



Legislative Assembly
of Ontario

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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 9 October 2002

Mercredi 9 octobre 2002

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

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Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 9 October 2002

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 9 octobre 2002

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Just before we start, I have an announcement: As you know, the pages aren't here today. The pages are going to be down at the trade centre performing for Her Majesty. There are some extra student pages here this afternoon, however.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

HYDRO RATES

Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): I found out today that Hydro One is nothing but a money-grabber. The Glengarry Golf Course in my riding had their meter read by Hydro One on June 13 when the rate was 3.2 cents per kilowatt hour. Then the July and August bills showed only an estimate, and guess what? The estimate was zero.

I wonder if this was because Hydro One knew all along that hydro rates would be going up and planned to rip off small, non-profit organizations like the Glengarry Golf Course.

Hydro One finally got around to reading the meter on September 11, when the rate was 8.5 cents per kilowatt hour, and they got a whopping bill of over \$7,400.

Due to the inefficiencies of Hydro One, the Glengarry Golf Course was hit with an increase of over 165% in comparison to the June rate. Why did they not read the meter in July and August when the rate was lower?

I am warning all Ontarians: check your hydro bills closely to make sure that Hydro One, the money-grabber, is not taking advantage of you. I understand that even the Minister of Energy had trouble reading and understanding the bill. I say to Hydro One, if you can't handle the job, give it back to the municipalities. They have the experience in the handling of hydro in their communities and they are up to the job.

LAKERIDGE HEALTH HOSPITAL AUXILIARY

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): I am pleased to rise in the House today to pay tribute to the hospital auxiliary to Lakeridge Health Port Perry. The auxiliary is celebrating

its 50th anniversary this year, and I'm sure we all wish them well.

Highlights of this year will include a special event in each of the villages and hamlets of the township that were instrumental in establishing the auxiliary 50 years ago. One of the founders was the late Jean Dymond, wife of the late Dr Matt Dymond, a former Ontario Minister of Health who served in this House for this riding.

There will be a special celebration on Saturday, October 19, and it will be in keeping with the decade when the auxiliary was founded. The evening will have a theme of the 1950s, which will suit me just fine.

Since 1952, the auxiliary has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars and donated countless volunteer hours toward assisting staff and patients. Since 1979, when cumulative contributions began being reported, they had raised an outstanding \$605,000.

Thanks to the auxiliary of Lakeridge Health Port Perry, the hospital has been able to purchase a wide variety of new equipment. The auxiliary has also given generously to building campaigns. They have just raised \$33,000 for instrument sterilization equipment. Most importantly, the auxiliary has always supported the hospital's goal of providing truly exceptional patient care.

All this is being accomplished today by approximately 125 volunteers. They're an outstanding example of service to the community. I'd like to congratulate hospital auxiliary president Gail Kerry and all the volunteers. I wish the auxiliary every success as they celebrate 50 years of working on behalf of the citizens of the township of Scugog.

HYDRO RATES

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex): A constituent of mine, Fred Burns, came into my office recently. He was steaming about his hydro bill, and I can understand why. He's been told that hydro rates wouldn't go up. He's been told that he was paying some charges that are now unbundled. Well, let me tell you about the unbundling: 32% of his hydro bill is unbundled. He can't afford to pay these kinds of bills, things like debt retirement charge, \$13.01; distribution volumetric charge, \$14.50; monthly service charge, \$14.66; non-competitive electric charges—whatever that is—\$12.45; SSS administration fee, 25 cents; transmission connection service, \$10.04; transmission network service, \$11.44.

No wonder Fred Burns is upset. And then the minister says, "Don't worry. When the cooler weather is here, your hydro rates are going down." Today the IMO says

5.8 cents per kilowatt hour. That's not down from last spring, guys, that's up.

INTERNATIONAL PLOWING MATCH

Mr Marcel Beaubien (Lambton-Kent-Middlesex): Great weather, delicious food, tireless volunteers, wonderful exhibitions and talented entertainers all combined to deliver the greatest Rural Expo since the event was inaugurated in 1913.

On behalf of the constituents of Lambton-Kent-Middlesex, I want to extend my appreciation and congratulations to the more than 1,500 volunteers who worked so unselfishly to make the IPM such an overwhelming success this year. Under the very able leadership of chairman Peter Twynstra and Ontario Plowmen's Association president Marie Chambers, Rural Expo 2002 more than lived up to its advanced billing as the largest agricultural show in Canada.

I also want to commend the three outstanding young women who represented our riding in the Queen of the Furrow competition: Karen DeClerk from Chatham-Kent, Dana Bryson from Lambton and Jennifer Ratcliffe from Middlesex.

More than 80,000 people attended this year's event, and like each of them, I was extraordinarily impressed with the quality of the exhibits, the generosity of the sponsors and the expertise of farm suppliers. For six days, rural and urban people came together to share in the quality of life that is unique to the agricultural community in rural Ontario.

Taking in everything this year's event had to offer reaffirmed for me how fortunate I am to represent the best people in the best area of the province. I wish I could convey to you in words the enormous pride I felt for what the organizers and participants accomplished in putting this whole show together.

In closing, I want to thank each and every person who took the time to share their view on farming issues while I was at the plowing match. I count on your words of encouragement and support as I strive to effectively represent each and every constituent of Lambton-Kent-Middlesex.

1340

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): Yesterday's revelation that the Harris-Eves gang approved in secret a \$10-million tax break for professional sports teams clearly shows this government has their priorities all wrong. The abuse of ministers' expenses that has gone unchecked and the secret deal for millionaire sports teams are all actions that prove this government is about being big spenders for themselves and secret deals for their rich, powerful friends.

The people of this province have watched this government cut services for people who have physical and mental disabilities and take over school boards who

would not jeopardize students' education with more cuts. We listened to this Premier just recently argue that in no way should the government subsidize community pools in Toronto, which serve 62,000 people.

It does not take rocket science to understand the benefits of physical activity, such as swimming. Considering the fact that two thirds of Ontario school-aged children are not active enough and we have an epidemic of obesity, the \$10 million would be better invested for fitness and well-being of children, youth and the general population.

This government has a misplaced sense of priorities. It lacks leadership in shaping a healthier, better Ontario.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): Yesterday the Westwood school in East York in my riding of Toronto-Danforth held a rally to protest the loss of a beloved and very special teacher. This teacher has to leave the school because he is one of 100 teachers who are being moved around because of lost enrolment in schools in the Toronto area. We know that this is partially attributed to more and more kids going to private schools because this government's taking money out of the public system and putting it directly into private schools.

I want to applaud the people, the teachers and students of Westwood school for speaking out and say to the government that this is just one of many rallies and protests to come because of course, as we know, since 1996, this government has cut over \$1 billion from public education. We saw the loss of all kinds of programs, school closings and that sort of thing happening.

Now, because of a flawed funding formula that's the fault of this government, the government has taken over our democratically elected school board trustees. Here in Toronto, our trustees have been particularly picked on. They've had all their rights taken away from them, even more so than in Hamilton and Ottawa. This is not democracy. I urge the government not to wait for the results of the funding formula but to put the money back in our schools now. Put the kids first.

RENEE FILION

Mr AL McDonald (Nipissing): Today I rise before the House to give praise to a young lady from my riding of Nipissing. Renee Filion is a former student at École secondaire Algonquin and a graduate of the University of Western Ontario. Upon graduation from university, Ms Filion received the Governor General's medal for having the highest standing in any four-year honours program at the university level. Renee Filion is now studying at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore where she's pursuing a master's degree in biomedical engineering.

According to the Conseil scolaire catholique Franco-Nord, the medal is by far the greatest achievement in the post-secondary educational world. The Governor Gen-

eral's academic medal was first awarded in 1873 by the Earl of Dufferin and has since become one of the most prestigious awards that a student in a Canadian educational institution may receive. The Governor General of Canada continues this tradition of encouraging scholarship across the nation and recognizing outstanding students.

I would like to personally say how proud I am of this fine young student who has excelled in schooling and continues to strive to be the best in academics that this great province of ours has seen in many years.

Congratulations also go out to Renee's parents, Jean-Marc and Lois. You certainly have raised a daughter with a strong work ethic and the ability to do well in whatever career she will ultimately pursue.

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale): If we didn't know it before, we certainly know now that the Tory government is full of double standards. We now know that when it comes to spending taxpayer dollars, they want everyone else to tighten their belts, but for cabinet ministers and their friends it's one after the other at the Eves trough. We have cabinet ministers one after the other, including the Premier, inappropriately expensing booze to the taxpayers and now we learn that you gave away \$10 million to your friends who own professional sports teams. Miks Harris said that pro sports teams wouldn't get a nickel from our government. Oh, quite a big nickel they got.

Jim Flaherty said he was against corporate welfare, but all of a sudden you sneak through a secret cabinet order to give away \$10 million to your friends.

And what do we see after that? One minister after the other doing their best interpretation of "Shaggy." "It wasn't me," they sang, and they sell and they try to convince Ontarians. It's not "Do as I say"; it's "Do as I do" over there-one set of rules for Ontario families, but no rules for you and your friends.

You know what? This bunch has the integrity of Brian Mulroney and the incompetence of Bob Rae. It's time for a change here in Ontario. Families will have a choice between an incompetent government with no integrity and a real leader with a real vision, a real plan and real integrity. That's Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberal Party.

LACROSSE

Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant): Today marks another chapter in a long and very unique relationship between the Six Nations and the monarchy of Great Britain. Eight members of the Six Nations Minor Lacrosse Association will be showing the finer points of their sport, the centuries-old national game of Canada, today in front of a royal audience in honour of Her Majesty's Golden Jubilee celebration ceremonies.

