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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Monday 10 June 2002

Lundi 10 juin 2002

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 10 June 2002

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 10 juin 2002

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

HIGHWAY 69

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): Today I again stand in my place and plead with the government to begin the four-laning of Highway 69 from Sudbury to Parry Sound. Last week I stood in the House and launched a petition campaign over the Internet. I must tell you that over the course of the last three days, these are just some of the petitions I've received from people like me who want the four-laning of Highway 69 to take place.

Again this weekend there were another two tragic deaths along that stretch of highway. There was a chemical spill south of Sudbury. The government must understand, it is time for this government to understand, that the four-laning of that section between Sudbury and Parry Sound is a necessity. It is an economic lifeline for the people in northern Ontario. But right now, Highway 69 between Sudbury and Parry Sound is a dangerous stretch of highway. Statistics indicate that.

I say on behalf of the people I represent, in the riding of Sudbury and the community of Sudbury, who want a loud voice to speak for them, you must four-lane Highway 69 from Sudbury. You must commit some money in the budget next week to four-laning that highway from Sudbury to Parry Sound. To do anything else is to continue the carnage and the deaths along that road, and that's not acceptable to anyone.

VOLUNTEER ACTION CENTRE

Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington): The Volunteer Action Centre of Kitchener-Waterloo tells me that in the area they serve, over 10,000 volunteers donate more than one million hours of their time each year. As such, it's abundantly clear that the Volunteer Action Centre plays an instrumental role in supporting volunteer services for my riding of Waterloo-Wellington. That is why, when they asked me to make a statement to recognize volunteerism, I readily agreed.

The Volunteer Action Centre provides three core services, which include encouraging and facilitating community volunteerism, providing community agencies with recruitment services and providing education and training in volunteer management and board management.

Recently they informed me that since April 1999, they have been working closely with the Waterloo Catholic District School Board and the Waterloo Region District School Board to help high school students fulfill their 40 hours of community involvement that they are expected to do in order to graduate. The Volunteer Action Centre has developed a resource that will assist teachers, guidance counsellors, students and their parents in finding a volunteer opportunity. That resource binder lists 200 opportunities, many of which can accommodate youth volunteers. Opportunities were listed under nine categories of interest, including sports and recreation; arts and music; short-term and special events; clerical; food services and retail; children and youth; health; public relations; and handyperson.

The Volunteer Action Centre also tells me that one third of the individuals they see are 25 years of age or under. Their hope is that these individuals will have a positive experience and will continue to volunteer throughout their lives.

All members should share that hope, and agree that this approach truly captures the spirit of the community involvement program, which could well serve as a model for other school boards in the province.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): On May 30, this government signed a deal with the federal government regarding housing. When you cut through the headlines and the rhetoric, you realize this deal is a total abandonment of people who need affordable housing in Ontario.

Look at the numbers. In Hamilton, there's a need right now for 775 units per year. At best, this deal will provide 700 units over four years while we have a waiting list of 3,600 families. Halton has had 2,300 families on its waiting list for up to seven years. This deal is only going to build a total of 400 units. London needs 700 units per year over the next 10 years. This deal would build 400.

When you look at it across the province, the government of Ontario sold out when signing this bad deal. Frankly, they did not put out one new cent. Part of the deal was going to be matching federal funds. The federal government came to the table with \$245 million and the provincial government did not put in one cent of new money. They downloaded the responsibility to municipalities. They took advantage of municipal tax grants. They took advantage of programs already in place but did not put in one new cent.

While this need continues to grow worse every day across the province, I'm embarrassed that this government has signed that deal. Frankly, I'm embarrassed that the federal Liberals went along with the charade of this provincial government to look like they're actually taking action and doing something about affordable housing, which is a total joke. It's a sad joke because many people in Ontario need help and don't get it. Shame on this government for signing that deal and shame on the federal government for being partners with you in this outrageous scam on people in Ontario who need housing.

HUNTING AND FISHING

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): Again last week the government demonstrated, by way of time allocation on the Heritage Hunting and Fishing Act, its disregard for the angling community and the First Nations people across this province.

I've had the opportunity to go back to my constituency and the greater constituency of northeastern Ontario and speak to a number of people in regard to this issue. They can't understand why the government would not accept the amendments that were put forward by the NDP caucus that would have done essentially two things: first of all, to give the bill some ability to respond to the needs of anglers and hunters. Most people understand this legislation for what it is: it's a great big group hug from the Conservative government, saying to the angling community on the one hand, by the title of the bill, that they love them, but when you look at the details of the bill, it does absolutely nothing. People understand this bill says that you basically do what you do now and you've got nothing more than what you used to have.

In regard to the First Nations communities, there is a huge amount of, I would say, hurt and anger toward this government from the leadership that I spoke to through the James Bay area and all the way through NAN up into Thunder Bay. They are saying, "Why is this government not accepting an NDP amendment that would have put a non-derogation clause into this bill?" I send you messages back from Chief Ignace Gull, Chief Stan Beardy, Chief Theresa Hall and a number of other people I talked to, who called me—I didn't call them—with the anger they show toward this government. They say if you truly believe this bill does nothing to you, why don't you then accept the NDP amendment to a non-derogation clause?

IAN ANDERSON HOUSE

Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South): I recently had the opportunity to visit Ian Anderson House, Ontario's first freestanding in-resident cancer hospice. Actually it's in Oakville, which is the riding of our honourable Speaker Gary Carr. This six-bed hospice provides quality end-of-life care, without charge, for residents of Halton and Peel regions in a home-like

environment. The hospice also supports the whole family as a unit.

One of the residents I visited with, Mr Donald Bennett, regularly watches the proceedings of the Ontario Legislature on TV and will be watching us today. As I promised you, Mr Bennett, I am waving "hello."

Ian Anderson House is named in memory of Ian Anderson, who was diagnosed with cancer in 1987 and who died at home, as was his wish, in 1990. Funding for the creation of Ian Anderson House came from the Anderson family through the Ian Anderson House Foundation. This outstanding hospice, working in partnership with the community care access centre, provides nursing and homemaking support and round-the-clock staffing by palliative care professionals, supported by trained volunteers.

The hospice philosophy of care understands the value of attending to emotional, social and spiritual, as well as physical, needs. When recovery is no longer possible, compassionate care directed toward improving the quality of life becomes critically important.

I would like to commend the Anderson family for its vision in founding a cancer hospice for our community. We also owe our gratitude to the many volunteers and financial donors who support Ian Anderson House.

1340

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Mr Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale-High Park): I rise today to report on Ontario Liberal hearings that many of my colleagues held this morning with parents from schools this government is shutting down with its provincial school closing policy. Parents from schools in diverse places such as Blytheswood, Port Colborne, Toronto and Sarnia made an appeal for the schools that have been sentenced by the incredible policies of this government. "The provincial funding formula is responsible for having boards make asinine decisions," according to Toronto parent Henry Gluch of St Aloysius school.

These nine schools put their finger on what's happening to students around the province. Hundreds of kids are being put on to buses for the first time, some for as long as an hour, due to the shutdown of the neighbourhood school. The so-called local process for school closings is actually a provincial template that makes a mockery out of local input.

The poor long-term decisions were exemplified by Blytheswood school near Leamington, where the government will pay \$188,000 a year to build an extension on another school just to save the local school board \$100,000.

Ironically, almost every one of the schools that were here today could claim a record as an excellent school, including one that was featured in Maclean's magazine as one of the best in the province, according to the province's own school testing authority, and another one called a gem by the EQAO. These are the schools that don't even get to ask the question: why, Conservative

government, are you shutting down good schools in Ontario?

TOURISM IN PARRY SOUND-MUSKOKA

Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka): Most of Ontario enjoyed some gorgeous weather this past weekend, marking the beginning of the busy summer tourism season.

In Parry Sound-Muskoka, our government's tourism marketing campaign appears to be paying dividends. Local resorts such as Muskoka Sands in Gravenhurst, Holiday Inn on Lake Muskoka, Grandview near Huntsville, Rocky Crest and Sherwood Inn on Lake Joseph are reporting positive signs for an exceptional year.

There has been a huge expansion in the facilities and in the choice of activities we have to offer in Parry Sound-Muskoka. Golf course development over the last five years has given us some fabulous courses: Rocky Crest, Bigwin Island, Taboo in Gravenhurst, which Mike Weir named as his home course just last week, and the Mark O'Meara course in Huntsville, to name only a few. Muskoka is fast becoming North America's next great golf destination. With its rugged lands and beautiful scenery, golfing in Muskoka is an extraordinary experience.

The unique features of Georgian Bay, along with the outstanding provincial parks in the area, are great natural attractions that offer many adventure sports opportunities.

As this vitally important industry gets underway for the summer season, I invite all residents of Ontario to rediscover Parry Sound-Muskoka, where there is a growing range of attractions. I am confident we have something for everyone.

RADIOLOGY SERVICES

Mrs Sandra Papatello (Windsor West): We were happy last week to assist the Ontario Association of Radiologists to release publicly their findings from a survey of 32 hospitals across Ontario.

Most of the survey results of these hospitals suggest and clearly indicate that diagnostic testing across the board is woefully inadequate in terms of how timely access can be achieved by patients. Some 95% of all diagnostic testing done at these sites is in fact delayed weeks and weeks, far longer than what they consider to be medically appropriate.

One of these areas in particular is Peterborough. I suggest that the Minister of Health would prefer to go to Peterborough to find out why so many of these individuals are waiting weeks and weeks for diagnostic testing. The excuse the minister gave in the House last week, choosing to attack me personally instead of referring to what the problems are there—he suggested that all emergency care can get right in the door. Of course that has never changed. Emergency cases always jump the queue. It's people who are considered non-emergency,

which is the lion's share of people receiving diagnostic testing, who wait weeks and weeks, much longer than is considered medically appropriate.

Shame on the member from that area and shame on the Minister of Health for not addressing real issues in diagnostic testing.

JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT OF WATERLOO REGION

Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener Centre): On June 6, 2002, an annual Evening of Excellence was hosted by Junior Achievement of the Waterloo region, a community-based hands-on educational organization for high school students who wish to take on the experience of starting up a business and carrying out all the responsibilities while still in school.

Junior Achievement has been operating locally in the Waterloo region for 31 years, for 46 years nationally and for 81 years internationally. It is funded by the private sector, service clubs and individuals. Programs are operated in Kitchener, Waterloo, Cambridge, Elmira, St Jacobs and New Hamburg and they involve students from communities such as Petersburg, Baden and Breslau.

Thursday's event recognized students who provided exceptional leadership throughout the year. I'd like to take this time to recognize some of those students and their companies. The NCR award in production was awarded to the Candy Corp; company of the year was awarded to Simply Irresistible; most valuable graduating achiever of the year was awarded to Ling Sun from Schmadl and Sun Bank; salesperson of the year was awarded to two achievers, Meagan Steg and Rose Harvey from Simply Irresistible; and president of the year was awarded to Mike Howanyk of Simply Irresistible.

Congratulations to all achievers and their respective companies for another successful year, and my thanks to all those who volunteered their time and resources to give students some true hands-on learning. That type of learning is unmatched.

VISITORS

Mr Dave Levac (Brant): On a point of order, Speaker: In the gallery today we have a very special visitor, Ursula Feige, who has brought her grandson, Steven Weir, who wants to be in my place one day. But I reminded him that it will be over there someday. So get ready for it, Steven; it's coming.

Steven is studying politics in grade 5 and wanted to visit us here. We welcome them. Thank you very much for being here with us.

Hon Carl DeFaria (Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: In the gallery we have a contingent from the Portuguese community. We have the president of the Federation of Portuguese Canadian Business and Professionals and lots of people from the Portuguese com-

munity. I would like to welcome them today on Portugal Day.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): We welcome our honoured guests.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I would ask all members to join me in welcoming our new group of pages. Our new group includes Kyle Ahluwalia from Beaches-East York; Andrei Bajenov from York Centre; Samantha Belaire from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke; Selena den Dunnen from Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh; Holly Garnett from Nipissing; Mackenzie Green from Peterborough; Colin Heics from Mississauga West; Lauren Jackson from Burlington; Matthew Kersten from Brant; Mini Mazumdar from Oakville; Peter Michel from Oshawa; Lindsey O'Brien from Niagara Centre; Sean O'Connell from Oxford; Jordan Paolucci from Etobicoke North; Jaclyn Raymond from Parkdale-High Park; Lisa Robinson from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound; Sarah Suh from Etobicoke-Lakeshore; Stephanie Whittamore from Markham; Lara Yeo from Eglinton-Lawrence; and Andrew Zmiyiwsky from Kenora-Rainy River.

Clark, Brad	Johnson, Bert
Clement, Tony	Kells, Morley
Coburn, Brian	Kennedy, Gerard
Colle, Mike	Kwinter, Monte
Cordiano, Joseph	Levac, David
Crozier, Bruce	Marland, Margaret
Cunningham, Dianne	Martiniuk, Gerry
Curling, Alvin	Maves, Bart
DeFaria, Carl	McDonald, Al
Di Cocco, Caroline	McMeekin, Ted
Dombrowsky, Leona	Miller, Norm
Duncan, Dwight	Molinari, Tina R.
Dunlop, Garfield	Munro, Julia
Ecker, Janet	Mushinski, Marilyn
Elliott, Brenda	Newman, Dan

Smitherman, George
Spina, Joseph
Sterling, Norman W.
Stewart, R. Gary
Stockwell, Chris
Tascona, Joseph N.
Tsubouchi, David H.
Turnbull, David
Wettlaufer, Wayne
Wilson, Jim
Witmer, Elizabeth
Wood, Bob
Young, David

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

Nays

Bisson, Gilles	Kormos, Peter	Martin, Tony
Churley, Marilyn	Marchese, Rosario	Prue, Michael
Hampton, Howard	Martel, Shelley	

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 79; the nays are 8.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

MOTIONS

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): I move that pursuant to standing order 9(c)(i), the House shall meet from 6:45 pm to 9:30 pm on Monday, June 10, Tuesday, June 11, Wednesday, June 12, and Thursday, June 13, 2002, for the purpose of considering government business.

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

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1350 to 1355.

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

Ayes

Agostino, Dominic	Flaherty, Jim	O'Toole, John
Arnott, Ted	Galt, Doug	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Baird, John R.	Gerretsen, John	Parsons, Ernie
Bartolucci, Rick	Gilchrist, Steve	Patten, Richard
Beaubien, Marcel	Gill, Raminder	Peters, Steve
Bountrogianni, Marie	Hardeman, Ernie	Phillips, Gerry
Boyer, Claudette	Hastings, John	Pupatello, Sandra
Bradley, James J.	Hodgson, Chris	Ramsay, David
Brown, Michael A.	Hoy, Pat	Runciman, Robert W.
Caplan, David	Hudak, Tim	Ruprecht, Tony
Christopherson, David	Jackson, Cameron	Sampson, Rob
Chudleigh, Ted	Johns, Helen	Sergio, Mario

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

PORTUGUESE CANADIAN COMMUNITY

Hon Carl DeFaria (Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors): It is my great pleasure to rise in the House today to speak to the Celebration of Portuguese Heritage Act, 2001.

June 2001 was the first official Portuguese History and Heritage Month and today is the first official Portugal Day in Ontario.

I want to acknowledge the support of all the members in this House, the House leaders of every party that support the unanimous passage of Bill 120, the bill that proclaimed the month of June as Portuguese History and Heritage Month and today, June 10, as Portugal Day.

This is a great day for every Ontarian of Portuguese descent. Indeed, it is a great day for all Ontarians.

This government took the initiative to recognize and celebrate the vast diversity of citizens in this province with the introduction of this legislation.

We took the lead in embracing the diversity that is all around us. Diversity is one of Ontario's strengths, and I invite all honourable members and all Ontarians to join me in celebrating that diversity through the history and heritage and culture of Ontarians of Portuguese descent.

The deep historical roots and the ongoing contributions to Canada by Ontarians of Portuguese background make the case for this very special recognition com-

memorating Portuguese heritage and its contribution to the mosaic of this society.

1400

Portugal played a pioneering and leading international role in the explorations of the New World in the 15th and 16th centuries. Those connections contributed to the passing from an age of closed worlds into an age of global societies.

Canada's historical ties with the Portuguese community run just as deep. Gaspar Corte Real, together with Giovanni Caboto, or John Cabot, as he is known to most Canadians, was one of the earliest explorers in Canada. His work heralds Canada's beginning as a multicultural nation.

For the past 500 years, people of Portuguese descent have settled and made their homes here in Ontario and they have made significant contributions to the growth of this nation and of this province. For example, when mail service was first established in 1693, it was a Portuguese man, Pedro da Silva, who transported and delivered mail by canoe between Montreal and Quebec City.

The Portuguese-Canadian community in Ontario is vibrant and continues to make many contributions to our society and to enrich Ontario with its history, its culture and its language, and also, and very important, with its work ethic.

I just want to briefly highlight our government's record on a couple of initiatives that are important to members of the Portuguese community who have joined us today in the members' gallery. In fact, these are investments in diversity, programs that will help newcomers to this province become productive working members of our communities and become integrated as quickly as possible.

I am, of course, speaking of our English-as-a-second-language training programs and other educational supports to our diverse population. We have increased funding to Ontario school boards for English as a second language since the introduction of student-focused funding in 1998-99. In fact, for 2002-03, the funding for ESL is projected to rise to \$168.5 million, an increase of \$57 million or more than 50% compared to ESL funding prior to 1998.

