases by clearly presenting themselves as the government company: Hydro. I know of several senior citizens in my constituency who only let them in the door and who only signed a contract because they thought they were signing with Ontario Hydro.

Imagine their surprise, then, when just days before the opening of the market on May 1, Hydro One announces that it has sold the entire portfolio, nearly 200,000 of those electricity contracts, to Union Energy, a wholly owned subsidiary of EPCOR utilities of Edmonton, Alberta. What do you say to those consumers, many of them senior citizens, who believe at this point they were hoodwinked and misled by a subsidiary of their crown-owned, government-of-Ontario-owned Hydro One?

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): There's a regulatory body in place that manages these affairs. It's the Ontario Energy Board, headed up by the previous finance minister under the NDP, Mr Floyd Laughren. The Ontario Energy Board is entrusted and regulated with power to manage and deal with the issues with respect to the door-to-door sales of the hydro contracts you speak of. They investigate and determine whether or not there have been fraudulent actions taking place and they have the power to fine and discipline and even withdraw licences.

The fact remains, we consider consumer protection very important. We spoke about it in the throne speech. When the new legislation comes into this House, there will be parts of it that will also deal with consumer protection. But the fact remains, if anyone out there feels they were dealt with unfairly or fraudulently, they have the capacity to make an appeal to the Ontario Energy Board. The Ontario Energy Board has the power to adjudicate on that and deal with that company very directly.

Mr Conway: It's true that just a few weeks ago the Ontario Energy Board, the regulator, fined Ontario Hydro Energy about \$46,000 for a dozen or so of these offences, but I want to make this point: there's been a lot of talk about consumer protection. Your company, our company, went out over months and particularly went after senior citizens. That company went out, in some cases in a totally rapacious manner, misrepresented themselves as a retailer, got senior citizens by the thousands to sign up, only then to sell the entire portfolio of contracts to an Alberta-based company. I can tell you, my 85-year-old father wouldn't have let Union Energy in the door. He signed with Ontario Hydro Energy because he thought he was dealing with the crown-owned company, and he's not alone.

What the hell is Clitheroe and company doing under your supervision with this kind of outrageous and misleading behaviour that is clearly a violation of the code of conduct?

I say to you, Minister, there are tens of thousands of Ontario citizens, many of them senior citizens, who are weeks away from finding out that they were not only misled by their government and their government's company but they were ripped off in a serious way.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I take exception to the fact that they were misled by the government.

Mr Conway: They were.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. I didn't hear that. I apologize if you've said that. You need to withdraw that if you said they were misled by the government. I would ask you to withdraw that.

Mr Conway: I just want to be clear. I'm saying Ontario Hydro Energy misled many consumers into believing they were signing a contract with a crown agency when in fact they weren't.

The Speaker: That is different. I didn't hear that. I understand that. I apologize. Just to clarify it, he was correct and that is acceptable. Sorry.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Then I obviously misheard the gentlemen across the floor. I thought he said the government misled.

Let me say this: there are provisions put in place to protect consumers and there is a regulatory body that is entrusted to protect consumers—the Ontario Energy Board. That's how the regulatory body works. You have a regulatory body put in place to protect the consumers.

If in fact you have this information that you testify to be accurate, that information should be laid before the Ontario Energy Board. Then the Ontario Energy Board will investigate and adjudicate, much as they have done in the past. Just very recently they went out and investigated some alleged statements similar to yours and they fined two companies, because you aren't supposed to do that.

We have also said in the throne speech that we will bring forward legislation to toughen up consumer protection. We have been in a position here that we understand that there needs to be good consumer protection and a good regulatory body.

All I can say to the member opposite is, if that is information you have, then lay it before the Ontario Energy Board and they will pursue it vigorously. They have been given that mandate from this government to do just that.

1530

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. There appears to be a great deal of confusion, certainly in the minds of some of the media and our opposition critics, about the relative contribution by the three levels of government toward providing housing supports here in Ontario. I certainly recall from my days in the ministry that notwithstanding the half-truths and mis-truths that are the hallmark of the bulk of the criticisms we face on this issue, the province of Ontario was by far the greatest contributor to housing programs.

Minister, I know you've been working very hard to improve the business and tax climate for the construction of affordable housing in Ontario. I was wondering if you could provide an update on the status of the federal, provincial and territorial agreement on housing that was reached last year.

Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I thank the member from Scarborough East for asking the question. There has been a lot of confusion. I've read stories that Ontario is somehow holding up an agreement with the federal government—absolutely not true. We are ready to sign an agreement with the federal government. We have been since last August, when I was the chair of the federal, provincial and territorial meetings in London, Ontario. Again in Quebec City, we were ready to sign with Minister Gagliano. They've had a cabinet shuffle in Ottawa. We're ready to sign today. Quite frankly, we're getting a little

frustrated with the foot-dragging by the federal Liberals on this issue.

Mr Gilchrist: Thank you, Minister, for that information. There appears to be real evidence for the first time in 25 years that there is an equilibrium developing between rental housing demand and the housing supply being provided by the private sector all across Ontario and even here in Toronto. I'm concerned, though, that there appear to be significant barriers for the private sector in the construction of affordable rental housing, notwithstanding opposition suggestions that the supply has been constrained exclusively by the Tenant Protection Act. So I'm glad to see we're making progress with the federal government on this agreement.

I was wondering what other steps you've taken to remedy the damage done by the previous government and to get the rental industry building again in Ontario.

Hon Mr Hodgson: We have taken a lot of steps to remove a lot of the barriers and the damage created by the Liberals and the NDP in their reign in office and we're seeing results. Housing is working. The numbers work at the top end. We have a problem at the affordable end.

But the answer to the provincial Liberals' concern about how much money we're spending is that the Ontario government is spending \$879 million a year. That's twice as much per capita as any other province. The federal government—CMHC—makes a profit of \$400 million a year. They are talking about putting back \$170 million a year. They are still ripping off poor people in this country by \$230 million a year. If we were to match that the way the Liberals want it done, we would have to cancel our \$879 million on an annual basis and think up a tax on poor people that the Liberals support in Ottawa through higher premiums.

There are only two places that CMHC gets its money: from insurance premiums on rental accommodation, for which the rates are too high, and from poor people who can't afford the down payment and need to insure their premium. They made \$400 million last year; they are returning \$170 million. And it gets worse: most of the money comes from Ontario, and we only get \$61 million of that on their four-year, time-limited program.