These young people have played the sport of lacrosse, known in native culture as the "Creator's game," much of

their lives, some since the age of 4. Many of their fathers, their grandfathers and their great-grandfathers have played the game. Today many mothers and daughters are beginning to make inroads in this sport. Lacrosse began its development with one rule: you cannot touch the ball with your hands. It has survived over the centuries and is played by professionals as well across North America.

Today's event will culminate with a formal presentation to the Queen and His Royal Highness Prince Philip of a handmade, inscribed lacrosse stick and a Junior A Arrows team jersey.

I'm very proud of my constituents from the Six Nations and share in the excitement of these athletes as they perform Canada's national sport in honour of our royal visitors.

VISITORS

Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant): As with many MPPs in the House, I have other constituents visiting today. I wish to draw the attention of members present to the presence of my daughter, Brittany Barrett, in the members' gallery.

Mr Bob Wood (London West): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I know all members of the House will want to join with me in welcoming some noted visitors from the London area. They are my godson, Jeremy Marin; my nephews and nieces Debbie Marin, Tyler Marin, Heather Tremblay, Dave Tremblay, Danielle Teeuwen and Christopher Teeuwen; and my friend John Rozeluk.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): It's not a point of order, but we welcome our guests.

In the Speaker's gallery we have my mother. Joyce Carr is joining us today, as well as my mother- and father-in-law, Mr and Mrs Harold Neal.

So you'd better behave or my mum will be on you.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: In the spirit of welcoming guests to the Legislature, in the members' gallery west I'm pleased to recognize Mr Ken Lewenza, the president of CAW Local 444, and Mr Tom Burton, editor of the Guardian newspaper. Ken has taken time out of his busy negotiations with DaimlerChrysler to bring literally tens of thousands of signatures opposing the Union Gas retroactive increase. We all welcome them here today.

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I am very pleased to introduce a special group of young people today. They're from the Premier's riding. It's the Maples Independent Country School, here today.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received the fourth report of

the standing committee on government agencies. Pursuant to standing order 106(e), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE AND SOCIAL POLICY

Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant): I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on justice and social policy and move its adoption.

Clerk at the Table (Mr Todd Decker): Your committee begs to report the following bill as amended:

Bill 60, An Act to give victims a greater role at parole hearings, to hold offenders accountable for their actions, to provide for inmate grooming standards, and to make other amendments to the Ministry of Correctional Services Act / Projet de loi 60, Loi visant à accroître le rôle des victimes aux audiences de libération conditionnelle et à responsabiliser les délinquants à l'égard de leurs actes, prévoyant des normes relatives à la toilette des détenus et apportant d'autres modifications à la Loi sur le ministère des Services correctionnels.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed.

The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

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ORAL QUESTIONS

EMPLOYER HEALTH TAX

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke): My question is for the Minister of Finance. In the last 24 hours, Ontario taxpayers have come to realize that their provincial government in Ontario, in early April of this year, a provincial government with very prominent ministers with names like Ecker, Flaherty, Clement, Tsubouchi, Stockwell and Hodgson, approved in secret a special multi-million dollar tax break for the rich and glamorous in the professional sports community, like the Toronto Blue Jays, for example.

What the taxpayers of Ontario want to know now is, since yesterday your Premier and many in the government indicated that they didn't know of and certainly didn't approve of this special, secret tax deal worth millions to good friends of the Ontario Conservative government, what specific plans do you have, as Minister of Finance, on behalf of your cabinet and caucus colleagues, to cancel and to rescind this special, secret, multi-million dollar tax benefit?

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Finance): As the Premier and I have been very clear, I am bringing forward options to the government to rescind it.

Mr Conway: My supplementary is this: can the taxpayers of Ontario now accept as a certainty that your government, the Eves government, will in very short order bring about an absolute and complete cancellation of the multi-million dollar tax break that was brought

about by the order in council signed on April 2 of this year?

Hon Mrs Ecker: Again, as the Premier made very clear, changes in tax policy are something that should be equitable. Changes in tax policy are something that should be openly announced to the public. This did not occur in this case. We have been very clear. I said in the House yesterday that I would look into the matter to see if anything untoward had occurred. Those principles were not observed, and I am looking at the legal options to rescind it.

Mr Conway: The outraged taxpayers are not interested in options and other things. What the irate taxpayers of Ontario want to know, and want to know today, with clarity and with certainty, is, are you saying today, without any qualification, that you and your colleagues in the Eves government are guaranteeing the cancellation of the multi-million dollar tax break that was occasioned by the April 2, 2002, order in council that provided this multi-million dollar tax break for groups like the Toronto Blue Jays?

Hon Mrs Ecker: I certainly can understand that the honourable member talks about the taxpayers being outraged. I'm sure the taxpayers are no more outraged about this than they were when your leader supported a financial bailout of the Senators in Ottawa. But I think the Premier has been very clear that this particular decision that he was not a part of does not meet what he believes to be the principles of a change of this nature. Therefore, again, as I have said, I'm bringing forward the legal options to rescind it. I would surely hope that the honourable member is not asking this government to proceed without due diligence in terms of matters that are very legal, in terms of matters that require the government of the day to observe the protection of personal information. We are exercising our due diligence to do that.

I'm sure with all the caterwauling over there, Mr Speaker, they've heard every word I've said.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): New question?

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): My question is to the Deputy Premier. It's on the same issue, but on a slightly different part of it. The people of Ontario yesterday were truly shocked that the government planned a \$10-million tax break for the most privileged in this province. They were also extremely angry that all this was done behind closed doors, in secret. It was their worst fear, and that is that this is a government that looks after their friends and does it behind closed doors, while saying to the public that they are purporting to look after them. My question to you is this, Deputy Premier: do you agree that the public had a right to know about this deal?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): In response to the question that has been asked, I think the Premier has been very clear throughout his time in office that he believes fairness and equity must be the underlying principles with respect to his administration's policies. He has indicated that this issue will be resolved and the appropriate action taken.

Mr Phillips: Listen, that's just all words and no action. Clearly, this deal was hidden completely from the

public. The only way they found out about it was that it was dug up through a lot of hard work in spite of your best efforts to keep it as quiet as you possibly can and hide it from the public. Ten million dollars to the most privileged in Ontario, all hidden from the public, and you only decided to do something about it when you got caught.

I say this to you: will you agree—because I think the public have a right to know that somebody's going to look at your actions—to send this issue to an all-party legislative inquiry into how in the world \$10 million could be silently, quietly signed behind closed doors to the most privileged people in the province? Will you agree to allow an inquiry by an all-party legislative committee?

Hon Mrs Witmer: The Premier made it clear yesterday that he was looking for and had asked the Minister of Finance to seek a solution to this problem. I would just repeat to you that throughout his term in office he has made it very clear that he believes in equity, that he believes in fairness and that he believes in transparency. I might add, it's no secret that we have cut taxes many, many times, 200 times, for the people in this province.

Mr Phillips: It's now no secret that you gave 10 million bucks to your friends. That's the thing that's no longer a secret. I say to the people of Ontario, listen carefully to what Mr Eves, the Premier, is saying now: no, he's not going to allow a public airing of this. It's going to stay behind closed doors.

I say to you again, will you, on behalf of Premier Eves, allow a public airing of this, with a legislative committee conducting a fair inquiry into how in the world \$10 million of hard-earned tax money that could have been used for health care and education was sent to your best privileged friends?

Hon Mrs Witmer: I will remind the member one more time: the Premier has made it very clear, and certainly all of his actions have indicated, that he believes in transparency, that he believes in accountability and that he believes in fairness and equity. I'll tell you, I find it passing strange that yesterday, when these allegations were made, your leader snuck out of this House, because he was responsible in asking for tax breaks for the Ottawa Senators in 1999.

HYDRO RATES

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Minister of Energy. Minister, it seems you still haven't read your market surveillance panel's report on the problems with privatized Hydro, so I'm going to send you over a large-print copy of the salient section. Hopefully you'll be able to read it now, because what it says is:

"There is a serious shortage of generating capacity to meet Ontario's growing demand for electricity.

"If steps are not taken to address this situation, Ontario could face even more serious reliability problems next summer, leading to the possibility of supply interruptions

and continued upward pressure on prices during periods of peak demand."

Minister, as a result of hydro privatization and deregulation, Ontario is in big trouble. What are you going to do to keep the lights on in our province?

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Energy, Minister responsible for francophone affairs): This government, as all in the province do, take the report levelled by the surveillance panel on this issue very, very seriously. We think it's a reasonable thing to do. I would share the concern that they have about the supply adequacy in the province of Ontario as we move forward in the next two, three, four or five years.

1400

The independent market operator had two reports. I accept the report they tabled this week and their comments on the issue of the amount of supply in the province. I also take very seriously their 18-Month Outlook. That's the report where they look specifically over the next 18 months as to how much power supply should exist in the province, and I'd like to quote from that: "The energy production capability is generally expected to be well above energy demand levels in each month of the outlook period."

To answer the last question from to the leader of the third party, if there's one thing we could do to prepare the Ontario marketplace next year with respect to hydro, it is that we could tell people who leave their lights on when no one's home—and that would certainly be advice I'd give to the leader of the third party.

Mr Hampton: You told the estimates committee that in your view part of the problem in Ontario is that hydro prices have been unrealistic, and yesterday you told the estimates committee that prices need to be higher in order to attract private sector generating stations.

Your own market surveillance panel says that despite all of your talk, the private sector is not building the generating stations that we need. Maybe you could tell the consumers of Ontario how much higher hydro prices have to go in your world of hydro privatization before your government can entice the private sector to build the generating stations that are needed.

Hon Mr Baird: With respect to the question the honourable member asks, obviously the prices went up in the province in the months of July and August. We did have the hottest summer in 50 years. The report, on at least three or four occasions, spoke of the heat wave we had in Ontario.