In addition to ESL funding, boards can now use funding from the demographic component of the learning opportunities grant to help students from immigrant backgrounds. That funding has been enhanced by \$50 million for the 2002-03 year. In total, the demographic component will increase to a projected funding of \$203.9 million.

We are also providing \$17.2 million through the continuing education and other program grants for international languages for elementary students.

Our government is providing a major increase of about \$350 million in new funding to Ontario's public schools for the 2002-03 school year.

This investment in Ontario's students increases our government's total spending on public education from \$13.86 billion to a record \$14.21 billion for the coming

school year. These are investments that reach to the very heart of our ethnic communities: strong educational supports that provide the kind of support that newcomers to this province need.

The month of June and the day of June 10 in particular have always been a great time of celebration in the Portuguese community. The celebrations honour the life of 16th-century poet Luis de Camões and his famous poems, the Lusiads, with cultural performances, history seminars, poem recitals, street parades and many other activities. June 10 is the anniversary of the death of Luis de Camões.

The strong communities of Ontarians of Portuguese descent number nearly half a million people. Ontarians of Portuguese background are proud Canadians and they participate fully in our society. They are forever grateful for the warm welcome they have received through the centuries. The celebration of the great cultural and historical heritage that the Portuguese bring is an integral piece of the cultural mosaic that makes Canada so wonderful and so great.

I invite all members of this House to join me in celebrating the wonderful contributions of Ontarians of Portuguese descent, and I invite all honourable members, indeed all Ontarians, to get out and join the festivities this month in communities throughout the province, because in our community we welcome, we are very inclusive, just like all the other communities in Ontario, and we are so proud of belonging to this great society.

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): On behalf of Dalton McGuinty and the Liberal Party, I'm delighted to rise to recognize an important date celebrated as Portugal National Day since 1880.

In the galleries are a number of distinguished local representatives, but they also come from pretty far away—from Ontario, they come as far away as Thunder Bay and Windsor and Ottawa, all over Ontario. In fact, some come from as far as Portugal to celebrate today, the national day of Portugal.

Even the President of the Azores has come to help us celebrate. His name is Dr Carlos Manuel do Vale César, and he has made a special request. That request has been that he would like all Ontarians to join in helping to celebrate this special day, because he feels—his English is perfect—a very special tie with this place called Toronto and this province called Ontario. He is saying to all Portuguese Canadians, "Let's join in and celebrate a very special day," Luis de Camões day.

The celebration of the national day of Portugal is special and unique in the pages of history. Unlike some dates that commemorate an important political event such as a declaration of independence, on this historic occasion we ask the people of Ontario to join our Canadians of Portuguese heritage in the remembrance of a great world-renowned poet and writer, Luis de Camões. Although he passed away more than 400 years ago, Camões left a living legacy of meaningful poetry of immortal beauty that has not withered with age.

We are all cognizant and appreciative of the tremendous contributions that Portuguese Canadians have made

to the development and growth of our province and country both in the economic and cultural fields, yet as important as these economic contributions are, the attention of Canadian Portuguese children today is focused not on the prosperity and wealth that opportunity in Canada brings, but on our democratic system of government, which allows the people of our multicultural society of Ontario to celebrate a national literary hero of their forefathers' original homeland as a right. Indeed, Luis de Camões is an intellectual giant whose footsteps have crossed centuries of time and crossed the Atlantic Ocean to implant into Canada a great heritage of love for literature, for poetry and education. But today we are cognizant of, especially as we raise the colours of Portugal and the national flag, the Portuguese community and its tremendous impact on all facets of Ontario life. Whether it's in economy, culture, commerce or the arts, we find that Portuguese Canadians have contributed a great deal.

1410

It is just as important, when we see the flag raised today at 11 o'clock and the colours of Portugal, to note that upon the shoulders of Portuguese Canadians rests a special responsibility: to ensure that their children are also knowledgeable about their history and about their country and about their culture and about their language. To them I say today [remarks in Portuguese].

As we, together, join as Canadians and Canadians of Portuguese background, we know that today we are building a new country right across the globe known as Canada, a country of free men and free women, a country where there is unlimited possibility in terms of economic growth and freedom.

On this special day I congratulate the minister, but above all else I congratulate these Canadians of Portuguese background who have made time today to join us in this gallery to ensure that everyone knows, not just Portuguese Canadians but everyone, that the work ethic is strong, that together they have a great sense of faith in their church and in their God, and that they have a very strong sense of family. To them I say congratulations [remarks in Portuguese].

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Further responses?

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): I too am very proud, as a New Democrat and proud to represent all New Democrats, to celebrate Portugal Day. We say proudly, again reminding those who are watching, that New Democrats gave their unanimous consent for the Celebration of Portuguese Heritage Act, 2001. There were some unsteady moments during those days, and New Democrats were here, ready and willing to celebrate and give consent to your bill, Carl.

Portuguese Canadians today were proudly raising their flags on College Street, on Dundas Street, I suspect even in Brampton and in Hamilton. It was, with all due respect to Mr Ruprecht, a wonderful victory for Portugal. It was a wonderful soccer game, which I enjoyed. They played beautifully. I'm a fan of soccer and I suspect there are many fans of soccer, and I wanted to tell you that in the

reception we had today at Queen's Park the excitement of Portuguese Canadians was palpable. It was not just to celebrate Portugal Day but to celebrate the victory of the Portugal team in that wonderful—

Interjection: What about the Poles?

Mr Marchese: That's why I said, "With all due respect to Mr Ruprecht." The Poles did not do very well.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): Today.

Mr Marchese: Today, but there's always another day.

I wanted to congratulate and thank the Consul General, Dr Joao Perestrello, because he is finishing his term. He's had close to his four years, and it's amazing how times flies. But I wanted to praise his work because I think the community is quite proud of what he has done for Portuguese Canadians—an indefatigable worker, great representation by a Consul General, whom I wanted to thank on behalf of all Portuguese Canadians. Carl, I think that was worthy of mentioning today because he may be leaving September, October; I don't know.

Second, I wanted to congratulate the president and the members of the Alliance of Portuguese Clubs and Associations of Ontario. They have pulled together Portugal Week activities in ways that need to be acknowledged and recognized, without which these activities that we celebrate, in particular the parade that begins on Lansdowne and ends at the centre of my riding, would not have happened. It's a celebration bringing together thousands and thousands of people along Dundas Street to share in the pride of Portugal Day and the pride of being Portuguese Canadians. I am happy to say I've lived in this riding most of my life and lived closely connected to the Portuguese community, and the parade is the height of all of those activities.

I want to say as well that there is a new committee that has been formed to celebrate the 50 years of official immigration of Portuguese Canadians. I know they have come before, but this will be the official date that has been selected. This group will be the umbrella group coordinating all the activities across Canada in a way that everybody will know, through the Web site and a calendar, through newsletters and other means, the events that will be held. This group is working very hard and very closely together to bring about in 2003 a whole series of events across Canada that Portuguese Canadians can be proud of.

The Consul General spoke of this unity that we need to have as a community to be able to do the great things Portuguese Canadians do. In fact it's that unity he talked about—that we saw in the Portuguese team today in their victory of 4 to 0—that is expected and called upon of them in the next year as we celebrate these activities. I believe that Portuguese Canadians are becoming incredibly active in the societal and political issues of the day that are making their presence felt here in Canada. It's that civic involvement that's manifesting itself in ways that I think Portuguese Canadians can be proud of. It's that civic involvement that will make all politicians accountable; not just a single politician, but all politicians.

I'm reminded by the member for Hamilton West that they celebrated Portugal Day activities at city hall this

past Saturday, and I'm sure other activities have happened throughout Ontario and Canada. I congratulate all of the communities working together to bring about and to show the pride of being who they are.

I congratulate the minister who, as a former member, brought together the bill of the Celebration of Portuguese Heritage Act. I think that was very good. Minister, you make some mention about increasing funding for international languages. I wouldn't go that far. This program is threatened with death unless your government puts some money into it to keep it alive. Please, I want to be nice to you, but we've seen a drop of 20% with ESL programs. I urge you to put money into it. Don't take money out of these programs—

The Speaker: I'm afraid the member's time is up. Responses are over.

MEMBER FOR ST CATHARINES

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): I seek unanimous consent to pay tribute to Jim Bradley, the member for St Catharines, on the occasion of his 25 years here in the Legislature.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Is there unanimous consent? Agreed. We will begin the rotation.

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): This is a wonderful opportunity for us in this Legislature to recognize a truly extraordinary accomplishment. Jim Bradley, the member for St Catharines, has been serving his constituents for a quarter of a century.

Holding down any job for 25 years is noteworthy. Holding down a job for that long in our just-in-time world, where the only constant is change, is remarkable, but holding on to the same political seat for 25 years is nothing short of spectacular.

Speaker, I'm sure you will agree with me when I say that many people are cynical when it comes to politics and politicians, and on top of that there is much less party loyalty than there used to be. So to hold the same seat for 25 years or, to put it another way, to win seven successive elections, speaks volumes about the high regard in which Jim is held by his constituents. I can assure you that the feeling is mutual. Jim Bradley is as committed to his constituents today as he was when he was first elected by them in 1977.

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Hansard is replete with his questions, his statements, his speeches and his rather creative way to make interventions on behalf of his constituents. I can tell you that Jim Bradley is one of the most grounded politicians I know.

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West): Did you say well-rounded or well-grounded?

Mr McGuinty: For purposes of clarification, I did not say "rounded"; I said "grounded."

One of the most remarkable aspects of Jim Bradley is that he knows what his constituents are thinking at all times. Many of us struggle to make a guess in terms of where they are at as we consider some of the issues of the

day, but Jim Bradley is well plugged in to his constituency and his constituents and he fully understands where they're at. He understands their hopes and their fears and he has never, ever allowed some of the trappings of power and the privileges of public office to come between him and his constituents.

Jim Bradley has served our party, the Ontario Liberal Party, very well over the years but especially so in his capacities as our interim leader, our House leader and as our Minister of the Environment. I say without reservation, Jim Bradley is the best Minister of the Environment who has ever graced this Legislature.

It's easy to forget some of his accomplishments, and I'll only list three. He brought in the blue box program. He first recognized and decided it was so important to address acid rain in the province of Ontario. Also—this is something that goes too frequently unmentioned—he led to a tremendous growth in green industries, which was a tremendous addition to our economy.

Today, of course, he serves as our environment critic, but maybe a better way to phrase that is, he remains an outstanding advocate on behalf of our environment.

The people of St Catharines are lucky to have Jim Bradley as their representative. Our party is lucky to have him as one of our members. This House is lucky to have him as one of our 103 MPPs. Quite simply, Jim Bradley gives politicians a good name and he's been doing it for some 25 years.

On behalf of my party, I say to my colleague, my friend Jim Bradley, congratulations and thank you very much.

Applause.

Mr Kormos: I'm pleased I won the competition in this caucus to speak to Jim Bradley's 25 years, quarter century, in this Legislature, especially because I'm speaking not only for myself and the caucus but I do speak today for Mel Swart. He was my predecessor, the member for Welland-Thorold for 12 years, 13 years, until he retired and I had the good fortune to be elected. Both Mel and I—and I want everyone to know this—have a 25-year history of being able to work with Jim Bradley in Niagara region. I was able to work with him much better when he was a member of the opposition than when he was a member of government, but nonetheless able to work with Jim Bradley.

I speak in tribute to him with affection and regard by this caucus and by a whole lot of people down in Niagara region.

Jim and I had a far better rapport, I suspect, before the ridings were redistributed. Of course, upon redistribution I acquired—and I'm grateful—the good folks in south St Catharines. What that meant is that, contrary to how it occurred in the past, where Jim had the St Catharines Standard as his exclusive domain and I had the Welland Tribune, the Thorold News and the Pelham News, Jim now has to share the St Catharines Standard with me.

From time to time, Jim has worked on issues that have resulted in the Standard having some modest headline making reference to my having raised in the House x, y

or z, and I tell you the contrary has happened as well. Jim's supporters in St Catharines are inclined to write prompt letters to the editor correcting the St Catharines Standard. Jim is inclined to stand in the House and rail against the Standard, its current owners, its previous owners and the owners before that, to utilize the immunity of the House to say all sorts of things that he has, and the record will show it, about the St Catharines Standard. But even the St Catharines Standard has atoned for any wrongs it has done to Mr Bradley, because here we are on Saturday—forgive me, Speaker—but front page above the fold. I simply want to tell the Standard that in consideration of that, they can ignore Mr Bradley's releases for the next 12 months in favour of mine.

Jim comes from an interesting and remarkable background, and that background is reflected in his behaviour and his positioning here in the Legislature, as well as in his ability to speak to and for the members of his community. Brief bios of Jim Bradley will indicate that he grew up in Sudbury. His father was a Mine-Mill member, a miner, and his father was nurtured and surrounded by the unique and very admirable politics that Mine-Mill was identified with. Jim certainly has retained those qualities that I have no doubt were nurtured not only by his father but by his father's experience and the experience of being a miner in what are still hard times but were even harder times during the course of Jim's youth.

I find it a distinct pleasure to share the community, the city of St Catharines, with him by virtue of my riding extending into south St Catharines. We have the opportunity to attend many of the same events. Jim has been a diligent, incredibly hard-working—and I say that without hesitation—fastidious representative of his riding.

I've been in his office, and those of you who have been in his office will understand when I comment and reflect upon Jim's astute preservation of all documents, notes, scraps of paper, magazines, newspapers—the archival qualities that Jim displays. I'm told his home reflects that same archival interest, and I tell you that while it may be an affront to some people, including public safety inspections by fire department officials, it doesn't offend me in the least.

Jim's a frequent traveller to and from his riding. I'm sometimes doing the best I can to get back to Niagara on a weeknight, and the Chevy S-10 I'm just pumping for all it's worth, but that Buick Road Master would go whizzing past me—the Buick Road Master, mind you, a somewhat interesting guzzler in view of Jim's long-standing environmental commitment, but, I say to his credit, replaced by a somewhat more modest although equally expensive Buick LeSabre in the recent past.

Jim's record as environment minister was applauded by all who witnessed it. There were some highlights that he will remember. There are some that I remember: the tire tax and, if time hasn't misserved me, the environmental lottery, which was oh, so short-lived. But notwithstanding those modest anomalies, he indeed was and remains committed to environmental issues and also to people's issues, certainly to the city of St Catharines.

We applaud his longevity in this Legislature. We also applaud his performance on behalf of his constituents and as a member of this assembly.

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Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Transportation): It's indeed a pleasure to pay tribute to Jim, as I did I guess a week ago at a very large event in the city of St Catharines, along with Sean Conway, Floyd Laughren and a number of members and former members of this House. It was interesting to see so many of them come back and congratulate Jim and to be with Jim, because I think it's indicative not only of what he's done as a legislator but what he's done as a friend, a friend to many MPPs on both sides of this House.

As you know, Mr Speaker, I came to this place the same time as Jim did, and I can never forget meeting Jim at one of the first legislative committee meetings. I started to talk to Jim and started to gather a little bit about what his views were, and I really wondered who was the Liberal and who was the Conservative, because Jim on some issues might have expressed an opinion which was perhaps right of me.

I can never forget as well, during the minority Parliament of 1977 to 1981, being in a committee room and there being a significant vote on a private member's bill. When you're in a minority Parliament, you don't have quite the same control over the process as you do when you're in a majority; these are much better days. But at that point in time, Jim, who was the point man for the committee, was looking around for the votes and figuring out that he needed every vote from the Liberal caucus. He ran out of the committee room to seek his compatriots to come back in for the vote. I'll never forget sitting there. The 20 minutes, I think it was, went up, and I could hear the door rattling but I didn't say it to anybody, because I was sitting down by the door, and the Liberals didn't show up. Of course, Jim, being so anxious, didn't realize that in this august building our committee room doors open inward and not outward. Jim, you lost that vote because you didn't push instead of pull.

At any rate, a lot of odd things occur in this Legislature.

As many of you know, I've been treated to a number of speeches by Mr Bradley over the period of 25 years. The difficult thing for those of us who have listened to the speeches so often is to distinguish one from the other. But Jim really does love this place; he loves the Legislature. I believe that he has been a model in terms of his dedication to this Legislature. I don't think that in opposition or in government there is a member who has been more dedicated to being here in his place, voting for his constituents and speaking for his constituents that I can think of.

Jim, I just want to say to you that I know you still have fire in your belly, and I want to tell you I have fire in my belly too. I wish you all the best in the future, Jim. You've done a great job for your people. You're a great example of an MPP, you're a great example of dedication as a cabinet minister, and I wish you all the best.

The Speaker: The member for St Catharines.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I'll be uncharacteristically brief in my response to the good wishes from Dalton McGuinty, Peter Kormos and Norm Sterling, as they went around the Horn, as we say. I must say that in politics there are so many good people, and all of us will find this the longer we are in politics, but every one of us here has found this already. We joke even among ourselves about politicians and the stereotypes of politicians. My experience has been that regardless of the political affiliation of the people, there are so many good people in politics and in the political scene for the right reasons, wanting to represent their constituents, wanting to advance their ideas. That's an observation you find to be even more astute the longer you're in the political field than it might otherwise be when you've been here a short period of time, as I was in my early days.

