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**Official Report  
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(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
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**Thursday 31 October 2002**

**Jedi 31 octobre 2002**

Speaker  
Honourable Gary Carr

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Président  
L'honorable Gary Carr

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 31 October 2002

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 31 octobre 2002

*The House met at 1845.*

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SAFE DRINKING WATER ACT, 2002  
LOI DE 2002 SUR LA SALUBRITÉ  
DE L'EAU POTABLE

Mr Stockwell moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 195, An Act respecting safe drinking water /  
Projet de loi 195, Loi ayant trait à la salubrité de l'eau  
potable.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** On a point of  
order, Mr Speaker: I don't believe we have a quorum.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Would the Clerk  
please check for a quorum.

**Deputy Clerk (Ms Deborah Deller):** A quorum is not  
present, Speaker.

*The Speaker ordered the bells rung.*

**Deputy Clerk:** A quorum is now present, Speaker.

**The Speaker:** The Minister of the Environment.

**Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of the Environment,  
Government House Leader):** I will be splitting my time  
with the members for Haldimand-Norfolk, Brampton-  
Gore-Malton-Springdale, and I believe Niagara Falls as  
well.

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** Durham.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** Not Durham. Specifically not  
Durham. If he tries to get up, we're not splitting our time.  
I know Mr Bradley will be splitting his time with him-  
self.

It's kind of a pleasure—it's more than kind of a pleas-  
ure; it is a pleasure to speak today on a bill that I take  
great pride in, the Safe Drinking Water Act. It's been a  
long time in the making and, in my opinion, it does many  
things to implement Justice O'Connor's report and  
resolve many outstanding issues that needed to be  
resolved that led to the terrible tragedy in Walkerton.

Being the Minister of the Environment who brings this  
bill into the House is truly an honour. I suppose in a lot  
of ways it's an honour with some very sad background to  
it.

I expect to hear tonight from the member from St  
Catharines for the Liberal Party and the member for  
Toronto-Danforth for the NDP. I'm going to listen very  
intently and carefully to the opposition members, because

I take very seriously their input into this bill. I believe it's  
a non-partisan bill. It's a bill that I think will build a  
better system to make our water safer, and I can't  
honestly believe that anyone would think that isn't a goal  
of every member in this House.

We're here tonight to begin the first round of second  
reading debate on our proposed Safe Drinking Water Act.  
In my opinion, this is a solid legislation and one that was  
derived from exhaustive public consultation, started by  
Justice O'Connor and continued by the Ernie Eves gov-  
ernment.

In May 2002, Justice O'Connor concluded his work  
with the Walkerton Inquiry with his part two report that  
made 93 recommendations on how this province could  
ensure the safe delivery of drinking water. I might add  
that 93 recommendations were adopted by this govern-  
ment.

Recommendation 67 states that, "The provincial gov-  
ernment should enact a Safe Drinking Water Act to deal  
with matters related to the treatment and distribution of  
drinking water." This government is delivering on this  
recommendation and on 49 more through this proposed  
act, which obviously means that we're delivering on 50  
of the 93 recommendations.

It is an act to provide for the protection of human  
health through the regulation and control of drinking  
water systems and drinking water testing. We are  
strongly committed, as you have heard time and again, to  
ensuring that the people of Ontario have safe drinking  
water and that all of Justice O'Connor's recommenda-  
tions are implemented.

**1850**

I might add that I will be interested in the voting of the  
opposition parties on this bill. It will be curious in my  
mind to see how they vote. I know they've said off the  
top in the introduction to this bill that there were some  
deficiencies with respect to source protection. It seems to  
me that that could be a criticism. I take the position that  
Justice O'Connor told us to separate these bills and in  
fact put them in place in an orderly fashion. The argu-  
ment that we should have brought source protection in  
sooner would only have meant that we would have had to  
delay nutrient management, Bill 175 and the Safe  
Drinking Water Act.

The rationale, I suppose, is that you want source  
protection. We all want source protection, but I caution  
the members opposite with respect to source protection.  
This is a monumental task. It's a very large task and a  
very difficult task to manage source protection right  
across the entire province of Ontario. It will take time.

I've committed as best I can to see that a source protection bill comes into place by next spring. I hope members take me at my word, because that is as early as we could get it in, considering the situation we're faced with.

I understand the challenge that the members opposite are saying, "How long does it take?" I've got to tell you, it takes more than two years and it's not that simple a job. When you talk about source protection, you're talking about protection for the entire province—wellheads, streams etc, agriculture—all over the province and that cannot be done in a few short months. I would hasten to add that if it could have been done in a few short months, I would have expected that the governments previous to us would have done that. To be fair, you've got to understand that that couldn't be done in a few short months.

We are strongly committed, as you've heard time and again, to ensuring the people of Ontario have safe drinking water and that all of Justice O'Connor's recommendations are implemented. This is sweeping legislation that addresses several different aspects of the safe delivery of drinking water, and I'd like to take a moment to elaborate on a few.

There are seven parts to this bill, and I'll list them for those watching: (1) licensing and accreditation of laboratories; (2) standards, including an advisory council on standards; (3) certification and training of operators; (4) owner's licence for municipal water systems; (5) statutory standard of care for municipalities; (6) compliance and enforcement; and (7) the Minister of the Environment is the lead on safe drinking water. Ultimately the Ministry of the Environment is the lead. It says "minister"; it really isn't the minister. It's the Ministry of the Environment that's the lead on all water-related issues.

Let's talk about mandatory licensing and accreditation of labs that perform drinking water testing. We know full well that part of the problem in the Walkerton situation was that the lab had done the tests but hadn't broadly shared that information. The question became, how could that have happened? Obviously it was a situation that shouldn't have happened and needed to be corrected.

Now we're saying labs must have a licence to test drinking water. That's the first time. The lab must be accredited by the accreditation body. Licences will have an expiry date determined by regulation and these licences can be amended, suspended or revoked by the director. I'm working from memory, but I think licences will be for no more than five years. In the briefing with the two opposition members I attended, I think that was the year. If I'm wrong, I stand to be corrected, but I think it was no more than five years.

The Ministry of the Environment will have authority to inspect all labs performing drinking water tests. I'm not really sure who could be opposed to that. I look across the floor at my friends opposite, reasonable people all—most—and it would seem to me that no one would have any problem with that process of accreditation and licensing of laboratories and drinking water.

The second part is the requirement for all drinking water systems operators to be certified. There's no doubt—and I'm not trying to be partisan here, but it's going to sound partisan—that one of the fatal flaws that led to Walkerton, I think everyone would agree, reasonable people most, that probably the operators of the system in Walkerton shouldn't have been operating the system in Walkerton. Nobody through all administrations—the same brothers were operating the Walkerton system.

I look around and I know there are at least two ex-ministers of the environment here, Mr Bradley and myself. I know Ms Churley is very conscious of the environment. I don't think she held the portfolio for the NDP.

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** I was parliamentary assistant for a while.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** She was the parliamentary assistant for the Ministry of the Environment, so she would know full well.

The problem was without doubt the Koebel brothers, who operated the Walkerton plant. I'm not trying to cast aspersions on either of these administrations but, clearly, when you grandfathered those people who operated those water plants from testing or from upgrading their skills, it was a very real slope to the problem. It was one of those things that created this issue and the deaths in Walkerton. Why? Because we withdrew the responsibility for those people who operate this system to be accredited, to be tested, to be brought up to speed on new technologies etc and, ultimately, by grandfathering them we took away all this ability we had to make sure that the people minding our water systems were doing a good job.

I know it sounds political, and it's not meant to be, but this was a problem, and that problem had nothing to do with this administration. These people were grandfathered in 1993. The last grandfathering took place right around the time Ms Churley was parliamentary assistant.

**Ms Churley:** Oh no, I was minister by then. I was Minister of Consumer Affairs.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** OK, then it was the NDP government; I think she'd agree with that. It was the NDP government.

You know, in fairness to those administrations—and I want to be fair to the administrations of the NDP and the Liberals, when Mr Bradley was the environment minister—I honestly don't believe it ever crossed your minds that somebody would take water-testing samples and actually fraudulently submit incorrect samples of tests. Would it ever have crossed your minds that somebody would have done that when you were Minister of the Environment? Probably not. Would it ever have crossed your mind, I say to the member for St Catharines, that somebody would get a chlorinator for a pump or for a well and tell the people that they'd connected the chlorinator when they had actually never connected the chlorinator? I know it doesn't appear I'm getting a lot of attention from them, but I would say that it probably never would have crossed your minds. So it was a series of situations and issues that led to the Walkerton disaster.

I will also add that I know there's this push to the private sector, and I know my friend the member for St Catharines is vehemently opposed to seeing any public water utilities turned in any way, shape or form over to the private sector. But I caution my friend the member for St Catharines that we must remember—and I think this has somehow slipped through the cracks during this debate—Walkerton happened at a public utility employing public employees. This wasn't a private water operator. This was a public utility employing public employees. I don't know if they were unionized or not. I guess it really shouldn't matter, and it doesn't. But we should always be careful about what we're condemning the private sector for. I think we have to take a look at ourselves and the responsibility we have with respect to this horrendous situation in Walkerton and ask ourselves how we, as the government of Ontario, through all three administrations allowed this situation in Walkerton to continue, with a public utility, with public employees.

We also have a section with a requirement for all drinking water system operators to be certified, and this I think is very important. This is what I think would have caught the situation in Walkerton at best: no person shall operate a municipal drinking water system or a regulated non-municipal system without a valid operator's certificate.

We are reviewing the current training and certification requirements of drinking water operators under the Ontario Water Resources Act. Once they have been revised to support O'Connor's recommendation, they will be transferred to the Safe Drinking Water Act.

Here is a very important point. I want everyone to understand this and know this: grandparented operators must be certified within two years of a regulation being made. So I want to say to the members opposite that all those people you grandfathered—I don't know; is it "grandparented"? I don't want to be sexist or PC or whatever. All those people you grandfathered will now have to be certified in two years. That's going to be tough, I'm telling you right now. I look to my friends in rural Ontario—Haldimand-Norfolk is a good example, even the member who represents Gravenhurst and Huntsville and all those good ridings that way. There are a lot of operators up there who probably are not capable of writing a test and passing. It's not that they don't know their stuff; it's just been so long since they've performed written tests. So we're going to try and create a friendly test that can be done orally, visually, without being written, to ensure that as long as you have the capacity to understand what you're doing, we can certify you to operate the water filtration plants and so on around this province.

So it's going to be friendly, but it's going to be tough. If you're going to provide water to the people in your community, the people of your community should have a comfort level that you know what you're doing, and you're providing clean water. It's not just for them; it's for their children, their parents, grandparents and everyone. It seems amazing to me, and this is why, curiously, I

don't honestly think either party is going to vote against this bill, because it makes so much sense: why would the person who is providing water, that we know can kill you if put in the wrong hands, not be properly trained and certified?

#### 1900

There will be a requirement for municipal water systems owners to meet all necessary conditions and obtain an owner's licence. All municipal owners of a water system must have a valid licence. That makes good sense. The licence involves a drinking water works permit, formerly a C of A; a permit to take water; an operational plan; a financial plan under another good bill that I think we brought in, Bill 175; and accredited operating authority. Directors may impose conditions, as well as revoke or suspend a licence. The Ministry of the Environment will issue licences and approve operational plans and permits to take water.

I will say this about it. I'm looking forward to some conversation with the municipalities on this one, because if I'm looking for amendments, it's here. Let me tell you why. I had a tough time putting this into the draft, because I thought to myself that municipalities are fairly sophisticated birds. It seems to me that if they can come up with a financial plan that really takes shape and shows a reasonable approach to providing water at cost, I don't know why we at the Ministry of the Environment would have to approve them all.