The report also, and the leader of the third party didn't mention this, throughout the entire report, from the beginning to its conclusion, talks about the benefits of having open market electricity and talks about how, while the first few months have not been easy, they have been worthwhile. It talks about the benefits of an open market. I find it passing strange that the leader of the third party doesn't want to talk about that.

I did read the specific section that he gave me. He said, "the generating capacity to meet Ontario's growing demand for electricity." In Ontario, the good news is,

under this party and this government, we have a growing need. There are more jobs, there's more hope and there's more opportunity. That requires more electricity, and that's good news to the people of Ontario.

Mr Hampton: Minister, they're your words. You were the one who said that Ontario's electricity prices will have to go higher in order to entice private generators to come into the province and build more generating stations. People across Ontario saw their hydro bills go out of sight this summer. I think that as the Minister of Energy you owe it to the consumers of Ontario to tell them, since in your government's view the price of hydro has to go higher still in order to entice private companies to build generating stations, how much higher, in your government's view, do hydro prices have to go? How much more do people's hydro bills have to increase before your government will entice private sector companies to build more generating stations? You owe it to people. What's your answer?

Hon Mr Baird: I think that is an unfair comment and analysis of my appearance before the estimates committee. What I did say is that some in the industry would like to see higher prices before they made investments. For example, in solar power, if rates were as high as 12 cents a kilowatt hour, solar power would be commercial, and some in the green sector would like to see that. I want to see and this government wants to see the lowest rates possible in a competitive marketplace.

The member opposite loves to get up and talk about high rates. He failed to stand in his place and mention that just yesterday rates fell to just 3.02 cents.

TAX EXEMPTION

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Deputy Premier. Yesterday you got caught pumping public money into the pockets of sports millionaires. Today you announced a review of this shameful practice.

If corporate welfare for sports millionaires really upsets you, then I want to ask you to look at a tax break that your government gave another professional sports team, the Ottawa Senators, two years ago—a \$4-million tax break. You exempted the Ottawa Senators from millions of dollars in education property taxes that should have gone into our crumbling schools, and you did it, yes, with the full support of Dalton McGuinty and the Liberal Party. Since you're rescinding sweetheart tax deals for millionaire sports teams, will you rescind that one as well?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): I'm going to ask the Minister of Finance to respond to the question.

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Finance): Municipalities had the option to change their property tax system to make sure that sports facilities—not teams, but facilities, as I understood it—were on an equitable basis with other entertainment facilities.

I think the honourable member does make an interesting point, though, that Dalton McGuinty, an Ottawa MPP, supported both federal and provincial bailouts. "I'm very pessimistic about the future of the team." "McGuinty says the government should consider allocating a share of money to keep the Senators in the region." There are lots of quotes where the honourable member, the leader of the Liberal Party, was very supportive when it was his team that was being bailed out through a municipal tax break.

Mr Hampton: Our schools are crumbling, some 40,000 children are on special education waiting lists, children are out there selling candy bars in order to buy textbooks, and your government passed legislation giving a \$4-million tax break to a professional, millionaire hockey team. I say that money should go back where it belongs: into our schools, into our children's classrooms.

If it's not acceptable to give a \$10-million tax break that you got caught in yesterday—and I agree, it's not acceptable—then the \$4-million tax break equally isn't acceptable. If you're going to review and rescind one, will you also rescind the other?

Hon Mrs Ecker: I think our record in terms of investments in health and in schools speaks for itself. In this spring budget alone, there was over \$1.7 billion of more new money for health care—important investments to expand services. Do we need to do more? Of course we do. That's why we asked the federal government for their support in expanding health services for Ontario residents.

Education spending has gone from \$12.9 billion to \$14.3 billion. Special education alone has increased by 17%, and the way we fund education is under review to see if we can improve it even further. So we understand and recognize the need to invest in priority services like health and education. We will continue to do that.

EMPLOYER HEALTH TAX

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): My question is to the Deputy Premier. I say that what has outraged people, in addition to the \$10 million, is that somehow or other you were able to do all of this behind closed doors, in secret, hidden from the public—a \$10-million break for the most privileged in our province—and the only way the public ever found out about it was through a considerable amount of work done by people using freedom of information to finally get at it.

I say to you again: this is no way to conduct the public's business. They have a right to know this. The public wants to know now what we're going to do about it. I propose again to you, Deputy Premier, that we refer this to an all-party legislative committee to conduct an inquiry into how in the world the government would have the right to spend \$10 million of taxpayers' money behind closed doors without ever informing the public. Will you agree to that?

1410

Hon Mrs Witmer: The member opposite knows that if you take a look at the process involved in this, there

has always been a process involved in cabinet decision-making. It is a system that undertakes due diligence. There are people in your party who have been part of a cabinet and know full well the process that is involved.

You also probably know that there are exceptional cases when cabinet decisions are made outside of the regular scheduled meetings, and the process that our government has followed, your government followed and the NDP government followed has been in place since 1899.

Mr Phillips: Again, the Premier said yesterday he had no idea about this. The cabinet have all run from it. The public say, "Who made this decision? Who made it? How did it get made; \$10 million of my money, as a taxpayer, spent on the most privileged in the province, money that could have been used for health care and education?" and nobody understands the process, including the Premier.

I say to you again, Deputy Premier, the public has a right to understand how in the world this happened. How did it happen? Frankly, they don't trust you to investigate it once again behind closed doors with just your little group there. They want this out in the open.

I say to you again, what is wrong with this? Why not refer it to a legislative committee, public, all-party, to conduct a proper inquiry into how this happened?

Hon Mrs Witmer: To the member opposite, just to set the record straight, I think it's important to acknowledge the fact that the Premier was not a member of executive council at the time; however, he has indicated also he's not prepared to pass judgment on decisions of ministers in previous cabinets.

I will say to you that since the Premier became Premier of this province, he has demonstrated that he acts in a way that is accountable, fair and transparent. He has indicated that he has asked the Minister of Finance to resolve this situation, and I have every confidence that it will be resolved in a satisfactory manner that will meet the needs of the people in this province.

NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): My question is for the Minister of—

Interjections.

Mr Johnson: If I could have a little attention from the member for Windsor—I'll wait until the member for Windsor lets me have some time in here.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Take a seat. The member for Windsor, do come to order please.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): That's Windsor West.

The Speaker: Yes, Windsor West.

Mr Johnson: My question is for the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Farmers across my riding are very interested, keenly interested, in the developments related to the Nutrient Management Act. They want to ensure that the new requirements will allow them

to remain competitive as well as protecting the water quality in their communities.

Minister, I understand that our government has commenced a series of consultations across Ontario on this important initiative. Can you inform me and the rest of the Legislature on the progress of these discussions?

Hon Helen Johns (Minister of Agriculture and Food): I'd like to thank the member for Perth-Middlesex for the question and once again congratulate him on his active interest in agriculture and Agriculture Week. He's done a fabulous job of keeping agriculture in the forefront.

I want to say that of course we've been working very hard over the summer, the Minister of the Environment and myself, to get regulations out on the nutrient management plan. As the Premier has said many times, we are committed to implementing the Justice O'Connor recommendations, so we went out and started to do consultations in August. At that time, we got three consultations done in Caledonia, Clinton and Wallaceburg. I know that Minister Stockwell is going into Kemptville this Friday and will be in North Bay next week discussing the nutrient management plan and the first two regulations.

These first two regulations talk about the phase-in provisions and the nutrient management plan itself. I must say, although we've had some very good suggestions, that generally all round people like the first two regulations and are looking forward to the next set.

Mr Johnson: Thank you, Minister. It sounds like you've got a very busy schedule ahead of you. We're keenly interested in the Nutrient Management Act and how it's going to influence agriculture out in the rural part of Ontario. Indeed, the detail from these meetings that will come out in the legislation is very important. Minister, can you provide some details regarding the issues that are being discussed at some of these meetings?

Hon Mrs Johns: Let me say that the expertise that comes to these meetings has been eye-opening, and we're very grateful for the information they have given us. As I said, when they talk about the stage 1 regulations, they've been very accepting. They've liked the idea of the nutrient management plan. They have seen some of the details in there, the categories of operation and when the phase-in will happen.

In the second set of the consultations, we're really talking more about the nutrient management bylaws that exist now and how the province will come about to take those bylaws and get a provincial system. So we are looking forward to that. We're also talking about some of the very strong environmental issues like municipal sludge and pulp and paper. Those issues will be discussed also.

I want to emphasize that the Minister of the Environment and myself have guaranteed that we'll be out to consult with each new set of regulations we have, so we hear what the people of the province of Ontario have to say. This is very important to the future of agriculture and the future of our water safety in the province—

The Speaker: The minister's time is up.

ACCESS TO ORDERS IN COUNCIL

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): My question is to the Deputy Premier. I listened very carefully to what she suggested about the Premier's desire to have an open review of what happened earlier. At 11 o'clock this morning, a member of our staff went to cabinet office to seek orders in council for the period roughly from March 23 to April 15. That is the transition period. All of those orders in council were available last week when we went to look at them. Today we were denied them. Today we were told we couldn't have them and that they wouldn't be available for at least several days. Can you tell us why they were available last week, why they are not available today and why the process has been changed all of a sudden?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. Come to order, please. The Deputy Premier has the floor.

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): I understand there is a process involved and I am sure the information will be made available according to the process. But if we're going to talk about these sports breaks and what have you—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Supplementary?

Mr Duncan: We followed the process that has been in place, as we did last week, as we do all the time. I'll ask you again, will you make those orders in council available that were available up until last week? Will you make them available to our research and to anyone else that wants them out of cabinet office as they were, at least up until last week? Why could we not access those today as we could last week?

Hon Mrs Witmer: I understand there have been no changes made to the process. Due process will be followed and that information will be made available to you.