As well, just as Norm has been the member for some 25 years in his constituency, the people of your own constituency really confer upon you a privilege when they allow you to serve as their elected representative. It isn't anything other than a privilege. You're there at their whim and fantasy, and that's the way it should be—I mean “fancy”; “fantasy” is those of us who have the job.

One of the things you find about this House is that after everything is behind us, after the heat is gone, the debates are essentially about ideas and policies and programs and not about people, and that's as it should be. I've never believed that because a person advances a theory, a policy or a suggestion that is diametrically opposed to what I am advancing, that person is any less worthy or any less relevant to the House. Fortunately we live in a society where we exchange these views in a civil atmosphere, where it is not the amount of armour you have but the strength of your argument that prevails in a debate on a particular day. That's so very important in a democracy, and we in our country are very privileged to have a democracy of that kind.

One of the things I do not like—more so in opposition, but it's on both sides—is that it's one of the few jobs in this world where one of your jobs is to make the other person look bad. That's part of the question period atmosphere; if I'm lucky enough to get on in question period today, I might try to make the minister look bad, but he will try back. We know on a personal basis that we are simply advancing our ideas, but it's a bit of a concern to me. It's one part of the job that I wouldn't like.

One of the other observations I've had is that, as a group in this Legislature, when tragedy strikes one of us in this House, it strikes all of us in this House, and we're all sad at that time. Or when there is a triumph for an individual, a joyful triumph that is not of a partisan nature but in some other aspect of one's life, we all share in that triumph and joy, even though we hold diametrically opposed views. That, again, speaks to the civility of our democracy and the civility of our House.

I did have a nice gathering of friends in St Catharines the other day, and Norm Sterling was kind enough and able to be with us, along with Sandra Pupatello, the

deputy leader of the party, and Sean Conway, my long-term colleague here in the Legislature—the longest-serving member of the Legislature, I might add—and Floyd Laughren. So we had a small-c conservative, two small-l liberals and Floyd Laughren, who always said he was an unabashed socialist, at that kind of evening. Again, I go back to the theme that that's what we're all about in Ontario and in Canada, in a democratic system where you can have people from various parties, including Mel Swart, who is another one of my colleagues. Actually, when I was in opposition, I used to drive Mel back and forth to St Catharines from time to time in the days when we sat here on Friday mornings.

I've also concluded that both the role of the opposition and the role of the government are important. Some of us have served on both sides of the House, and unless you've served on both sides, you really don't recognize what that is all about. Certainly I didn't in my first eight years in the Legislature. When I got into government and listened to my colleagues who had never served in opposition talking about the childish, irresponsible, obstructive opposition, I would try to explain to them that the opposition has a role, that governments are stronger and the system is stronger if a government has a strong opposition to make sure that it is held accountable. Some of us have had to play that role longer than we would like and others have had the opportunity to serve on the government side. Both are equally important, in my view. We're all elected as legislators.

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I've always felt, as well, that even though I have a title and we all have a title, and certain privileges and access to the media—people see us perhaps on a daily basis—that there are many people in our society who are unsung heroes, who don't have that same opportunity but serve our communities in a similar way without the accolades, perhaps without the criticism as well, but without the accolades and the attention that we have. They are the unsung heroes whom we take about a week to pay tribute to during Volunteer Week. They're important people in our system.

We also observe, all of us, I think, that we get many friends in politics as the years accumulate, particularly when you sit on that side of the House. You get friends you didn't know you had before. But the friends that you appreciate most are those who are with you from the beginning and those who are with you in the most difficult of times, when you're down in the polls, when you're not very popular perhaps in the stance that you've taken, when there doesn't appear to be a good prospect. When you have those friends still with you in those difficult times, you appreciate those people very much.

I heard the allegation about the office and the fact that the fire marshal should visit the office. It's alleged I've never thrown anything out. I remember a very brief story of bringing in a newspaper for members of the press gallery. It was about American troops landing in Lebanon. They were quite amazed. I said, “I've got this newspaper I want to show you.” They said, “You know,

President Reagan should not have had the American troops at that time stationed in Lebanon.” They were very vulnerable and it was a very difficult time. I had to show them that it wasn’t President Reagan; it was President Eisenhower that I had the headline from. American troops had landed in Lebanon in July 1958. I had that newspaper. It just happened to be in one corner of the basement at the time. So I’ve always believed that you should never throw out something that some day you might just need somehow. That’s why there’s some of that material around.

Mr Speaker, former Mr Speaker and other Mr Speakers who may be anywhere around today, I appreciate your tolerance in allowing some of the bending of the rules when there’s a speech on about an agriculture matter or another matter and I get up and ask why the speaker didn’t mention the need for another MRI in St Catharines or something of that nature, or something to do with ophthalmologists. I appreciate that tolerance. Our Speakers play an important role in our House and I’ve really appreciated Speakers over the years who have been tolerant of some of us. I haven’t even been thrown out in 25 years in this House. That’s not something I guess I should brag about, but—

Interjection: We can fix that.

Mr Bradley: That could be fixed.

We all play a role for all Ontario but ultimately each one of us is elected from our individual constituencies, and those are the people to whom we must ultimately answer.

In talking about the Legislature, I tell my own constituents, “You people may be totally shocked, but not all of the good ideas in this world emanate from inside the confines of the Ontario Legislature,” and of course they are completely shocked when they hear that. That’s why we, as legislators, invite their input, as we should.

The last observation I would have, as a personal observation, is that in our society there are many powerful people out there who, through position, are powerful and in many cases earn that position, and there are many people who are extremely wealthy. Those are individuals who really don’t need us that much. We must be cognizant of what they say but they don’t need us. Ultimately we are elected to speak for people who cannot speak for themselves. When we do that, we are doing our job appropriately.

I thank all members of the Legislature for your kind remarks, for your good friendship over the years. Like my friend Norm Sterling, there is still fire in the belly and in my case, there’s even more belly to have fire in.

MINISTER’S COMMENTS

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: Pursuant to the notice I gave you earlier today, I rise now to address a matter under the provisions of standing order 21.

I regret that I must bring this matter to your attention today. For reasons that are yet to be determined but

readily inferred, the Minister of Energy has presented two directly contradictory facts about the same matter to this House. Hansard has recorded these statements and you have been provided with a copy of those Hansard transcripts.

It’s our position that this conduct is inconsistent with the standards of the House and the standards that the public expects from the members of this House. Accordingly, I put to you that it is open to you to find the Minister of Energy in prima facie contempt of this Legislature.

On June 5, 2002, the minister, in response to a question in the House, stated that he learned of the outrageous Hydro One executive pay packages and informed the Premier about them back in April. The minister said at that time, and I quote, “When I got into the Ministry of Energy and they briefed me on these salaries, I went on the consultations, spoke to the Premier, said, ‘We have to deal with this. These are excessive.’”

The minister assumed his responsibilities in April, I believe on April 15. Thus, his statement suggests clearly that he informed the Premier in April. That’s a fact that the minister himself supported when speaking to reporters. He said, and I quote, “When I was made Minister of Energy, I acted on it right away.” But then on Thursday, the minister contradicted himself. He said he didn’t inform the Premier about the pay packages until a month later: “... around the second week of May, I discussed this with the Premier.”

Earlier that same day, during media scrums in Guelph, the Premier clearly contradicted both statements. He said the minister did not inform him about the pay packages in April, but that’s not all he said. He said the minister didn’t inform him about the pay packages in May either. He says he only found out about the compensation packages from media reports, the first of which were published on May 16. The Premier said, “When this issue came to light in the media was when I first became aware of what these compensation packages were.” He later told reporters he couldn’t recall any briefing by the Minister of Energy.

On page 111 of the 22nd edition of Erskine May it states, “The Commons may treat the making of a deliberately misleading statement as a contempt.” On page 141 of the 19th edition of Erskine May it states, “Conspiracy to deceive either House or any committees of either House will also be treated as a breach of privilege.”

At page 234 of the second edition of Joseph Maingot’s *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada*, it explains that in order for the Speaker to find a prima facie case in a matter involving a deliberate misleading statement, there must be “an admission by someone in authority, such as a minister of the crown or an officer of a department.”

Speaker, we’ve got two contradictory statements by the minister recorded in Hansard: one from Wednesday, June 5, and one from Thursday, June 6. We have media reports of statements by the Premier that clearly indicate the minister may have been less than forthright in this

House not once but twice in regard to his statements about Hydro One pay packages and when he informed the Premier.

There is federal precedent for this. On January 31, 2002, federal member of Parliament Brian Pallister made a similar point of privilege about similar statements made inside and outside the House of Commons by Liberal cabinet minister Art Eggleton. As you're well aware, the Speaker in that case found there was indeed a prima facie case of privilege.

I submit to you that this is evidence of a prima facie case of contempt, and I have available the appropriate motion, should you so find.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I thank the member for his point of privilege.

The government House leader on the same point of privilege.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): To suggest there's a quantum leap here would be an understatement. At page 673 it suggests, "When I got into the Ministry of Energy and they briefed me on these salaries, I went on the consultations, spoke with the Premier, said, 'We have to deal with this. These are excessive.'" There's no date involved there, there's no mention of a date, there's no mention of a month. There's nothing. I don't know how you suggest that because I said that, somehow you're now nailing down an exact date that I suggested I spoke to anybody about this. It's patently absurd.

The Speaker: I thank the member for his input. I will certainly read Speaker Milliken's ruling and I will reserve my judgment and be back in the House with the results.

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ORAL QUESTIONS

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My first question is for the Minister of Education. Today in the gallery are parents from across Ontario representing at least 10 schools that are slated for closure. They are here specifically to ask for your help. They are asking that you impose a moratorium on school closures.

You will know, Minister, that last week I put forward a proposal that I called Helping Kids Now which calls for, in part, a moratorium until you have repaired your badly flawed funding formula. I am sure, Madam Minister, there is no disagreement with respect to the funding formula being badly flawed.

On behalf of these parents, I am asking you if you will do the right thing. Will you put a stop to school closures that are being driven not by a desire to improve learning but rather by a desire to save money at the expense of learning?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): The leader of the opposition obviously

does not understand that school closure decisions have always been the responsibility of local school boards. It is not a matter of the policy of this government.

In fact, I'd like to share with the members opposite the fact that between 1985 and 1990, when the Liberals were in power, 37 public and Catholic schools were closed in Toronto. Between 1995 and 2000, under our government, in comparison, there were not 37, but there were only 20 public and Catholic schools closed in Toronto.

I say to the member opposite, these are decisions that have always been made by local school boards based on the information they have about the needs in their community. I would recommend to you that you recognize that you closed schools for five years, almost twice the number.

Mr McGuinty: Madam Minister, there's a difference and you know it. There's a difference between closing schools as a result of declining enrolment and closing schools because of your badly flawed funding formula. That's the difference. It is pure fiction to argue that in each and every instance today when boards are closing schools they're doing so freely and voluntarily. They are doing so because they are being driven by your badly flawed funding formula.

Let me tell you about some of the schools we are talking about here. In Sarnia, St Helen is slated for closure. That school is in good shape. Its junior kindergarten class is operating at capacity and this school is 90% full. In Port Colborne, Humberstone is on the chopping block. Let me tell you about that school. It has the highest grade 3 test results in the province. It's a one-floor school that is just barely 30 years old.

Your funding formula is destroying good community schools where good learning is taking place. Does it not make sense to impose a moratorium at least until you have reviewed and repaired your funding formula?

Hon Mrs Witmer: It has always been the responsibility of locally elected trustees on boards of education to make decisions as to when and why schools close and when and why new schools are built. I have just indicated that, under the Liberal government, boards made the decision 37 times to close schools here in Toronto. During the period of time when the Liberals were in power, there were only 176 new schools built; 37 closed in Toronto. During our time, 1995 to 2001, there have been 262 new schools built in this province.

Do you want to take all the autonomy away from locally elected school boards? School boards have made good decisions on behalf of their students.

Mr McGuinty: Madam Minister, the parents here today did not come to hear you say you have absolutely no input into what's happening with respect to school closures around the province of Ontario today. They have already met with their trustees and other representatives at the local board. They are here today to ask for your help. They don't want some lecture about what happened in the last century. You've been in charge for seven years over there. It is your funding formula that is driving school closures in the province of Ontario. They're here

to ask for your help. They want to know whether or not you're going to help them. These are good schools where good learning is taking place. Your funding formula is closing small schools in particular, where studies are telling us very good learning is taking place.

There's a school in Bruce township called Bruce Township Central School that is slated for closure. It's the only school between Kincardine and Port Elgin. When it goes, kids are going to be bused to Kincardine or Port Elgin.

The parents here are from Sarnia, Toronto, Essex and Port Colborne. Again, on their behalf, I say to you, why not put in place a moratorium until you have reviewed and repaired your funding formula?

Hon Mrs Witmer: I think it's very important to recognize and understand that school closings are always difficult issues. It is always very challenging. Our government has recognized that we do have schools that have declining enrolment and small populations. We have actually made more money available this year to those schools.

In fact, you mentioned that some of the parents here today are from Port Colborne. For the record, I just want to indicate that Tim Hudak, the MPP, has already made the previous minister aware of the fact that the parents are concerned with the funding formula and have the view that the board did not follow a fair process.

As I have said to you again, it is up to each board to determine how they deal with the building of new schools and the closings of others.

I would just like to quote you, Mr McGuinty. In November 1998, you said, "Well, you know, um, schools close and schools open on a fairly regular basis." You're right. School trustees have continued—it's a tough—

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

PUBLIC SECTOR COMPENSATION

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): To the Minister of Energy: Deb Hutton was one of Mike Harris's and Ernie Eves's most trusted political advisors. In fact, she was at Ernie Eves's side when he won your party's leadership, and she was a senior member of his transition team.

Ms Hutton now also happens to be a vice-president at Hydro One. I'm sure you're familiar with that. How much money are Ontario ratepayers paying Deb Hutton?

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): I don't have any idea.

Mr McGuinty: The problem, Minister, is that you don't care, and you should. You should have that information. More importantly, so should Hydro's ratepayers, the people of Ontario. We can't get this information because of the blackout that your government imposed on Ontario Hydro's successor companies.

Today I'm asking for your support on two things: (1) a forensic audit to find out what Deb Hutton and others at

Hydro One are now making; and (2) I'm asking that we make Hydro One and all of Hydro's successor companies subject to freedom-of-information laws.

Will you support those two measures? Will you turn the lights on at Hydro?

Hon Mr Stockwell: The rationale behind the exclusion of this particular company from freedom-of-information laws is the same rationale used for the exclusion of Toronto Hydro—another good example of a company that is excluded from the FOIs. The fact of the matter is, if they're operating within the private sector, which they are, then it would be very simple for a competitor to file an FOI and find out exactly anything they want about the company.

Mr McGuinty: No, not "anything."

Hon Mr Stockwell: Well, absolutely. Once you file under the FOI, you can file for virtually anything under that company's jurisdiction. Therefore, I think even you would concede that it would put them at a competitive disadvantage if competitive companies were allowed to file FOIs on everything that company were to do. The shareholder would also be impacted, because that information would be privileged information that all other companies could keep to themselves, but only this one wouldn't be allowed to.

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Mr McGuinty: Minister, this is a public company. Hydro One is competing with nobody today. What are you afraid of? What are you trying to hide? Why can't hydro ratepayers find out what the company is paying by way of salaries and compensation packages, especially to people at the senior executive levels?

I'll tell you why they are very concerned. In 1999, when you created a wall of secrecy around these companies, we knew that the Tories were at the trough. We knew that Tom Long, Leslie Noble and Paul Rhodes all had ridiculously fat contracts. We knew that and I'm sure you're aware of that, Minister, because the media dug up the information under then-existing FOI legislation, which covered Hydro.

The fact is that you are covering something up. You can dissuade us of this by simply agreeing to do two things which I think serve the public interest: let's have a forensic audit to find out what people are getting paid, and let's turn the lights on the—

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

Hon Mr Stockwell: I think Hydro One and OPG should be allowed the same privileges as any private sector company operating within that operation. The people at OPG are also operating in the private sector. As generators, they would also be in a situation where companies would be allowed to file FOIs and determine very important and private information about the company.

It seems to me that if the argument is made, then you'd also make the argument with respect to Enbridge and Toronto Hydro. All those companies would be in exactly the same situation. The same argument could be

made with respect to Toronto Hydro. No doubt about it: it's the same jurisdiction and the same public accountability.

The argument isn't a question of covering up. They file on the Ontario Securities Commission the same information that private sector companies do. They provide that information; it's out there for the public to see. Anything more would be very difficult for a private sector company to operate under if they were the only ones forced to operate under that particular jurisdiction.

COMPETITIVE ELECTRICITY MARKET

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Deputy Premier. Before your government introduced your Hydro privatization bill, your Premier promised full public hearings on the bill. Now we learn that your definition of full public hearings means just two days outside Toronto: one day in Ottawa and one day in London. You seem to think that people outside Toronto don't matter when it comes to this issue.

Deputy Premier, this is the people's hydroelectric system, not yours, not Eleanor Clitheroe's. Why are you so opposed to having the people of Ontario have a say in what happens to their hydroelectric system?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): I'm going to refer that to the Minister of Environment and Energy.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): We offered public hearings. We asked for input from the opposition parties about public hearings. The response was practically negligible. We requested that information get back to us, on the proviso that we would like to get this bill passed by June 27. I said I'd be happy to discuss any agreement between three parties with respect to getting the bill passed by June 27. Your House leader put in an application that wouldn't allow us to pass it by June 27, so obviously there was something counterproductive about that when we had suggested we'd like it passed by June 27. I asked them, "Give me your best estimates. Where do you want to travel to?" etc. All I got back was the Liberals saying, "Scrap the bill," and you saying, "Go to 12 cities," which we couldn't get in by June 27. I had to act unilaterally because you people were acting absolutely irresponsibly.