I look to the members opposite—the member for St Catharines is the critic, and the member for Toronto-Danforth—to see if they will have any advice in committee on amendments to that particular part of the bill. I'm not sure we need to be that prescriptive in the act. I put it in there, I thought it would be better that I put it in there, but if there's an idea you have that could be less prescriptive and allow the municipalities—I know municipalities. I sat on a municipal government and the two critics in either party sat on municipal governments as well. It seems to me that 99.999% of municipal governments are financially sound governments. We couldn't run debts. We couldn't run deficits. We never did. So I'm looking for some input from you with respect to that.

This will also strengthen compliance and enforcement provisions. Provincial officers can issue an order to any person for contravening the act. A director can issue orders to decommission or replace part of the system, appoint an interim operating authority or provide an alternative water supply. The minister can suspend a lab licence for up to 90 days or issue a directive to license labs on how tests should be carried out if public health is in danger.

Penalties for the most serious offences that result in drinking water health hazards are, and sit down for this: up to a \$4-million fine for individuals on first conviction and \$7 million for subsequent convictions—it seems steep, but it should be—a fine of up to \$6 million for corporations on first conviction and up to \$10 million for subsequent convictions.

New inspection powers include follow-up inspections for systems with deficiencies within one year and the

power for provincial officers to inspect places where drinking water tests are conducted. We will also create the new position of chief inspector.

Let me just revisit that. The numbers seem astronomical, I agree. The reason they are astronomical is that you're dealing with large corporations in some instances—for instance, the city of Toronto. You have to make the fine so significant and so real that it would have an impact on the city of Toronto, and a \$6-million to \$10-million fine, in my opinion, will catch their attention. I will also add this: you're talking about the cost of water, and it's kind of interesting. These are just musings off the top of my head, I suppose, but it seems to me the average water bill—and I look to the members from Toronto: Mr Kwinter, Mr Phillips and Ms Churley. I don't know what your water bill is, but it seems like it's about \$35 to \$40 a month, roughly. I think that's about what mine is. It seems funny to me that we pay \$35 to \$40 a month for water, and there's some kicking and fussing about whether it should or will cost more, but we think nothing of spending 100 bucks for satellite television that gets you 796 stations.

**Mr Kormos:** Who does that?

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** Lots of people do that, I say to Mr Kormos; lots and lots and lots of people do that. It seems to me that if we're going to provide clean, safe drinking water and it's going to cost, instead of \$38 to \$40, maybe \$45 or \$47, it would be far better for our constituents to know that for that extra \$4 or \$5 a month, their water is truly clean and safe. I think we have to examine whether or not the cost of providing that water is properly being covered and, if it isn't, maybe it should be. I think also—and this stands to reason in my opinion—if people start thinking about water in a conservation way, they may use less, and I don't think that's such a bad idea either.

I know about the water-taking stuff. They'll be allowed to take water. I know I had a bit of a brouhaha in estimates with the member for Toronto-Danforth about water-taking. We had a curious crossfire there. The next day, I do admit, she came back and changed her position.

**Ms Churley:** No, you misinterpreted it.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** No, I never did misinterpret your position.

**Ms Churley:** Yes, you did.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** I did not. I looked up Hansard; I did not.

I say to the member for Halton, Mr Chudleigh, who was at that committee—

**Ms Churley:** The Hansard is not out yet, Chris.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** It's out from committee.

Mr Chudleigh, who was there from Halton, will I think back up my position about the water-taking at estimates, where the NDP suggested that she would put a moratorium on any new—

**Ms Churley:** Until?

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** Yes, a moratorium on any new water-taking testing or permits in Ontario if they were in the government.

**Ms Churley:** Until? You're doing it again, Chris.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** Until when?

**Ms Churley:** Until source protection.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** Right, until the source protection comes in.

**Interjection:** A couple of years?

**Ms Churley:** It shouldn't take that long.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** That's right. It's going to take at least six months. So if you adopted that policy, you would be in the situation where farmers wouldn't be able to get water-taking permits to water their crops. But I will give her credit, she did come the next day and said, "OK, maybe that was a bit much. We'll have to analyze it a little more sophisticatedly than that." I do give her credit for coming back and reworking her policy position.

**Ms Churley:** That was a backhanded compliment.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** That was an absolutely backhanded compliment, no doubt about it.

Statutory standard of care: the statutory standard of care is causing some municipalities a little concern. We will hold municipalities with oversight functions to a statutory standard of care. Now, listen carefully. I know AMO is out there asking about this one, but I want it to be clear. Municipal owners—and those are the municipalities that own the water plants, as most already do—must exercise a level of care, diligence and skill and act honestly, competently and with integrity to ensure the protection of safety of the users of their systems. A standard of care extends to directors and officers of the corporation and applies to those who exercise decision-making authority over a municipal system. Under the proposed act, we will establish a standards advisory council and provide authority to set standards for drinking-water treatment and distribution.

Why do we have that? Well, the other problem in the situation with respect to Walkerton is that there were fraudulently filed reports. I've said this before and I'll say it again: I'm not really sure the Ministry of the Environment could ever hire enough inspectors who could stand over every single report written in Ontario and make sure they wrote down the right number. I think everyone would agree you could never hire enough inspectors. So we put the standard of care in there because you have to check on your employees and ensure that your employees are actually doing what they're telling you they're doing.

You've got to go in there and test and do surprise visits to know that if they're actually writing out that 0.4 is the level of whatever, they're not writing 0.2 when it's actually 0.4. That really comes down to standard of care. This isn't out there to shock municipalities into fear—it's not. It's doing what it's supposed to be doing. It's holding them to a level of care, honesty, competence and integrity to ensure the protection of the supply of water.

Now, mistakes happen, but after the Safe Drinking Water Act, with the checks and balances we've put in place, the mistakes should be caught. But I think the members opposite would agree, you have to know that when someone submits a report that says they've tested

the water and here are the results, they haven't made it up. And that happened: they just made it up, which is frightening.

In a lot of ways it's kind of scary that you put this into a bill, because in all my years of dealing with the municipal civil servants I knew, I can't imagine any of them ever just making stuff up and putting people's lives at risk when they make it up. So that's the statutory standard of care and it's a sad day when that's what you have to put in the law. You know what it comes down to? You could re-title this part of the bill so that it says, "You can't make stuff up." That's really what this statutory standard of care is, the "you can't make stuff up" part of the bill. It's in there because, frighteningly, seven people died because public employees in Walkerton made stuff up. I think that should be a sobering and chilling thought to anyone who sits in this place.

#### 1910

Miscellaneous—as always, there's a miscellaneous part of this bill. My friend from St Catharines left. My friend from St Catharines always says this is where all the hostages are held in all normal bills: the miscellaneous part. I will assure you, members opposite, there are no hostages in this bill. I will assure you there are no surprises. I will assure you as I speak today, this is what the bill does, and I will assure you, the briefing the ministry gave to both members a couple of days ago, all those positions and issues we brought forward were part of the bill and there are no hostages in this bill.

Miscellaneous: we will amend section 62 of the Health Protection and Promotion Act to address vacancies in the position of medical officer of health. Under the proposed act, the government will also be requiring to submit to the Legislature an annual "State of Ontario's Drinking Water" report.

With the adoption of this act and the regulations that will be input, we will no longer need regulation 459. So 459 will actually come out, and the new one we'll put in is more of a risk-management aversion approach to water.

This government will continue to be accountable for all promises and this report will provide a benchmark for doing that.

The proposed Safe Drinking Water Act has benefited from the ideas and comments put forward by stakeholders and members of the public alike. In addition to the extensive public process Commissioner O'Connor undertook through the Walkerton inquiry, this government has consulted broadly on technical details of the act. Further consultations will be held through upcoming legislative hearings and stakeholder meetings. I've met with a lot of stakeholders—what does "stakeholders" mean? I've met with a lot of people from various parts of the province who are interested in this bill.

The public is also encouraged to provide their comments through the Environmental Bill of Rights registry posting.

Safe drinking water remains a top priority of this government. We are committed to ensuring that Ontario

has, and enforces, the best and toughest clean water policies in the world.

On a quieter note, I suppose, I want to also say there has been a lot of talk—and I remember very clearly in this House a couple of years ago when this story broke. At the time, there were a lot of allegations and charges—probably unreasonable allegations—made by some members of this House. Let me say very clearly, this could have happened to any one of the past administrations if they were in office. Case closed, end of discussion. It could have happened to any one of them. I know the members opposite are going to say no and they're going to make allegations about reductions and environmental cuts and so on.

**Ms Churley:** Justice O'Connor made those, not us.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** I will tell you, the Koebel brothers were operating the filtration plant during our administration, during the NDP administration and during the Liberal administration. They were fraudulently fabricating numbers during our stop, during their stop and during the Liberals' stop and, to be fair, no one caught them. Nobody caught them. I appreciate the fact that this is strong language.

**Ms Churley:** Let me remind you of the report.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** To the member from Toronto-Danforth, I think Justice O'Connor has done a wonderful job with those reports—

**Ms Churley:** He talked about more than just—

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** Can I just finish my thought? You're going to get to speak. I'd like to finish my thought. I appreciate the fact that this is very troubling for you, and I know it's troubling because it's difficult, but the fact is, any balanced individual who looks at this and any balanced municipal leader I spoke to has come to the same conclusion. The fact is simply this: we just believed that water was safe. We just believed the water that came out of our tap was safe drinking water, and we became lax.

People were operating water filtration plants. I know it frustrates the members opposite, but the reality is this, I say to the member for Toronto-Danforth: you and your administration grandfathered the Koebel brothers. I know she doesn't want to listen, but it's true. Your administration grandfathered the Koebel brothers. You gave them a permanent ability to operate incompetently in this system. I'm not blaming; I'm saying this is just how we managed our water system for the last 30 years. There was this belief that it was always going to be clean.

Are we blameless as a government? No. We're not blameless either, I say to the members opposite. Certainly there are some things we could have done and should have done and didn't. We should have done things and we didn't do them. But to be fair, in a non-partisan way, as long as these guys were operating in Walkerton, this could have happened to any one of us, and just by the grace of God it didn't, to the point that inspectors would go to Walkerton, provide the equipment and were told this equipment was hooked up when it was never hooked up. It's really difficult to comprehend, I know, but that is the fact. It was never hooked up. They

would say they hooked up a chlorinator and never do it. They would say they did tests they never did. They would take tests and make them up, and they'd been doing it for 15 years. And that's why we need a Safe Drinking Water Act.

Could we have had a better approach? Yes. We should have had the private lab distribute those results more broadly, no doubt about it. No doubt about it. I'm not saying we shouldn't have, but ultimately, you know what it came down to—and I look to the members opposite. You believed your local municipality that was running your water system basically didn't make things up, that they actually did the tests. You believed that; I believed it. If you told me that at the city of Toronto they don't actually do the tests, they just make them up, I'd laugh at you. If anyone had told me that about a water plant anywhere around this province, I would have said, "You're out of your mind. You're telling me they don't do them, they just make them up? They tell you they hooked up chlorinators and they never did?" Nobody thought that. Nobody. There was no inspector before that I know of, in any administration, who would actually have said, "OK, did you hook the chlorinator up, sir?" and when he said yes, they'd actually go out to the wellhead and look to see if they hooked the chlorinator up. We never did those inspections, nor did you. That's how frightening this situation was.

We're investing more than half a billion dollars in the next two years on clean, safe drinking water for the people of Ontario. This year alone, we are providing \$245 million, including investments to help municipalities upgrade and make improvements to their water systems to meet our tough new standards.

The proposed Safe Drinking Water Act is an environmental milestone for this province. I will say—and this is my opinion. I think others have said it; I know people in the ministry staff have said it: this is the toughest legislation in the world for safe drinking water—not Canada and not North America; it's the toughest legislation in the world. I was reading today—and I guess I don't have the quotes, but I think I read comments from British Columbia about the fact that the legislation introduced in Ontario is the toughest and best safe water legislation in the world, it was conceded. By passing it, we will make Ontario a world leader in drinking water protection and preservation.