If they really wanted to fix the housing—

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

LONG-TERM-CARE FACILITIES

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): My question is to the Deputy Premier. Life for the more than 30,000 seniors who are currently on waiting lists for space in a nursing home or a home for the aged, and their families, has become a lot more stressful and chaotic as a result of the new regulation forcing many seniors into nursing homes before they are ready. Not only will the regulation worsen the backlogs on hospital boards but, more importantly, it will also give the seniors limited choices for a nursing home place. As a matter of fact, you

are threatening to charge seniors over \$300 a day for refusing to take the first bed offered to them in a long-term-care facility. Your policy of striking names of seniors off the waiting list for a six-month time period if they refuse to choose within a 24-hour period and move in within five days may in effect cause families to put their father or mother in a home earlier than they need to so that they don't lose their spot in line.

Why are you treating the seniors of this province, who have contributed so much to this province, in such an utterly disrespectful fashion?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): I know that the Associate Minister of Health is very anxious to respond to that question.

Hon Dan Newman (Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I want to assure the member opposite that our government wants to ensure that seniors who need long-term care are able to get it as quickly as possible. That's why we worked with our partners in the long-term-care and community-care sectors to bring about new regulations which will shorten waiting lists for long-term-care facilities as well as speed up the application process for patients. Indeed, these changes mean that all bed vacancies in long-term-care facilities will be filled more quickly by those persons with the greatest need for facility care. These regulations have legally come into effect on May 1 of this year.

Mr Gerretsen: Minister, your own spokesman didn't even realize the effect that these regulations would have. As a matter of fact, he said, "I don't know. I didn't write the regulations."

If your officials had really been working on this new policy for such a long period of time, why did the new regulations fail to address the backlogs on hospital wards that caused the overcrowding in the province's emergency wards, and why are they so tough on seniors? It is deplorable that in a wealthy province such as Ontario, government funding has not kept up for long-term-care facilities with the average in this nation.

Minister, why are you treating seniors with such utter disrespect? Why don't you allow them a sufficient length of time to make the choices and give them the available choices that indeed they should be accustomed to and are entitled to in this province?

Hon Mr Newman: It sounds like the member opposite wants our seniors who are on waiting lists to be on waiting lists forever. We want to ensure that those individuals get the care they need where and when they need it. This regulation that came into effect establishes a limit of three long-term-care-facility waiting lists per individual applicant that they can be placed on at a single time. It also establishes the one-offer policy for offers of admission to long-term-care facilities. There is also an extension of the bed-holding period from three days to five days on the admission to a long-term-care facility. It also requires the mandatory reporting of all long-term-care-facility bed vacancies to long-term-care facilities.

I want to quote the CEO of the Ontario Association of Non-Profit Homes and Services for Seniors. She says, "I

think it will give a certain amount of integrity to the waiting list. What often happens is people put their name on waiting lists for facilities when they're not bed-ready. What they're saying is you can't say no forever and basically tie up the system."

GO TRANSIT

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

My question is for the Minister of Transportation. In 1992, the Bob Rae government discontinued GO Transit service to the town of Innisfil and the city of Barrie. In 1998, the city of Barrie, through the financial assistance of \$2 million from our government, purchased the rail line from Bradford-West Gwillimbury to Barrie, which was slated to be torn up by CN, with the blessing of the federal Liberal government.

Since that time, the province has taken over responsibility for GO Transit and a comprehensive study was completed by the Barrie rail passenger committee, chaired by myself. This study provides a strong business case for the return of GO Transit.

Minister, what are the prospects for the return of GO Transit to the town of Innisfil and the city of Barrie?

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Transportation): Yes, indeed, our government has taken back responsibility for GO Transit. That's saving the municipalities in the greater Toronto area some \$100 million in expenditures, \$50 million here in the city of Toronto alone. The city of Toronto is enriched by \$50 million as a result of that move.

I'm very happy that the city of Barrie, in partnership with the province, did retain this significant railway corridor. I only wish that we had over the longer period of time in fact kept more of the railway corridors so that in the future we would have the opportunity to bring forward many of the transit options for the future.

I'm happy to tell the member that the chair of GO Transit is going to meet with the chamber of commerce in Barrie on May 24 to talk about this issue. I look forward to working with him and the community of Barrie to meet their needs in the future in this regard.

1540

Mr Tascona: Minister, there are a number of transportation studies being conducted in my riding of Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford and in Simcoe county. The proposed Highway 400 expansion through the city of Barrie has drawn considerable attention. The residents of Chieftain Crescent and Ottaway Avenue, along with others potentially affected, are concerned. I am against the expropriation of any resident's home. Minister, what is the status of this Highway 400 study?

Hon Mr Sterling: I would imagine that any member representing his riding would be against expropriation of residents' homes. We are going through a planning study for the 400. It's well underway; it's focused on the interchange, safety issues surrounding Barrie and widening improvements.

Barrie is one of the fastest-growing areas in the province of Ontario. We recognize that and we recognize the need not only of the people who live in that community, but the people who pass by that community. We will be fair in terms of the hearings. We will go through all of the proper processes and the citizens of Barrie will have through information sessions, one in June, the opportunity to express their opinions with regard the future of this highway.

AUTO STRATEGY

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): My question is for the Minister of Opportunity, Enterprise and Innovation; I believe that's the new handle.

Minister, I want to bring to your attention that, while I was canvassing for Brian Masse, the new MP in Windsor West, two of the key issues that came up door after door were your plan to privatize Hydro and the concern about the loss of thousands of auto sector jobs and the fact that you have, to date, refused to enter into discussions with the CAW, Navistar, Chrysler and others who have said you've got to bring down an auto policy. I know you've got some little meeting planned, a little get-together, but that's not nearly enough. The point is that your tax cuts and the federal tax cuts have done nothing to stop and prevent the loss of thousands of auto worker jobs to date, and more in the future if we don't do something.

States south of the border are pouring millions of dollars into auto strategies and you won't even acknowledge that we need one. Minister, I raise the need for the people in Windsor, St Catharines, Oakville, Hamilton and Toronto, right across Ontario, to have an auto strategy that effectively ensures investment and jobs. When are you going to step up to the plate and provide the leadership that's called for and save thousands of jobs in the province of Ontario?

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Minister.

Hon Jim Flaherty (Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation): You didn't say the ministry, Speaker. I wanted you to say that big, long name for the ministry. You're not going to say that.

The Speaker: The Minister of EOI.

Interjection.

Hon Mr Flaherty: Yes, it is quite a briefing book, isn't it? It's a smaller one, yes. I don't have those other jobs. I have this and this is it.

The question was about the auto industry, and an important part of the Ontario economy it is. The former Minister of Economic Development and Trade, Mr Runciman, who is here, had discussed issues of course with Mr Hargrove on behalf of the CAW and with our federal counterpart, Allan Rock, the Minister of Industry.