Mr Hampton: It would appear we've settled one thing. The emphasis for the government isn't upon hearing from the people of the province; it's on ramming this through as quickly as they can and shutting out as many people as they can.

I also want to ask you about northern Ontario. The pulp and paper industry, the mining industry and the steel industry are all heavily dependent upon electricity, but you're not going to go to anywhere in northern Ontario. You're not going to go to a mining community, a pulp and paper community or a steel manufacturing community, as if they don't matter, as if their need to have access to electricity is somehow irrelevant to your government.

Can you tell all those people, the hundreds of thousands of jobs that are dependent on receiving electricity in a reliable and predictable fashion at affordable prices, why you don't even think they're important?

Hon Mr Stockwell: I do think they're important. The fact remains, why did you not submit a reasonable recommendation rather than the notoriously—you guys offer up absolutely impossible recommendations to the House leader to fulfill. You absolutely put impossible restrictions on us in order to suggest that we didn't co-operate.

Well, we did co-operate. I asked your House leader, "Where do you want to travel? Let's work this out. Let's get some detailed plans together. Let's work in co-operation, so we can get this bill to as many communities as possible."

What did he give me back? Nothing. Some bogus report suggesting he doesn't want it passed by June 27, so he put on as many cities as he could. That's not negotiation; that's the dog-in-the-manger attitude that you people take on everything. Then you stand up here and claim we're not negotiating.

You don't negotiate. You don't agree to anything. All you want to do is put another notch in your belt that we passed time allocation. You people think the only thing we should be doing in here is argue about nothing when we could be travelling, going to towns, going to committees, but you put irresponsible applications in to the House leader.

Mr Hampton: I guess we are to tell the people of Ontario now that, according to the government, we should negotiate away a community like Thunder Bay, with four pulp and paper mills, or we should negotiate away a community like Sudbury, with mining operations, or negotiate away Hamilton, with steel mills, or negotiate away Windsor, with all the auto assembly plants and manufacturing plants.

Get it through your head, Minister: this is not your hydro system; this system belongs to the people of Ontario who built it over generations. If you think you can simply swing a deal in a backroom with a couple of your honchos on Bay Street and line their pockets, and people are going to let it happen, you're quite wrong.

Seventy per cent of the people out there are opposed to this. Are you going to provide across-the-province public hearings, or are you simply going to listen to your cronies on Bay Street?

Hon Mr Stockwell: You've got a team to pick, then, when it comes to Bill 80. Why don't you pass the bill? Whose side are you on? Are you on the ratepayers' side? Then pass the bill by unanimous consent so we can move forward to get those salaries down.

Furthermore, you've got a lot of nerve to talk about public hearings. You were part of a government that pushed through the social contract. How many public hearings did you have on that? How many towns did you go to on that one? How many minutes did you have for public consultation? How much time did you have for amendments? How much longer did you go on clause-

by-clause? Absolutely zero. Zip. And you're talking to us.

We're having a week. We're travelling. We're going to cities. We've got clause-by-clause. If we have 15 seconds of public hearings, that's 15 seconds longer than you had on the social contract, I'll tell you.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): New question.

Mr Hampton: To the Minister of Energy—the Minister of Energy, and the Premier, who said you were going to hold province-wide public hearings on this very important issue—I'm simply calling you on what your government said. Once again we find that what you said a month ago is suddenly very shallow.

But I also want to ask you why your government considers it so important to keep the consumers of the province in the dark. Part of what you've introduced in this legislation would essentially keep the consumers of this province from knowing what generating stations are in effect gaming the market, manipulating the market, forcing prices up. You seem to have the attitude that the less consumers know, the better for them it is.

Will you take out the pieces of this legislation that in effect place a cloak of secrecy on what's happening in terms of power production and the independent market operator in this province?

Hon Mr Stockwell: I'm not really sure he's driving at a point here. He says we're trying to keep the consumers in the dark. I think this bill does exactly the opposite. It provides an opportunity for consumers to have full knowledge of the kind of agreements they're entering into. It talks about a 30-day cooling-off period. It talks about a 15-day period after which you have to sign on to ensure it's a double standard to be met. It talks about no negative optioning. It talks about giving the OEB more power to investigate complaints. It talks about the IMO being allowed to go on-site in investigating companies with respect to their generation power. I think this is protecting the consumers considerably across Ontario.

1510

I don't know what you're talking about. What it comes down to is the same thing as you talk about with respect to House leaders and travel. We'd be very happy to travel. We'd be very happy to have committees go out. We'd be very happy to negotiate an agreement to send the committee out. Can you just direct your House leader from hell to go out and negotiate a contract that we could have?

Mr Hampton: I will take the minister up, because we submitted to you the list of communities where we wanted committee hearings held. Your response was a time allocation bill which effectively ruled out those communities. So we'll put those communities forward again today and we'll expect from you later on today a commitment that the committee will go to those communities and hear from people in those communities.

Let me get back on the point I was just trying to make, that your legislation as proposed would, in effect, allow the independent market operator to keep secret from people all kinds of information about what is happening

in terms of the generation of electricity and the marketing of electricity. I simply say to you again, if you think your scheme for privatization of electricity is so wonderful, why are you trying to keep the freedom-of-information act from shining the light on what's happening? What do you have to hide that you want to keep consumers out of the information?

Hon Mr Stockwell: It relates back to the original question by the leader of the official opposition. There is certain information that, if you allow filing to the FOI for private sector operators, would put them at a competitive disadvantage to others in the industry. It's fairly clear that everybody understands that. That's why they have to compete in private sector operations, and if they have to meet certain requirements that are much more stringent and much more specific than other private sector operators, then it becomes an unfair disadvantage for them and a clear advantage for the other competitors. I think I was very clear on that.

With respect to your committee, I just got a list of 12 cities from your House leader, but nowhere does he say how he's going to manage this through the committee process in order to get the bill back to the House by June 27. I've been very clear with him. I've said June 27 is when we want to pass this bill. All I get is a list of cities that he goes through around Ontario. There's got to be 50, 100, a thousand cities he's left off the list. What have you got against all those other cities, I say to the leader of the third party? Why are you opposed to those good cities—Etobicoke, for instance? What have you got against the good people of Etobicoke, I say to the leader of the third party?

TAXATION

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Minister of Finance. I have been travelling the province, as I'm sure you have been as well, and when I speak with families, they talk to me about some of the concerns they have. I ask this in participation of next week's budget. They talk to me about the shortage of doctors in their communities, the shortage of nurses, maybe hospital beds, cutbacks on CCAC home care hours. They talk to me about school closures, class sizes. Maybe their kids are on a waiting list for their first psychological assessment. There are some 39,000 children there.

In light of those pressing needs and concerns on the part of our families, Madam Minister, I am asking you with respect to next week's budget, will you now not reconsider your government's drive to reduce corporate taxes to the point where they are 25% below their US counterparts?

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Finance): This government is very well aware of the concerns of Ontario's families, the priorities that families in Ontario put on good health care, on a good education system, on a good, clean environment. We're well aware of that. But families also recognize that you can't spend money you don't

have, that we need to have jobs and economic growth here in this province if we're going to have the resources to spend on quality-of-life programs like health and education.

I know the honourable member across the way thinks that business and jobs just naturally appear in this province. That was the attitude from the Liberals and the NDP that drove jobs out of this province. Our job is to make sure we have the investment here and the jobs here so our families can be strong, so we can have the growth and the prosperity that allow us to make the new investments in health and the new investments in education that we have continued to make and will continue to make.

Mr McGuinty: Well, you are obviously and painfully out of touch with the needs and concerns of Ontario families.

You know who I'm with on this one. I'm with Liz Witmer. This is what she said during the course of the leadership race. She said, "I don't hear people asking me for tax cuts when I travel the province." She's absolutely right. They are not after you to cut corporate taxes; they are after you to do more for their health care, their education, the protection of the environment and so on. And besides that, Madam Minister, they are wondering why it is that you consider it absolutely essential that our corporate taxes be at a level that is 25% below that of their American counterparts. It's one thing to have corporate taxes that are competitive, but they are in fact today competitive. Why is it that you insist—where is this obsession coming from that would drive our corporate taxes 25% below their US counterparts at the expense of investment in health care, education and the environment?

Hon Mrs Ecker: I know the honourable member likes to ignore the literally hundreds of thousands of Ontario residents who make modest incomes who no longer have to pay Ontario income tax. They have to pay federal income tax. I haven't heard him complain about how his federal colleagues are in the pockets of people in the low-income level. He never complains about that.

But let's also be very clear. He keeps talking about this mythical \$2-billion tax cut for corporations. The only way he's going to cancel any \$2-billion corporation tax or tax for business means he's going to have to raise taxes in this economy \$2 billion. He's talking about the policy that the Liberal Party is going to raise business taxes in this province \$2 billion. If you're concerned about Ontario families, wait and see how many of them are still employed if you take \$2 billion out of our business community.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): My question is for the Minister of Labour. Thousands of young people across the province, including my great riding of Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale, are about to leave school and start summer jobs. I know you have a great concern for the health and safety of young

people. Can you tell us what is being done to reach young people with the message to work safely?

Hon Brad Clark (Minister of Labour): I thank the honourable member for the question. Our government on this side of the House has made a very strong commitment to the prevention of workplace injuries and illnesses in all sectors, making Ontario's workplaces among the safest in the world. At the present time, in the last five years, we've actually reduced workplace injuries by over 30%, which is a significant outcome.

We're now reaching out to young people over the course of the summer. Our concern is that as they are enthusiastic about getting into their jobs and earning wages, we want to make sure they are aware of the dangers where they are working. That's why the WSIB has put forth a young worker awareness campaign and will spend \$675,000 this summer. It will run all the way to Labour Day. We want to make sure the kids who are going out working, the young workers, know their rights, their responsibilities and how to protect themselves in the workplace. That's essential to prevention of injuries.

Mr Gill: Thank you, Minister, for that answer. As we recognize the work that the WSIB, which is the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, and the Ministry of Labour are doing to achieve safe workplaces, I would like to know if there are other things that other people can do as well.

Hon Mr Clark: It's a very good question. What we have to do is to change an entire workplace culture. We have to change an attitude. If you go back in time and you remember drinking and driving 20, 30 or 40 years ago, it wasn't a huge issue. People thought they could handle their alcohol and drive an automobile. We found that that was wrong. We've changed an entire culture, an entire attitude in the province about drinking and driving.

Now we have to do the same thing when it comes to workplace injuries and illness. Now we have to provide a combination of enforcement, awareness and education. We need parents to be involved. We need kids to be involved. We need the employers to be involved, the unions, their leaders, everyone to be involved to ensure that the workplaces for our young people are safe. We don't want any injuries. We want to prevent the injuries themselves. That means we need an entire shift in culture and attitude. We need friends, co-workers and everyone to become more aware and create an environment where we're all working for one goal, and that is the prevention of illnesses.

1520

POLLUTION CONTROL

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have a question for the Deputy Premier. On Friday there was a headline in the Standard that said, "Tories Determined to Sell Hydro One," and a very animated-looking Minister of Environment speaking. It's interesting to hear what he says to editorial boards and what he says in this House. I

want to see whether you agree with him, speaking on behalf of the Premier.

The Premier of this province said that he was in favour, or gave the suggestion he was in favour, of the signing of the Kyoto accord. Yet when speaking to the St Catharines Standard, this is what the Minister of Environment is reported to have said: "Until the United States agrees to sign the Kyoto accord, Ontario will oppose any potential ratification of the climate change treaty in Canada."

I would like to ask you, do you agree with the Premier who suggested somehow that he was in favour of signing the Kyoto accord or do you agree with the Minister of Environment, who says you won't possibly sign it until George Bush and the United States agree to it?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): It's a tough one. I'm going to give it to the Minister of Environment.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): I was going to give it to the Minister of Energy.

I think you should talk to your federal cousins with respect to the Kyoto accord. If there's any foot-dragging with respect to the Kyoto accord it's coming—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I think you should talk to your federal cousins. It seems to me that there's a huge rift between Mr Dhaliwal and Mr Anderson with respect to the accord. All along, our position on the accord is, we have got to see some hard numbers put in place that the federal government is very resistant to lay on the table. Until we see those numbers, no one can have any knowledge as to whether or not they're going to support the accord or not support the accord.

The idea is noble but we have to see how they're going to implement it to ensure that we can protect the things we—

The Speaker: The minister's time is up.

Mr Bradley: I draw from that the conclusion that the minister disagrees with the Premier and in fact the government is going to drag its feet on this and not play a leadership role.

I'd like to go back to the Deputy Premier again, because once again you'll recall I asked a question last week in the House about the conversion of coal-fired generating plants in Ontario to gas-fired plants. This was the answer I got from the Minister of the Environment: "If we listen to the thinking of the critic for the environment, the only way he wants to get up to number one" in North America "is that we close down all our infrastructure, close down all our plants, close down all our manufacturing and lay everybody off and put them on welfare. Then we'll be number one. That's the logic the critic has: close everything down, don't create any jobs, no prosperity, put everybody on welfare and we'll be number one."

I ask the Deputy Premier, because I don't think when she was Minister of Environment she would have given

that answer, does she agree with the Minister of Environment when he says that if you convert the coal-fired plants, somehow Ontario will come to a standstill? Does she agree with that? I know my friend Mr Gilchrist does not.

Hon Mr Stockwell: There's revisionism again from the Liberals. The problem is, the answer you're asking for was from a different question you asked. The question you—

Mr Bradley: Just answer the question.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Hold it. You know what? I understand it's my job now to make you look bad, and I'll tell you, afterwards I'm going to feel terrible about it.

The question he asked me last week was with respect to a study that was put out in 1999. I responded by suggesting to the member opposite that the only way we're going to get up to the high echelon where he wanted to be with Guam and Hawaii and PEI is that we'd have to shut down all the manufacturing, all the job opportunities, all the investment and all the prosperity. Everyone would end up on welfare, and that's the goal of the NDP and the Liberals. That doesn't happen to be our goal.

With respect to coal-fired plants, you could have shut down the coal-fired plants when you were that wonderful Minister of Environment your leader talked about. Why didn't you shut down the coal-fired plants? I know why you didn't. You didn't because if you did, people would be left in the dark. There would be no hydro for our seniors, single mothers and all those important people out there. So when your Ministry of the Environment was so important, how come—

The Speaker: Order. The minister's time is up.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr Al McDonald (Nipissing): My question is for the Minister of Finance. It has been reported that the budget will be delivered on June 17, 2002. In fact, newspapers are already speculating about what it's contents may be. I'm wondering, Minister, if you can give us some idea where this budget is headed.

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Finance): I'd like to thank the member for Nipissing for the question. Yes, we announced we will be tabling the budget on June 17, 2002. I think it's important to recognize, as I've said in this House, that we are being presented with significant challenges this year because of the economic slowdown, even though there are signs of increased growth in many sectors of the province because of the steps this government has taken over the last several years. We are seeing declines in some significant revenue streams; for example, business profits. I know the leader of the opposition stands for a \$2-billion tax increase on our business community, but we would certainly see the loss in jobs if that kind of policy were to go through.

We will be tabling a budget next week that responds to the priorities of Ontario families, that responds to their concerns around health, around the environment, around education, but also responds to their concerns for good,

strong, economic fundamentals to keep the jobs growing in this province.

Mr McDonald: Minister, there have been some concerns about the nature of our budgets, specifically requests that we move to a more businesslike approach. I believe these are legitimate concerns. I wonder if the minister can tell the House if there is any effort to address these concerns.

Hon Mrs Ecker: It's not something that necessarily attracts a lot of public attention, but this government has been following through on its commitment to make sure that the way we keep our books and the way we report on the finances of the province are very accountable to taxpayers, and also that they represent the best advice that we have received from organizations like the Ontario Financial Review Commission, the Public Sector Accounting Board with the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants, and the Provincial Auditor. One of the changes we will be making in this budget is how we report the tangible capital assets to respond to those particular recommendations. I know the member for Scarborough-Agincourt has also periodically raised this from across the House, as well as my colleague the member for Mississauga Centre.

We certainly will be following through on this. I've written to the Provincial Auditor to let him know that we'll be approving the province's reporting on tangible capital assets for better management of our taxpayers' resources.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a question for the Minister of Health. On May 27, 2002, the Ontario Hospital Association sent an update to members advising that it was holding intense discussions with the Ministry of Health on the urgent need for a funding announcement. The OHA said, "The current hospital funding problems stem directly from the planned under-spending in the 2001 provincial budget. At that time, the government was advised of the real needs of hospitals to maintain current programs and those needs were not included in the budget." Ontario hospitals need at least \$300 million to deal with problems from last year and another \$600 million to \$700 million just to maintain current services.

Minister, can you tell us today if the real needs of Ontario hospitals will be met in the budget?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): No, I can't tell you that today, because I am neither the Minister of Finance nor in charge of the budget. I can tell you that in the past two years this government has increased funding by 22% for our hospital sector and, in the 2001-02 fiscal year, spending on behalf of the people of Ontario for hospitals reached a record \$8.8 billion.