Finally, just a note of caution, I say to the members opposite and to the member from St Catharines, who asked this in the briefing—you can operate a water filtration plant and privatize it.

Here's the quote, and this is a good one. It's from Broadcast News, from Keith Martin, an Alliance medical doctor: "A Vancouver Island MP is calling for national drinking water standards, based on the findings of the Walkerton inquiry. Alliance MP Keith Martin, a medical doctor, calls the Ontario report a useful document. He says the Ontario government took a leadership role by adopting its recommendations."

I say, yes, you can still go through the privatization route if you own the water filtration plant as a muni-

cipality, but you can't fob off your responsibilities. You still have the responsibility of assuring the water is safe. You can privatize it, contract it out, but the question will be, I suggest—and we suggest it will happen—that you better pay people on staff to insure that they're following those rules, because you can't give up your liability simply because you privatize it.

At the end, I'm just going to say in closing—I know I have three members who want to jump in—that we're proud of this bill. I am very proud of this government and the way they've handled this situation since that terrible tragedy in Walkerton. I've been to Walkerton, where we're building the centre for excellence, and I've talked to the people of Walkerton. I'm very proud of the fact that the local MPP, Bill Murdoch, has I think done an outstanding job in dealing with the issues in Walkerton and the people of his county.

I honestly believe that after review and debate—and I want healthy debate. I want to have committee time on this. I don't think it's a partisan issue. But I can't honestly believe that the opposition will vote against this bill. I think this is a great bill. The biggest complaint I can see from you is that it doesn't include source protection. I've said source protection will come in the spring. I would hate to think that an opposition party would vote against what I think is a really constructive and good piece of legislation because it didn't have some component that it wanted to see in there that they knew they were going to get in the spring.

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I will challenge you at committee and I will challenge you in this House: if you find flaws as we debate the bill, tell me, because I want to hear it. I didn't draft this bill in a partisan way. I want to hear the flaws, and if we can fix them, we can.

Today there is a working group: Mr Murdoch is working with AMO to determine whether or not there are flaws in the regulations, to help draft the regulations to make sure they do what we think they should do.

So in closing, I'm going to be interested in hearing comments. I'll be interested in hearing your positions. But I want to also tip my hat to the Ministry of the Environment. It's been a ministry that has been bombarded and besieged in the last couple of years, probably a ministry that has had its fair share of debates and publicity. It's a heroic group of people who have stood up well to the constant demands of the people of this province and the newspapers and the politicians, and the opposition, I might add, as well. Some days we say things in here that I don't think we mean, and some days we've said some terrible things about the ministry staff that probably in hindsight we didn't believe. I think they have come a long way in the last two years and I'd also like to thank them as well.

I look forward to further debate, and I appreciate the chance to listen and hear your concerns.

**The Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant):** I'm pleased to contribute to this debate on the Safe Drinking



Water Act, introduced very recently, October 29, by our Minister of the Environment. I think members are aware this proposed bill follows closely the recommendations of part two of Justice O'Connor's report. Premier Eves and our government are committed to act on these two reports, and I want to reiterate that all of the recommendations in them will be followed.

When Commissioner O'Connor's report was issued last May, our Minister of the Environment stated that the commissioner "offered his recommendations with one eye on Walkerton and one eye on the future, reflecting the balance that you would expect from someone skilled with the scales of justice."

It was encouraging to see that even as the report clearly called for change—and I point this out to the member opposite—it avoided condemnation. I'll quote Justice O'Connor: "My recommendations should not be viewed as a criticism of Ontario's current water quality standards. The current standards were established with great concern for the safety of the province's drinking water."

It is with this eye on the future that one of the prevailing themes evident in both parts one and two of the report has emerged in the proposed act: the theme of education and continuous learning. It's within this context that I will focus my comments with respect to mandatory training and certification requirements of operators of drinking water systems.

To start off on a positive note, I would like to refer all members' attention to some of the media coverage that our proposed legislation has received. I make reference to the *Globe and Mail*: Mr Bruce Davidson, vice-chair of the Concerned Walkerton Citizens Group, "praised the legislation that was introduced yesterday for 'ensuring that the people working in the water facilities are well trained' and for requiring that 'equipment has to be maintained and the appropriate equipment has to be in use.' A lack of training and lack of functioning equipment were among the causes of the Walkerton tragedy."

It is heartening to hear such encouraging words from people from Walkerton. Knowledgeable and capable operators are an essential element of safe drinking water, and this has been ably pointed out by our minister this evening. In both part one and part two, Commissioner O'Connor made several recommendations related to improving the quality and accessibility of training, as well as strengthening the licensing requirements for operators of municipal water works.

In part two, the recommendations state: "The Ministry of the Environment should continue to require the mandatory certification of persons who perform operational work in water treatment and distribution facilities." That's recommendation 59.

To continue, "The Ministry of the Environment should require water system operators who currently hold certificates obtained through the grandparenting process to become certified through examination within two years, and it should require operators to be recertified periodically" This is found in recommendation 60 and was addressed earlier by our minister.

To continue, "The Ministry of the Environment should require all applicants for an operator's license at the entry level to complete a training course that has a specific curriculum to ensure a basic minimum knowledge of principles in relevant subject areas," and I quote this from recommendation 61.

"The Ministry of the Environment should develop a comprehensive training curriculum for operators and should consolidate the current annual training requirement in Ontario regulation 435/93 and the proposed requirement of ministry-approved training into a single, integrated program approved by the Ministry of the Environment." This is recommendation 62.

If you'll bear with me, I'll also refer to recommendation 63: "The Ministry of the Environment should take measures to ensure that training courses are accessible to operators in small and remote communities and that the courses are tailored to meet the needs of the operators of these water systems." We all recognize that many of the water systems in rural areas do not need the kind of scrutiny and close approach that we're seeing in large urban areas.

"The Ministry of the Environment should meet with stakeholders to evaluate existing training courses and to determine the long-term training requirements of the waterworks industry. The ministry should play an active role in ensuring the availability of an array of courses on the subjects required to train operators." Again, this is from recommendation 64.

Operator training and certification ensures that municipal water system operators have the qualifications they need to perform their job and help protect the safety of drinking water in our province. It is this training that will really allow us to move from recommendation to reality.

The proposed act requires that all operators must have a valid operator's certificate in order to operate a drinking water system. This also includes all grandparented operators, who must be certified within two years of the regulations being made.

The regulations that would be made under this proposed act would recognize that there is really no substitute for education, examination and experience. All three are essential components of continuing to ensure competence in the system.

Those individuals who either own or operate a drinking water system will be required to conduct a training needs assessment of its operators and ensure that these operators have the skills they need to effectively carry out their responsibilities.

In the interests of clarity and to ensure that all operators understand what is expected of them, we are reviewing the current training and certification requirements for municipal drinking water operators. These are requirements found in the Ontario Water Resources Act, regulation 435/93, with the goal of making changes that will support Justice O'Connor's recommendations. Then the ministry would transfer them to a new regulation under the proposed Safe Drinking Water Act.

For example, the regulation would at a minimum require that all entry-level applicants successfully com-

plete a training course to demonstrate a basic knowledge of water treatment and distribution principles, as well as the public health risk of contaminated water.

We have hired Georgian College to do a survey of current water treatment facility operators. This will provide us with more detail on essentially what is needed to certify these operators. We will hold meetings with knowledgeable stakeholders to discuss training and certification of operators, as well as the development of new curriculum that will provide operators with the latest information on developing the skills they need to meet these new requirements.

I should also mention that in response to Justice O'Connor's part one report, over the summer the Ministry of the Environment conducted a rigorous selection process in an effort to hire new staff. To date, the MOE has brought in 51 new drinking water inspectors and has hired 10 new supervisors.

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Our commitment to bringing these people on indicates just how seriously the government is in dealing with safe drinking water.

Hand in hand with training and certification, operators of municipal waterworks need data and they need information in order to make knowledgeable and informed decisions.

The government will deliver on its budget commitment to establish the \$50-million Clean Water Legacy Trust and the Clean Water Centre of Excellence to be located in Walkerton, again to provide access to the best scientific knowledge, research and technology and training in the management and monitoring of our safe drinking water.

Other clean water commitments include conducting groundwater studies to support the development of source water plans. The government has made a \$19.3-million investment in local groundwater studies; this is the largest investment in groundwater resources in the province's history.

A little closer to my part of Ontario, \$365,500 was invested in the Norfolk county area, an agricultural area located on the Norfolk sand plain. The Norfolk study will produce information about groundwater at both the local and regional level. Regionally, the study will map sensitive groundwater areas, inventory potential sources of contamination and survey how groundwater is used within seven of the area's watersheds. At the local level, this Norfolk study will identify wellhead protection areas around municipal wells and potential contaminants. The information generated from this study will help the county, the conservation authority and other partners to better deal with some of these issues.

So there's a considerable amount of money presently being invested in studies to map sensitive groundwater areas, aquifers, to survey how groundwater is used and to identify wellhead protection areas around municipal wells. Again, the information generated by these studies clearly will help communities develop local source protection measures.

I've made my several points, and I would now like to turn this over to the member next door.

**Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale):** First of all, to people who might still have televisions on at home, who might be just about in the middle of trick-or-treating, I'm sure mothers and fathers at home keeping an eye on the safety of the children as they open the doors, I wish them a happy Halloween. I just want to assure them that their tax dollars are hard at work at Queen's Park, as are all of us, from each side. Members from every party are here.

**Mr Kormos:** There're only four over there.

**Mr Gill:** Yes, there are more here. Naturally we have more numbers because we were given that mandate, and there are many more things to be done for the next five years, as we all agree.

It is a pleasure this evening to be discussing and debating a very important bill, and that bill is our commitment to provide Ontarians the safest drinking water in the world. Now, that's a tall order. I know we're up to the job and will come through, as we have always come through, with our promises. So I am pleased.

I remind the viewers at home that we are today talking about the Safe Drinking Water Act, which was introduced a couple of days ago, on October 29.

As members are aware, part two of the Report of the Walkerton Inquiry was released last May. Judge O'Connor made 93 recommendations on how the province could ensure the safe delivery of drinking water, including a recommendation specifically addressing the need for the province to create a Safe Drinking Water Act.

In those recommendations, in recommendation 67 to be specific, Commissioner O'Connor stated, "The provincial government should enact a Safe Drinking Water Act to deal with matters related to the treatment and distribution of drinking water."

As the members know, this government is committed to implementing all the recommendations made by Commissioner O'Connor. Premier Eves has been very forthright, and as soon as the report came out, he agreed that we would be implementing all the recommendations. This includes the passage of the excellent piece of legislation introduced by the Minister of the Environment, the Honourable Chris Stockwell. He just finished speaking very passionately about this bill because he, as well as all of us, is committed to providing the safest drinking water in the world to our constituents and the people of Ontario.

The proposed bill includes a number of significant new components that will ensure the protection of drinking water in Ontario. As you know, when the bill was introduced the other day, the opposition mentioned that it doesn't do much about the wellheads and incoming water supplies. As the minister said very clearly, he is working on that and will have something forthcoming in early spring, I believe he said, so stay tuned. We want to make sure that, once again, we do the right thing.

During this debate, I will try and focus my comments on the new requirements for the licensing and accredita-

tion of drinking water labs. An editorial in The Toronto Star earlier this week said, "There's a lot to like in the Ontario government's proposed Safe Drinking Water Act." That's the Toronto Star. Many times they're not very complimentary, for some strange reason; we just have to accept that as their editorial style. But in this case they've already said, "There's a lot to like in the Ontario government's proposed Safe Drinking Water Act. On the positive side, the act would force testing labs to be accredited and all operators of water systems to be licensed." Those words are positive. It is true that lab licensing and accreditation will play a significant role in the protection of our drinking water.