HIKE ONTARIO

Mr AL McDonald (Nipissing): My question today is for the Minister of Natural Resources. Many Ontarians, including myself and my family, take every opportunity we can to enjoy the wonderful outdoor activities this beautiful province has to offer. One of these activities—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Member take his seat. Come to order, the member for Windsor West, please. The member for Nipissing has the floor. If people want to carry on discussions, they can go with each other and do that, but the member for Nipissing has the floor. I apologize for the interruptions.

Mr McDonald: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I'll start again.

Interjection.

The Speaker: Government House leader, come to order. Two seconds after I sit down, you immediately yell. That's why she starts up. If you would leave it alone, we wouldn't have this going on. You continue all the time to egg on the other side. When I stand up, I'd appreciate some co-operation from the government House leader.

The member for Nipissing.

1420

Mr McDonald: I'll start again. My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources. Many Ontarians, including my family and myself, take every opportunity we can to enjoy all the wonderful outdoor activities this beautiful province has to offer. One of these activities is hiking. Minister, I was very pleased to hear you're announcement regarding Hike Ontario last week, but could you please explain to us here today what Hike Ontario is and how all Ontarians can benefit from what they do?

Hon Jerry J. Ouellette (Minister of Natural Resources): I thank the member from Nipissing for the question. October is Let's Hike Ontario Month, and that's why last week I was happy to announce \$300,000 in funding for Hike Ontario through Ontario's Living Legacy.

Hike Ontario is a non-profit organization which represents the interests of walkers and hikers in Ontario. Its membership includes numerous hiking clubs and thousands of individuals. Hike Ontario provides a leader's certificate program, publications and books, a newsletter and Ontario hike month, all of which promote and encourage the people of Ontario to experience Ontario's great outdoors.

Any Ontarians wishing to get outdoors need look no further than Hike Ontario. These fine people will help anyone regardless of age get started on their hike.

Mr McDonald: Thank you for that answer, Minister, and I couldn't agree with you more. This is a wonderful province we live in and Hike Ontario does a fantastic job of promoting it. Could you fill us in on what Hike Ontario will be doing with these funds?

Hon Mr Ouellette: We are fortunate in Ontario to have thousands of kilometres of recreational trails that spread across the province. As a matter of fact, I've hiked hundreds of kilometres of the Bruce Trail myself. The area, enjoyed by young and old alike, can range from simple walks on flat terrain to challenging hikes in some most rugged areas.

The funds announced last week will be used to design and install hundreds of interpretive signs along trails across the province, and whether it's Toronto's popular lakefront trail right in the core of the city, the world-famous Bruce Trail along the Niagara Escarpment or the spectacular Voyageur on Lake Superior, these additions to the trails will properly showcase the green space and natural beauty that make Ontario unique.

I would like to take this opportunity to officially acknowledge the Let's Hike Ontario Month of October and encourage everyone to get out and hike the Ontario we're fortunate enough to live in.

ONTARIO DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): My question is for the Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services. Last June, in order to escape the overwhelming pressure of the demand for an increase in the ODSP disability pension, you said you would review the amounts being given. In response to a private member's bill that I introduced to give a modest increase based on the cost of living to people living with disabilities in the province, which your government members defeated, you said you would carry out a review. Minister, what is the status of that review and when can the disabled in this province expect an increase in their pension?

Hon Brenda Elliott (Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services): I thank my colleague in the opposition across the way for the question. I continue to meet with individuals to learn their recommendations about different parts of the Ontario Disability Support Program, and it is ongoing.

Mr Martin: It's been almost four months now that the disabled in this province have been living in poverty because this minister cannot get her house in order and her act together. Minister, do you even know what the poverty line for people living in cities in this province is? It's \$18,371. Single people who depend on the ODSP receive \$11,160 a year. They live \$7,211 below the poverty line and yet you're quite happy to keep the rates where they are and sentence people with disabilities to a lifetime of abject poverty while you do your inquiring.

Minister, I ask you again: will you commit today to increasing the benefits for people on the Ontario Disability Support Program in this province, which you have the power to do?

Hon Mrs Elliott: To my colleague in the opposition across the way I say I find it interesting that he would continually question me on this file because this is the party across the way that did nothing for Ontario disability support recipients while they were in government—not one thing. It was our government, when we came to power in 1995, that introduced tremendous reforms that reformed welfare—transformed welfare—to an opportunity, which, by the way, was referred to by a welfare recipient I talked to recently as “opportunities galore.”

It is our government—the Ernie Eves government, the Mike Harris government—that took the Ontario disability support plan out of the welfare system and implemented a number of changes—and benefits, I might add—that did not exist before, and we will continue to do more.

HYDRO RATES

Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's): My question is for the Minister of Energy. He's reading hydro bills.

Minister, your inability to read a hydro bill yesterday testifies to your government's hydraulic incompetence on

matters of energy. It is not enough to say that you have only been the minister for 40 days. I would have thought that every member of the government caucus could explain a hydro bill to a constituent. You have had seven years to ensure reliable and affordable electricity to Ontarians and to provide hydro bills that make sense, and yet yesterday, in your own words, hydro bills for all Ontarians are “gobbledegook.”

I thought you were the people who were going to fix the government, not gobbledegook the bills. It doesn't exactly inspire consumer confidence when an energy minister cannot understand energy bills that average Ontarians are supposed to make sense of.

When, Minister, are Ontarians going to get clear and accountable hydro bills? When are they going to be spared this continued gobbledegook?

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Energy, minister responsible for francophone affairs): When you go around the province of Ontario, whether you're in Sault Ste Marie and have Great Lakes Power or whether you're in the city of Ottawa and have Ottawa Hydro or you're here in the city of Toronto and have Toronto Hydro, every hydro company, every electric corporation, every local distribution company has their own way of presenting things.

Frankly, I'm a consumer just like everyone else.

Mr Bryant: That's the problem.

Hon Mr Baird: The member opposite says, “That's the problem.” This is the party that voted against standardized property tax assessment bills because they didn't like that. They said it was overly prescriptive and it was the government meddling in things.

I think it would be important that every local distribution company in the province be able to present clearly and in plain language their charges to the consumer. I do think it is a better system now that we can actually break out these expenditures. In the past, people didn't know all of the expenses for which they were charged. There are Web sites available which local distribution companies—not the Ontario government or my ministry—who present these bills alert people to, and I think that's well worth it.

Mr Bryant: Unbundling bills was a good idea, but obviously the execution was a failure if the energy minister can't read energy bills. I think the minister would agree that we need to standardize the bills. The bill that reads one way in Sault Ste Marie ought to read the same in Ottawa and Toronto. I think we need to do that. I think we need to add some clarity and some transparency to the bills. Words like “volumetrics” should not show up on a consumer bill. We need to provide some accountability to ensure that ratepayers know where their money is going, whether it's going to transmission or distribution or paying for electricity.

Minister, what I'd like to know now is, when are you going to fix the bills? You said yesterday that you didn't understand them and that they were, in your words, gobbledegook, so you've got to fix them. When are you going to fix them? And in the interim, what relief are you going to provide to ratepayers struck dumb by their hydro

bills, who don't understand them? What are you going to do to help the consumers of Ontario?

Hon Mr Baird: I agree with the member opposite that confusion in the marketplace is unhelpful. Confusion is unhelpful when it comes to hydro rates; it's also unhelpful when it comes to political promises.

Let's look at what Dalton McGuinty said. He said in one clip, "I am in favour of privatization both in terms of the transmission and the generation. I think it's the right way to go." Then the consumers of political information get the following: "I've been very consistent.... I think it should be left in public hands." Then he was asked if he was misquoted. Dalton McGuinty's response? "If you take a look at the quote, it's a paraphrase."

I think the people of Ontario continually are confused by the flip-flopping of the party which the member opposite represents, and they would like to know where he and his party stand and see them stay there on one issue, on one occasion.

1430

DAIRY FARMERS

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): My question is for the Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services.

I come from a rural riding. We have many, many farmers. It's my understanding that you were part of an announcement last week with the Dairy—

Interjection.

Mr Johnson: This may not be of interest to anybody from Hamilton, because you may not have many farmers down there, but they're an awful important part of my riding.

Out of the announcement last week with the Dairy Farmers of Ontario, could you please tell the House and the farmers in my riding, and also those from Hamilton, what you announced with the Dairy Farmers of Ontario?

Hon Brenda Elliott (Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services): I thank my colleague from Perth-Middlesex for his tremendous championship of farming and agriculture in the province of Ontario. He would have loved to have been part of the announcement. I was surrounded last week by dozens of little kids wearing cow print hats and sunglasses and lunch bags. They were all excited because I was at King Edward school. I was there as part of an anniversary celebration and I was there presenting a \$1-million cheque to the Dairy Farmers of Ontario. This is a fabulous program that we're supporting through the government. We're supporting this because this organization, of whom we're very proud, for 15 years has been providing and is building a program that provides milk to children six years and under, for junior kindergarten, kindergarten and grade 1, in almost 3,000 schools across the province.

Not only do they provide milk, a very nutritious food; they provide nutrition education and they make sure that milk is accessible and affordable to children under six in these various schools that they serve. It's a great

program, and through the challenge fund I was delighted to give them that \$1 million.

Mr Johnson: Minister, that is indeed good news. This expanded elementary school milk program is great. Children all across the province will benefit from having milk available to them at school, not only from a health point of view but from the nutrition that it provides at that very early age.

Minister, you mentioned that this program is part of the Early Years challenge fund. Could you tell me and my constituents what the challenge fund is and what other initiatives have received challenge funding in my great riding of Perth-Middlesex?

Hon Mrs Elliott: The challenge fund is a \$30-million program that our government sponsors. It's part of our Early Years program, as he indicated, where we try to focus resources on early years for the children to give them the healthiest, brightest start possible. This is a program where we contribute equal amounts of money to organizations, to various groups across the province who design a program that meets a need in their community. We have already approved 260 new programs in various communities.