Ms Martel: If I might, the financial needs of Ontario hospitals are very serious. The OHA estimates that 100 out of 160 hospitals are now operating in the red. The University Health Network has dipped into its cash

reserves to keep operating. The Rouge Valley Health System is now into its line of credit and has had to meet with the bankers to continue operating.

Despite your comments about multi-year funding for hospitals, the throne speech also says that as Ontario moves toward its goal of multi-year base funding, it needs the federal government's partnership in health care.

Minister, the question is very clear: are you going to meet the real needs of Ontario hospitals in this budget, and are you going to move to multi-year funding even if you don't get additional funding from the federal government?

1530

Hon Mr Clement: The commitment of this government has been clear. Indeed, through the first throne speech of the Ernie Eves government, this government committed itself to moving rapidly, I would say, to a multi-year funding model. This has been accepted with enthusiasm by the Ontario Hospital Association, speaking on behalf of Ontario's hospitals. They saw it as a very significant announcement in the throne speech and something that shows we are listening. We understand the need for multi-year budgeting that our hospitals have to engage in, and indeed this is a priority for this government.

The honourable member is quite correct: it is difficult to fund and finance our hospitals when the federal Liberal government has allocated merely 14 cents of every health care dollar spent from their budget. That has been an issue in the past, and it will continue to be an issue.

HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr Joseph Cordiano (York South-Weston): This is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Last year you asked the Toronto District Health Council to evaluate a proposal to replace the existing Humber River Regional Hospital with a new superhospital. The council reported back to you that this was a bad idea. In fact, it said it was not in the community's interest and that it would hurt the most vulnerable in the community.

You can imagine our surprise when Rueben Devlin, president and CEO of Humber River Regional Hospital, announced you were supporting his proposal for a new superhospital. In case you've forgotten, Rueben Devlin is also president of the Ontario PC Party.

My question is: does being president of the PC Party of Ontario entitle you to privileged information, and does being president of the PC Party of Ontario entitle you to get what you want even if it's not in the community's best interests?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): You must be very happy that your seatmate was not present when you make that allegation. As president of the Ontario Liberal Party—some people were asking the same kinds of questions.

The honourable member is incorrect. There has been no decision made by this government with respect to the

Humber River Regional Hospital. Any decision that is made by this government will be made on the basis that we have better health care for people in northwestern and western Toronto in the catchment area of the Humber River Regional Hospital. That is the way these decisions are made, and that's the way they should be made.

Mr Cordiano: Minister, I have correspondence from you that clearly says no decision has been reached and that this matter is still under review. Dr Devlin claims he has correspondence from you that says he's instructed to proceed with his plans. In fact, he claims you support his proposal and that your support is continuing.

I say again that his claims amount to his having received insider information about a cabinet decision. If we believe Dr Devlin, then obviously his position as party president has entitled him to privileged information, and that amounts to a conflict of interest. Who are we to believe: the president of the PC Party of Ontario or you, Minister? Which one is it?

Hon Mr Clement: It really is beneath this honourable member to make these baseless allegations. The difference in your allegation is this: I said to the president of the hospital that he could proceed with presenting a proposal. He can proceed with creating a proposal. That did not mean, and does not mean, that we have automatically accepted any proposal. That is the difference between your allegation and any form of insider information you're alleging, which is simply not true and simply not a policy of this government.

I would go back to my original statement: we will make a decision, just as we make any decision, on the basis of what we see as furthering the health care needs, in this case, of citizens of Ontario who find themselves in the catchment area of the particular hospital.

If the honourable member has an allegation to make, with actual evidence, make the allegation. What you have right now is beneath you as an honourable member, and you should withdraw it at this particular time.

TELEMARKETING PRACTICES

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): My question is for the Minister of Consumer and Business Services. Minister, not a year goes by that we don't hear about telemarketing scams taking advantage of vulnerable members of our society. It's of particular concern to many seniors in my riding of Scarborough Centre.

I was pleased to hear Minister DeFaria speak about fraud-proofing of seniors last week, because knowledge, as we know, is a very important weapon against this sort of crime. But I'm sure, Minister, you will agree that just as important as fraud-proofing is fraud prevention. We have to continue our commitment to pulling the line on telephone scams. What are you doing to prevent this kind of despicable crime in our province?

Hon Tim Hudak (Minister of Consumer and Business Services): I thank the member for Scarborough Centre for the question and for her work on protecting seniors from scams in her riding.

In fact, the Ernie Eves government, together with the Ministry of Consumer and Business Services, is doing it's our best to take the steam out of these boiler room operations. These are aggressive, intensive and fully mobile underground telemarketing scam operations that chiefly target seniors and other vulnerable people. I'm very pleased to let the members of the House know that today at Metro Toronto police headquarters we announced a major boiler room bust through a strategic partnership with the province, the OPP anti-rackets squad, the York and Toronto police forces and US law enforcement. Through this hard work, people are now behind bars, guns were taken off the street, and thousands of dollars were returned to innocent victims.

On behalf of Premier Eves and also the Minister of Public Safety and Security, Bob Runciman, I want to recognize our partners in this initiative: Staff Inspector Mike Federico from the Toronto police fraud squad; Staff Sergeant Kevin O'Grady from the York squad; Detective Sergeant Barry Colqhoun from the OPP anti-rackets squad; and Deirdre Brennan from the Ministry of Consumer and Business Services. Great work.

Ms Mushinski: Thank you for that response, Minister, and please allow me to extend my personal appreciation to the police officers and the ministry's investigators who are here today. They are indeed doing an excellent job in keeping our streets and our phone lines safe.

Not all citizens will know what boiler rooms and advance-fee loan scams are, and this is a real barrier to actually preventing these crimes. With the mobile nature of these fraud operations, it's very important that we keep Ontarians up to date on what to look for and how to react to these scams. It's also important that we let people know about some of the resources we have when it comes to fighting telephone fraud.

Minister, how can someone recognize one of these scams, and what should they do if they believe they have been contacted or even victimized by a telephone scam?

Hon Mr Hudak: The member for Scarborough Centre is right. These types of boiler room operators have scams that are advance-fee scams. They'll offer, for a fee, special services like credit card protection, prizes on their way, or loans at very beneficial rates. Whatever they colour it as, it's fraud and it's criminal.

Unfortunately, not all citizens who are contacted take the chance to let us know at the ministry. I want to let those at home know that if they know somebody who has been a victim of this or has received a suspicious phone call, they can call us at the Consumer Services Bureau at 1-800-889-9768 or through Phone Busters at 1-888-495-8501.

The goal of the Ernie Eves government is to bust these boiler rooms. We work with partners in Canada, Ontario and the US. We want to put the criminals in jail and shut down these boiler rooms. Since February 2000, this partnership has resulted in 40 boiler rooms being shut down and close to \$1.2 million being seized and returned.

WASTE DISPOSAL

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): My question is for the Minister of Energy and Environment.

In 1995, Mike Harris promised that no community should be forced to take the garbage of other communities against its will. Canadian Waste Services has proposed to expand the Richmond landfill site that is located in the town of Greater Napanee in my riding, and the environmental assessment for this proposal is now underway. The town of Greater Napanee is on record as an unwilling host. People within the community do not want a bigger dump in their midst, and they are frustrated that the environmental assessment process does not provide a component that will consider alternatives to burying our garbage. They want to be part of a process that actively and aggressively pursues more progressive and environmentally sound ways of disposing of municipal solid waste.

I'm asking, Minister, will you act today to direct Canadian Waste Services to revise the terms of reference for the Richmond landfill expansion to include a section outlining alternatives to landfilling?

1540

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): I know as Minister of the Environment you're put in a very, very awkward position when situations come up with respect to environmental assessments. Not but a couple of weeks ago, your friend from Timiskaming basically told me that I had got involved in an environmental assessment hearing that hadn't been filed yet. Get that? It hadn't even been filed yet, and he suggested I remove myself from that situation because I had commented on a potential environmental assessment. Here we are today, not but two short weeks later, and a member of the opposition is saying now, "Insert yourself into the environmental assessment program and do something I want you to do."

You can see that it's kind of a Catch-22: on one hand, one member from your caucus is saying, "Don't get involved in the environmental assessment hearing. If you do, then you're in conflict and you should step down," and you're saying to me today, "Get involved in the environmental assessment hearing, and if you don't, you're not doing your job and you should step down." I'm kind of between a rock and the devil and the deep blue sea.

Mrs Dombrowsky: Minister, I am asking you to make the process what the people in the community want, which is what the terms of reference are designed to do.

In March of this year, Ernie Eves was in Napanee. When he was there, he was presented with this issue. This is what the Premier stated in the Napanee Beaver: "We should be developing processes right here in the province of Ontario that are scientific and environmental at the same time. Other jurisdictions have done it and some jurisdictions in Ontario have done it, so I don't see

any reason why we can't be promoting this kind of activity as opposed to just continuing to extend and expand large megadumps in the province. That's not the answer to our problem." That is what the Premier said in March. Clearly, the Premier has stated that alternatives should be considered, and yet this environmental assessment precludes that.

I'm asking you today, Minister, will you correct this error in the environmental assessment, this oversight, and will you commit today to direct that the environmental assessment will include a component to consider alternatives to landfill?

Hon Mr Stockwell: You know what? Allow me to answer in a broader way with respect to alternatives.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): Why don't you answer the specifics?

Hon Mr Stockwell: I'm sorry. I thought that was Sandra.

What I want to do in a more broad approach to this—I agree with that approach. I think we should be looking at alternatives. The mistake was made many years ago when I think the NDP pulled incineration right off the table. I don't think it's such a bad idea to look at incineration or other forms of landfill issues. I think in a broader review we can put forward some initiatives in the future that would allow us to do that. I don't disagree with you. But the problem I'm faced with now is that this is actually an environmental assessment that is an ongoing concern. As Minister of the Environment, it would be very inappropriate of me to meddle in the process now that it's been set up.

Having said that, there's nothing to say, after the fact, that when submitted the EA will be subject to a thorough technical review by extension of a government review team and they have an approved terms of reference and are preparing the EA in accordance with the approved terms of reference. Finally, the public may request that the EA be referred to a hearing after the review of the EA has been published.

You haven't closed all the doors. There is opportunity in the future.

With respect to the original question, I'm in agreement and I think we should be moving toward that.

HIGHWAY 7

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): My question is to the Minister of Transportation. I've been meeting with and listening to constituents of Durham on important issues in my riding. For instance, the Scugog Chamber of Commerce has brought to my attention the need for improvements at the intersection of Highway 7A and Island Road on Scugog Island. There are also ongoing concerns expressed by Mayor Doug Moffatt and members of Scugog council on the same issue.

By way of background, the road is heavily travelled since it leads directly to the Great Blue Heron Charity Casino. I might say that on Scugog Island this is the only way in and the only way out. It is important to under-

stand that the engineering and design work on the project is complete. However, to the best of my knowledge there has not been any commitment to proceed.

An important temporary solution was the addition of a stoplight at the intersection, for immediate assistance. Minister, can you please advise me, on behalf of my constituents in the township of Scugog, what progress will be made toward highway improvements at this very busy intersection over the next few months?

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Transportation): I'm beginning to wonder if there are any provincial highways in any other ridings than Durham East. However, this member does represent his constituents very well. I want to tell him that we are committed, as you know, to safe roads in our province, and particularly with regard to these kinds of improvements that can be made.

With respect to Highway 7 and the Island Road, we have reviewed that situation and we have determined that traffic signals are indeed needed because of the heavy volumes there. We evaluated temporary lights in this area, but we found that they could not be installed in a safe manner because of the design of the particular intersection. So what we're doing at the present time is designing four permanent ones. After we acquire the property we will then go ahead and put the traffic lights in.

Mr O'Toole: Thank you very much for that comprehensive response, Minister. I know it's an ongoing issue and I know you'll be working hard at it, and I'll be working hard on you.

Another intersection, Highway 7A in Scugog township, is the intersection of Old Simcoe Road and 7A where the community and the township council have requested a traffic light, as well. Minister, could you advise on the status of this request for a signal at this location?

Hon Mr Sterling: This is another very important intersection along Highway 7A, and like the island project, we have already made significant progress in moving this project forward. We have determined that, again, there is a need for traffic signals at this intersection. Once we have acquired the property surrounding this particular intersection, we will be able to go ahead with these safety improvements and install the traffic light that is so badly needed. I congratulate the mayor of the township council in terms of bringing this forward and working with the member for Durham East on this important issue.

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): A question for the Minister of Public Safety: Minister, you are responsible for judges sending criminals back out on to the street instead of to jail. Metro West Detention Centre—three inmates per cell instead of the one inmate per cell it was designed for. That means inmates are taking shifts sleeping on the floor. You've reduced the number of staff, so that rather than two correctional officers per unit

there's only one, and that means that because he or she doesn't have the backup of a second correctional officer, they have to position themselves away from direct contact with inmates. Over 50 inmates diagnosed with tuberculosis; over 100 inmates yet to be tested still in the range, still out there among the general population. Judges have been refusing to send criminals to your jails because of what they call the inhumane conditions, the dangerous conditions, the unsafe conditions. When are you going to do something about it as part of your law-and-order agenda?

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Minister of Public Safety and Security): We are doing something about it. We're the first government in memory to do something about it. Through infrastructure renewal, this government is investing millions of dollars in new facilities. We have one in Penetanguishene, one soon to open in Lindsay and there are other investments being made across the province, so clearly we do recognize the gravity of the situation. We can't build new institutions overnight but we are moving quite quickly and quite expeditiously.

I would mention, with reference to the particular case the member raises, that we were going through a very challenging time—the strike situation, where we were operating our facilities primarily with management people from across government, who did an outstanding job under very difficult circumstances.

Mr Kormos: Minister, bullfeathers. One, this isn't the first time this happened. Last summer another judge made the same observation about Metro West and similarly refused to send a convicted prisoner there. The truth is that with all your so-called plans for expansion, there's not one single new correctional bed, because for every new bed in the system you're closing another. You've done nothing to alleviate this situation. You de-staffed Metro West; you made the decision to reduce correction officers in units from two to one. You've made the decision to de-staff so that they can't do adequate testing, as is required, upon admissions. You are exposing, not just other inmates, but—think about it, Minister of Public Safety—correctional officers to the risk of riot, mayhem, and the risk of disease, not only for themselves but their families and children.

This needs your prompt response now. You can do something about it. Why don't you get resources back into Metro West, get correctional officers back in there, live up to your claim to fame as Mr Law and Order?

1550

Hon Mr Runciman: The member is right about one thing: this is not a new problem. In fact, it was referenced in the 1993 auditor's report. I'm not sure what party was in government at that time—I think it was the NDP—but they talked about capital investment in the infrastructure, the problems of overcrowding. The Conservative government is the first government to make a commitment to do something about this situation, and we are doing it.

I would also take the opportunity to ask the member opposite and his party to go on the record with respect to a number of things that this party has asked the federal

government to look at with respect to overcrowding in the provincial system—intermittent sentences, for one thing, which create significant problems for us in terms of setting beds aside, staff requirements etc; bringing drugs into the system on the weekends. This is a real problem which I do not think the NDP has taken a position on and certainly the Liberal Party has not taken a position to encourage their federal cousins in Ottawa to remove intermittent sentencing from the federal rules.

PETITIONS

AUDIOLOGY SERVICES

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): This petition is to the legislative Assembly of Ontario.

It's entitled "Listen: Our Hearing is Important!"

"Whereas services delisted by the Harris government now exceed \$100 million in total; and

"Whereas Ontarians depend on audiologists for the provision of qualified hearing assessments and hearing aid prescriptions; and

"Whereas the new Harris government policy will virtually eliminate access to publicly funded audiology assessments across vast regions of Ontario; and

"Whereas this new Harris government policy is virtually impossible to implement in underfunded and under-served areas across Ontario; and

"Whereas this policy will lengthen waiting lists for patients and therefore have a detrimental effect on the health of these Ontarians;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to demand the Mike Harris government move immediately to permanently fund audiologists directly for the provision of audiology services."

I affix my signature and ask Jordan, our new page, to bring it to the table.

CHILD CARE

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a petition that's been sent to me by Child Care Algoma in Sault Ste Marie. It reads as follows:

"Petition to the Ontario Legislature:

"Whereas an internal government document states the Conservative government is considering cutting the regulated child care budget by at least 40%;

"Whereas the same internal document states the government is also considering completely cutting all funding for regulated child care and family resource programs;

"Whereas the Conservative government has already cut funding for regulated child care by 15% between 1995 and 1998 and downloaded 20% of the child care and family resource program budget on to municipalities;

"Whereas Fraser Mustard and Margaret McCain identified regulated child care and family resource programs as integral to early childhood development;

"Whereas the Conservative government will receive \$844 million from the federal government over five years for early childhood development;

"Whereas Ontario is the only province which didn't spend a cent of this year's federal money on regulated child care;

"Whereas the need for affordable, accessible, regulated child care and family resources continues to grow in Ontario,

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

"We demand the Conservative government protect the current regulated child care and family resource program budgets and invest significant federal Early Years funding in regulated child care and family resource programs. We demand future federal Early Years funding be invested in an expansion of affordable, regulated child care and in continued funding for family resource programs."

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

TENANT PROTECTION

Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington): This petition with some 500 signatures on it, approximately, is being presented on behalf of the member for Kitchener-Waterloo and Deputy Premier and Minister of Education, who, as you know, is unable to present petitions in this House because of the rules of the standing orders.

This petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend the Tenant Protection Act reads as follows:

"Whereas the new Tenant Protection Act allows landlords to charge tenants who move into an apartment whatever rent the landlord wishes, resulting in significantly higher rents across Ontario, with the consequence of increasing inflation, loss of jobs and increasing numbers of homeless people;

"Whereas the new Tenant Protection Act has removed the requirement for landlords to submit a cost-revenue statement to justify a higher-than-guideline rent increase;

"Whereas the new Tenant Protection Act has increased the allowable, higher-than-guideline rent increase maximum for capital expenditures from 3% to 4% and no restrictions have been imposed on the number of consecutive annual applications that can be made by a landlord for these increases;

"Whereas current legislation and government policy make it easier to demolish or convert existing affordable rental housing to condominiums and do not address the issue of converting reasonably priced senior rental units to care homes or retirement life communities with expensive personal services;

"Whereas the government of Ontario has eliminated the valuable information provided in the rent registry;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to freeze any possible apartment rent

increases for a period of two years, during which time a comprehensive review of the impact that this Tenant Protection Act, 1997, has had on the affordable housing in Ontario is activated. This review is to include public input meetings and the development of suitable amendments to this act to provide greater protection for Ontario's tenants."

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 \$6-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."

It's signed by a number of residents from Ridgetown and I too have signed this petition.

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Conservative government plans to sell off Hydro One, which includes Ontario's electricity transmission grid;

"Whereas there's been little evidence and no public case which proves that selling the grid will benefit electricity consumers;

"Whereas the selling off of the transmission grid is one of the largest privatizations in Canadian history;

"Whereas the Conservative government never campaigned on the selling off of this public asset, and the people of Ontario have not been consulted on this plan;

"Whereas the government does not have a clear mandate from the owners of Hydro One—the people of Ontario;

"Whereas this sale is proceeding too hastily and without transparency;

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

"To demand that the Conservative government of Ontario under Premier Ernie Eves move immediately to halt the sale of Hydro One."

I affix my signature to this petition.

1600

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon John R. Baird (Associate Minister of Francophone Affairs): I move that pursuant to standing order 46 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 58, An Act to amend certain statutes in relation to the energy sector, when Bill 58 is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment, and at such time, the bill shall be ordered referred to the standing committee on general government; and

That the vote on second reading may, pursuant to standing order 28(h), be deferred until the next sessional day, during the routine proceeding "deferred votes"; and

That the committee shall be authorized to meet for the purpose of conducting public hearings in Toronto on Tuesday, June 18, 2002, Wednesday, June 19, 2002, and Thursday, June 20, 2002; in Kingston on the morning of Friday, June 21, 2002, and in Ottawa on the afternoon of Friday, June 21, 2002; in London on the morning of Saturday, June 22, 2002, and in Chatham on the afternoon of Saturday, June 22, 2002;

That the committee be further authorized to meet on Monday, June 24, 2002, and the morning of Tuesday, June 25, 2002, in Toronto for clause-by-clause consideration of the bill.

That, on all of the dates specified, the standing committee on general government shall be authorized to meet outside of its regularly scheduled meeting times, and beyond its normal hour of adjournment, but when meeting in Toronto, not during routine proceedings, and that the committee be authorized to meet on June 24, 2002 until 9:30 pm.

That pursuant to standing order 75(c), the Chair of the standing committee shall establish the deadline for the tabling of amendments or for filing them with the clerk of the committee;

That, at 9:30 am on Tuesday, June 25, 2002, those amendments which have not been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill, and any amendments thereto;

Any division required shall be deferred until all remaining questions have been put and taken in succession with one 20-minute waiting period allowed pursuant to standing order 127(a); and

That the committee shall report the bill to the House not later than the first sessional day that reports from committees may be received following the completion of clause-by-clause consideration, and not later than June 25, 2002.

In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on the date provided, the bill shall be deemed to have been passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

That upon receiving the report of the standing committee on general government, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading; and

When the order for third reading is called, that 60 minutes shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, to be divided equally among all recognized parties, and at the end of that time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That no deferral of the third reading vote pursuant to standing order 28(h) shall be permitted; and

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

The Deputy Speaker (Mr David Christopherson): Mr Baird has moved government notice of motion number 11. I look to the government for a speaker. Mr Baird, you have the floor.

Hon John R. Baird (Associate Minister of Francophone Affairs): I expect I will be speaking on this issue for about three or four minutes, maybe five minutes, I say to my colleague the whip from the official opposition, my good friend the member for Sudbury.

This bill has been debated for some time. There has been a terrific debate around the province of Ontario about the intentions with respect to the bill. At this time we'd like to send the bill out to public hearings, to go to four communities and, as well, to hear deputations in the city of Toronto, so that we can have the opportunity to render a verdict on the bill, which is an important part of the process.

Furthermore, I would move that government notice of motion number 11 be amended as follows:

That the third paragraph be deleted and the following substituted therefor:

"That the committee shall be authorized to meet for the purpose of conducting public hearings in Toronto on Tuesday, June 18, 2002, Wednesday, June 19, 2002, and Thursday, June 20, 2002. The committee is further authorized to meet for the purpose of conducting public hearings on Friday, June 21, and Saturday, June 22, in locations to be determined by the committee;"

That the fourth paragraph be amended by deleting the words "Monday, June 24, 2002"; and the fifth paragraph be amended by deleting all of the words following the words "routine proceedings"; and the seventh paragraph be amended by deleting the time "9:30 am" and substituting "11 am" therefor.

The Deputy Speaker: Mr Baird, you have the floor again.

Hon Mr Baird: I conclude my remarks with the amendment.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West): I'd like to move an amendment to the time allocation motion on Bill 58.

I move that the motion be amended by striking out the 13th and 14th paragraphs of this motion as it appears on the Orders and Notices paper and substituting the following: "That the vote on third reading should not take place before June 3, 2004."

The Deputy Speaker: I need you to send the paperwork over. We just have to have a look at it. Please wait just a moment before you take the floor.

To the member for Windsor West—

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. This would involve you, I say to the chief government whip.

Member for Windsor West, your amendment would ordinarily be fine except that we already have an amendment on the floor. So the only thing that would really be allowed would be an amendment to the amendment. Having said that, it may indeed be possible that in working with the chief government whip and perhaps the third party, there may be agreement to incorporate this into the amendment. I'll leave that up to you. But as things stand at this moment, I have to rule your amendment out of order because we already have Mr Baird's amendment on the floor. It is in order, and nothing else can be introduced until it has been disposed of. With that, I'm in your hands as to how you'd like to proceed.

Mrs Pupatello: Speaker, if I'm requesting an amendment to the amendment, then, would that paper be in order?

The Deputy Speaker: Let me just check. It would actually have to amend the amendment and deal with the issues that are contained in the amendment, which is why it would require the co-operation of the mover of the amendment to then modify that, with agreement of the House that that's what we would debate.

Mrs Pupatello: Speaker, I'd like to call for an amendment to the amendment so that it be written that it would be in order and that what we are writing is in fact moving an amendment to what the chief whip has just introduced.

The Deputy Speaker: I think we're still at the point where just changing the name of it from an amendment to an amendment to the amendment doesn't change the fact that it's still out of order, because it doesn't address the amendment. I don't want to spend too much more time on this, but that's where we are. You can't just say "It's an amendment to the amendment, then, to make you happy, Speaker." It truly has to amend the amendment; yours doesn't. It deals with other paragraphs contained in the original motion. Go ahead, member.

1610

Mrs Pupatello: Thanks for your indulgence, Speaker. Because my motion is actually calling for those para-

graphs to be amended such that the vote on third reading should not take place before June 3, 2004, I'm hoping the Speaker would find that in order, as it's dealing with the amendment of the original motion.

The Deputy Speaker: Here's where we are. This amendment, as it's been presented to me, is out of order. At this point, I do not have an amendment to the amendment. If I receive such an amendment and it's in order, I will entertain it. You may move it any time. It may still be out of order. That will be determined by how you word it and what you present. Therefore, the amendment to the motion is in order. To the member for Windsor West, the amendment you've moved is out of order. That amendment does not exist as of this moment.

You now have the floor. Please start the clock.

Mrs Papatello: I appreciate that, Speaker. Ideally, within the next few moments I'll have an additional copy of an amendment to the amendment which you'll find perfectly in order. I appreciate the Speaker's indulgence.

Let me tell you why this is such an important amendment to the amendment. It's because it reads clearly that the vote on third reading should not take place before June 3, 2004. What is so critical about this amendment to what has been introduced today—that is, the amendment of the government's bill—is that we don't know. When the people went to the polls and elected this majority government of the PC Party, they had no idea that this government would engage in the selling of Hydro One. That is something that came as much to the surprise of those on Bay Street as to the caucus in this very House. When Mike Harris, before he resigned as leader, stood up, unbeknownst to many people across the province, and announced the sale of Hydro One, it was a big surprise.

We say this is completely unreasonable. We believe the people of Ontario should have an outright say on whether Hydro One should be sold. You and I, all of us on all sides of the House, acknowledged time and time again that many things over the history of Ontario Hydro should have been changed, should have been different. But here we are today with Ontario Hydro being broken up into five different companies. What does that mean to my neighbours? What does that mean to the people of Windsor West or the people of Wawa or the people of any place in Ontario, small town or large city? What is happening with Hydro in Ontario?

There is confusion between the generation and transmission of power. What we need to understand today is that Hydro One is about the highway series of electricity. It's about the highway system that is a natural monopoly controlled by the government, and that's where it should stay. Hydro One in fact should not be sold. That is the Ontario Liberal Party position. That is what I and my caucus colleagues believe is the position of most people in Ontario. Because of that, I believe we should be able to go back to the people and ask the people, in the form of a general election, whether they believe this historic sale of a government asset in fact should go forward. If they believe you should do it, you will have had an entire

election campaign going door to door, going into your local riding debates and explaining away why the number one question that's been asked repeatedly in this House about the sale of Hydro One is, "Why?" No one has been able to answer that question.

I remember when the Minister of Energy brought into this House in 1998 the bill that was going to make a wholesale change of Ontario Hydro. At that time, he laid out various caveats to that bill. He said the price would go down, what the consumers pay would go down. He also set out a number of other things, none of which has happened. I can tell you that most residents of Ontario have seen the prices of their bills go up. So if we know the one thing that people care the most about—how much they pay—then we know that the government has not been honest with them. The government told them they were moving forward with changes and that the changes would see better pricing; in fact, we have more expensive electricity today than ever. How could the people believe that things would get better when they go forward to sell Hydro One, which is the electricity transmission grid?

So I ask this government to seriously consider, if you choose to move forward in this direction, to go to the people and ask them. That is a very reasonable thing to do. When we held hearings in my community and we brought people in who were interested, when Sean Conway came to my riding to talk to people, he received the same response that I've gotten everywhere we go to talk about Hydro: people do not want to see the sale of Hydro One, the single largest sale of a public asset in the history of the nation, with barely that kind of consensus-building that the government ought to have for such a major move. And because of this, we think that's wrong. We think you should wait. We think that if you'd gone to the people and the people gave you the mandate—you had mandates for other sales of public assets, because in your own campaign documents you spoke about the sale of LCBO, you spoke about the sale of TVO. But the difference between those organizations and Hydro One, I guess, is who happens to head them up. We have the ever popular Andy Brandt, the big favourite Tory over there, heading up LCBO, and we can't create too many waves for Andy, and on the other side we have the Premier's life partner, who's heading up TVO; the point being that those were items that were in your document, but the sale of Hydro One was not in your document.

Because of this, when we can bring forward this amendment to an amendment, which we hope the Speaker will find in order, we are suggesting that that vote not be held until after you've gone to the people in a general election and asked their permission for that.

The Deputy Speaker: There was no determination whether we do it in bloc or rotation. Usually it's in rotation, so I will look to the third party. OK. Government? You're going to get the floor anyway. Member for Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and—

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Northern Development and Mines): She was up.

The Deputy Speaker: I'm sorry. My apologies. Member for Scarborough Centre.

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): Thank you. It is one of the problems of being vertically challenged, Mr Speaker, especially being to the extreme right of this House. So I will try to shout a little louder the next time.

The Deputy Speaker: My apologies for the oversight.

Ms Mushinski: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

If Bill 58 is passed by this Legislature, it would provide broad authority to determine the future of Hydro One. As well, it would give us more flexibility to meet the government's objectives for Ontario's electricity sector. There's no doubt that the first priority in meeting these objectives is to ensure that consumers are protected, and that's been clear right from the very start when the wholesale and retail electricity markets were designed. The government made the commitment to fix the problems of the past, to safeguard our future electricity supply and to ensure that safe, reliable power will continue to be supplied to consumers at competitive rates.

May 1, when our electricity market was opened to competition, marked an exciting new era in Ontario's history. Notwithstanding all the doom-and-gloom predictions by the Liberals and the NDP, I have to tell you that the transition was very successful. Electricity prices for May were 33% lower than the 4.3 cents a kilowatt hour that was the norm prior to market opening. This is very good news for my constituents in Scarborough Centre, as well as consumers across the province. In fact, the government made sure that Ontario's new market has all the key ingredients to function smoothly, especially with respect to adequate supply and a robust market design. As the market matures we should see other benefits, including greater efficiencies, better service and innovation.

1620

As with other jurisdictions that have successfully made the transition to competition, and there are a great many despite the fact that the Liberals and the NDP don't believe so, we firmly believe that market competition, commercial discipline and strong regulation are the best guarantee of reasonable prices for customers over the long term. I appreciate the fact that the Liberal members across the way support the basic principles of these elements.

For the first time, Ontario's 4.1 million residential electricity customers have two choices—choice, something that we all believe in, especially freedom of choice—in buying their power. They can decide to do nothing and their local utility will continue to supply them with power at a variable or spot-market rate with supply and demand determining the price, or they can purchase their electricity at a fixed rate from one of several retailers licensed by the Ontario Energy Board. It is altogether the customer's choice based on their individual circumstances and preferences. Who could be against that? No matter what choice customers make, their local utility will continue to deliver electricity and bill customers for transmission and distribution and still be responsible for the safety and reliability of local dis-

tribution, just as in the past. In fact, nothing has changed in terms of my own personal electricity bill.

Furthermore, the government has established the Independent Electricity Market Operator, or the IMO as it's known for short, to oversee the wholesale market and grid operations of our electricity system.

It's important to recognize that by law the IMO must protect the interests of customers with respect to reliability and the quality of electricity services in Ontario. The government has provided the Ontario Energy Board with the tools that it needs to protect customers by putting in place tough consumer protection laws for energy retailers. These require them to operate fairly and honestly. The energy board is mandated to oversee the retailing practices of marketers and deals with those engaging in questionable practices. For example, all retailers must be licensed by the energy board. As a condition of their licences, they must follow the electricity retailer code of conduct's guidelines and standards. Retailers must provide identification when retailing door to door, to indicate that they don't represent a distribution utility, to clearly state the price and other terms, and to provide a clearly printed contract. The offer must clearly indicate the price, any other fees, length of contract and any other terms, such as cancellation charges, renewal terms and transferral or assignment of the contract. Retailers are required to give a customer ample time to understand an offer without pressure or harassment. No customer is required, for instance, to show their electricity bill or any other information to a retailer unless they decide to sign a contract with that retailer. If there are problems, the energy board has the authority to levy financial penalties against a retailer or revoke or suspend its licence. The energy board also has a dispute resolution process in place. The director of licensing is empowered to make a ruling if the dispute can't be resolved with the retailer.

The government's proposed Reliable Energy and Consumer Protection Act goes even further to enhance the current consumer protection by including reforms to further strengthen the Ontario Energy Board's powers against unfair marketing and retailing practices; enacting a new energy consumers' bill of rights which would place new requirements on gas and electricity retailers dealing with consumers; and providing the Ontario Energy Board with new enforcement powers and strengthening the market surveillance powers of the Independent Electricity Market Operator's market surveillance panel.

There are other aspects of the proposed legislation that are designed to protect the consumer, such as the energy consumers' bill of rights and new enforcement powers for the Ontario Energy Board and market surveillance. The proposed legislation would give the Ontario Energy Board enhanced powers to inform a new regime, including more powers to order compliance and attach conditions, and the ability to levy administrative penalties on retailers and marketers for these new requirements. The penalties would be up to \$10,000 a day.

These are just a few of the protections that are built in to protect the interests of consumers.

In conclusion, the government has introduced this legislation in order to ensure that strong consumer protections are in place and that electricity customers and future generations of Ontarians have access to an efficient, competitive supply of electricity. As we move forward with the restructuring of our electricity market, the government will continue to put the needs of Ontario's electricity customers first and to ensure that their interests are protected. That is why I am happy to support this legislation today.

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): Mr Speaker, as a follow-up to your direction, I would like to introduce an amendment to the amendment—I believe the table has a copy of this—that the amendment to government notice of motion number 11 be amended by adding the following:

The 13th and 14th paragraphs be struck out and the following substituted:

“That the vote on the third reading should not take place before June 3, 2004.”

I'll provide this copy for your consideration.

The Deputy Speaker: The amendment to the amendment is indeed in order, and therefore you may continue speaking to the amendment to the amendment.