In part two of his report, Commissioner O'Connor made the following observations regarding Ontario's drinking water labs. I'm going to be quoting right from Commissioner O'Connor's substantial and important report:

"Environmental laboratories conduct a wide variety of tests for water providers, including chemical, physical, and microbiological tests of raw, treated and distributed water. Depending on the size and complexity of its system, a water provider might have anywhere from dozens to thousands of water tests conducted on a weekly basis....

"Laboratory testing plays a critical role in determining whether contaminants are present in the system.... The prompt and reliable reporting of test results by laboratories is especially important ... when dangerous contaminants have entered the distribution system."

From these observations, Commissioner O'Connor made three specific recommendations.

First, "The provincial government should phase in the mandatory accreditation of laboratories for all testing parameters, and all drinking water testing should be performed only by accredited facilities." If people at home want to check it out, it's recommendation 41.

Second, "The Ministry of the Environment should license and periodically inspect, as required, environmental laboratories that offer drinking water testing; as with water treatment operations, continuing accreditation should be a condition of license." Specifically, that is recommendation 42.

Third, "The results of laboratory accreditation audits should be provided to the Ministry of the Environment and should be publicly available." This is recommendation 43. This is so the people at home, through the Internet, can check the accreditation and see if the labs are still meeting what they are supposed to be meeting.

If passed, the proposed Safe Drinking Water Act will require all labs that test drinking water to be licensed by the Ministry of the Environment and accredited by a designated accreditation agency on behalf of the Ministry of the Environment. Only accredited testing methods implemented through Ministry regulations will be used and accepted. No other jurisdiction in Canada requires mandatory licensing and accreditation for labs. This is a first in terms of having accreditation in Ontario. Any and every lab has to be accredited.

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There are also several conditions associated with obtaining these licences. These conditions are grounded in the principles of openness and accountability. This will help ensure the viability of the labs being accredited. For example, standard provisions of a Ministry of the Environment licence would include an expiry date with a specified renewal period to be defined by regulation and the ability on the part of the Ministry of the Environment to suspend or revoke a licence. It's not an open-ended licence. It is reviewed from time to time and can be revoked. And it should be revoked if labs are not meeting the standards. In addition, there will be offence provisions and an appeal process through the environmental review tribunal.

In deciding whether to issue or renew a licence, ministry officials will consider the following critical factors, which do not preclude any other grounds that may be prescribed by regulation in the future:

Is the lab able to meet notification and reporting requirements?

If this is an existing lab, has the lab operated in a competent manner, in accordance with the act and regulations?

If this is a new lab, ministry officials will make a similar assessment regarding its perceived competencies.

Does the lab have appropriate staff, resources, suitable premises and equipment?

Does the lab have the necessary record management capacity?

Last, but certainly not least, will the lab operate with honesty and integrity?

You can have all the rules and regulations in the world, but if people are not following those rules and regulations, I think we have a different problem, which is what happened, as I understand it, in the case of the Koebel brothers in Walkerton. They knew what had to be done, but they had not been doing that for I don't know how many years. As Minister Stockwell said, they had been doing the same thing when the Liberals and the NDP were there, and they certainly were doing the same thing when we were there, and they got caught.

The people of Ontario must have confidence that the answer to each of these questions is yes. The proposed Safe Drinking Water Act is designed to provide this confidence.

Once a licence has been obtained by a drinking water lab, the principle of ongoing accountability continues to be an important condition. The Ministry of the Environment will have the authority to inspect all labs performing drinking water tests. The ministry may also amend, revoke or renew a licence on the same grounds as set out for issuing a licence and based on the results of any inspections or audits.

The following scenario briefly outlines the conditions attached to every licence; they do not include other conditions that may be prescribed by regulation:

The lab shall only conduct drinking water tests for which it has been accredited by the designated agency.

The lab shall take all reasonable steps to keep its accreditation in good standing, including the payment of any fees for the accreditation program as the designated agency may require from time to time, and the lab shall submit to any audit by the designated accrediting agency.

In the spirit of openness, the results of lab audits will be provided to the Ministry of the Environment and will be made public. These labs must not only be doing the right thing, but must be seen as doing the right thing. False or misleading information regarding drinking water tests will be an offence. There will be zero tolerance for infractions.

As identified earlier, the Minister of the Environment may designate provincial officers with the power to inspect labs. As you are no doubt aware, we have already hired inspectors to carry out this very important function—51 inspectors, to be exact.

The powers of provincial officers to inspect labs are consistent with existing powers under the Environmental Protection Act and the Ontario Water Resources Act. In addition, offence provisions are also consistent with these two acts.

The proposed licensing and accreditation of drinking water labs sets high standards and expectations on those who will perform drinking water tests. We will expect those standards to be honoured consistently and 100% of the time. There is no margin for error. The public's trust and safety is at stake.

I would urge all members first of all to familiarize themselves with Bill 195. It is a hefty piece of legislation. A lot of care and thought has gone into it. It is in compliance and trying to meet all the requirements Justice O'Connor mentioned in both parts of his report on Walkerton.

It is important to have labs that, first of all, know what they're doing, and that have the personnel who know what they're doing and the tools. They must be accredited and they must keep their licence ongoing and active.

I urge all members of this House to have a speedy approval process of this bill. A lot of times when everybody agrees, we still want hours and hours of debate, and then they wonder why there is closure. Eventually one says that enough has been said. Justice O'Connor has said we must do the right thing. It's all spelled out. The bill is pretty clear about what has to be done. Let's do the right thing.

Once again, Mr Speaker, I wish you and everybody at home a happy Halloween.

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** One of the questions I have, and perhaps the parliamentary assistant can assist me with this: there is the top person who will be the head of water or the water commissioner, shall we call that person. I'm wondering if someone on the government side can explain to whom that person will report.

For instance, if that person were to report only to the Minister of the Environment, I think it would be much

less advantageous than if that person were to report instead to the Legislative Assembly. If you had an Environmental Commissioner who reported only to the government or only to the Minister of the Environment, that would be much less advantageous than his having a public forum, as he does now—he can report from time to time, have a press conference and be asked about these things. I was asked about that by someone and really don't know, and I'm wondering who the person reports to.

Second, some of the appointments I see here, in terms of advisory committees, are not order-in-council appointments; they're made, in this case, by the minister himself. I would think it might be better, if we look at it in perspective, to have order-in-council appointments, because those people have to go through the review process of the standing committee on government agencies. At that time, those people could be questioned by both members of the opposition and members of the government. Their resumés are put before us, and we get a better idea of the people who are going to be part of what I think is going to be a very important committee; that is, an advisory committee.

I don't see in this bill the kind of hostages you see in some government bills, the kind of item that would automatically make you oppose the bill. I want to commend that, but I do see some deficiencies that I'll discuss a little later on when I have an opportunity to speak at length.

**Mr Kormos:** In short order or, more precisely, in an hour and around eight minutes, Ms Churley, the member from Toronto-Danforth, is going to be speaking of the New Democratic Party with respect to this bill after Mr Bradley does the leadoff for his caucus. But I reflect on the comments made by the minister. During the course of his comments, the minister was prevailing upon people in this chamber: "Let's not be partisan about this." Yet during the course of his speech, which was in no small way texted, crafted, a speech clearly designed not to be listened to but read when it's published, and a speech, I put to you, very strategically—at least that's the government's limited capacity to be strategic—made in the absence of the press gallery, a speech that was very clearly very partisan and a naive attempt to somehow prevail upon opposition members, "Oh, let's not be partisan."

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The fact of the matter is that nobody died drinking water in this province under either of the two governments that preceded this Conservative government of Mike Harris in 1995. The fact of the matter is that this matter can't be swept under the rug by pointing the finger solely at the Koebel brothers.

Ms Churley had a safe drinking water act before. This also received second reading, with support from all three parties—September 28—not 2001; September 28, 2000. It was an act that quite frankly was far more comprehensive than the legislation that this government, with some great nerve, puts before the Legislature today, so long after the fact.

I call upon people to consider the minister's comments very, very carefully and to regard them in the partisan style that in fact they were intended.

**The Speaker:** Further questions and comments?

**Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls):** I want to compliment the minister on his opening remarks as well as the members from Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant and Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale for their remarks.

It's an excellent bill. I know that the members opposite, at the end of the day, will vote in favour of the bill. As the minister said, we will have a lot of healthy debate. The minister has said that he looks forward to the input he will receive in debate and in public hearings, I believe, and the amendments that may come forward from all members of the Legislature on the bill.

I want to commend the minister. I know that he's worked extremely hard on this for the last little while, and he's had difficult grillings even from his own caucus members. He has come forward with an excellent bill.

His speech was also a terrific leadoff, and I think that most people will have a look at what he said. I think most people are aware of what happened at Walkerton. Not very many people have said what the minister said tonight, but I think a lot of people feel that way from what they read in the papers about the Walkerton incident.

Before I sit down, while I am not the PA, I do know some answers to the member from St Catharines' question. The member asked about the chief inspector. I just wanted him to know that indeed the chief inspector reports to the minister, but it is my understanding that report will be a public report in the years to come. Also, he should be reminded that under this proposed act, the government is required to submit to the Legislature an annual State of Ontario's Drinking Water report. I hope that clarifies that and will answer that concern.

**Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington):** I had the opportunity to be in my office and listen very carefully to the opening remarks by the minister, the parliamentary assistant and the member from Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale. I was listening very carefully because I had the opportunity to speak with a water system manager from my riding this week, who was actually in this city being briefed on the contents of the bill. It was during that conversation with the water manager that he indicated to me—I asked initially what I should be looking for as a local member, what things would be important to a water manager to understand within the body of the legislation so he could do his job well in the community in my riding. The point he made to me and, I have to say very sadly, something I didn't hear in any of the opening remarks was the role, the commitment and the support the provincial government was going to have to ensure that communities did have safe drinking water.

In fact, the government is really quite silent in this bill in terms of what they are prepared to do to ensure that communities of all sizes, in all locations across Ontario, have access to safe drinking water.

I'm certainly encouraged to understand from the members who spoke this evening that the minister is inclined to listen very carefully during the course of debates on this important issue. I hope the minister understands that a lot of people in Ontario—I believe the minister will hear this if there are public consultations on it—want to know how the province is prepared to support communities to ensure we have safe drinking water in Ontario.

**The Speaker:** Response?

**Mr Gill:** First of all, I want to take this opportunity to thank every member—

**Mr O'Toole:** The member for Durham.

**Mr Gill:** —who spoke. I know the member for Durham did listen to my comments as well, and he did compliment me as soon as he came back into the House.

The member for St Catharines spoke. I want to thank the member because he commended the government for coming forward with such a great bill. He agreed and said there were no so-called hostages in this bill and no wedge issues; that everybody agrees it's a good bill and we must proceed with it quickly.

The member from Haldimand-Norfolk also spoke on this bill.

The minister certainly had a great leadoff and tried to cover all the angles to make sure that Ontarians have the best drinking water in the world.

The member for Niagara Centre spoke right after the member for St Catharines. The member for St Catharines commended the government; the member for Niagara Centre said it's a partisan thing. I'm not sure, but maybe he wasn't listening at that time, because it certainly is not partisan. It's just a good bill for the people of Ontario.

The member for Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington said she spoke to the water manager from her municipality. That is a good thing, because in the past we took things for granted and said, "Ontario water is safe." I don't think we ever sat down with the municipalities or the water managers to see what their concerns were, we just took things for granted.

I'm quite happy that with the proposed Bill 195 we are moving ahead in implementing Justice O'Connor's recommendations for the safest drinking water in the world right here in Ontario.

**The Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Bradley:** I was somewhat amused by listening to revisionist history this evening. My good friend the Minister of the Environment portrayed himself as non-partisan and then delivered essentially a partisan message. The reason you know that is, I have friends in the Conservative party and I know when they speak, they're speaking from the Tory notes that come out. They even send them out from time to time, so you know what the speaking notes are. You, as Speaker, wouldn't get them because you're non-partisan. In fact, you have a petition out in your constituency office which condemns the government for allowing those astounding increases in hydro rates.