I can tell you in the past week alone, 1,000 jobs at GM Oshawa—a third shift building the Impala in Oshawa. I was there, Buzz Hargrove was there and Michael Grimaldi, the president of GM Canada—great news for Oshawa. Yesterday in Sarnia, UBE, building wheels, opened a brand new plant in Sarnia, Ontario—great news

for southwestern Ontario. Yesterday afternoon in Aliston, Ontario, in Jim Wilson's riding—a new Pilot SUV is being built by Honda.

All of this is good news. I've spoken with Mr Hargrove since taking on my current responsibilities. We're looking forward to the automotive round table next week, May 22, in—

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

PETITIONS

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East): I have a petition with regard to Bill 134, which will be debated in this House on Thursday. It's entitled Fair Rent Increases Now.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the number of tenants receiving above-guideline increases is growing exponentially, and;

“Whereas many of these increases are for increases in utility costs, many of which have gone down since; and

“Whereas tenants should not have to pay for improvements forever, even when the costs have been realized by these rent increases; and

“Whereas the Tenant Protection Act does not give a tenant relief due to the costs being realized or a drop in utility costs; and

“Whereas tenants should not be receiving rent increases where there are work orders issued for the building;

“Therefore be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature to immediately pass MPP David Caplan's Bill 134 entitled the Fair Rent Increases Act at the earliest possible opportunity so that tenants can get relief from above-guideline increases once the bills have been paid.”

This has been signed by over 2,000 tenants from across the province of Ontario, and I hope the Legislature will pass Bill 134.

ONTARIO DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): I have petitions from my riding addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that read as follows:

“Whereas the recipients of benefits under the Ontario Disability Act have not received a cost-of-living increase since a \$2.50 increase in 1987; and

“Whereas the cost of living in Ontario has increased in every one of the years since, especially for basic needs such as housing, food, utilities, transportation, clothing and household goods; and

“Whereas disabled Ontarians are recognized under the Ontario Disability Support Program Act, 1997, and as

such have the right to have their basic needs met, including adequate housing, a proper and healthy diet, a bed that does not make them sicker and clothing that fits and is free of stains and holes; and

“Whereas their basic needs are no longer being met because the Ministry of Social Services has not increased the shelter and basic needs allowances of disabled Ontarians eligible to receive benefits under the Ontario disability support program to reflect the increased costs of shelter and basic needs (and in fact have reduced these benefits for those recipients who receive a disability benefit under the Canada pension plan); and

“Whereas a new Ontarians with Disabilities Act has yet to be introduced to help protect the thousands of vulnerable people in Ontario who are dependent on others for their basic needs and care and who are eligible for benefits under the Ontario Disability Support Program Act, 1997;

“Therefore we, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, request the Ontario Legislature to urge the government to respect their own definition of basic needs and provide a cost-of-living increase to recipients of benefits through the Ontario Disability Support Program Act that is sufficient to cover the increased costs of their basic needs as of 2002 prices, and that this benefit not be reduced as a result of increases in the Canada pension plan benefit.”

On behalf of myself and all my NDP colleagues, I add my name to this important petition.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): I have a petition that I'm presenting on behalf of the Honourable Gary Carr, who is prohibited from presenting it himself.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas we, the undersigned, believe a strong, broadly based and fully funded public education system is the basis for a vital and prosperous Ontario;

“Whereas we, the undersigned, as residents and taxpayers of the province of Ontario, are gravely concerned regarding the present state of financial support for publicly funded schools in the province Ontario,

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

“(1) We respectfully request that immediate actions be taken to review the current education funding model in order to eliminate shortfalls currently being experienced across the province.

“(2) We further respectfully request that this review be conducted in full and open consultation with concerned parent groups, teachers and school boards across the province.

“(3) We finally respectfully request that the upcoming provincial budget be structured so as to provide funds to remedy current shortfalls in classroom-based salaries and benefits, school operations and maintenance, transportation and special education funding as reported by school boards to the Ministry of Education.”

I'd like to add my signature to the 922 from the Oakville area.

LONG-TERM-CARE FACILITIES

Mr John C. Cleary (Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the over 60,000 Ontarians living in long-term-care facilities are older, frailer and sicker and require more care than ever before;

"Whereas government funding has not kept pace with increasing needs of residents of long-term-care facilities;

"Whereas current funding levels only allow limited care;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly to ask the government to provide additional operating funding to increase the levels of staffing to an acceptable level of service and to reduce the risk to those individuals living in long-term-care facilities across Ontario."

I've also signed the petition, along with 1,225 from my community.

1550

ELECTRICITY DEREGULATION

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): Again a petition, this time from across Hamilton. It's addressed to the Ontario Legislature:

"Whereas the Harris government's"—now the Eves government's—"plan to privatize and deregulate Ontario's electricity system will lead to higher rates because private owners will sell more power to US customers whose rates are typically 50% higher than Ontario's; and

"Whereas selling coal plants like Nanticoke to the private sector will lead to more pollution because the private owners will run the plants at full capacity to maximize profits; and

"Whereas electricity deregulation in California has led to sky-high rates and blackouts; and

"Whereas Ontario needs a system of public power that will ensure rate stability, environmental protection and secure access to power;

"Therefore, be it resolved that the undersigned call on the government to scrap electricity deregulation and privatization and bring in a system of accountable public power. The first priority for such a public power system must be incentives for energy conservation and green power. Electricity rates and major energy projects must be subject to full public hearings and binding rulings by a public regulator instead of leaving energy rates to private profit."

On behalf of those Hamiltonians I represent, I add my name to this petition.

DOCTOR SHORTAGE

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the provincial Durham riding, including Clarington, Scugog township and portions of north and east Oshawa comprise one of the fastest-growing communities in Canada; and

"Whereas the residents of Durham riding are experiencing difficulty locating family physicians who are willing to accept new patients; and

"Whereas the good health of Durham riding residents depends on a long-term relationship with a family physician who can provide ongoing care; and

"Whereas the lack of family physicians puts unnecessary demands and strains on walk-in clinics and emergency departments;

"We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows: that the government of Ontario will:

"Do everything in its power to immediately assess the needs of Durham riding and Durham region and work with the Ontario Medical Association, the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, local health care providers and elected officials to ensure there are enough family physicians available to serve the needs of the community;

"Make every effort to recruit doctors to set up practices in underserved areas and provide suitable incentives that will encourage them to stay in these communities;

"Continue its efforts to increase the number of physicians being trained in Ontario medical schools and also continue its program to enable foreign-trained doctors to qualify in Ontario."

I'm pleased to support this on behalf of my constituents in the riding of Durham.