Mrs Dombrowsky: I have to say that it is with regret that I have to stand in my place again today to speak to yet another time allocation motion. I think the point I would like to stress in this debate is that this is probably one of the most significant issues that this House will consider in terms of business on behalf of the people of the province of Ontario. The bill was introduced a little more than a week ago and already the government has moved to close debate on this most significant issue.

Of course it is an issue from the perspective of a member of the opposition, but I also look to the people in my riding who have contacted me in significant numbers. In fact, I can't think of an issue that has garnered more reaction from the people of Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington than the proposal to sell Hydro One. There are lots of issues among many of my constituents and, I'm also given to understand, indeed across the province. Yet it would appear we have a government that is not prepared to consider the very important and valid issues raised by the people of the province with respect to this piece of legislation.

1630

The member for Scarborough Centre indicated in her remarks that Bill 58 was proposed to ensure a safe and reliable power source for the people of Ontario. I have to say that until the time Premier Mike Harris indicated it was the intention of the government to sell Hydro One, I had not had a single complaint on file about the safety or reliability of the power source in Ontario. I think that begs the question why the government is moving in this direction.

I want to talk to you too about municipalities that have come to me and indicated that in good faith they entered into arrangements with Hydro One with the very clear

understanding that they were selling their utility. They did have other options to consider, but at no time was it ever indicated to them, when they were considering the business deal, that Hydro One would be privatized.

So you had a public entity that had provided a public service in a very effective and efficient way to people within the community, thinking, “Well, if we can no longer be in this business, then we want to sell it to another publicly run manager.” That's why they sold their public utility to Hydro One, only to find out after the fact that it was going to be privatized. Many municipalities feel they have been duped, that had they known this was the plan of the government, they might have made other considerations.

The consumer protection in the bill: certainly we on this side of the House have been advocating for, and the member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke has been on his feet many times to talk about, the need for consumer protection. We're saying it's too little too late, and there are literally thousands of Ontarians who find themselves in contracts they are very sorry they signed.

I want to commend my colleague the member for York West for the good work he has done in laying the groundwork, the foundation, for legislation to protect our hydro corridors, which is in this bill.

My concluding remark is that I am very sorry that on this most important issue, about which there is so much we should be debating and talking about and putting forward ideas from the people of this province, we have very little time now to do that in this Legislature.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate? Further debate?

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): Mr Speaker, I'm not surprised that there aren't people standing up quickly, because this is a debate on time allocation and closure. Before I make a few comments about what the legislation is trying to deal with, it's really important to know that this particular government, the Harris-Eves government, is the most active government by a long shot throughout all the jurisdictions—among all the provinces and territories—in terms of closing off debate and time-allocating bills. The Ernie Eves government seems to be going down the same path: time-allocate anything of significance. If it's something all parties agree to, that's fine. Then we'll talk about hearings and we'll take time. The thermometer of the length of time of debate is directly related to the lack of importance of the bill, in relative terms, because of course all bills are important.

When we want to talk about licences for young people and operating water vehicles, the government is happy to spend weeks of hearings throughout the province. Why do we need to do that when all parties agreed? It's not a problem. We want to talk about health issues, we want to talk about the environment, we want to talk about energy and the future ownership and what should go on, and under the guise of expediency we cannot do this. Of course the member from Scarborough Centre knows this, because he's been part of many closure items in this House.

The government says we have the opportunity to have hearings in some communities. I can appreciate the desire to have this by the time we leave at the end of this short session, but we could meet for longer periods of time. This is extremely important. Believe me, when I talk to people in my riding, other than the CHEO issue—trying to centralize pediatric heart surgery in Toronto—Hydro is the issue on which I receive the greatest number of e-mails, phone calls and questions. People are very nervous. They're not just nervous about the rising costs related to their particular prognosis of the future and what that's going to mean to them; they're worried about what's going to happen to the whole infrastructure of this industry, and in particular Hydro One, the infrastructure of our province.

It's interesting that we have here a ruling from Judge Gans, who kind of spoiled the schedule for the government and kind of put a stick in the spokes of the government and slowed them down, but still they're moving ahead with the legislation. They didn't want to move ahead with an inquest in Ipperwash, but they move ahead now, even though this is before the courts. They could very well proceed if they chose to proceed. It really comes down to political will, and I think that's an important thing.

My time is up. I'm sorry, but so many of my colleagues wish to speak to this motion that I will sit down and allow them to voice their opinions.

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): I only have four or five minutes as well, so I will not spend any time dealing with the fact that this is another closure motion and that this government has invoked closure at least 86% of the time according to the independent study I conducted through the legislative research department here.

From listening to the one government member who has spoken about the substance of this bill—

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: When someone quotes from a study, at times they are requested, when they quote from it on regular occasions and numerous times, which the member has done, to table that study. I wish he'd table that study.

Mr Gerretsen: You can have the study.

The Deputy Speaker: Hold on; you don't have the floor yet. I'm going to answer the point of order.

I think the government House leader knows there hasn't been a great deal of excess reference to it, so at this point I don't believe that triggers that part of the standing orders.

The member has the floor again.

Mr Gerretsen: Thank you very much, Speaker. He can get it right out of the legislative library. It's number 010978.

I would like to talk about the substance of the bill, because that's a heck of a lot more important in this particular case. The one government member who got up here today talked about the consumer protection aspect of the bill. Let there be no mistake about it: we are all in

favour of that. I dare say everyone in the House is in favour of greater consumer protection as far as the people who have been asked to sign these contracts are concerned. The problem is, that's not really what this bill is about. This bill is really about the sale of Hydro One.

The government has taken these two issues, one on which we all agree and one on which certainly the two opposition parties don't agree at all, and put them in one bill, and the government keeps talking about consumer protection as if that's the only thing that's in the bill.

The relevant section in this bill, that it is really all about, is section 49, and let me just read it to you. It's as clear as pie as far as what the government wants to do with this. It is a very simple section that says, "The minister, on behalf of Her Majesty in right of Ontario, may acquire, hold, dispose of and otherwise deal with securities or debt obligations of, or any other interest in, Hydro One Inc...." It's the "any other interest in" Hydro One that basically gives the minister, once this legislation is passed, a blank cheque to sell Hydro One.

1640

Speaker, you and I know, and everyone I've spoken to over the last six months about this issue, from the people who hold the most right-wing view of things to the people who hold the most left view of things, agrees on one thing: why are we selling Hydro One? They think it is the most ridiculous thing they have heard, and the only argument the government has advanced is that we have this stranded debt and we have to pay it off.

The interesting thing is, you may get \$5 billion or \$6 billion for it, so you sell it, and what have you got? You haven't got the asset any more. This is the main asset that's owned by the province of Ontario—all of the grid, the wires that are out there. Why are we selling it? It would be like selling your house in order to get rid of the mortgage debt, which is absolute nonsense.

What this government has to do and what our amendment is really all about is to call an election over this issue. Call an election right now. Now, the minister's laughing about it, but I can tell you there is no other single issue that I've been involved with here over the last seven years, other than the ongoing problems with the health care system, about which the people of Ontario are getting more and more upset. I would dare say that the government somehow thinks this is mainly some sort of left-of-centre plot that these people don't want to sell Hydro One etc, etc. I find it very interesting that in my riding I have heard from an awful lot of people who have traditionally supported this government and traditionally supported the Conservative Party. These people cannot understand why we're selling this.

While I'm at it, we keep talking about this stranded debt situation. Let me first of all say that's a horrible situation to be in and undoubtedly it's due to an awful lot of mismanagement. But if something is mismanaged, do you get rid of the company? No. You change the management structure. You deal with the problem that exists and you change the management system or whatever needs to be done. You don't get rid of the company.

Let's be clear about this. Over the last 100 years, whichever government was in power, of whatever political stripe, they have all used the hydro power rates in this province as an economic development tool in order to get industry to locate all over this province, from which we've all benefited. So when we talk about the stranded debt, it has nothing to do with whether or not we actually charge the cost of the electricity that was produced from time to time; it has an awful lot to do with the fact that we like to produce and cost out the cheapest electricity possible in order to get industry to come into this province. All governments over the last 100 years have been guilty of that.

Do we have to deal with the debt situation? Absolutely. But do you deal with it by in effect selling the main asset of the electrical industry? That is just so absurd and insane that I cannot understand how this government or any government would even contemplate that. If the government at least had some sort of rationale as to why they wanted to do it, we would have something to debate and argue about. But I can tell you, Speaker—I'm getting signals here as to when to stop—I feel very strongly about this issue. I feel very, very strongly about this issue. It would be akin to selling all the four-lane highways in Ontario.

Hon Mr Baird: Don't give us any ideas.

Mr Gerretsen: Listen to the government whip: "Don't give us any ideas."

You can recall the tremendous outcry there was with respect to the sale of the 407, which is now costing people three times as much to ride on than it was originally four or five years ago when it was first privatized. But this is so much worse. There is only one grid system out there. People have no other choice. At least with highways you can get off the four-lane highways and go on to the local roads. You can't do that in this case. So I beg and plead with the government: do the right thing. Come up with some other scheme or whatever you want to do, but do not sell this very crucial asset that the people of Ontario have worked for, not only in this generation but over the last 100 years. This is the one main intricate part of the electricity system that basically connects the generation with the distribution, and it must remain in public hands.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): The message from the people in my riding is very simple: don't even think about it. We will never buy something as cheap as something we already own. This is a provincial asset that has been good for individuals, it's been good for our economy, good for our businesses.

We live in a brutally cold climate here at times. This has a potential to force greatly increased rates on to our seniors, on to people on fixed incomes, on to everyone.

Industry faces a challenge here in Ontario. We're a long way from a lot of the markets that we sell into. We have, as I mentioned earlier, a very difficult climate. It is difficult for a number of companies to work 12 months a year. The advantage we've had that has enabled us to compete very successfully with the rest of North America

has been electricity at cost, and part of that has been attributed to the fact that we own the distribution system and it's been distributed at cost. This is not a luxury. This is an absolute necessity that just begs for government control of it.

There's certainly the talk about all the regulations that are going to be put in place. These regulations are being put in place to protect us from who they're going to sell it to. We wouldn't need all of these regulations if we, the people, continued to own it, as was the original intent and has worked well for many years.

The people of Ontario have become an experiment for this government. "Let's try changing health care." It didn't work. "Let's try changing education." It didn't work. "Let's try selling the 407." The rates skyrocketed. It is time we ceased being victims of this government and the government recognized that this is too fundamentally important an issue to the people of Ontario to be played around and experimented with. It is time we learned from others. Yes, they can say deregulation and the selling is working in Alberta. It's working in Alberta because that government has buckets of money from oil revenues to give people reimbursements, otherwise they would be freezing to death in the dark, literally, out there.

They've talked about California. What we've seen in California is how easily Enron could take and manipulate the costs. We don't want to be party to that. For goodness' sake, let's learn something about what's going on out there. In fact, interestingly, in Alberta and then in California where Enron was playing around with it—this government has put up a firewall that would prevent the citizens from knowing whether a generator was down and which particular one it was. We're seeing an era of secrecy on all of the dealings that this government does and Hydro One would be absolutely no different.

The people of Ontario are being forced to gamble right now. Do you go with a fixed contract and is the price that's being offered fair or not, or do you take the fluctuating price and try to budget out over the months or over the year? It is a gamble that the people of Ontario never had to participate in before. The only thing we can assure them of is that costs are going to go up.

Consultation has been a joke with this. This government has consulted with Bay Street—not made the consultations public but they've consulted with Bay Street. They have faked the consultation with the public. They have said, "Come and tell us how we can sell it. Don't come and tell us whether or not we can sell it. We're interested; our minds are made up."

There's only one set of wires to each house. It is absolutely vital that those wires be maintained in public ownership. We cannot have a monopoly with a firm looking for a profit. We need a monopoly that is in the best interests of the citizens.

If there are problems with Hydro One, then fix it. I don't think it's too much to ask our government to fix it. But to simply abdicate responsibilities and turn it over—you know, we need to listen to the people of Ontario. This was not in the last election platform. This is not going to be a subject of a referendum or an election.

Their great experiment with education has been a failure, but it can be fixed. The great experiment with health care has been a failure, but it can be fixed. But the sale of Hydro One, if that fatal error is made, cannot be reversed, cannot be fixed. We need to recognize the responsibility of government is not to Bay Street, not to a Premier who's seconded from Bay Street for a while to complete a mission. We need to remember who put us here as politicians. It is easy to get politicianitis and think we know what's best for Ontario. Go stand on a street corner and talk to the citizens. In all of the time that this has been an issue, I have not had one citizen say to me, "Hydro One should be sold," while I've had literally hundreds and hundreds say to me, "Please protect our asset. It's important that in Ontario we continue to have electricity that is ours and that the rate can be controlled."

This is probably the worst move this government could have considered, and I think it is characteristic that they have attempted to sneak it through. Thank goodness for the courts that intervened and drew the line. In some sense, we need courts to keep this government under control.

1650

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate? The Chair recognizes one of the two of you. It's up to you. The member for—

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): St Catharines.

The Deputy Speaker: St Catharines, yes, who, I was going to add, has been here 25 years. I add my personal congratulations on that.

Mr Bradley: Thank you very much.

I'm disappointed to see that we're into a time allocation on a bill of this kind. I really think that had the Legislature come back earlier, had the Legislature not been absent from sitting from the middle of December until the very middle of May, we would have had lots of time to be able to deal with this legislation. I know that many of my colleagues feel the same way about this particular bill.

Most people I've talked to, the experts in the field or just the average citizen out there who has an interest, say the one thing you should keep in public hands is the transmission system. We are, I'm telling you, to a person opposed to this legislation only because we believe that there are some things that should stay in public hands and public control. The matters related to security, particularly after September 11 of last year, militate in favour of keeping an asset of this kind in public control and under public security. We happen to believe that with the amendments that could have been proposed for this, if they had been accepted for this bill, if the government had thought it through better and brought it in earlier, we would have a much superior piece of legislation.

As I say, I've talked to people who have worked in this field, in the electrical field, whether it's municipal or provincial. To a person, they say that you want to keep this asset in public hands, because that's exceedingly important. The public may have been in a mood for divesting some of the assets the government had a num-

ber of years ago. That mood, if it were ever really true, has shifted considerably now. To sell off the transmission system, which is essentially like selling the 400-series highways, or the major highways in this province, would be ill-advised. It would be similar to saying that there are a lot of people out there using the highways but somehow the private sector should be running the highways. I think the public says that, yes, there should be individual transportation companies out there, private and public, but what they want to see is that their government is in full control of the highways, full ownership of the highways. This is a highway in itself, being a transmission system.

Really, what this is about, it seems to me, is the government again engaged in a fire sale, wanting to get rid of an asset so they'll be able to balance a budget, so their books will look much better. I think one always has to look at the long-term effects, however, because I've seen this pattern taking place. I was discussing with some people yesterday this whole idea of selling off an asset, as though you somehow sell your house and, yes, you've got all that money, but the next year you don't have the house and perhaps the money is gone because you've sold it off for a specific purpose. Even people I've found who would be normally Conservative, and I mean PC, have said to me, as I'm sure they've said to many people, "We don't want to see this asset divested; we don't want to see this go into private hands. This is one asset we want to see stay in public hands. Do we want to see it managed better? Most assuredly, because there have been problems with management. We understand that."

So they do want to see it in the public sector and they do want to see it managed better. I'm just disappointed that the government has not allowed for the kind of public hearings that my friend from Scarborough East and I would like to have so we could hear from people around the province, as we did on the alternative fuels committee. That would have been a good model, but the government is determined to shove this through before the end of an abbreviated session. That's unfortunate.

Mr Gerretsen: On a point of order, Speaker: Normally during this kind of debate it goes in rotation and it goes in such a way that every party can respond to what every other party says. In this particular case, the Liberals have been forced—because of the government members and the NDP members not getting up—to use up all of our time and the other two parties can still keep on speaking for the next hour.

Speaker, the debate would have collapsed if we had not gotten up at that time. I would ask you to rule on whether or not it is fair, in the interpretation of the rules, for the debate not to take place the way it normally does whereby we go in rotation, which didn't happen in this particular case. I await your ruling.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Mr Speaker, with respect to the rotation and time taken during these periods, it is completely acceptable for anyone to stand up during their period of time to speak. If the Liberals choose to stand up and use all their time, that is the way it is. If at that point in time the debate collapses, then the debate collapses. There is nothing that you as Speaker can do to rectify

change, nor should you do that. It's completely up to the House as to where they go from there.

The Deputy Speaker: On the point of order, let me just say that had the caucus of the official opposition chosen not to speak and rise on the amendment to the amendment, then the debate would have collapsed. We have moved to a vote on the amendment to the amendment. We then would have reverted to the amendment, in which case any caucus that had time remaining would be in order to use that time in rotation for debate.

I believe that disposes of the matter. The floor is now open for further debate.

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): Indeed, it is my privilege to add a few thoughts and respond to the collective wisdom of the official opposition and to look forward, I guess, to the repetitive rants from the third party when they decide to stand up and make their very predictable points.

Let's start back at square one on this bill. Its roots are found in another activist judge who has decided, unelected as he is, that he should be the authority on the legislation that governs the people of this province. It's quite remarkable to me, and I think to anyone else who considers themselves a student of Canadian history and of our rights and responsibilities, that any judge would argue that someone doesn't have the right to sell an asset that they own. Whether it's the government of Ontario or an individual citizen, we didn't have the right, in the eyes of Judge Gans, to buy, to sell, to lease, to make any other change to, as the lawyers would say, alienate their rights to a particular piece of property. It's the very first lesson that lawyers get on the subject of property law, the alienation of property. But in the eyes of this judge, somehow you needed a special law to say that the Ontario government had to have property rights. Well, he's wrong and we will continue to challenge him in the courts. I'm sure the esteemed justices higher up the totem pole will come to a very different opinion than Judge Gans.