I want to go back to why we are here this evening with this bill. I want to say again—and I think certainly the

critic from the New Democratic Party would agree with me, and even, in their heart of hearts, many members of the government—had it not been for the Walkerton tragedy, we would not have this bill in this form before us this evening. Since Walkerton, a lot of what you see happening with this government they never in their wildest dreams had any intention of doing and, to this day, in their heart of hearts, still don't want to do. I think you have to remember that.

This government has some strengths. I don't consider this a particular strength, but if you're in favour of downsizing government, if you're in favour of characterizing government as an evil force, if you're interested in giving tax cuts to the wealthiest people in the province, then you would say that's what this government is about, and if you wanted to give them credit for that, you would do so. But when it comes to the environment, virtually everything they have done has been as a result of being dragged kicking and screaming into it, forced into it by a public that is sensitive to the environment.

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I note that in the most recent poll available, the Green Party now registers some 6%, and about 8%, someone told me the other day, in the greater Toronto area. Plus, the opposition parties combined are substantially ahead of the government. What that indicates in this snapshot—because that's what polls are, a snapshot—is that there's a lot of concern about the environment.

I would have felt more comfortable—and I don't say this simply because she is here tonight—in terms of the defence of the environment if the Deputy Premier, now the Minister of Education, had been permitted to retain that role. She and I would have some disagreements, but I genuinely felt there would be somebody there to defend the environment.

If I can go to the Kyoto accord, for instance, the question I asked the other day is, who is speaking for the environment in the government? You expect that the Minister of Finance has a certain view on environmental issues, and that the minister of economic development or whatever the new name is—enterprise and innovation and things of that nature—and even the Minister of Energy—our former minister, Mr Stockwell, unfortunately was both—are going to take perhaps a view that isn't very sympathetic to the environment, but you hope that the Minister of the Environment is going to be the one with sharp elbows, persuasive arguments and a genuine commitment to putting forward the environmental view in the government.

Instead, what I witnessed at the federal-provincial conference was our Minister of the Environment being the anti-minister of the environment, aligning himself, along with the Premier of this province, with Ralph Klein and with the Minister of the Environment of Alberta. Again, if you want to ask has Mr Klein been successful in economic terms in the province, particularly with all the oil in the ground, the answer is probably yes. On environmental issues, would objective people across the country look to Alberta for leadership? The answer I

think clearly would be no. There are many areas in which they might say there has been progress and there has been something to applaud. One area you would not say is the environment, and yet I saw Premier Eves, almost arm in arm with Premier Klein, denouncing the Kyoto accord, and that's a different role. Mr Speaker, you've been in the House I think since 1990. That's a different role than Ontario has played in years gone by and a somewhat disappointing role as far as I'm concerned.

I want to go back to why this bill is before us. Is it before us because the government promised it somewhere along the line? No, it is not. Is it before us because the government wants to bring this legislation forward? It is not. It is a direct result of the tragedy of Walkerton, where for the first time in the history of Ontario, seven people died from drinking the water and well over 1,000 people were seriously ill, some of whom will be seriously for years to come as a result of the consumption of locally produced water.

It was the contention of the government—and I've heard this before. As I say, you hear it in the government talking points when you speak to your Conservative friends. They would like to portray it as these two local yokels who were not very good, to say the least, at operating a water system. More objective observers, including Justice O'Connor if you read his report carefully, rejected that contention. Yes, we recognize that they played a role. He said, however, that you cannot simply pin the blame on these two individuals and say there were not other causes.

I think it goes back to a fundamental decision made by this government. I don't want to put words in the mouth of the Speaker or others, but I well recall three, four or perhaps five members of the Conservative caucus, including the present Minister of the Environment, who cautioned, before the Common Sense Revolution was announced and immediately after the government came into office, not to proceed with tax cuts before the budget was balanced. I thought that was sage advice.

If people had said, "You have to address the fiscal problems of the province," most people would have agreed with that. What happened, however, was that not only did the government make massive cuts to many ministries, including the Ministry of the Environment, but at the same time it was invoking tax cuts, which meant they had to make even deeper cuts in those ministries.

They would have been wise to listen to what I recall was your counsel, Mr Speaker, that of my good friend Ted Arnott, my friend Chris Stockwell and I think maybe Morley Kells, a couple of others anyway, who said, "Please think about this carefully." If I'm correct, even during the leadership campaign I thought I heard the Minister of the Environment, when he was running, say, "You know something, folks? You've got to get things in order. You can't go out and make tax cuts until you have your budget balanced and you've got things in order." I think that would have been wise advice.

But what happened instead was that the government engaged in massive cuts to ministries, and one of the real

targets was the Ministry of the Environment. Why was that? Well, there's a considerable number of people in the government caucus who don't like the Ministry of the Environment and certainly didn't like it during the years that the New Democrats were in power, the Liberals were in power and perhaps even the Davis Conservatives. Why? Because the government was aggressively chasing polluters and was being tough on environmental issues. So the nod and the wink and the elbowing of people was saying, "Don't worry. We'll get the Ministry of the Environment out of your face"—a promise made, a promise kept. They sure as heck got the Ministry of the Environment out of the faces of a lot of polluters and proceeded to virtually dismantle that ministry.

Why I am personally saddened by that is that I recall my many discussions with the Treasurer of the day, the Honourable Robert Nixon, about the need for substantially more staff and larger budgets and greater clout for the Ministry of the Environment. As a good Treasurer, as a good Minister of Finance and a person who I think one could say was fiscally cautious, he of course would challenge those contentions I would put forward. Fortunately, Premier Peterson was in tune with the contentions I would put before the cabinet.

**Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke):** I think he's breaking cabinet solidarity.

**Mr Bradley:** I may be breaking cabinet solidarity to say it, but the point I want to make is that the ministry was turned around completely. First of all, it had the financial resources to do its job properly, second; it had the staffing levels to do it; and third, it had the clout to do it within government—much to the annoyance of some of my former cabinet colleagues from time to time, ministers of mines and other ministries, who did not always like the Ministry of the Environment. But it was a strong ministry; it was an enthusiastic ministry. If you ask the members of the Ministry of the Environment today, "What was your heyday?" they would not say it is today. A lot of them are no longer with the ministry, because they were fired out the door.

So what happened? Well, this government, in its rush to invoke tax cuts before balancing the budget, in its ideological opposition to government as a whole, in its dislike for the Ministry of the Environment and what it perceived to be its interference with economic growth in the province, proceeded to make damaging and deep cuts to the Ministry of the Environment. Virtually one third of the staff were fired out the door, a lot of very good people, a lot of very competent people, respected not only in Ontario but in Canada and throughout the world. Second, the budget was cut by 50%. Third, the staff were told to be business-friendly. They know how to define that. That means, "Don't push business too hard."

What I found in my experience, by the way, to give a compliment to business, was that there were many people in the business sector who were in fact prepared to be ahead of government, to make major changes in their style of operation, to put in catchment systems for the pollution they produced, but even better, to change the

way in which they produced their products so as not to produce contaminants in the first place.

**2010**

So there were many progressive people out there—not all, by any means. They were the people who were most critical when governments got easy on polluters. The reason they were is that they spent the time, they spent the energy, they spent the money, they trained their employees and they were getting kudos for what they were doing in the environment. When they saw competitors begin to get away with what they didn't get away with and to gain a short-term competitive advantage, they were justifiably annoyed.

We were all shocked when we heard what happened in Walkerton, when the news came on finally that people were dying from drinking the water. We all remember the medical officer of health on television, and his solemn pronouncements. He turned out to be a hero in this particular case. But when we heard of the tragedy and we saw the people who were really, really ill, when we saw the lack of confidence, which still exists, unfortunately, in many people in Walkerton about the water supply and others across the province who are lacking in confidence in the water supply, I think all of us were genuinely troubled by that, saddened by the tragedy that happened in Walkerton.

I think that was a fundamental change in this government. I don't mean this as a pun or in any way like that at all: it was a watershed for the government in terms of its thinking. It hit a wall. The philosophy was that government was bad, that you should dismantle as much as possible, that you should get the government out of the faces of individuals and companies and industries and so on. I think much of that has swung back in the other direction. Part of that, I might say, came from the tragedy of September 2001 in New York and Washington, where people saw that public servants played a very significant role. Even in the US, I think I saw the pendulum begin to swing back the other way.

But remembering what happened in Walkerton, the tragedy and all of the warnings that were given to government, the Provincial Auditor, who is totally objective—the Provincial Auditor is a person who, no matter who's in power, carefully analyzes what's happening in government to make sure we're getting value for the dollars and comments on what's happening. The Environmental Commissioners, Eva Ligeti, first of all, who was ultimately fired by this government for being too critical of the government, and subsequently our new Environmental Commissioner, Gordon Miller, both have been critical of this government and have issued warnings to this government about its policies and the potential consequences.

The Walkerton inquiry, conducted by Justice O'Connor, went into some detail about the government having two sets of business plans, one that it showed to the public and one that it showed internally to the cabinet and members of caucus. So when these massive cuts were being made to a ministry that was an overseer of

municipalities and others, in fact they knew that the risk to the water supply of this province would be increased considerably by the action taken in virtually dismantling the Ministry of the Environment.

I well recall, as will others in this House who have been here a while, the excellent job that was done by the Ministry of the Environment laboratories. We had a central laboratory and we had regional laboratories. This government, as a cost-cutting measure in 1996, closed those laboratories virtually overnight and forced municipalities to scramble to find somewhere to have their water tested in about an eight-week period of time.

Virtually everybody who has observed this, and even people at the time said, "This is madness." If you don't have rules in place, particularly for reporting to the medical officer of health when there's a problem, and when the reporting is only to the operator of the system, that's bound to cause problems. I remember a memo from Jim Wilson, if I can use his name, then as Minister of Health, to the Honourable Norm Sterling as Minister of the Environment, a memo which warned about this. That memo was based on staff input to the minister. When a specific memo or letter goes from one minister to the other saying, "Watch out; this is a problem," in terms of the reporting of adverse results in water testing, then you know that that minister is either protecting himself or at least trying to transmit a message.

We now are—what?—two and a half years after the Walkerton tragedy, and at long last we have a bill introduced which addresses some of the concerns that began to flow from that. There were many warnings at the time about the consequences of the cuts to the Ministry of the Environment.

I remember Dr Richard Schabas, a person for whom I, and I think most people in the province, have a good deal of respect, saying the following in his testimony, and this probably symbolized what was happening in the government at the time. Let me quote directly from his testimony:

"The third meeting, which to the best of my recollection was at the end of May of 1997, I was actually in Montreal with the minister and with the deputy at a meeting of the federal and provincial medical officers of health, we were there to discuss the creation of the board agency, which I was very much involved with as a policy standpoint from the ministry, and we had a discussion that morning at which point the minister and the deputy both identified the fact that the proposed policy changes and legislative changes were going back to policy and priorities committee of cabinet that afternoon and there was not going to be anyone there to represent the viewpoint of the ministry or the viewpoint of public health and there were a number of important issues that were still on the table for that day's discussion.

"So, at the direction of the minister, I came back, I missed the second half of the minister's meeting, came back to Toronto to attend the policy and priorities committee meeting, which would have been in the late afternoon, and the way these meetings work, there's a little

anteroom where all the civil servants who come in for selected items wait and we sat and waited for the public health item to be called. When it was, I came in to the meeting and sat down in the appropriate chair for the table to prepare to discuss these issues, at which point an official assistant deputy minister in cabinet office came over and put his hand on my shoulder and said, 'Dr Schabas, the Premier doesn't want you here for this discussion.'