To my colleague in Perth-Middlesex, I'm pleased to tell him that there are four projects sponsored under this challenge fund in his area: Arts Kids, Preschool Intervention Program for Children and Parents, the Salvation Army Community and Family Services Parenting Project, and the Perth County Prenatal Health Fairs.

To my colleagues in the Legislature, there are programs, not just the milk program but many others, that are happening in their very own communities, all sponsored under the challenge fund, again designed to give children the healthiest and best start possible.

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West): My question is for the Minister of Health. Minister, we've got a long weekend coming up this weekend. What that usually means from your ministry is that you drop some kind of an announcement, usually a relatively controversial one, on the Friday night of a long weekend. Last time it was Canada Day. Do you remember that one? Then we had Labour Day. One was the massive 15% to 30% increase for seniors.

We've got a long weekend coming up. I'd like to know what the status is of the RFP process for private MRIs in Ontario.

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I'm not sure what she's referring to. We do have a process to increase accessibility for our diagnostics using stand-alone clinics that are within the Canada Health Act that are open and accessible to the citizens of Ontario using their OHIP card, not their Amex card. If that's the proposal to which she is referring, it's on track.

Mrs Pupatello: Minister, what we know is that we have 16 ridings held by your MPPs that are desperate for an MRI or CT. These are proposals that have already

gone before you. These are communities that have raised a significant amount of money and that are still waiting for announcements of MRIs and CTs.

You said an RFP process would be available this fall to get underway this two-tier private MRI campaign. It is the fall. Minister, we'd like to know what the status is. We want to know if the private companies are putting up all the capital money, or is the government going to include capital money in this scheme? We'd like to know where the radiologists are coming from, because we're short 150 in Ontario and short hundreds of technologists in this area. These are questions that we demand be answered before you come forward with a request for proposal process. We haven't heard the answers yet, and we'd like to know what your timing is going to be.

Hon Mr Clement: I can say to the honourable member that indeed there is a lot of demand for diagnostic services. We know that. We heard that from the people of Ontario. That's why the Ernie Eves government is acting in a number of different ways in this area. For instance, in Minister Ecker's budget there was an increase, by 90%, of the hours of operation that are paid for for MRIs in our hospitals. We are proud of that on this side of the House. Since that budget, we have been approving MRIs and CTs: the CT in Lake of the Woods that was announced by Minister Wilson, the MRI in Oakville that was announced by this government.

The Ernie Eves government is there for diagnostic services because the people of Ontario deserve to have the best, the most accessible, the most successful diagnostic services that are available in this province and in this country. That is what the Ernie Eves government stands for, and the member can be assured that her constituents will be the beneficiaries of that as well.

NATIVE PEOPLE

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): My question today is for the Attorney General with responsibility for native affairs. Minister, before I ask the question, I just wanted to thank you very much for the grant through the aboriginal community capital grants program of \$293,000 that went to the G'Nadjiwon Ki Aboriginal Tourism Association in my riding. That fits in very well with Casino Rama, which of course is the largest employer of aboriginals in our nation. I thank you for that cheque.

I know you have been building relationships with First Nations leaders since you took office as Attorney General and minister responsible for native affairs. You've established a formal process to meet with First Nations leadership twice a year. Just last week, there was a visioning session at Queen's Park, which was attended by the Premier and many other cabinet ministers. Can you please update the House on what has been achieved at these meetings?

Hon David Young (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): I thank the member for Simcoe North. He and I have worked together on a

number of successful endeavours in this field and in others. I do appreciate his assistance.

Before I answer his question, Mr Speaker, I thought I would just take a moment to advise you, sir, that we have a special guest in the members' gallery today, and that is Ted Nolan, a former NHL star and former coach of the Buffalo Sabres. I thought we'd give him a round of applause.

Applause.

Hon Mr Young: Indeed, last week we had a tremendous meeting. We had native leaders from across Ontario come together for another dialogue. This is one in a series of discussions that we've had to try to address some of the very serious issues, both short- and long-term, that exist. There are some challenges in native communities across this province, but there are also some tremendous success stories, and we talked about and highlighted both at the meeting.

In attendance were my colleagues. Minister Ouellette, Minister Wilson, Minister Cunningham, Minister Flaherty, and Minister Galt all were there during the course of what was a very productive day. We talked about land use mapping and we talked about the tripartite process. We have made real progress on these very important issues.

Mr Dunlop: Minister, I thought for a moment you were going to point at Andrew Hodgson.

I know that you also met with First Nations and leaders representing Metis and aboriginal organizations, formally and informally. There is also a national forum involving federal-provincial-territorial ministers of aboriginal affairs and national aboriginal leaders. What other initiatives have you undertaken to enhance relations with aboriginal people?

Hon Mr Young: I must tell you that this is a very rewarding part of my job. I've had an opportunity to visit in excess of 17 communities across Ontario and to meet some tremendous people. I've had an opportunity to learn from those experiences a great deal and take much of that knowledge to federal-provincial-territorial conferences. We've had three to date, all very successful.

Out of one of them, the last one, we did talk about a business summit, a national summit that will take place in Toronto. We are co-hosting, with all the other territorial and provincial governments as well as the federal government. It shows what can happen when governments and aboriginal leaders work together in a very positive way. I'm very proud of that.

We have a further federal-provincial-territorial-aboriginal meeting scheduled for next month in Nunavut. We are conferring with native leaders from across this province so that will be just as productive as the previous meetings we have had.

1440

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a question for the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. You recently announced a \$600,000 grant for the

Sensenbrenner Hospital in Kapuskasing to cover the hospital's operating deficit. Can you tell us where the money came from?

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Northern Development and Mines): That money is coming from the Ministry of Health and Long-term Care.

Ms Martel: That's a strange answer, because we talked to Ministry of Health officials this morning and they said they have no idea where this money is going to come from. In fact, they were taken completely by surprise by your announcement.

However, you have made a very specific commitment to Sensenbrenner and now it has to be kept. More importantly, you now have an obligation to ensure that every other northern hospital which has an operating deficit will have that deficit fully covered too. That includes the Sudbury Regional Hospital; it would include the Notre Dame Hospital in Hearst.

Minister, who do our hospitals have to apply to for this money, and can you guarantee that their operating deficits, all of the operating deficits of all northern hospitals, will be fully covered too?

Hon Mr Wilson: Sensenbrenner Hospital has gone through the wringer. It has a legitimate \$600,000 deficit left over. We did cover the first \$500,000 of that. We're working on the \$600,000.

Interjections.

Hon Mr Wilson: I'm well aware, as a former Minister of Health in this province, that there are Liberal and NDP bureaucrats at the Ministry of Health who don't want to help northern Ontario. I'm well aware they're bucking this proposal too. But I've made the announcement in conjunction with the Minister of Health, on behalf of the people of Ontario, to give \$600,000 to cover the deficit, and I expect it to be done, as Minister of Northern Development, for the people of northern Ontario, and it better bloody well be done.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): New question. The member for Kingston and the Islands.

HOME CARE

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): My question is to the Deputy Premier.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Take a seat.

The member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr Gerretsen: Deputy Premier, on April 29, 1998, when you were Minister of Health, you and your government made a solemn promise—

Interjections.

The Speaker: The member take his seat. We'll let him start up.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): On a point of order, Mr Speaker. Let the record show that the Minister of Northern Development is now threatening to fire—

The Speaker: That is not a point of order. Take your seat and stop wasting time. The member take his seat. It's not a point of order. You're wasting time.

The member for Kingston and the Islands has the floor.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Minister of Northern Development, come to order or you'll spend the afternoon—he can go over and ask for the money because he's going to be thrown out. Come to order, please.

We're wasting time. We've got down to the Liberal question now. The NDP hopes to get the question in, and then they stand up and do points of order when the Liberals have a question.

The member for Kingston and the Islands has the floor.

Mr Gerretsen: This is a very serious issue that affects over a million people in this province. On April 29, 1998, when you were Minister of Health, you and your government made a serious promise and commitment to the people of Ontario to enhance the community care and nursing services in this province by \$551 million over seven years. In early September of this year, over a million Ontarians were represented at emergency meetings to address, in their words, the home care and community care crisis facing those in need and their caregivers.

Twenty-three different organizations, from the Alzheimer's Society of Canada and Ontario to CARP, to the Victorian Order of Nurses, pleaded with you to lift the freeze on home care that you instituted two years ago. In a joint letter signed by these organizations to the Premier, they state, "All of us continue to receive an overwhelming number of cries for help from Ontarians barely surviving without adequate care, especially seniors with long-term-care needs and others of all ages and disabilities whose needs are not being met."

Minister, why don't you live up to your commitments and immediately reinstate the \$140 million that you have not supplied to the home care community and that was part of your solemn promise that was made in 1998? These people need care. Do the right thing—

The Speaker: The member's time is up. Deputy Premier.

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

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I can inform this House that when it comes to home care, the Ontario government provides the most generous level of home care services in Canada, approximately \$128 per capita. That's because we know how important accessible home care is to the citizens of Ontario.

To answer the honourable member's question directly, if his question is whether we are contributing, on behalf of the taxpayers of Ontario, more financial resources to home care through the community care access centres this year, the answer is yes, and those transmittal letters went out some weeks ago.

Mr Gerretsen: Minister, you have shortchanged the community care access services to date, by way of the

\$551-million commitment you made four years ago, of a total of \$140 million. As Duncan Sinclair, your own hand-picked health care restructuring commissioner stated, "There is no question that those people right now who need home care and aren't getting it—they face individuals crises.... I just hope and pray that it doesn't escalate into a general crisis, as I fear it may." There are only two years left in that commitment of \$551 million. Right now you're \$282 million short on the seven-year commitment you originally made. Why don't you do the right thing and put \$140 million into the system so the people who need the care will get it?