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the residents of Centre Hastings are facing an immediate and critical situation in accessing physician services; and

"Whereas a retiring family physician has been unsuccessful in procuring a replacement physician, potentially leaving 5,000 patients without a doctor; and

"Whereas accessibility to already overcrowded hospital emergency departments and walk-in clinics is limited because of distance and availability to transportation; and

"Whereas Centre Hastings has been designated as an underserved area in need of five physicians;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to act immediately to establish a community health centre in Centre Hastings."

I will affix my signature to this very worthy petition.

LONG-TERM-CARE FACILITIES

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): Further petitions from Hamilton West—and let me just thank Helen Tarbak, who took the initiative to provide all of these citizens with an opportunity to sign this petition. She did an awful lot of work and it's appreciated; it makes a real difference.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas our elderly, chronically ill population in long-term-care facilities deserve competent and compassionate care; and

"Whereas to accomplish this goal, funds need to be allocated to hire more RNs so that each unit in every nursing home is staffed with a minimum of one RN; and

"Whereas RNs in nursing homes should be compensated at the same rate as their colleagues in hospital settings to attract and retain the highly skilled nurses that are needed for this nursing speciality; and

"Whereas the annual inspection of nursing homes by the Ministry of Health, presently required for the basis of the entire year's funding, be replaced by a more flexible system that would more accurately reflect the actual nursing hours and funding required to provide quality care; and

"Whereas increasing the numbers of lower-skilled, unregulated caregivers while decreasing the number of skilled RNs and RPNs has caused physical and mental suffering for nursing home residents, their families and also the staff of the facility; and

"Whereas this is an intolerable situation and a standard for increased numbers of nurses is required;

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

"That the government take immediate action to resolve these outstanding issues so that residents of long-term-care facilities get the high quality care they deserve."

I proudly add my name to those of these petitioners.

HYDRO ONE

Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex): "To the Ontario Legislature:

"Whereas the Conservative government plans to sell off Hydro One and Ontario's electricity transmission grid—the central nervous system of Ontario's economy;

"Whereas the government never campaigned on selling off this vital \$5-billion public asset and never consulted the people of Ontario on this plan;

"Whereas Ontario families want affordable, reliable electricity—they know that the sale of the grid that carries electricity to their homes is a disaster for consumers;

"Whereas selling the grid will not benefit consumers—the only Ontarians who will benefit are Bay Street brokers and Hydro One executives;

"Whereas selling Hydro One and the grid is like selling every 400 series highway in the province to

private interests—selling the grid means the public sector will no longer be responsible for its security and protection.

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature as follows:

"To demand the Conservative government halt the sale of Hydro One until the government has a clear mandate from the owners of Hydro One—the people of Ontario."

This petition is signed by concerned citizens such as George and Georgette Devos and Lois Pratt. I too have signed this petition.

Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ernie Eves is planning to ram through the sale of Hydro One without a mandate from the people of Ontario; and

"Whereas an Ontario court judge has ruled that the sale of Hydro One is illegal; and

"Whereas Ernie Eves' Bay Street friends will benefit from the sale of Hydro One at the expense of Ontario's working families;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to encourage Ernie Eves to take Dalton McGuinty's advice to put working families ahead of his Bay Street friends by immediately stopping the sale of Hydro One."

I affix my signature.

CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): I have a petition to the Legislature of Ontario.

"Whereas animal abusers are not currently subject to any provincial penalties;

"Whereas it is currently impossible for a judge to ban puppy and kitten mill operators from owning animals for the rest of their lives; and

"Whereas Ontario SPCA investigators need to act on instances of cruelty to animals in a more timely fashion, thereby lessening the animals' suffering;

"Whereas it is currently not an offence to train an animal to fight another animal; and

"Whereas Ontario's animals are not adequately protected by the current law;

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

"To pass the amendments to the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act developed by a governmental working group (which included the Ontario SPCA) and submitted to the office of the Solicitor General of Ontario in June of 2001, so that the above conditions, among others, will be properly addressed."

I'm in full agreement and will affix my signature to this petition.

1600

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I believe I have unanimous consent to move a motion respecting consideration of Bill 90 for this evening.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): Agreed? Agreed.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I move that Bill 90, An Act to promote the reduction, reuse and recycling of waste, be called for second reading debate at the commencement of orders of the day this evening. Upon completion of the debate or at the end of the sessional day tonight, whichever comes first, the Speaker shall put all the questions necessary to dispose of second reading debate of the bill; and that following second reading, the bill be ordered referred to the standing committee on general government for two days of consideration; and that when the bill is reported back to the House, it will be ordered for third reading and that one sessional day will be allotted to third reading debate on the bill; and at the end of such day, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of third reading consideration.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 13, 2002, on the motion for an address in reply to the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): Mr Speaker, I want to start today by taking this opportunity to wish you and the members opposite a happy new year. I hope everyone had a wonderful Christmas break. It's worth noting that for everyone else in Ontario Christmas break ended some four months ago and they all got back to work. Apparently, my colleagues opposite take a more relaxed view of what their work responsibilities happen to be. As my kids might say, what's up with that?

I love that question, actually: "What's up with that?" We Liberals have been asking it a lot recently about all sorts of different things. To be quite honest, we were hoping to have those questions answered, even just some of them, in last week's speech from the throne. Instead, we were left with more questions than we had before. What is up with that?

I don't want to imply that the throne speech wasn't interesting—far from it. There's something almost morbidly fascinating about watching a government try to

answer everyone's questions by not answering any at all. There's something almost painfully amusing about watching someone try to put as much distance as possible between himself and the man whose legacy he fought so hard to inherit. Then there's something almost slapstick about a group of people running around pretending to be different from the last group, when they're all the same people.

It would have been nice if instead of attempting to be something they're not and instead of claiming not to be something they are, my friends opposite simply told the people of Ontario what they are and what they stand for. That's what a throne speech is supposed to be all about.

A case in point is the infamous Hydro One. Surely this soap opera has gone on for too long. The people of Ontario would have liked to have been told exactly what the government plans to do. Actually, the people of Ontario would like to have been told that the government plans to put the whole thing off until after the next election. But what is it that we got from the throne speech? What did the throne speech indicate was going to happen with Hydro One?

I've got to tell you, Mr Speaker, my colleagues and I have spent a few days trying to figure that one out. We're all still scratching our heads, trying to imagine what "bringing market discipline to Hydro One" might mean. I'm pleased to inform you that we have been able to crack the government's code. The throne speech said that the government wants to bring market discipline to Hydro One. It turns out what that means is, "We're going to privatize it as soon as we figure out how to get away with it."