"So I was taken aback and started to express my concerns to him and then I looked and I realized that the Premier himself was sitting directly across the table from me so I turned and I addressed my remarks to the Premier and basically said that the Minister of Health has specifically asked that I be here, that these are important issues with regard to public health, they are important concerns, and that in my view it was very important that the viewpoint of public health be heard in these discussions and the Premier looked at me and I was quite certain was hearing what I was saying, we weren't more than a few feet apart, and then he basically turned away from me and, I mean, as far as I was concerned, the Premier was turning his back on public health and then I left the meeting and that was the last opportunity that we had to discuss these before these changes were made to the public health system."

Let me put that in context. This is the chief medical officer of health, a non-partisan person who serves no matter who is in office, saying that the Premier had turned his back on public health.

The warnings were there. You see, when the Ministry of the Environment laboratories existed, if there were an adverse result in a test, if there were any abnormalities, not only was the local operator notified but also the medical officer of health was notified. Had that happened in Walkerton, had that regime been in place in Walkerton, we would not have had the seven deaths and the thousands of people who are ill.

That is the context in which we find ourselves in Walkerton. So when my good friend the Minister of the Environment paints a picture of two individuals operating a water system and they're almost entirely responsible for this, it is not a picture which is agreed to by others. Certainly a role was played there, but Dr Richard Schabas would not agree. As I read the testimony, or as I read the final report of Justice O'Connor, he did not come to that conclusion either. He said certainly the government's oversight, or lack of oversight, played a significant role.

#### 2020

As I think was pointed out earlier by the member for Niagara Centre, seven people had not died before—nobody had died before—from drinking water in Ontario, and massive numbers of people had not become ill before in the province. So with the lack of staff, with the lack of resources and with the lack of clout, the Ministry of the Environment was unable to do its job as it would like to have done. In fact, there was testimony which indicated that the Red Tape Commission, this sinister group within



the government that was there to find what it would say were unnecessary regulations, had intimidated Ministry of the Environment officials to such an extent that they did not even bring forward recommendations as to how the reporting system should work when the laboratory testing was privatized. That's how intimidated they were. They felt they would not be listened to, that they would be criticized.

So you have to look at the atmosphere. It was an axe swinging wildly and without thought in 1996. Now we see the government creeping back from that through various pieces of legislation; in fact, through regulation and through some policy changes. But that was only because we saw seven people die from drinking water in the province of Ontario.

Those massive cuts were made not only to the Ministry of the Environment but to the Ministry of Natural Resources. The Ministry of Natural Resources, as a lot of people don't understand, has a lot to do with water quantity and quality as well. They had a lot of people who were dealing with water quantity and quality, either directly through the Ministry of Natural Resources or indirectly through their funding and association with conservation authorities. Keep in mind, and you would know this from your area, Mr Speaker, that there were massive cuts made to the budgets and staff of conservation authorities as well.

So all of this oversight of our water system was cut back. In fact, we have seen it continue. The Environmental Commissioner, Gordon Miller, in his latest report revealed to the public of the province that when this government took office, there were some 730 monitoring stations on our streams and rivers and lakes, and that by the year 2000 that had diminished to 240—almost 500 monitoring stations removed. Surely, as everyone recognizes, the raw water supply has to be monitored and protected so we don't have these problems.

One of the initiatives the government moved slowly on but finally passed in terms of legislation was what was called the Nutrient Management Act. That really refers to manure and sewage. We use the word "nutrient" in a way, I guess, to avoid using those words. But even with that act, the regulations are not in place yet. There is still a consultation going on. There are even some exemptions. I am told that raw sewage from outhouses, for want of a better word, can be spread on agricultural land. That doesn't make any sense to me. There are even people who are genuinely concerned about sewage that comes from sewage treatment plants, that has been treated, being placed on agricultural land, but most assuredly untreated sewage being placed on agricultural land is a problem.

Within the Ministry of the Environment there is not the inspection regime available to deal with this issue, and the Minister of the Environment was not even allowed to have the lead. The lead was given to the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. So that legislation, much cheered about by the government, is not implemented appropriately yet and has a lot of flaws

in it. It is more flash than substance in terms of its effect on protecting the raw water supply, the groundwater or surface water that we use for drinking purposes.

I recall, when the incident broke, what happened. They asked the Premier the questions in this House. First of all, he blamed the NDP. He said, "Oh, well, it's not my fault. It was the NDP. They started it all." That was quickly put aside when it was revealed that in fact the major massive cuts were made by the government, not by the NDP.

Then the town of Walkerton was at fault because they didn't take advantage of infrastructure money that was available. Then somebody—I think it was the federal member from Grey-Owen Sound—showed evidence that in fact Walkerton had taken advantage of this funding. So that took that out of place.

Finally, after much discussion and debate in this House and questions in and outside the House, the Premier was dragged, kicking and screaming, into allowing a public inquiry. I must give my colleague Mr Conway probably the lion's share of the credit in one question that he asked, and many of us asked questions in the House. The day he got up in a very impassioned way and asked questions of the government, finally the government capitulated. But it was in an impassioned way, because I had asked questions, the leader of the official opposition, Dalton McGuinty, the critic for the NDP and the leader of the NDP had all asked questions about a public inquiry. I don't know what finally motivates a government, but I remember the very impassioned plea made by my colleague from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke that day, and finally the government capitulated, after much weeping and gnashing of teeth, to have a public inquiry.

I want to say something positive about the appointment that was made. I thought the appointment of Justice O'Connor was a good appointment. I didn't know that much, not being a lawyer or involved in the judicial system, and I asked my colleague from St Paul's about this. I said to him, "What about Justice O'Connor? Is he a good choice?" The answer was yes. I think most people out there said yes. It turned out he was a good choice, in my view. I like the way he conducted the inquiry. I like the way he was able to speak to the average citizens within Walkerton and wherever he went in the province, as well as to the so-called experts. I thought, as I say, the manner in which he conducted the inquiry was superior to what I've seen in many cases. That's why I think the recommendations he made were so compelling for all members of the House and why they are included in this legislation, as I think they should be.

I do want to say, however, that when we talk about the regime of the day, let's look at the inspections that were done. By the way, I should mention something that a lot of people wouldn't realize. Do people in this House realize that the operating budget of the Ministry of the Environment was higher in 1976 than it is today? That's 26 years ago.

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Finance):** That's because we had Energy.

**Mr Bradley:** I don't know if that was the case in 1976. I'm pretty sure, if you think back to 1976, it was only the Ministry of the Environment in those days. I think subsequent to that they were combined. I remember my friend Robert Welch was Minister of Energy for a while. But I think it was separate from that in those days. It's interesting to see that in 1976—it wasn't a Liberal or NDP government; it was a Conservative government of the day—it was even higher than when this government is in effect today, even after it has made some additions to the ministry.

So the number of inspections was way down. The government kept diminishing the number of inspections. The inspection team that used to go out to the municipalities to see what was going on was virtually dismantled. I remember when they went on their blitz, they had to hire some of those people back; they had to hire people from wherever they could to do the inspections that were to take place at the time. So I thought the annual reporting, what I call the drinking water surveillance program, had been allowed to slide, the inspection regime had been allowed to slide, and yet there were many out there warning of problems that could happen not only in Walkerton but in other municipalities.

We must remember that the finance minister of the day, through all these massive cuts, through the dismantling and destruction of the Ministry of the Environment, was none other than the Hon Ernie Eves, who is now the Premier of the province of Ontario. I can't blame the present Minister of Finance, who is with us this evening, because she wasn't the Minister of Finance of the day, but I can certainly tell you who was, and that was the Honourable Ernie Eves.

**2030**

So we have a circumstance where we now have a drinking water act before us. As I mentioned at the beginning, one of the things I liked about the bill—although the member for Bramalea-Gore-Springdale and somewhere else heaped praise on it; I think that was an overstatement—was a lack of hostages. In other words, in a lot of government bills they'll bring in a poison pill that the opposition can't swallow and can't vote for. This bill doesn't have that.

Is it missing some components? It sure is. It does not have a component that allows people to take legal action against the government. It does not have a component that deals with water sources. It does not have a component that specifies—

**Ms Churley:** Public right to know.

**Mr Bradley:** Public right to know is not found in this bill, as my colleague from Toronto-Danforth points out.

It does not spell out the kind of financing that must be part of the implementation of this bill. And there's still a regulatory framework that must be finalized.

The appointments made to the advisory committee of the Minister of the Environment are at the discretion of the minister. As I mentioned, I think, in my response to the government in its initial discussion, I think it would be superior to have those as order-in-council appoint-

ments, to be analyzed and scrutinized by the government agencies committee.

My good friend Bob Wood, who is a prominent member of that committee, is here tonight, and I might add that I, as an opposition member, find him a helpful member of that committee in that he certainly does his job for the government but in my view he helps the committee function as it should. I would think, although I can't put words in his mouth, that in his heart of hearts he would probably like to see the people come before that committee as order-in-council appointments, so that members of his caucus and members of the two other caucuses could interview the people and see if they are the best possible people for that job.

Earlier this evening, my friend Bart Maves answered the question as to whom the water commissioner shall report. He can correct me if I'm wrong, but I thought he said "reports to the minister"—

**Mr Maves:** Publicly.

**Mr Bradley:** In public. But I think it would be superior if that person were an officer of the House, who reported to all members of the Legislature. I can tell members opposite that were they in opposition, they would feel even more strongly about that than they might in government. I notice that even within government caucuses, including the federal government caucus at this time, there's a feeling that individual members want to have more say. Having that person as an officer of the House, as opposed to reporting to the Minister of the Environment, albeit publicly, would be superior in this legislation.

Virtually everyone who has made reference to this says, "Look, you have to deal with the sources of water." We saw the cutback from 730 monitoring stations to 240 monitoring stations. That's an indication the government is moving backwards. Conservation authorities can play a very significant role in that. If they're given the financial resources, the staff and the clout, they can deal with that. The Ministry of Natural Resources and the Ministry of the Environment can deal with that. I think it's going to be important that we deal with the sources.

Again, the Provincial Auditor, the two Environmental Commissioners we've had in the Legislature and the Ontario Medical Association are among the people who have said we have to address the problem, the challenge, of the raw water supply out there. I'm disappointed that the government is only now appointing, or is about to appoint, a committee to look into it. I think it could have been done simultaneously with this bill or indeed could have been started last spring as part of a legislative or regulatory framework, and that has not happened.

Let's get down to the implementation of the bill. Anybody who is knowledgeable about the Ministry of the Environment knows there will have to be a massive investment of funds in the Ministry of the Environment to ensure it can carry out its role under the provisions of this bill. If the bill is to mean anything, if the words in the bill, the provisions of the bill, are to be meaningful, the Ontario Ministry of the Environment is going to have to

play a significant role in the implementation of this bill. They will need many more staff—dozens upon dozens more staff than they have today—and they'll require millions more dollars more, and again the clout.

The minister and some of the others who have spoken on the government side make the point, "We've hired this many new people." What I would point out is that they fired those people out the door. They're now trying to replace some of the people who were fired out the door.

What has to happen is that the Ministry of the Environment has to be restored to its former budget, at the very least, and to its former staffing level, also at the very least, to do its job appropriately.

It is said by members of the government that this is going to be the best drinking water in the world, that this is the strongest bill in the world. I'm surprised they didn't say in the universe.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** OK, then.

**Mr Bradley:** The Minister of Finance says the universe will do. We like to be critical, we Canadians, of Americans. There are many states that have tougher drinking water standards than we have anywhere in Canada, and some federal legislation. I hate admitting that from time to time. But if you look at specifics in some of their legislation, it's stronger than ours. So this contention that somehow this is going to be the strongest bill ever anywhere, is one which will not hold water, just as when the government says it's implementing all the recommendations of the Walkerton report, of the Justice O'Connor report, they're really not doing so. They're nodding and winking at some of them and fully implementing others, but they're certainly not fully implementing them.