Many people right now go without any kind of home care service at all. There are hundreds of other people who have been cut back from two hours a day to two hours a week for these services. You are denying them the services. Live up to the commitment you made—

The Speaker: The member's time is up. Minister of Health.

Hon Mr Clement: To be fair, the honourable member in the first part of his question indicated there was no increase in home care this year, and that is incorrect. He is misinformed. If the honourable member wants to get on to statistics, his own area has had a 22% increase in home care funding since 1995. That is a fact. That is on the record.

If the honourable member wants to talk about people, I want to talk about people too. In Ottawa, the largest CCAC in the province went from a 500-person waiting list to a zero-person waiting list. All those people are getting services. They're getting services right now because we have made the changes necessary to make sure the funding goes to the front line. We are proud of that on this side of the House. We are going to be there for recipients of home care, just like we are there for the people of Ontario who deserve better health care and less rhetoric from the opposition.

TENANT PROTECTION

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): My question is for the Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing with responsibility for urban issues. My constituents are a mix of homeowners and renters. In fact, a significant percentage of my riding—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): The member for Ottawa Centre, come to order, please. The member for Scarborough East may continue.

Mr Gilchrist: As I was saying, my constituents are a mix of homeowners and renters. A significant percentage of my riding is rental units, and I believe it's important for those who rent to be aware of the rules regarding their rights as tenants. When we compare the Tenant Protection Act to initiatives by previous governments in this area, among other benefits, I've noticed a staggering increase in the amount of money being spent to improve the quality in existing units as well as the development of new rental units in my riding and all across the province.

Minister, I wonder if you could tell the House specifically how the Tenant Protection Act has changed previous provisions that didn't work well for Ontario's tenants and landlords and resulted in these new investments.

Hon Tina R. Molinari (Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I want to thank the member for his question. This is an important issue, not only in the member's riding but all across Ontario. In my urban tours of the cities, I've heard this is an issue throughout the province. In my responsibility as urban affairs minister, I am happy we are changing the Tenant Protection Act. In fact, the changes and the provisions in the new law make it more accessible and fair for all the tenants and the landlords.

Rent control has been improved so that it encourages landlords to invest in the buildings. As a matter of fact, \$164 million has been invested to improve apartments. It is estimated that the 2000-01 figures will push this investment to over the \$200-million mark. So we are happy to be making changes in this act to improve it for all landlords and tenants in the province of Ontario.

1450

Mr Gilchrist: Thank you, Minister, for that answer. There is no doubt every time an apartment is refurbished, every time a new apartment is built, that improves the quality of life for tenants all across Ontario. It improves their choice. I'm happy to hear those investments are being made and I know you've personally visited many urban municipalities to discuss this and the other issues in your portfolio.

In my supplementary, I'd like to deal with the annual rent increase, which this year, as you know, was set at 2.9% for the year 2003. I think that's good news for tenants, and I wonder if you could contrast this year's increase against increases in past years?

Hon Mrs Molinari: Indeed, this is good news for our constituents as well as renters all across the province of Ontario. In fact, the 2.9% annual guideline for 2003 is the lowest in 17 years. Our government believes that the annual rent guideline recognizes the interests of both tenants and landlords. While the guidelines protect tenants from high rent increases, they also take into account increases in operating costs faced by landlords.

The same formula that we used to calculate the annual guideline was established in 1987 under the Liberal government. The NDP used the same formula as we currently use today. However, you will be interested to know that the annual guidelines have been lower under this government than former NDP and Liberal governments. In fact, the Liberal government issued increases up to 5.2%, and the NDP up to 6%. This government has protected tenants from these rent increases.

VISITORS

Mr Dave Levac (Brant): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I wish to bring to the attention of the House today a most welcomed visit from very special people in

my life. With me is my forever wife, Rosemarie, my dear mother-in-law, Madge Campbell, and my special and talented children Joe, Rachel and Nicole.

MINISTER'S COMMENTS

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke):

On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I rise and will be brief on a point of order under standing order 21, which concerns privilege. I have had the benefit of a brief conversation with the Clerk of the House.

I've been here a long time and I understand the pressures of this place and I've certainly evinced bad behaviour on more than the odd occasion, but I want to say that the standing orders of this place, section 21 of our orders, say that "Privileges are the rights enjoyed by the House collectively and by the members of the House individually conferred ..." etc. I was astonished at the exchange about 10 minutes ago between the member from Cochrane, Mr Bisson, and the Minister of Northern Development. I do regret that Mr Wilson's not here.

The exchange I heard that causes me great difficulty is when I heard Mr Bisson say, "You are threatening, Minister, to root out public servants who may have a political affiliation of one kind or another." The minister then—an experienced member of this Legislature, somebody who has been in cabinet for seven years—stood up in his place and clearly said, "It's not a threat; I promise to do so."

I just want to say on my own behalf, and I hope on behalf of everybody here, no matter how upset we get as cabinet ministers and as private members in government or opposition, it has to be a breach of the spirit, if not the reality, of our legislative privilege for any one of us, particularly a cabinet minister, to stand up and say, "You folks out there who are paid to work in the civil service of Ontario, be warned: I'm going to dedicate myself to having you fired." That I just think is a comment that we simply cannot let stand and I would invite my friend Mr Wilson to return here at an early point and clarify what he said, because I think what he said affects us all and should be very troubling to all members of the Legislature.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I thank the member. As you know, during the exchanges, I was listening to the question. When he said that—I did hear him say something about that—I thought he was talking about giving the cheque; he was going to make sure the cheque got delivered. That's the way I understood it. I guess that was not the case.

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): On the same point of order, Mr Speaker: We are elected by members of the public to come and raise issues in the public interest.

This is not an unsubstantial matter. This concerns a community hospital and a \$700,000 deficit. The minister makes an announcement and is asked a question that I think was completely in order in this House. The response, "I promise you that these civil servants will be

fired"—first of all, I think it is intimidation. It is threatening. Second, what does it say not just about the democracy of this place and what we need to do to protect democracy in this place but the wider democracy that all Ontario citizens are supposed to enjoy?

You are entrusted with this—

The Speaker: I thank the member for that. As you know, the minister on occasion does get very vocal in here. What happens, in fact, is that a lot of the members encourage him and it becomes a bit of a joke. Unfortunately, it went over the line today.

I'm sure the honourable minister, if he did say something down there that was inappropriate, will come back to the House, and do so as an honourable member.

As you know, the difficulty is that you're both way down on that side of the House, very close to each other. It's very difficult not only for the Speaker to hear but also for the table, because I've asked the table to listen to what is happening as well. It makes it very difficult when exchanges are going on.

As you know, I had to warn the minister and threaten to throw him out. This is a minister who has, I know, been thrown out of this House on occasion while he's been a minister. There have been two ministers thrown out, and this has been one minister. It makes it very difficult to keep order in the House sometimes when the answers come back like they do today.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker—

The Speaker: The government House leader is first. I think he had a point of order.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): On the same point of order, Mr Speaker: I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this point of order.

First and foremost, I don't know what the point of order is. If the point of order is unparliamentary language, then I would suggest at this time that it would be simply inappropriate to pursue that point of order without the member against whom the allegations are being made being here.

Second, on what stance is this point of order? With great respect to my colleagues across the floor, this sounds like a point of political debate.

I appreciate the fact that there may have been certain things said. We will certainly go back to Hansard and check. I'm certain if the member said anything unparliamentary, he would withdraw it. But at this point in time, it appears to me that with the absence of the minister and with political speeches in place of points of order, we're now degenerating to a point of political debate about what somebody said who isn't even here.

The Speaker: The point of order relates to the decorum of the House, as the member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke talked about. It does make it very difficult to maintain the House when you have an answer that was given this afternoon by the minister. In fairness to the member not being here, hopefully the members will discuss it. And I will say this: I will also speak to the

minister myself personally and see what did arise coming out of it. I would ask all members—we do have a little bit of fun here with the members going back and forth, but we do not need to have something degenerate like it has today.

I'll give the member for Timmins-James Bay a short point of order.

Mr Bisson: On the point of privilege, Mr Speaker: I just want to make this very clear. I'm not going to go through everything he said. My difficulty is that the minister got up on two occasions and threatened to fire bureaucrats on the basis of speaking to a member of the opposition.

My point of privilege is that all members of the assembly have the right to work within the government in order to advocate on behalf of their communities. I'm the one who made the calls to those ministries—

The Speaker: Take your seat. I thank the member.

I will also review Hansard and speak to the minister involved. I thank all members.

ACCESS TO ORDERS IN COUNCIL

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): On a further point of order, Mr Speaker: I just want to clarify for the House today the protocol in place to collect OICs with due dispatch when they're issued by cabinet office.

It's a common practice that has been held for many years that if you cross the street, go to the Whitney Block and push "4," you'll get to the fourth floor and the previous three months' OICs will be posted on the fourth floor for anyone to see or read.

Second, if you simply make an application previous to those three months, it will take a couple of days to access them, but you will be given that information in two days with respect to OICs passed at cabinet.

I want to be very clear about this. The Liberal caucus employee came down and asked these questions to the staff at cabinet office. These answers were given exactly to the point. They came in here and made allegations that these have changed. They have not changed. Anyone can get them. Cross the street, push the fourth floor, and you can read them just like they do any newspaper in a communist country—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I thank the government House leader for the clarification.

1500

ADDRESS TO HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN

ALLOCUTION À SA MAJESTÉ LA REINE

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): Mr Speaker, I would like to move a motion to ask for consent for an humble address to be presented to Her Majesty The Queen.

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

Hon Mrs Witmer: I would move that an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty The Queen in the following words:

"To the Queen's most Excellent Majesty:

"Most Gracious Sovereign:

"We, Your Majesty's loyal and dutiful subjects, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, now in session, beg to extend to Your Majesty, on the completion of the 50th year of Your reign, our most sincere congratulations, and reaffirm to Your Majesty the continuing warm respect and affection in which You are held by Your subjects in Ontario.