It is painfully clear that this government knows what it wants to do with Hydro One, but it doesn't have the foggiest idea of how to do it. On one side, we have the enterprise minister, whose basic philosophy seems to be that if it's public, it should be privatized. On the other side, we have the energy minister holding public consultations in which people are consulted as little as possible and told in advance that it doesn't matter what they think anyway. Then there's the bizarre—and there's simply no other word for this—spectacle of the government itself filing a document in court last Friday saying that when it comes to privatization, statements made by government members, including the energy minister himself, should be seen to carry no weight.

Selling off a natural public monopoly is a bad idea. There are some Bay Street brokers who stand to make big dollars in commissions, granted, but the rest of Ontarians risk huge increases in their electricity bills. If their bills do go up, they can't take their business elsewhere. There's only the one transmission grid. The new owners will be the only game in town.

My party supports competition in the generation of electricity as an important way to bring on line as and when needed clean and green electricity.

The NDP are quite prepared to prop up the old Ontario Hydro, our province's number one polluter. The NDP

government record, by the way, with respect to controlling Ontario Hydro and its polluting ways is abysmal.

We also support the desire of many of our publicly owned local utilities to generate electricity. The NDP would also shut them out. Our progressive generation policy favours clean and green electricity and locally generated electricity. Sadly, the NDP remain opposed to both.

We do not support handing over to the private sector absolute control of transmitting the electricity that Ontarians need to run their businesses, feed their families and heat their homes. So I say to the government, wait until the next election. Put it to the people. Show them the risk. Explain the benefits, assuming that at one point in time you'll be able to think of any. Lay out the alternatives. Let the people decide. Then do what they say. There's that democracy thing that seems to get in the way for the members opposite.

Listening to people is a part of the job that this government just hates. The other part of the job that this government is no good at is telling people during an election campaign what it plans to do. Nobody opposite, and I mean nobody, ever said anything during the last campaign about selling Hydro One. What that means, to be very specific, is that this government has no mandate to sell this province's transmission grid, no mandate of any kind.

Speaker, as you well know, I grew up in a family of 10 kids. We weren't badly off, but 10 mouths is a lot of mouths to feed. The way that my parents managed was to keep a pretty close eye at all times on the bottom line. It's a way in which my parents and my friends opposite are a little—and I emphasize the word "little"—alike. They, as well, pay very close attention to the bottom line. But here's the difference between my parents and this government, and it's a huge difference. My parents paid attention to the bottom line so they wouldn't have to cut the important things. This government cuts the important things so that it can get to the bottom line.

That, in a nutshell, is what's wrong with selling Hydro One. It's a quick fix, and it's a bad one. They want to make the books look a little better. They need a few billion dollars because there is an election coming and the only way this government can see its way to winning it is to try to restore a few of the services it has cut, to try to undo some of the damage it has done. It won't work but it will cost money. So let's get ready for it: the promises are about to start.

1610

To pay for those promises, this government is prepared to sell off a natural public monopoly. They are prepared to sell off our one and only electricity highway. The government wants to sell off the family silver and they won't even do us the courtesy of seeking our consent. What's up with that? I'll tell you what's up with that: it's a product of exactly the same kind of quick-fix, two-tier, "I'm all right, Jack" thinking that seems to inform all this government's decisions. I say to the people of Ontario, don't be fooled. This government

doesn't do things because you need them; it does things because it needs you. Don't be fooled.

If my friends opposite are really looking for a couple of billion dollars, I know where they can find them. They don't have to sell off Hydro One; they just have to tell their friends on Bay Street that the \$2.2 billion in corporate tax breaks they were expecting is something that we just can't afford. Think about it: \$2.2 billion in corporate tax cuts, with medicare in peril, with public education on its knees, with our cities struggling, with our environment going virtually unprotected.

The truth is that this government is terrible with money. They don't seem to understand that the best time to prepare for bad times is during the good times. Did they really think that the economy would just continue to expand indefinitely, like some magic balloon? Have they not studied the basics of economic history? Good times follow bad, follow good. It's called the cycle. It's not always nice but it does have the wonderful advantage of being somewhat predictable.

It didn't take a genius to know that eventually there would be a downturn, and in a downturn we need a government with something more in the way of ideas than just slashing corporate taxes. This government has never understood that you don't make money by cutting; you make money by investing. The members opposite have never understood that at the beginning of the 21st century—and this is great news—good social policy is good economic policy.

Do you know one of the major reasons that Ontario businesses are able to compete in today's tough global economy? Medicare. Ontario businesses enjoy what we call the medicare advantage. Businesses south of the border would love an advantage like that but they don't have it and they can't get it. We've got it.

I say to the members opposite, if you want to compete with the US, stop trying to lower corporate tax rates to rival Alabama's. It might make a pretty good line at some of the Bay Street parties. You get to say, "You know, our corporate tax rate is lower than Alabama's," but in the real world there are more important things. If you really want to help Ontario businesses, then help by supporting one of the biggest advantages they have—medicare. And it's not just me saying this. The business community is saying the same thing. Just recently the Ontario Chamber of Commerce announced that it's going to lobby this government for health care reform that preserves the universality and affordability of the current system. It turns out that at the end of the day business and families are on the same page when it comes to medicare. We are all worried by this government's lack of commitment.

Let me talk for a minute about two tiers, because our new Premier is getting quite a reputation for his two-tier thinking: Bay Street versus working families; big corporations versus small, unimportant businesses; private schools versus public schools. I'll get back to that one shortly. But first there is that little jaw-dropper that he floated during his recent leadership campaign. You'll

know what I'm talking about. That's the one where he said a second tier of health care should be on the table.

We on this side of the House were looking for a clear repudiation of that in the throne speech and we didn't get it. Ontarians were looking for a clear repudiation of that and they didn't get it. Instead, they got Ernie Eves's code for two-tier health care dressed up with fancy words like "innovative." He's not as upfront about it as he was earlier this year, but that's because he knows that people don't want anything to do with two-tier health care. But because they plan to bring it in anyway, the objections of the people of Ontario who elected them notwithstanding, they inserted it into the throne speech in code.

So I say to the people of Ontario one more time, don't be fooled. If this government believed in our public health care system, if it maintained honestly that it was against two-tier medicine, it would have said so unequivocally in this throne speech. If this were all one big board game, I'd be admiring my friends opposite for how devilishly cleverly they play their game. But it's not a board game, it's the real thing, and the people of Ontario are at risk.

This government is willing to consider two-tier health care because it's a product of the same kind of "I'm all right, Jack" thinking that I referred to earlier. Rich people get health care faster. That must be good, right? No, actually. This government is walking away from its basic responsibility to improve health care for all Ontarians, not just the wealthy.