In the meantime, it would be preposterous to suggest that the government should not be allowed to move forward and exercise its rights to look at what's in the best interests of taxpayers and hydro ratepayers all across the province of Ontario, because that was at the root of the original decision to look at changes to the electricity marketplace.

1700

So far in the debate we've heard lots of sidebars into hospitals and other very extraneous issues from the official opposition, but we've heard no sidebars into a discussion of the other major change to the electricity marketplace, namely the opening up of competition on the generation side. Mr Speaker, that took place on May 1. You will know that on the day before competition was allowed in this province, every utility, on behalf of its ratepayers, was paying 4.3 cents per kilowatt hour for power. Since then, the sky has not fallen. The Chicken Littles from the NDP and the Liberal Party have been proven wrong, because the average price for power has

been fully one third below the April 30 reference price every day since the market opened on May 1.

In fact, I just called up www.theimo.com on the Internet, where you can find out from the actual entity that manages the distribution of power throughout Ontario what the up-to-the-minute price for electricity is. You will find that the average price this past week has again been only 3.217 cents per kilowatt hour. Remember, it was 4.3 cents before. It's now 3.2 cents today. That is hardly a crisis. That is hardly something the ratepayers should have offered up, in the context of the fear-mongering from the Liberals and NDP, as something they should fear and dread.

Despite a challenge weeks ago in this House, the members opposite have yet to come up with any other product or service that they've ever seen in the marketplace that has faced a price increase when more people offer more supply into the market. Ten years ago we saw the opening up of the telecommunications marketplace. As I said in debate last week, when the whole family is gathered around them at Christmas, I'm sure Grandpa Bradley and Grandpa Hampton gather all the little kiddies on their knees and share all the wonderful stories of how great it was to have Ma Bell as our sole phone choice. Yes, how great it was to get that bill increasing year after year, to have no choice when the service was terrible and they told you they couldn't come to fix your ripped phone cord. "Maybe this week, maybe a month from now. Who knows? But no one else is allowed to touch that phone wire." Of course, if Grandpa Jim over here had to call a relative back in the old country, we measured the cost in dollars per minute, not minutes per dollar, which is the case today.

There is a classic example of how a monopoly that had for almost 100 years supposedly served the people of this country well—it was revealed what a fraud that was. Anyone who defended the status quo before the opening of the telecommunications market to competition was shown to be absolutely all wet when it came to the arguments of why you would have maintained a monopoly in the face of potential competition. The same is going to take place, I submit to you, when it comes to electricity marketing in the months and years to come.

One of the members opposite suggested this was an issue we should call an election over. I know they keep losing time and time again on the other side. They didn't quite make it in the 1990 election, the 1995 election or the 1999 election. I'm sure there are Liberal members who just believe the law of averages, that sooner or later they won't have to come up with good ideas, a credible leader or any kind of tangible proof that they've got what it takes to listen to the people of this province and to articulate legislation that will truly move this province forward. It's just like spinning a wheel at the CNE. "Let's go down there and hope that if it spins often enough, one time it's going to come up Liberal." That's not the basis for how democracies operate.

I would challenge the members to go back and look at the Common Sense Revolution, the most comprehensive pre-election platform any political party has ever offered,

provincially or federally, in the history of Canada. You will find a very clear reference to the then Ontario Hydro and the fact that we as a party did not believe the status quo was working. We have heard countless times in this debate, and I'm sure we're going to hear from the leader of the third party, how wonderful the distribution of electricity has been. In fact, they used the phrase at least a half-dozen times in the last hour that "Hydro was selling power at cost." Isn't that a noble objective on behalf of the ratepayers? They were selling hydro at cost.

Mr Speaker, you will know that my background was in retailing. I'm really proud of the fact at that my Canadian Tire store we had an average of about 4,000 products on sale in any given week, more than you would have found at surrounding Canadian Tire stores. It was just something we felt we had to do to bring customers into the store. You might lose a little bit on one product, but you had 40,000 other products that you could make your money back on.

The problem is that in all those 40 years, Ontario Hydro wasn't selling power at cost; they were giving it away. This was a 40-year loss leader. The problem is when the customer came in the door, they didn't have any other products to sell them. The consequence of that was they ran up a debt. As part of this deal of the century, this permanent sale on electricity, the ratepayers may have gotten a good deal, but those same individuals who happened to be taxpayers in Ontario inherited a \$38-billion debt for \$17 billion worth of assets. Great retailing. Any Canadian Tire store that had followed that kind of model would have gone bankrupt within a year. It's only because it was propped up by successive governments that put political expediency in front of fiscal responsibility that we're standing here today having to debate this bill to fix the problem that has vexed the people of this province for 40 long years.

We haven't heard mentioned in the debate so far of one of the other tremendous benefits that the passage of our various pieces of legislation will bring to consumers in Ontario. Access to the grid in the form of the new competitive marketplace for green power is something that now won't happen on a whim of the old Ontario Hydro; it will happen as a matter of right for anyone who wants to set up wind turbines, anyone who wants to develop solar panels as a cladding on the side of an office building, anyone who wants to develop methane recovery programs at landfill sites all across Ontario. As a matter of right they will be able to sell that power into the grid and nobody will be able to stop them.

At that point, it's up to consumers to decide: do they care about the air quality in this province? Do they care about the future for their children and their children's children when it comes to the air they breathe? Is that worth paying a premium? The challenge is out there and I am pleased to see that already many manufacturers, even the city of Toronto in partnership with an energy co-operative, have chosen to start, albeit in a small way, down that path to green power. At the same time, I know that many people have indicated their willingness to buy

power once these new green sources are hooked up and supplying power into the grid.

We have a very long way to go until we can claim that we have totally decarbonized the energy stream in Ontario, but the fact of the matter is, as recently as last week, an all-party, unanimously endorsed report by the select committee on alternative fuel sources was tabled in this Legislature. In there are 141 recommendations. They are perhaps the most thoughtful, the most progressive, the most aggressive and the most comprehensive platform of consumer and business initiatives, tough new standards for the kind of products we're putting in our cars and into our home furnaces, exercising authority where, again, past governments of all stripes in Ontario have dared not tread.

For example, the quality of fuel used in locomotives is 10 times dirtier, we were told in the committee, than the diesel fuel that is supplied for trucks and cars. The only reason no one has ever trod that way is because the operation of railroads is considered to be a federal responsibility. The problem is, for those who wish to maintain that position, there are countless court rulings by good judges who have said that if there is an environmental component, provinces do have the right to apply their standards, to exercise authority and to act in the best interests of their citizens. Our Constitution makes it very clear that environmental concerns are in fact quite within the purview of the members in this chamber. And so as part of that committee, I was struck by the degree of cooperation, the degree of enthusiasm that members from all parties brought to that very, very important discussion. We could stand here and start taking cheap shots back and forth at each other but I don't think that furthers the debate. Having now built the foundation, I think that if all three parties and their respective members who served on that committee were serious, the challenge should be to look at the tangible and concrete ways in which that report can now be moved from a theoretical document to practical applications in the marketplace.

1710

In the scant few days since that report was tabled, we've already seen reactions from biodiesel companies, from fuel cell manufacturers, from a wide variety of industrial leaders who had despaired that Ontario, instead of being the heartland for research and development on alternative fuels, had turned a blind eye or turned its back on the potential economic and environmental benefits of pursuing the expansion of the manufacture and application of those technologies, not just here in Ontario but for export around the world.

I remember a report my father worked on, along with federal MPs and senators and a variety of industrialists, back in 1986 that laid out then, 16 years ago, the future for hydrogen technologies. They forecast that had government—at that point it was the federal government they were addressing—invested the paltry sum of only \$50 million a year in research and development, the payback by now would be \$4 billion in exports every year and 4,000 new high-tech, high-quality jobs. Ontario would have become the place, the focus for fuel cell—in

particular, hydrogen fuel cell—development and manufacture.

It's not too late to catch up now. Whatever has been lost in delaying these decisions, at the same time the technologies have moved forward. While we may have lost some ground, we certainly have not lost the potential to apply wind and solar and biomass and fuel cell technologies to ensure that at least in Ontario the future will be cleaner and greener for our children.

But I hope something else as well, and I'd like to think that my colleagues opposite had the same perspective when they undertook their role in the committee. We're told that barely 50% of the air pollution we suffer under in this province is actually generated within our borders and that fully 50% comes to us courtesy of the United States. If we turned off every engine, every car, every furnace, shut off the air conditioning and let our hydro-electric and other electricity-generating plants shut down, the most we could do is eliminate half of the air pollution. That's not good enough. We need this report and the actions that flow from it to shame our American cousins—and other provinces for that matter, no less so—into following a similar path. It won't be until Detroit Edison, with its 26 coal plants in Michigan, all of them upwind from Windsor and Chatham and London, has turned off or converted to cleaner sources of energy, that we are going to see the kind of potential, the necessary cleaning of our air that I'm sure all of us aspire to see.

Dealing with some of the specifics of moving forward from here, this is a time allocation motion, and like all previous time allocation motions it is a function of the lack of co-operation we received in terms of scheduling time in the House.

One of the things we heard ad nauseam during question period today was a suggestion that when it comes to consulting the people of Ontario, somehow the old way of doing business should continue to be the hallmark of the government, regardless of improved technological access, regardless of new ways that we can reach out and get the viewpoints of people across this province.

I'm very proud to serve as the Chair of one of the standing committees, in fact the standing committee to which it is proposed this bill be ordered. I can tell you that we have on a number of occasions employed video conferencing, and, if the bill is ordered to the standing committee on general government, it is certainly my intention to do the same thing for this bill. On a bill we debated last fall, it meant that for the first time in the history of this province, in all likelihood, people on Manitoulin Island had direct face-to-face contact with the standing committee and had a chance to give their input. It had never happened; in 135 years it had never happened.

So the bottom line is that the technology exists today. No one has ever asked the people of Manitoulin Island, Sioux Lookout, Atikokan or the mining communities that Mr Hampton talked about earlier. Nobody has ever employed any effort, whether it's video conferencing or any other strategy. No one under the Liberal government

or the NDP government ever set foot in any of those communities to which he referred during question period—not once. But we now have the opportunity. I'm going to make it very clear: we intend to take advantage of the technology to make sure that as broad a range of views from as widely dispersed a geographical area as is possible to reach will have access to these hearings.

Here's the other thing that doesn't happen then. We don't spend a fortune on Air Canada, flying for the sake of a few hours' of hearings in Thunder Bay. We can let the same input from all across the north, the east and southwestern Ontario come into Queen's Park. It's as convenient as their nearest community college or many other government offices that have access to video conferencing.

The end game of all that, of course, is going to be to assess the opinions we hear from across the province, to look at the variety of options before us.

Throughout this debate, the members opposite continue to insist they know what the outcome of the Premier's, the ministers' and the government's deliberations on the future of Hydro will be. I marvel at that because, as the parliamentary assistant, it's news to me if that final decision has been made. But if the members on the other side believe they have a crystal ball, I suggest very strongly that before the markets—oh, the markets have now closed, but hopefully in time for tomorrow, while you're tuning in to that crystal ball, spend a few minutes on the stock market page and make yourself very wealthy. Because I think you may find yourself very, very, very embarrassed. It's kind of tough to take both feet out of your mouth after you've wedged them in there. I'm sure that will be what we hear in the last few minutes of the debate here today: more suggestions that they know the outcome.

We are committed to hearing from people all across this province. We are very committed to a future that has four overriding principles: first, that there be an efficient and price-competitive supply of electricity for the people of Ontario, and, for whatever surplus is generated—and there has always been a surplus generated each year—the development of profitable export markets; second, to ensure that the necessary capital is provided to maintain the infrastructure in tip-top shape, to guarantee that we don't face the consequences of what happened during the ice storm just a couple of years ago and the very questionable engineering that had gone into the design of the towers in eastern Ontario; third, to bring some market discipline to Hydro One. The members opposite have been very keen to comment about many things wrong with Hydro One, yet they themselves don't seem to be struck with the contradiction: the very entity that on the one hand they're suggesting we maintain, that is the paragon of virtue, they have on the other hand, during question period, gone to great lengths to eviscerate because of certain decisions made by the board. The fourth point, of course, is to achieve those goals while protecting consumers.

There is so much more we could say on this bill, but since no NDP members have risen in the last five go-

rounds, they must not want to speak. So I move adjournment of the debate.

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

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1720 to 1750.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please rise and remain standing until all are counted. Thank you. Please be seated.

All those opposed to the motion will please stand and remain standing until counted by the Clerk. Thank you. Please be seated.

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 7; the nays are 64.

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

The first item is Mrs Dombrowsky's amendment to the amendment. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion, please indicate.

All those opposed, please indicate.

In my opinion, the nays have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1752 to 1802.

The Deputy Speaker: Those in favour of the amendment to the amendment will please rise one at a time and be counted by the Clerk.

Ayes

Agostino, Dominic	Di Cocco, Caroline	McMeekin, Ted
Bartolucci, Rick	Dombrowsky, Leona	Parsons, Ernie
Bisson, Gilles	Gerretsen, John	Patten, Richard
Bountrogianni, Marie	Hampton, Howard	Peters, Steve
Boyer, Claudette	Hoy, Pat	Phillips, Gerry
Bradley, James J.	Kormos, Peter	Prue, Michael
Caplan, David	Kwinter, Monte	Pupatello, Sandra
Churley, Marilyn	Levac, David	Ruprecht, Tony
Cordiano, Joseph	Marchese, Rosario	Sergio, Mario
Crozier, Bruce	Martin, Tony	

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

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Hastings, John	O'Toole, John
Baird, John R.	Hodgson, Chris	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Chudleigh, Ted	Jackson, Cameron	Runciman, Robert W.
Clark, Brad	Johns, Helen	Sampson, Rob
Clement, Tony	Johnson, Bert	Spina, Joseph
Coburn, Brian	Kells, Morley	Sterling, Norman W.
DeFaria, Carl	Marland, Margaret	Stewart, R. Gary
Dunlop, Garfield	Martiniuk, Gerry	Stockwell, Chris
Ecker, Janet	Maves, Bart	Tascona, Joseph N.
Elliott, Brenda	McDonald, Al	Tsubouchi, David H.
Flaherty, Jim	Miller, Norm	Turnbull, David
Galt, Doug	Molinari, Tina R.	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Gilchrist, Steve	Munro, Julia	Wilson, Jim
Gill, Raminder	Murdoch, Bill	Witmer, Elizabeth
Hardeman, Ernie	Mushinski, Marilyn	Young, David

Clerk of the House: The ayes are 29; the nays are 45.

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the amendment to the amendment lost.

All those in favour of the amendment to the main motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: I jumped ahead a little—my mistake. I apologize.

All those in favour, please indicate.

All those opposed?

Let's make sure this is not a procedural thing. Let's be sure this is what it looks like.

On the amendment to the main motion, is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please indicate.

Those opposed?

In my opinion, the nays have it. The motion is lost.

On the main motion, is it the pleasure of the House that the main motion carry?

All those in favour, please indicate.

All those opposed, please indicate.

In my opinion, the nays have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1806 to 1816.

The Deputy Speaker: Members please take their seats.

Mr Baird has moved government notice of motion number 11. All those in favour of the motion will please stand and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Hastings, John	O'Toole, John
Baird, John R.	Hodgson, Chris	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Chudleigh, Ted	Jackson, Cameron	Runciman, Robert W.
Clark, Brad	Johns, Helen	Sampson, Rob
Clement, Tony	Johnson, Bert	Spina, Joseph
Coburn, Brian	Kells, Morley	Sterling, Norman W.
DeFaria, Carl	Marland, Margaret	Stewart, R. Gary
Dunlop, Garfield	Martiniuk, Gerry	Stockwell, Chris
Ecker, Janet	Maves, Bart	Tascona, Joseph N.
Elliott, Brenda	McDonald, Al	Tsubouchi, David H.
Flaherty, Jim	Miller, Norm	Turnbull, David
Galt, Doug	Molinari, Tina R.	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Gilchrist, Steve	Munro, Julia	Wilson, Jim
Gill, Raminder	Murdoch, Bill	Witmer, Elizabeth
Hardeman, Ernie	Mushinski, Marilyn	Young, David

The Deputy Speaker: Those opposed to the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Agostino, Dominic	Crozier, Bruce	Marchese, Rosario
Bartolucci, Rick	Di Cocco, Caroline	Martin, Tony
Bisson, Gilles	Dombrowsky, Leona	McMeekin, Ted
Bountrogianni, Marie	Gerretsen, John	Parsons, Ernie
Boyer, Claudette	Hampton, Howard	Peters, Steve
Bradley, James J.	Hoy, Pat	Prue, Michael
Caplan, David	Kormos, Peter	Pupatello, Sandra
Churley, Marilyn	Kwinter, Monte	Ruprecht, Tony
Cordiano, Joseph	Levac, David	Sergio, Mario

Clerk of the House: The ayes are 45; the nays are 27.

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

It being after 6 of the clock, this House now stands adjourned until 6:45 this evening.

The House adjourned at 1820.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

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