« À l'occasion des visites de Votre Majesté et des autres membres de la famille royale, nous avons eu l'insigne privilège de Vous souhaiter la bienvenue dans Votre province de l'Ontario et n'avons jamais manqué de bénéficier de Vos gracieux conseils et du charme de Votre présence.

"May Divine Providence sustain Your Majesty in health and happiness during a long and glorious reign to the benefit of Your People," and

That the said address be engrossed and presented by Mr Speaker on behalf of the Assembly to the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor for transmission to Her Majesty.

The Speaker: Mrs Witmer moves that an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty The Queen in the following words:

"We, Your Majesty's loyal and dutiful subjects, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, now in session"—

Interjection: Dispense.

The Speaker: Dispense.

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

Petitions? The member for Sudbury was up first.

VISITORS

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): Before I begin the petition, I want to just address Mrs Carr, your mother, and your mother-in-law: be very proud of your son and your son-in-law for the great patience that he shows in this House. He does an excellent job and is an excellent Speaker, and you should be very, very proud of him.

PETITIONS

HIGHWAY 69

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it says:

"Whereas modern highways are economic lifelines for the north; and

"Whereas the stretch of Highway 69 from Sudbury south to Parry Sound is a treacherous road with a trail of death and destruction; and

"Whereas the carnage on Highway 69 has been staggering; and

"Whereas the Harris-Eves government has shown gross irresponsibility in not four-laning the stretch of Highway 69 between Sudbury and Parry Sound; and

"Whereas immediate action is needed to prevent more needless loss of life; and

"Whereas it is the responsibility of a government to provide safe roads for its citizens, and the Harris-Eves government has failed to do so;

"Whereas 46 people have died on this stretch of highway between Sudbury and Parry Sound in the last three years; and

Whereas 10 people have died on this stretch of highway between Sudbury and Parry Sound so far this year;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to urge the Harris-Eves government to begin construction immediately and four-lane Highway 69 between Sudbury and Parry Sound so that the carnage on Death Road North will cease."

I of course affix my signature to this petition.

AMBULANCE SERVICES

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I only regret, Mr Speaker, that your mother, Mrs Carr, had to depart before I read the petition, but I know she'll read the Hansard or watch the replay tonight.

This is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario Conservative government hastily amalgamated Niagara's ambulance dispatch services into the Hamilton Central Ambulance Communication Centre;

"Whereas an independent review of Hamilton Central Ambulance Communication Centre found several major shortcomings, including inexperienced dispatchers, high call volume and out-of-date equipment, hindering the dispatch of ambulances in Niagara and in other parts of the province;

"Whereas poor training of central ambulance communication centre dispatchers by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care has led to improper emergency coding, resource misallocation and waste and increased wait times for those requiring ambulance services;

"Whereas the Central Ambulance Communication Centre dispatchers are handling 1,300 more calls a year than recommended by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care;

"Whereas these shortcomings in ambulance service restructuring are putting lives at risk in Niagara, Hamilton and throughout the province; and

"Whereas the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care has been in possession of the independent review since October 31, 2001, which provides recommendations to greatly improve ambulance dispatch services in Niagara and Hamilton;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately act upon recommendations presented in the independent review of the Central Ambulance Communication Centre and eliminate the grievous imperfections which are placing our citizens at risk."

I affix my signature; I'm in complete agreement.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Ontario government led by the Harris-Eves Tories has severely damaged public education and created turmoil in our schools since they took office in 1995; and

"Whereas the current Toronto-based education funding formula is broken when it comes to rural schools; and

"Whereas our community schools in both Springfield and West Lorne are being threatened with closure; and

"Whereas rural schools are the heart and soul of their communities;

"Therefore be it resolved that we, the undersigned, demand that Education Minister Elizabeth Witmer immediately address the funding formula in relation to rural schools and place a moratorium on rural school closures."

I'm in full agreement and have affixed my signature hereto.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): I have a petition as well. They've been coming in by the thousands from all over the province. It's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Eves government has increased the fees paid for by seniors and the most vulnerable living in long-term-care facilities 15% or \$7.02 per diem effective August 1, 2002; and

"Whereas this fee increase will cost seniors and our most vulnerable more than \$200 a month; and

"Whereas this increase is 11.1% above the rent increase guidelines for tenants in the province of Ontario; and

"Whereas the increase in the government's own contribution to raise the level of long-term-care services this year is less than \$2 per resident per day; and

"Whereas according to the government's own funded study, Ontario ranks last amongst comparable jurisdictions in the amount of time provided to a resident for nursing and personal care; and

"Whereas the long-term-care funding partnership has been based on government accepting the responsibility to fund the care and services that residents need; and

"Whereas government needs to increase long-term-care operating funding by \$750 million over the next three years to raise the level of service for Ontario's

long-term-care residents to those in Saskatchewan in 1999; and

“Whereas this province has been built by seniors who should be able to live out their lives with dignity, respect and in comfort in this province;

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

“Demand that Premier Eves reduce his 15% fee increase on seniors and the most vulnerable living in long-term-care facilities and increase provincial government support for nursing and personal care to adequate levels.”

I agree with the petition and I've signed it accordingly.

NATURAL GAS RATES

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario signed by over 1,000 of my constituents.

“Whereas the Ontario Energy Board has consented to allow Union Gas to retroactively charge \$40 per month for a three-month period to recover additional system operation costs that occurred during the winter of 2000-01 totalling approximately \$150 million; and

“Whereas Union Gas will recover accrued costs over the peak heating season, causing undue hardship; and

“Whereas this retroactive charge will affect all customers who receive Union Gas, including new homeowners and new customers to Union Gas;

“Therefore be it resolved that we, the undersigned, demand that the Ernie Eves government issue a policy directive under section 27.1 of the Ontario Energy Board Act disallowing the retroactive rate hike granted to Union Gas, and we further demand that the Legislature examine the Ontario Energy Board, its processes and its resources, and make changes that will protect consumers from further retroactive increases.”

I'm in full agreement and will affix my signature hereto.

HIGHWAY 69

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly, the names of which were garnered by Alex McCauley of Nickel Belt, and it reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas modern highways are economic lifelines for the north; and

“Whereas the stretch of Highway 69 from Sudbury south to Parry Sound is a treacherous road with a trail of death and destruction; and

“Whereas the carnage on Highway 69 has been staggering; and

“Whereas the Harris-Eves government has shown gross irresponsibility in not four-laning the stretch of Highway 69 between Sudbury and Parry Sound; and

“Whereas immediate action is needed to prevent more needless loss of life; and

“Whereas it is the responsibility of a government to provide safe roads for its citizens, and the Eves government has failed to do so;

“Be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to urge the Eves government to begin construction immediately and four-lane Highway 69 between Sudbury and Parry Sound so that the carnage on Death Road North will cease.”

I affix my signature. I agree with Alex McCauley of Nickel Belt and the others who have signed this petition.

1510

LONG-TERM CARE

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

“Whereas the Eves government has increased the fees paid by seniors and the most vulnerable living in long-term-care facilities 15% or \$7.02 per diem effective August 1, 2002; and

“Whereas this fee increase will cost seniors and our most vulnerable more than \$200 a month; and

“Whereas this increase is 11.1% above the rent increase guidelines for tenants in the province of Ontario; and

“Whereas the increase in the government's own contribution to raise the level of long-term-care services this year is less than \$2 per resident per day; and

“Whereas, according to the government's own funded study, Ontario ranks last among comparable jurisdictions in the amount of time provided to a resident for nursing and personal care; and

“Whereas the long-term-care funding partnership has been based on government accepting the responsibility to fund the care and services that residents need; and

“Whereas government needs to increase long-term-care operating funding by \$750 million over the next three years to raise the level of service for Ontario's long-term-care residents to those in Saskatchewan in 1999; and

“Whereas this province has been built by seniors who should be able to live out their lives with dignity, respect and in comfort in this province;

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

“We demand that Premier Eves reduce his 15% fee increase on seniors and the most vulnerable living in long-term-care facilities and increase provincial government support for nursing and personal care to adequate levels.”

Of course, I affix my signature to this petition.

HYDRO RATES

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ernie Eves government promised the people of Ontario that the opening of the electricity market would deliver lower hydro rates and improve service; and

“Whereas hydro rates have risen 21% over the past five months since the opening of that market; and

“Whereas consumers have been advised to expect power shortages in spite of higher costs; and

“Whereas consumers have not been adequately informed about the unbundling of charges and therefore do not understand and cannot reconcile the charges shown on their hydro invoices;

“Therefore be it resolved that we, the undersigned, demand that the Ernie Eves government convene a legislative committee to oversee electricity issues in order to inform and protect the public interest.”

I’m in full agreement and have affixed my signature hereto.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the Eves government has increased the fees paid by seniors and the most vulnerable living in long-term-care facilities by 15% or \$7.02 per diem effective August 1, 2002; and

“Whereas this fee increase will cost seniors and our most vulnerable more than \$200 a month; and

“Whereas this increase is 11.1% above the rent increase guidelines for tenants in the province of Ontario; and

“Whereas the increase in the government’s own contribution to raise the level of long-term-care services is less than \$2 per resident per day;

“Whereas, according to the government’s own funded study, Ontario ranks amongst comparable jurisdictions in the amount of time provided to a resident for nursing and personal care in the position of last;

“Whereas the long-term-care funding partnership has been based on government accepting the responsibility to fund the care and services that residents need; and

“Whereas government needs to increase long-term-care operating funding by \$750 million over the next three years to raise the level of service for Ontario’s long-term-care residents to the same as those in Saskatchewan back in 1999; and

“Whereas this province has been built by seniors who should be able to live out their lives with dignity, respect and in comfort in this province;

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

“We demand that Premier Eves reduce his 15% fee increase on seniors and the most vulnerable living in long-term-care facilities and increase provincial government support for nursing and personal care to adequate levels.”