Instead of undermining and dismantling the system, my party wants to improve it for everybody. So we would scrap that \$2-billion tax break for corporations. We have a better use for that money. We want to move ahead with primary care reform, creating what we think is going to be the most effective system of primary health care in the world. That plan includes more doctors and nurses and greater accessibility to them for all our families. Studies now in Ontario are telling us that one in four Ontarians finds it difficult and sometimes impossible to find a family doctor. From our perspective, that is absolutely unacceptable. So we're going to establish community-sponsored family health centres around Ontario. Dozens of Ontario communities are eager to get on board. These are going to improve access to quality care while reducing the cost of specialized care and hospital use. It's a win-win plan. It's the kind of idea that Ontarians are looking for from their leaders.

They're not looking for two-tier medicine. They're not looking for a government that chases thousands of nurses out of the province with its wrong-headed policies. They're looking for a government that's going to fight for something that helps define us as a nation, that gives expression to us at our very best, this wonderful concept that says, "It doesn't matter how much money you've got in your family; if you are sick, we are there for you and we will care for you." I can tell you that, whether in opposition or in government, we will never stop defending medicare, while looking for ways to improve it.

The government recently made this announcement that it's going to finally fund this very important treatment, specifically a drug called Visudyne. Visudyne is a drug that stops people, particularly seniors, from going blind. We're the last province, by the way, to sign on to funding Visudyne for our seniors. You may recall the case of one Mrs Thurston. Mrs Thurston came to Queen's Park. I recall going over here to the gallery and chatting with her. She told me she was 73 years of age, I think it was. She had been widowed much earlier and she had raised her three kids on her own. She worked as a store clerk. She was one of those salt-of-the-earth Ontarians: she played by all the rules, paid her taxes, raised her family, did as good a job as she could. So she came to Queen's Park and I made her case for her. I presented the case to the Minister of Health. I said, "Mrs Thurston here"—she had already lost sight in one eye at that time—"is going blind in her remaining eye and it seems to me if you've got a couple of billion dollars for tax breaks for corporations, we can come up with the money for Visudyne to keep her sight." Do you know what the Minister of Health said?

1620

Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East): What did two-tier Tony say?

Mr McGuinty: Two-tier Tony Clement said that she should fundraise in order to get the money necessary to save her sight. Do you know what Mrs Thurston ended up doing? Back in her very small Ontario community they held a dance. Think of that: they held a dance and they raised money so that she could get the treatment. Now the government would have us laud them for their decision just recently to fund Visudyne.

So I say to Ontarians, the government is not funding Visudyne because you need it; the government is funding Visudyne at this time because it needs you. It wants your support. I offer the same counsel to Ontarians as I have several times already in this speech: don't be fooled.

It shouldn't have been particularly complicated for the government to figure out that every person has the right to safe drinking water, but as the people of Walkerton could attest, that's a concept that the finance minister, now Premier, Ernie Eves was a little hazy on. That's the kind of thinking I referred to earlier. I want to be clear about this: I'm not advocating big government. I don't think government should do everything. But I believe there are some things that government must do, and it must do those things well. One of those surely is ensuring the safety of people's drinking water. The Walkerton report made it very clear: in its ideological commitment to the bottom line at all costs, this government walked away from its fundamental responsibility to the people it has the privilege of serving. People got sick because of that. People died because of that. Well, I'm glad to hear now that the government plans to adopt the recommendations of the Walkerton inquiry. Just imagine how different the history of this province would have been if this government had been as willing to listen to advice before people started getting sick and before people

started dying. I guess we have to conclude that if the government accepts the inquiry's recommendations, they must also accept the inquiry's findings that they were partly to blame. That being the case, we should have heard at least some semblance of an apology from the government in the throne speech, but we did not.

Government can't be all things to all people. It cannot possibly do everything. We've seen examples of governments trying to do that. Far from doing everything, they end up accomplishing almost nothing and they end up breaking their promises in the process. But government must do some things. You can't claim to represent people and then do nothing for them. You can't claim to represent people and then set about tearing down the vital institutions that generations of Ontarians have put into place and that these people were elected to protect.

That's what this government did with the water supply in Walkerton. That's what this government has done in health care. That's what this government is doing with Hydro One. And that's what this government has done in education.

Do you know what line I personally liked best in the throne speech? It's the one that read, "Ontarians have said they do not want classrooms ... to be battlegrounds. Your government has heard that message." Is that all it took? You just needed Ontarians to explain to you that going to war with the province's teachers was maybe not the best thing? Well, maybe someone should simply have explained that safe drinking water is a good thing.

But really, what do we take from that particular line I just quoted? That this government spent seven years humiliating and alienating teachers because they assumed everybody thought it was somehow a good idea? The fact is, if as a government you've spent seven years at war with the people who impart knowledge to our children, then you have pretty much screwed things up. We're sending our kids out into a very tough, very competitive world. It's a world that rewards education and very little else. It would be nice to think that heart and determination would be enough, but usually they are not, today. You need to be educated. For our kids to compete in today's tough global economy, they need to be skilled, they need to be educated. For Ontario to compete in today's tough global economy, it needs a skilled, educated workforce. For that, Ontario needs good schools. It needs strong schools.

I've talked about the government's obsession with the bottom line. Well, I've got a bottom line of my own. The way it works with me is this: every dollar that I will spend in government, I expect to get something back; I expect results. That way, you're not really spending, you're investing. That applies to budgeting my money in my home and it certainly applies to budgeting the people's money in government.

Right now, this government is spending too little on Ontario's public education system and it's investing badly. How do I know that? Easy. Because results, outcomes in education, are not what they should be. Half of our kids are failing to meet the basic standard in reading,

writing and mathematics. That is not how you prepare kids to join a skilled, educated workforce. You can't blame the schools and you can't blame the teachers, though my friends opposite have tried. The fact is, the system is reeling under the weight of this government's endless cuts. It's a miracle to me that it continues to operate at all.

I would urge the members opposite to subject themselves to a bit of a reality check when it comes to public education. Take a long, hard look at what you've accomplished during the past seven years. Take a walk through some of our schools. Take a look at the messy hallways. Closely examine the dirty washrooms. Find out how many kids are sharing textbooks because the school can't afford enough for everyone. Count the number of adults supervising the hallways, because there are a lot fewer than there used to be.

Find out if there are special-needs students at the school you're visiting, and see if they are among the 35,000 kids in our province still waiting for a critical psychological assessment. I guess they would be the same special-needs young people the throne speech assured us would be a government priority. I can tell you that 35,000 kids and their parents know that's a great big joke.