This bill doesn't deal with privatization. I'm afraid that some of the provisions of the bill will drive smaller municipalities into privatizing the water system within their area if there is not a component that provides for assistance to municipalities to help them in meeting the considerable costs of the implementation of this bill. The Ontario government, the provincial government, must be a funding partner on an ongoing basis to assist those municipalities.

I see that the government keeps announcing and re-announcing some money. A good example is Camden, Ontario, and the town of Lincoln, where I've heard money announced and re-announced, but it never seems to flow; a cheque never seems to get there. I hope the government isn't using the excuse of waiting for an election campaign to start flowing those funds which have been announced and re-announced but never flowed to the municipalities.

I said at the beginning that I wanted to share some time with one of my colleagues. I am at the present time going to turn it over to Mrs Dombrowsky, who has four names in her riding: Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington. I am going to turn over to Mrs Dombrowsky my further time on this bill.

**Mrs Dombrowsky:** It really is important to me to have this opportunity this evening to speak to a very

important piece of legislation that has impacts across the province, obviously, and very definitely in my riding as well.

I listened with great interest and attention to the opening remarks of the government and also to my colleague. I am always very impressed by Mr Bradley, who was the best environment minister the province has known. That comes to me not just from members of our caucus but from people across the province, people who worked with the Ministry of the Environment. Jim Bradley was a minister who was truly committed to the environment. I was amused by the analogy he used earlier this evening when he talked about a Minister of the Environment who had sharp elbows when it came to advocating for the environment. Certainly Mr Bradley has those in our caucus room, at our caucus table, and has taught me a great deal about the value and the way to ensure that we protect our environment for everyone in our community, particularly for generations to come.

I am very honoured to share the lead with Mr Bradley today. It provides me with an opportunity to talk about the parts of the bill that I'm happy with and the parts of the bill that are not there, what should be in the bill that isn't there, and what I'm hearing from people, from constituents in my riding, about the concerns they have about the Safe Drinking Water Act.

**2040**

It is important that we have this bill. As Mr Bradley has indicated already, sadly it was an environmental tragedy that precipitated this piece of legislation. It was only after seven people died in Walkerton that we now are entertaining this type of legislation here this evening.

I well remember those election campaigns when the Tories were going across Ontario speaking about the excesses in government, that we had too much government and we didn't need all those people in those offices doing whatever they do. Well, you know, some of those people in those offices were responsible for testing water. How it ever happened that someone made a decision that we didn't need to do that is beyond me. Sadly, we've all witnessed what happens when people really don't understand the role, the work and the importance of what civil servants do, particularly at the Ministry of the Environment. Certainly it's something Mr Bradley was very aware of because of his former role, but also because he recognized that government does have a responsibility to be a watchdog to ensure that we have those quality services in our communities.

I was thinking, as Mr Bradley was reading the comments of the former medical officer of health for the province of Ontario, Mr Schabas, that it was really very chilling to hear the account from the doctor who had the responsibility to consider the well-being of all Ontarians. He sat in a room with the Premier and ministers of the day. He was very adamant that the issues at hand were of importance, of significance and really would impact the health and well-being of Ontarians. It's chilling to think that this gentleman would say that he felt the then-Premier of the province would turn his back on the

concerns this man was very earnestly trying to have them understand: the important role of the folks at the Ministry of the Environment and what they did for the people. Consequently, because his warnings were ignored, 700—or was it 900?—people were fired out the door at the Ministry of the Environment.

**Mr Bradley:** Nine hundred.

**Mrs Dombrowsky:** My colleague from St Catharines has confirmed that 900 people at the Ministry of the Environment were fired out the door, testing in communities did not have the provincial oversight as they once did and we had the tragedy at Walkerton.

I was reading an editorial in one of the local papers in my riding, the Kingston Whig-Standard, and the comment in the newspaper was that this legislation is a step back to the future, that we're not moving ahead but are moving back to what we had. The report wasn't especially complimentary, from the perspective that this is really righting a wrong that happened many years ago when staff at the Ministry of the Environment was cut.

Concerns that I have as a rural representative about this bill relate, I would suggest, more to what's not in the bill than to what is in the bill. I spoke, in the one opportunity I've already had to make some comment on remarks made earlier in the evening, about the fact that I was speaking with a water supervisor from my riding. He asked, where does it indicate what the responsibility of the provincial government is with respect to this act? What is the provincial government prepared to provide by way of support for communities across Ontario?

I live in a part of the province that is not especially densely populated. It's a beautiful part of the province, with quality people and a wonderful quality of life, a number of smaller communities, no communities of significant size. When I say "significant," I don't have communities in my riding with populations of more than 100,000 people, for example. I have a number of small communities. Many of them have water systems. Many of them have very old water systems, actually, and that's part of the problem. When I speak to municipal representatives about the state and the condition of their water treatment facilities—they're very dated, they're very much in need of repair and upgrade—they're quite concerned about the fact that the law will require them to provide a level and quality of product, being the water for the people in their community. I'm not suggesting that they should not be required to do so, but I think there needs to be some recognition that a small community of 700 or 800 people, or even 2,000 people, does not have the financial resource base to perhaps address those needs.

In the past, historically, they have been able to count on support from the provincial government to assist them with those infrastructure needs. It was explained to me by one municipal representative in my riding, who said that their municipal water system needs to be upgraded and the cost to upgrade the water system to meet present-day standards, to ensure that the people in this small town have quality water, safe drinking water, is over \$1

million—\$1 million for a community of 1,000 people. That is a significant burden if that community is to bear that financial burden alone.

It was interesting that the municipal representative also pointed out to me that they could upgrade to a capacity of 15,000 people for the same cost. So whether you're upgrading a facility and you have 1,000 residents or 15,000 or 20,000 residents, the cost of the upgrade is the same. But I would suggest that the ability of the people to pay is not the same. The concern is that people in rural communities are going to be required to pay more for safe water than people in more populated communities, and I don't think that should be the case. Up until now in Ontario, that has not been the case because there has been the recognition that as a province we all benefit from healthy communities and there is a recognition that the province can assist communities with infrastructure dollars to meet these very important needs.

The other concern I have about the impact this legislation will have on people, certainly in my riding but also across Ontario, is the impact it will have on our seniors, on people who are on fixed incomes and also on our poorest people. I'm particularly concerned about this, given the information that all members of this Legislature have been receiving in their constituency offices in recent days and weeks about the cost of hydro. The cost of hydro has absolutely skyrocketed, and people on fixed incomes are contacting my office who have had hydro bills double and triple and even quadruple in amount, and they're on a fixed income. They don't have the money to pay the bill.

Now we have a piece of legislation whereby the basic premise is that communities, the users of the water resources, should also pay for whatever mechanisms are in place to ensure their safety. So the users very possibly are going to see water rate increases as well. I'm very concerned for those people who are on fixed incomes, who haven't had raises, in many cases, for years. People who are on Ontario disability support have not had a raise in, I believe, nine years—maybe it's been more. And now they're dealing with hydro rate increases, and I believe that in the not too distant future, they're going to be hit yet again with water rate increases.

**2050**

What we very much want to see in this bill is an indication that the province recognizes that there are communities that do not have the same resource base to support some of the upgrades and that the province recognizes that it has a responsibility to supplement those communities so that everyone in Ontario will have access to quality drinking water and they will have access to it at a relatively even rate, so you don't have some people in smaller communities paying a significantly high amount of money for safe water while people in other communities, particularly those that are very well-resourced or have a greater assessment base or tax base, don't pay as much.

As a rural member, these are concerns that have come to me already. When I read the bill and when I listened to

the debate here this evening, I was hoping that I would hear some indication from any of the members who participated from the government side that there would be some assistance, some consideration, some understanding that the bill will have impacts across the province. And while the ultimate impact is safe and clean drinking water, I think the question has to be, at what cost? Does the government understand that there may be communities that will not be able to afford the cost, and because the government recognizes that, it's prepared to put in safeguards to ensure that all Ontarians will be able to access safe drinking water at a reasonable price?

Certainly, I think it is important for the government to commit to and understand the value of obtaining public input on this piece of legislation. This was certainly something that I know our critic has advocated, as have other members from other parties, as absolutely essential to ensuring that we have a sound piece of legislation.

I also wanted to talk about the fact that within the body of the bill there isn't anything that would prevent a municipality from selling their water system to a private corporation. I've talked about the fact that there may be small municipalities that would find the upgrading of their water system a significant burden, perhaps one that they didn't feel they could pass along to their ratepayers. So it is conceivable that a company or corporation could come along and say, "Let us relieve you of that worry. Let us take that burden from your shoulders. We would be prepared to come in and we will provide you with a quality water system. We will manage it, we will provide all the bells and whistles." I'm sure there are many municipalities that might think, "Well, that might not be a bad idea. That takes the responsibility away from us. We're not in a position, as a municipality, of binding our ratepayers to a significant debt load." So the system could possibly be sold to a private corporation.

I don't think that's a good idea for a variety of reasons. Again, it goes to consistency of services in communities in Ontario and also, once such a facility is in the hands of a private corporation, there is no control or regulation around rates or about quality or level of service. So I'm very concerned that Bill 195 has been totally silent, that there is no commitment within the body of the bill that the water system must remain in public hands.

I have to say that while it disappoints me, it doesn't surprise me, because it is very much in keeping with the whole privatization agenda of the Harris-Eves government that we have seen unfold in many areas during the term of the last two governments.

I have to say that when we consider privatization of the many services in the province that have been privatized, I really am hard-pressed to think of an example where privatization has resulted in better services for the people of Ontario.

I hear on a number of occasions on a variety of issues about services that have been contracted out, services that have been privatized, and people in my riding are not especially happy. One example I'm thinking of is Ministry of Transportation services, particularly in times of

bad weather in the winter months where the contracted services are not as efficient as when they were provided for the people in the communities by the Ministry of Transportation. In community and social services there have been many services contracted out, and there again we hear from people who are not satisfied with the level of service.

In Bill 195, I believe this is another opportunity the government is making available for the privatization of an essential service. It's an essential service, and we all must be concerned about that.

What we in the Ontario Liberal Party are looking for in terms of good, solid legislation is legislation that will ensure a government that takes responsibility for providing a quality, dependable service at a reliable rate.

As the article in the Whig-Standard that I already referenced said, we're going back to the future, going back to where we were before. Sadly, we have a long way to go to get to where we should be. But when you're following up, when you're playing catch-up as a government that slashed the budget and fired out the door 900 workers of the Ministry of the Environment, while this legislation is a step in the right direction, we have a lot more steps to take before we get to where we need to be and should be for the safety and well-being of the people in this province.

I'm very happy to have had this opportunity, and I hope the government will be prepared to entertain amendments that will strengthen this legislation.

**The Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Ms Churley:** I listened carefully to the speeches by the Liberal environment critic and of course the former Minister of the Environment, who knows the ministry very well, as it used to be anyway. Before I got into government I worked directly with him to get some environmental things in my riding accomplished. I always listen carefully when Mr Bradley speaks because I know he's well aware when he talks about the cuts to the ministry and the impact those have had on our environment and the health of the people of Ontario.

One of the things he spent a great deal of time pointing out, I think because he was provoked, as am I, by the Minister of the Environment, who spent a great deal of his speech talking about—well, what he did was come full circle. I felt like it was déjà vu all over again, because somewhere in his speech he started saying it's all the fault of the Koebel brothers. All you have to do is pick up these reports, these two thick reports by Justice O'Connor. It was almost like he was saying that was all unnecessary because really it was the Koebel brothers alone, which is where the Tories started out. I was really disappointed tonight to find that we're back to that. Of course nobody is denying, on any level, that what the Koebel brothers did contributed in a big way to the tragedy. But Mr Justice O'Connor made it clear that the cuts to the ministry had a huge impact, and that they ignored the many warnings from many people that a tragedy could happen, that those were not listened to.

So the minister provoked the need to tell the true history again tonight of what led to the tragedy of Walkerton.

Thank you for this opportunity. I'll be up again in the next few minutes.