I affix my signature as I’m in complete agreement with this petition.

HIGHWAY 69

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): This is some more of the 20,000 names on a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario which states:

“Whereas modern highways are economic lifelines for the north; and

“Whereas the stretch of Highway 69 from Sudbury south to Parry Sound is a treacherous road with a trail of death and destruction; and

“Whereas the carnage on Highway 69 has been staggering; and

“Whereas the Harris-Eves government has shown gross irresponsibility in not four-laning the stretch of Highway 69 between Sudbury and Parry Sound; and

“Whereas immediate action is needed to prevent more needless loss of life; and

“Whereas it is the responsibility of a government to provide safe roads for its citizens, and the Eves government has failed to do so;

“Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to urge the Harris-Eves government to begin construction immediately and four-lane Highway 69 between Sudbury and Parry Sound so that the carnage on Death Road North will cease.”

Of course, I affix my signature to this petition.

AUDIOLOGY SERVICES

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

“Listen, Ernie Eves: Our Hearing is Important!

“Whereas services delisted by the Ontario provincial 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 new provincial government policy will virtually eliminate access to publicly funded audiology assessments across vast regions of Ontario; and

“Whereas the new provincial government policy is virtually impossible to implement in underserved 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 Ontario Legislature to demand the Ernie Eves government move immediately to permanently fund audiologists directly for the provision of audiology services.”

I’m in full agreement and have affixed my signature hereto.

HIGHWAY 69

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): I have some more names from the 20,000-name petition regarding Highway 69, which we refer to as Death Road North:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas modern highways are economic lifelines for the north; and

“Whereas the stretch of Highway 69 from Sudbury south to Parry Sound is a treacherous road with a trail of death and destruction; and

“Whereas the carnage on Highway 69 has been staggering; and

“Whereas the Harris-Eves government has shown gross irresponsibility in not four-laning the stretch of Highway 69 between Sudbury and Parry Sound; and

“Whereas immediate action is needed to prevent more needless loss of life; and

“Whereas it is the responsibility of a government to provide safe roads for its citizens, and the Eves government has failed to do so;

“Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to urge the Harris-Eves government to begin construction immediately and four-lane Highway 69 between Sudbury and Parry Sound so that the carnage on Death Road North will cease.”

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Pursuant to the order of the House dated Monday, September 30, 2002, this House is adjourned until 10 of the clock tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1517.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon / L'hon James K. Bartleman

Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Gary Carr

Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers

Deputy Clerk / sous-greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks at the Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Algoma-Manitoulin	Brown, Michael A. (L)	Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant	Barrett, Toby (PC)
Ancaster-Dundas- Flamborough-Aldershot	McMeekin, Ted (L)	Haliburton-Victoria-Brock	Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC) Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford	Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)		
Beaches-East York	Prue, Michael (ND)	Halton	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)
Bramalea-Gore-Malton- Springdale	Gill, Raminder (PC)	Hamilton East / -Est	Agostino, Dominic (L)
Brampton Centre / -Centre	Spina, Joseph (PC)	Hamilton Mountain	Bountrogianni, Marie (L)
Brampton West-Mississauga / Brampton-Ouest-Mississauga	Clement, Hon / L'hon Tony (PC) Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée	Hamilton West / -Ouest	Christopherson, David (ND)
Brant	Levac, Dave (L)	Hastings-Frontenac- Lennox and Addington	Dombrowsky, Leona (L)
Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Huron-Bruce	Johns, Hon / L'hon Helen (PC) Minister of Agriculture and Food / ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation
Burlington	Jackson, Cameron (PC)		
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Kenora-Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Chatham-Kent Essex	Hoy, Pat (L)		Gerretsen, John (L)
Davenport	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	
Don Valley East / -Est	Caplan, David (L)	Kitchener Centre / -Centre	Wetlaufer, Wayne (PC)
Don Valley West / -Ouest	Turnbull, Hon / L'hon David (PC) Associate Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation / ministre associé de l'Entreprise, des Débouchés et de l'Innovation	Kitchener-Waterloo	Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth (PC) Deputy Premier, Minister of Education / vice-première ministre, ministre de l'Éducation
Dufferin-Peel- Wellington-Grey	Eves, Hon / L'hon Ernie (PC) Premier and President of the Executive Council, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif, ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	Beaubien, Marcel (PC)
Durham	O'Toole, John R. (PC)	Lanark-Carleton	Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W. (PC) Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Eglinton-Lawrence	Colle, Mike (L)		
Elgin-Middlesex-London	Peters, Steve (L)	Leeds-Grenville	Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W. (PC) Minister of Public Safety and Security / ministre de la Sécurité et de la Sécurité publique
Erie-Lincoln	Hudak, Hon / L'hon Tim (PC) Minister of Consumer and Business Services / ministre des Services aux consommateurs et aux entreprises	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne (PC) Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Essex	Crozier, Bruce (L)		
Etobicoke Centre / -Centre	Stockwell, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC) Minister of the Environment, government House leader / ministre de l'Environnement, leader parlementaire du gouvernement	London West / -Ouest	Wood, Bob (PC)
Etobicoke North / -Nord	Hastings, John (PC)	London-Fanshawe	Mazzilli, Frank (PC)
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Kells, Morley (PC)	Markham	Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H. (PC) Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Culture / président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement, ministre de la Culture
Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)		
Guelph-Wellington	Elliott, Hon / L'hon Brenda (PC) Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services / ministre des Services à la collectivité, à la famille et à l'enfance	Mississauga Centre / -Centre	Sampson, Rob (PC)

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Mississauga East / -Est	DeFaria, Hon / L'hon Carl (PC) Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors / ministre des Affaires civiques, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées	Scarborough Centre / -Centre	Mushinski, Marilyn (PC)
Mississauga South / -Sud	Marland, Margaret (PC)	Scarborough East / -Est	Gilchrist, Steve (PC)
Mississauga West / -Ouest	Snobelen, John (PC)	Scarborough Southwest / -Sud-Ouest	Newman, Hon / L'hon Dan (PC) Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre associé de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Nepean-Carleton	Baird, Hon / L'hon John R. (PC) Minister of Energy, Minister responsible for francophone affairs, deputy House leader / ministre de l'Énergie, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones, leader parlementaire adjoint	Scarborough-Agincourt	Phillips, Gerry (L)
Niagara Centre / -Centre	Kormos, Peter (ND)	Scarborough-Rouge River	Curling, Alvin (L)
Niagara Falls	Maves, Bart (PC)	Simcoe North / -Nord	Dunlop, Garfield (PC)
Nickel Belt	Martel, Shelley (ND)	Simcoe-Grey	Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC) Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Nipissing	McDonald, AL (PC)	St Catharines	Bradley, James J. (L)
Northumberland	Galt, Hon / L'hon Doug (PC) Minister without Portfolio, chief government whip / Ministre sans portefeuille, whip en chef du gouvernement	St Paul's	Bryant, Michael (L)
Oak Ridges	Klees, Hon / L'hon Frank (PC) Minister of Tourism and Recreation / ministre du Tourisme et des Loisirs	Stoney Creek	Clark, Hon / L'hon Brad (PC) Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
Oakville	Carr, Hon / L'hon Gary (PC) Speaker / Président	Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh	Cleary, John C. (L)
Oshawa	Ouellette, Hon / L'hon Jerry J. (PC) Minister of Natural Resources / ministre des Richesses naturelles	Sudbury	Bartolucci, Rick (L)
Ottawa Centre / -Centre	Patten, Richard (L)	Thornhill	Molinari, Hon / L'hon Tina R. (PC) Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre associée des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Ottawa-Orléans	Coburn, Hon / L'hon Brian (PC) Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre associé des Affaires municipales et du Logement	Thunder Bay-Atikokan	McLeod, Lyn (L)
Ottawa South / -Sud	McGuinty, Dalton (L) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition	Thunder Bay-Superior North / -Nord	Gravelle, Michael (L)
Ottawa West-Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest-Nepean	Guzzo, Garry J. (PC)	Timiskaming-Cochrane	Ramsay, David (L)
Ottawa-Vanier	Boyer, Claudette (Ind)	Timmins-James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	Bisson, Gilles (ND)
Oxford	Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Toronto Centre-Rosedale / Toronto-Centre-Rosedale	Smitherman, George (L)
Parkdale-High Park	Kennedy, Gerard (L)	Toronto-Danforth	Churley, Marilyn (ND)
Parry Sound-Muskoka	Miller, Norm (PC)	Trinity-Spadina	Marchese, Rosario (ND)
Perth-Middlesex	Johnson, Bert (PC)	Vaughan-King-Aurora	Sorbara, Greg (L)
Peterborough	Stewart, R. Gary (PC)	Waterloo-Wellington	Arnott, Ted (PC)
Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge	Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet (PC) Minister of Finance / ministre des Finances	Whitby-Ajax	Flaherty, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC) Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation / ministre de l'Entreprise, des Débouchés et de l'Innovation
Prince Edward-Hastings	Parsons, Ernie (L)	Willowdale	Young, Hon / L'hon David (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke	Conway, Sean G. (L)	Windsor West / -Ouest	Pupatello, Sandra (L)
Sarnia-Lambton	Di Cocco, Caroline (L)	Windsor-St Clair	Duncan, Dwight (L)
Sault Ste Marie	Martin, Tony (ND)	York Centre / -Centre	Kwinter, Monte (L)
		York North / -Nord	Munro, Julia (PC)
		York South-Weston / York-Sud-Weston	Cordiano, Joseph (L)
		York West / -Ouest	Sergio, Mario (L)

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

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

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