These are all problems facing our schools today. What is this government's response to this? How does our two-tier Premier want to solve the funding crisis in public education? He wants to give half a billion dollars to private schools. That's right: he wants to give 500 million taxpayer dollars to schools that most taxpayers couldn't afford, even if they wanted to.

1630

So I say again to the people of Ontario, don't be fooled. My friends opposite can wax poetic about a new era. There will be flowers blooming and kids playing soccer in all the fields. But these are the same two-tier Mike Harris Tories that they have always been. Don't be fooled.

As you know, in addition to being leader of my party, I have another, more important responsibility: I'm a parent. And Terri and I are just like other parents: we want the world for our kids. The world under a Tory public education system is a world that is letting them down. So let me be very clear. That half-billion dollars? A Liberal government would use it for our public schools, because that's where it's needed.

We are on record, I am proud to say, with a plan that would improve our schools and improve our kids' chances of succeeding after school. We're going to do something that will be extraordinary, in contrast to this government. We're going to take responsibility for bringing about improvement in student achievement. We're not going to blame the teachers, we're not going to blame parents, we're not going to blame the trustees, we're not going to blame anybody else out there, and we sure as heck won't blame our kids. We're going to take responsibility for bringing about improvement in education. That \$500 million they would invest in private schools

will more than pay for a central part of our plan: an absolute cap on class sizes in the lower grades.

This government has permitted some classes to swell today in Ontario to as many as 31 kids or more. That's how kids get lost in the crowd. That's how kids fall through the cracks. Big classes mean overworked teachers don't spot and help problem kids. Big classes mean overworked teachers don't spot and encourage gifted students. Big classes are bad classes.

My plan also involves a curriculum that combines a strong core with flexibility. The basics must be and will be taught, but schools that want to will be freed up to innovate. Schools that innovate successfully will be given the mandate and the resources to teach other schools how they did it. Our lighthouse schools program is all about good schools lighting the way, showing other schools how it is done.

These are the things that a Liberal government would do to improve our kids' academic results, to help them learn. But kids can't learn in schools that are not safe, and more and more schools these days just aren't safe. So for that reason I recently announced several measures to help make our schools safer places for kids to play and learn and develop. They include funding for surveillance cameras in schools that don't have them but would like to have them. There has been some misinformation in this regard and I want to take the opportunity to clarify that.

We will make resources available so that schools that wish to avail themselves of it can, if they wish to do so, install a video surveillance camera. The problem we're trying to address here is that of intruders. Unfortunately, there are growing numbers of unwanted people getting inside our kids' schools. There was a case here recently in the city of Toronto where a grade 2 girl was sexually assaulted when an unwanted intruder snuck into the school, unbeknownst to the administration, unbeknownst to the staff, and laid in wait inside the girls' washroom. Some schools are constructed in such a way that it is virtually impossible to tell whether somebody is coming into the school. If those schools think it will help make their kids safer by installing video surveillance cameras, we'll be there for them; we'll make sure they can do that.

The other safety measures I announced last week deal with bullying. We're going to have to do for bullying what we did for drinking and driving. We're going to have to make it unacceptable. I'm no longer talking about when a big kid picks on a smaller child, which may be the stereotype many people have of bullying. Modern-day bullying is more akin to prolonged tormenting. It can cause serious harm to our children. In worse cases it can lead to depression. There have been three cases of young people in Canada who have committed suicide as a result of prolonged bullying. Bullying is a real issue in our schools today. A recent study put out a couple of weeks ago here in Ontario tells us one in four students—this is a study of grade 7 to OAC students—had been the subject of bullying.

A Liberal government will make anti-bullying programs mandatory for every school in the province. These

programs will be designed at the school community level, drawing upon models that have enjoyed success in other jurisdictions. As well, we will implement a school safety hotline so that parents and students have somewhere to turn, someone to speak to, in the event that situations begin to develop in schools that they don't know how to deal with.

We are all sadly familiar with these tragedies that have taken place in some parts of our country and south of the border, and more recently in Europe, where some child enters a school with a weapon and goes on a killing spree. When they reconstruct those scenarios they virtually always come to the same question: "How could we possibly miss all those telltale signs? Everybody knew something was going to happen here." The school safety hotline is all about ensuring that there is some kind of outlet for somebody to get on the phone and say, "Listen, I think there's something here that you should take a look at." I believe that kids have a right to feel safe when they head off to school. I also believe that parents have a right to feel safe watching their kids head off to school.

The other announcement I made last week involved something that we call character education. In a nutshell, that involves working into the curriculum those values and attributes that the school community feels are important. Naturally there was some criticism from certain quarters that I am trying to impose certain values on our children. That's not so. I wouldn't do it, and it wouldn't work if I tried. Unlike the people making that criticism, I'm not afraid of standing for something either. Some people shy away from using the word "values." I don't. There are certain values that are universally accepted as good, as desirable in our citizens. The members opposite are surely familiar with a few of them. I'm talking about things like respect, responsibility, honesty and fairness. Those aren't things that you impose; those are things that you teach, encourage and foster.

Through our character education program, all school boards will be required to come up with their own shared values. The York region school board is leading the way in Ontario in this regard. They brought together teachers, students, parents and representatives of various faiths, the business community and municipal government. They brought them together over the course of three separate sessions. This is what that community settled on when it comes to their values they want to instill in their young people. Listen to these: honesty, respect, responsibility, fairness, perseverance, initiative, integrity, courage, optimism, empathy.

1640

Do you know who said it best? Martin Luther King Jr said it best. He said, "We must remember that intelligence alone is never enough. Intelligence plus character: now that is the goal of true education." That is what our character education is all about.

The money spent on the education measures I have just outlined is money well spent; it's money invested. Money invested in our schools is money invested in our citizens. It is money invested in a skilled, competitive

workforce. It's money invested in our future, and when you invest in the future, when you invest well in the future, you're doing your job as a government. This government is no longer doing its job. I'm not certain it ever did and I certainly know it's not doing that now.

There can be no better proof of that than what passed for a speech from the throne last week. That was a feeble document. I'll be honest: we weren't expecting much. But even so, there were four things we were hoping for on behalf of Ontario, because apart from everything else, we live here too.

We were hoping to hear the government state in no uncertain terms that it was putting off the sale of Hydro One until at least after the next election, but we heard nothing of the sort.

We were hoping to hear that the government would state in no uncertain terms that the \$2-billion corporate tax cut was off the table, but it's still sitting there.

We were hoping to hear the government state in no uncertain terms that it would not be giving half a billion dollars to private schools and instead it would dedicate itself to solving the myriad problems facing public schools. We didn't hear that either.

And we were hoping to hear the government state in no uncertain terms that, the comments of two-tier Ernie notwithstanding, two-tier health care would not be an option for Ontario. Well, guess what? Under this government, two-tier health care is an option for Ontario.

All in all, the throne speech really told us nothing new but it told the people of this province exactly what they need to know. It told them that they shouldn't be fooled. This government wants to be a government for the sake only of being a government. There is no real sense of mission over on the other side. There is no sense of, "This is what we want for our province." And as a mission statement, "This is what we want for Bay Street," just doesn't cut it. This government has spent seven long years selling itself to the people of Ontario on the grounds that it is tough but fair. I say they have long since lost sight of what fair is, and if they were really tough they wouldn't kowtow to Bay Street at the expense of Ontario's working families.

My party, the Liberal Party of Ontario, is committed to Ontario's working families and we are committed to small business. And do you know what? We're committed to big business and Bay Street as well. We just don't believe in favouring any one group over another. Government exists, from our Liberal perspective, to serve all the people. It exists to preserve and to strengthen the institutions that people depend on. To do otherwise is to betray a fundamental responsibility.

I can tell you, we will never do that. Our party will never do that. We will never walk away from our fundamental responsibilities. Instead, we will embrace them. Thank you very much.

Mr Speaker, I would like to present an amendment to the government motion to the throne speech, and that amendment reads as follows:

That the address in reply to the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session be amended by striking out all the words after, "We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, now assembled," and substituting the following:

"Whereas working families in Ontario deserve a government that will provide them with accessible health care, the best public education system in the world, a clean environment and a strong economy;

"Whereas the speech from the throne proved that the Eves government will continue to support the failed policies from the Harris regime, such as two-tier health care, private school tax credits, corporate taxes lower than Alabama's, compromised environmental protection and the privatization of Hydro One;

"Therefore, this House profoundly regrets that nothing has changed. The Eves government is out of touch with the people of Ontario and will continue to adopt policies that cater to their friends on Bay Street rather than hard-working Ontario families."

I so move, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): Mr McGuinty has moved an amendment to the government motion to the throne speech that reads as follows:

"That the address in reply to the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of this session be amended by striking out all the words after 'We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, now assembled' and substituting the following:

"Whereas working families in Ontario deserve a government that will provide them with accessible health care, the best public education system in the world, a clean environment and a strong economy;

"Whereas the speech from the throne proved that the Eves government will continue to support the failed policies from the Harris regime, such as two-tier health care, private school tax credits, corporate taxes lower than Alabama's, compromised environmental protection and the privatization of Hydro One;

"Therefore, this House profoundly regrets that nothing has changed. The Eves government is out of touch with the people of Ontario and will continue to adopt policies that cater to their friends on Bay Street rather than hard-working Ontario families."

Further debate?

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): Speaker, I move adjournment of the debate.

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

Hon John R. Baird (Associate Minister of Franco-phone Affairs): I move adjournment of the House.

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

This House stands adjourned until 6:45 of the clock.

The House adjourned at 1648.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

CONTENTS

Tuesday 14 May 2002

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Post-secondary education infrastructure	
Mrs Bountrogianni	53
St Marys municipal administration	
Mr Johnson	53
Assistance to farmers	
Mr Peters	53
Investments in Northumberland	
Mr Galt	54
Welfare reform	
Mr Gravelle	54
Long-term-care funding	
Mr Christopherson	54
Durham Region Community Care	
Mr O'Toole	54
Premier's attendance	
Mr Smitherman	55
Health care investments	
Mr Tascona	55

FIRST READINGS

Sir John A. Macdonald Highway Act, 2002, Bill 18, Mr Gilchrist	
Agreed to	56
Mr Gilchrist	56
Registered Plan Exemption Act (Retirement Savings and Education Savings), 2002, Bill 19, Mr Cordiano	
Agreed to	56
Mr Cordiano	56

MOTIONS

Private members' public business	
Mr Stockwell	57
Agreed to	57
Business of the House	
Mr Stockwell	57, 60
Mr Phillips	57
Mr Kormos	59
Agreed to	61
Time allocation	
Mr Stockwell	76
Agreed to	76

ORAL QUESTIONS

Hydro One	
Mr McGuinty	63, 64, 67
Mr Stockwell	63, 64, 67
Mr Bryant	67

Electricity market price study

Mr Hampton	65
Mr Stockwell	65

Bruce generating station

Mr Hampton	66
Mr Stockwell	66

Grape and wine industry

Mr Maves	67
Mr Hudak	68

Ministry spending

Ms Di Cocco	68
Mr Stockwell	68

Social assistance

Mr Hampton	69
Mrs Elliott	69
Mr Martin	69

Competitive electricity market

Mr Conway	69
Mr Stockwell	70

Affordable housing

Mr Gilchrist	70
Mr Hodgson	70

Long-term-care facilities

Mr Gerretsen	71
Mr Newman	71

GO Transit

Mr Tascona	72
Mr Sterling	72

Auto strategy

Mr Christopherson	72
Mr Flaherty	72

PETITIONS

Affordable housing

Mr Caplan	73
-----------------	----

Ontario disability support program

Mr Christopherson	73
-------------------------	----

Education funding

Mr Johnson	73
------------------	----

Long-term-care facilities

Mr Cleary	74
Mr Christopherson	75

Electricity deregulation

Mr Christopherson	74
-------------------------	----

Doctor shortage

Mr O'Toole	74
Mrs Dombrowsky	74

Hydro One

Mr Hoy	75
Mr Lalonde	75

Cruelty to animals

Mr Peters	75
-----------------	----

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

Mr McGuinty	76
Debate adjourned	81

OTHER BUSINESS

Visitors

The Speaker	55
-------------------	----

Legislative pages

The Speaker	55
-------------------	----

Wearing of hockey jerseys

Mr Sterling	56
Mr Bisson	56
Mr Smitherman	56
Mr McMeekin	56
The Speaker	56

Government report

Mr Bradley	56
------------------	----

Correction of record

Mr Wettlaufer	57
---------------------	----

Member's birthday

Mr Prue	57
---------------	----

Edward Good

Mrs Witmer	61
Mr Conway	61
Mr Kormos	62

TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Mardi 14 mai 2002

PREMIÈRE LECTURE

Loi de 2002 sur l'Autoroute

Sir John A. Macdonald,
projet de loi 18, *M. Gilchrist*

Adoptée

Loi de 2002 sur l'exemption des régimes enregistrés (épargne-retraite et épargne-études),

projet de loi 19, *M. Cordiano*

Adoptée