**2100**

**Mr Maves:** I'd like to respond to the member for St Catharines and the member for Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington, specifically to the member for St Catharines. I had to bristle when early in his comments he said that this government was brought kicking and screaming into bringing in pro-environmental legislation. I bristled quite a bit at that, because the history shows something totally different.

For instance, we were not dragged kicking and screaming into the Drive Clean legislation we introduced. It offended many of our supporters, in fact. It wasn't politically popular at all, but we had the courage to introduce, pass and implement that. The SWAT team was something we campaigned on in the 1999 election. We were not forced into that. These are focused inspection teams to target polluting industries. This government legislated the highest penalties, including jail terms, for major environmental polluters.

We set aside and protected more parkland than any other jurisdiction in the developed world. Again, we were not dragged kicking and screaming into that. We did it because we believed in it. We said we'd eliminate the Lakeview coal plant by 2005. No other government did this. We were not dragged kicking and screaming into that. We've done that because we believe in it. Lately, we nixed the OPG sale of two coal-burning electricity plants because the prospective buyers would not commit to cease using coal and replace the coal with natural gas by our timeline of 2015. Again this disappointed some of our supporters, but we still had the courage to do it.

We have a very active and positive pro-environment history, so I take exception to the comments of the member for St Catharines.

**The Speaker:** Further questions and comments? The Member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale.

*Interjection.*

**Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale):** You have neither that nor a medal to pin it on.

I want to say what an honour it is for me to have an opportunity to comment on the speeches by the member for St Catharines and the member for Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington. For anybody who's watching at home, I think it's been an interesting night, especially the contrast between their thoughtful speeches and the apologetic comments of the member for Niagara Falls, who preceded me, who stands here suggesting that if it were not for the tragic events that occurred two and half years ago in Walkerton, Ontario, where seven Ontarians died, died at the hands of policies, according to the O'Connor report, attributable to mistakes that people in government made—and instead we get this crappy response from the member opposite, who talks about how they weren't dragged kicking and screaming to implement Drive Clean, which took longer than anything.

I think tonight's debate, led by the government members and followed up by my colleagues and, in a moment, at least part of a presentation by the very thoughtful, on this issue, member from Toronto-Danforth, gives Ontarians a good glimpse into some of the worst and into some of the best about government.

I do think we have a piece of legislation that we're coming together around. There has been a bit of an opportunity for input, something that is too rare in this House. The spirit of bipartisanship apparently can only occur when serious death has been involved, all other bills depending upon a government which thinks it has all the answers. On this bill they had to recognize, for once perhaps, that their own policies led to deaths in Walkerton. We need to remember that as we debate this.

**The Speaker:** Let's see: one, two, three, four. Yes, the member for Niagara Centre.

**Mr Kormos:** I wouldn't have stood if I was out of order, Speaker. Far be it from me.

I listened very carefully to the speeches of Mr Bradley and Ms Dombrowsky. While I was listening to them, though, I was reading the Hansards from June 1991. I saw that there had been a succession of quorum calls being made by opposition members. Finally, one Mr Turnbull stood up with great indignation, stating, not incorrectly, "Once again it appears that the government has so much disrespect for this House that we do not have a quorum." Well, hour after hour I've sat here watching a quorumless House, government benches absent. I was relishing the opportunity, just before Ms Churley began speaking with her leadoff on behalf of the New Democratic Party, to call quorum, but, sure enough, a quorum of Tories scurried in here, the chicken hanging from their mouths, the stains on their ties drying rapidly in the heat of the chamber.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** We didn't have chicken tonight.

**Mr Kormos:** I'm sorry. Ernie is at Swiss Chalet. With these guys we're talking about the tender beef fat from the curl around the filet, cut with a fork.

Ms Churley is going to be speaking to this bill in around two and half minutes' time. I want to remind folks once again, notwithstanding the rather feckless effort on the part of the minister to somehow explain his comments away as being non-partisan, and simply point out that nobody ever died drinking NDP water in this province. Nobody ever died drinking Liberal water. It was Mike Harris-Ernie Eves Conservative water that killed seven in Walkerton. That's why we're here today.

**The Speaker:** Response?

**Mr Bradley:** I thank the members for Toronto-Danforth, Niagara Falls, Toronto Centre-Rosedale and Niagara Centre for their contributions. Indeed, I think each one of them brought a different perspective tonight.

I think we all recognize, from the comments that have been made, that we would not see this legislation before us tonight had seven people not died tragically in the town of Walkerton.

We see that the bill contains many of the recommendations that have been made by Justice O'Connor,

and I think that's positive. We see also that the bill is missing some significant components and some significant assurances on the part of the government that it's going to provide the necessary funding and staffing and the clout to the Ministry of the Environment, to the Ministry of Natural Resources and to conservation authorities so they can carry out their responsibilities in implementing the bill. It is one thing to have legislation which contains words; it is yet another to have the wherewithal to implement that legislation. I think that's what's going to be key with this bill.

In addition to that, I express concern once again, and I don't think anybody has dissuaded me, at the fact that this bill does not contain anything in terms of a meaningful reference to protecting the water sources. Everyone recognizes that preventing contaminants from getting into the water supply in the beginning is so exceedingly important. I know the Provincial Auditor thought so. I know that two Environmental Commissioners think so. I know as well that the Ontario Medical Association believes that to be the case.

We look forward to what will follow this bill. I know that my colleague from Toronto-Danforth will want to analyze it and come forward with some of her recommendations as well. I look forward to that.

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**The Speaker:** Further debate?

**Ms Churley:** It was June 15, 2000, shortly after the tragedy in Walkerton, that I first introduced my Safe Drinking Water Act, which was then Bill 96. Then, on September 28, 2000, the bill passed second reading. It never did go any further than that. Later, I introduced the bill again as Bill 3.

It's human nature for everybody to want to take some credit for being here tonight, and that's fine. I think we should probably all, in different ways, take some credit for being here tonight and having this bill before us, and I will get to what I like about the bill and what I don't a little later.

Here is what I want to do: I want to give the credit to the people of Walkerton. They are the people who suffered. They are the people who lost loved ones. They are the people who lost six people through that tragic occurrence. They are the people who have up to 2,000 people ill, some of whom are children who will never, ever totally recover. There are still adults as well as children on medication they will be on for the rest of their lives. There are children who will end up being on dialysis. We must not forget the reason we're here tonight. Not much good can come out of such a terrible tragedy.

I want to once again say to the people of Walkerton that they are responsible and we back them up here in the Legislature. It was they who inspired me to immediately continue the work I had been doing on a Safe Drinking Water Act some time ago. I got really busy and shelved it and hadn't gotten very far. It was the people of Walkerton who inspired me to get together with experts in the field and look at the American safe drinking water

legislation, which at the time I wrote this bill had been around for 25 years. In fact, although I added made-in-Ontario pieces, a lot of my bill was based on very successful safe drinking water legislation in the US. So it's the people of Walkerton we should be giving credit to tonight for any movement we've seen here in the Legislature as a result of the terrible thing that happened to their town. I want to commend them and thank them for their perseverance, dignity and strength throughout this whole ordeal.

Hopefully when we have all of the pieces of legislation in place—because we're not there yet, and even the minister acknowledges that. The Safe Drinking Water Act before us tonight, the Nutrient Management Act and the other bill, Bill 175, dealing with other matters around sewers and water, in and of themselves will not prevent another Walkerton from happening. Indeed, unless the government reinvests in the Ministry of the Environment, none of these pieces of legislation, including groundwater source protection, when and if it comes, will prevent another Walkerton.

One of the things Justice O'Connor points out—and I have both the reports. I've read them and I recommend that all people do. It's not heavy reading. I have to commend Mr Justice O'Connor as well for the incredible job he did, not only in conducting those hearings but making them so comprehensive, and for holding them in Walkerton and allowing the people of Walkerton to be very involved every step of the way. His reports are very readable and very doable.

What Mr Justice O'Connor did was have a very thorough look—and he has two parts. Part one deals with some of the more technical aspects of what went wrong, and with recommendations. Part two deals more with the policy areas. If the government doesn't want to believe what the opposition has to say about the impact of the cuts, the reductions in staff, the privatizations, the downloading, the Red Tape Commission, if you bundle them all together when you read these reports, you will see that the government—and it has been admitted finally. There was an apology from Mr Harris—a long time coming, but it came—and an acceptance of the government's role and their responsibility. I commend them for finally, after some time, recognizing that, making that apology and acknowledging that some of their policies and cuts did indeed have an impact.

Particularly in response to the Minister of the Environment, I said earlier that I was appalled by the minister's speech. He brought us back to the early days after the events in Walkerton happened, when Mr Harris first tried to blame the NDP, then moved on to blaming the town and then specifically the Koebel brothers. Nobody here is going to say for one moment that the Koebel brothers' activities did not play a large role in what happened in Walkerton—we all know that. But for the minister to stand up tonight with these reports in hand and say that could have happened under any other government, I would say to him that's not so. I also would say to him when he gets up and says, "What did

you guys over here do? You did nothing. We're the ones bringing in the Safe Drinking Water Act, we're the ones who are setting up a committee to study, to advise on source protection. You did nothing," that's not so.

If you look at the kinds of programs and staff levels that were in place, not just under the NDP—we in fact increased it, despite the recession. We decided to invest in environmental protection in this province, even though we got a lot of flak from this side of the House, at the time, for increasing the deficit. That was one of the things we were doing when we were in government. We made a decision not to borrow money for tax cuts, we made a decision to borrow money to keep people afloat during a recession and for environmental protection, among other things, in this province.

When the minister says we did nothing, he's wrong. The difference is, and everybody knows this by now, that under successive governments, from the time the Ministry of the Environment was first set up under the Bill Davis government, under the Liberal and NDP governments, there was a continuum of improvement within in the Ministry of the Environment. That stopped after Mike Harris took over. Not only were there not any improvements, but we went downhill, we went backwards. And indeed, when the NDP was in government—and I want to talk about source protection for a moment, because the minister and government members like to point out, "Why didn't you do it when you were in government? You didn't do it." You're supposed to be neutral, Mr Speaker. Nice to see you in the chair because you can't heckle me now.

When we were in government we did a couple of things that started on the road to groundwater and source protection. First of all, we gave adequate funding to conservation authorities, which do a lot of that work, the monitoring and that sort of thing. We didn't cut the ministries of the Environment or Natural Resources, we actually increased funding. But furthermore, and this is very relevant to source protection, there are two things—there are many others, but there are two things in particular that started us down that road, although, admittedly, not yet a comprehensive plan. We brought in the green planning act. You have to understand that when we talk about source protection, that is a big piece of it. Land use planning is a big piece of source protection. So we're on the road to source protection with that. And what did this government do? One of the first acts of the government under Mike Harris was to get rid of that planning act, throw it out. It was seen as red tape, it got in the way of development.

Another thing that we did that contributed to source protection policy was to bring in a small but actually mighty program. It was called CURB, Clean Up Rural Beaches. It was a program that actually had dollars assigned to it. Once again, we were using money, yes in a recession, to try to protect the source of our water. That was to help farmers establish where there were problems with farm animals too close to wells and water sources, and helping them, giving them money, working with

them, training, educating and then giving them money to fence off areas where there might be a well or an environmentally sensitive area that could harm the water, to keep the cow manure away from the water sources.

I want to make it clear to the government members tonight that it is not fair and it is not accurate, indeed, to say that under our government nothing was done on source protection; in fact, we're further behind. That is what is so discouraging. When I hear the government say that—talk about bristling—it's just not a correct accusation or observation, because we did do things. Instead of this government building on it, which is what we were going to do had we been elected, they threw it out. So we're starting from way back, back from when we were in government and brought these policies in.

Instead of using my own quotes about the cuts to the Ministry, I am going to read specifically from Justice O'Connor because I think that for the government members he is perhaps more believable than I am even though I've got my own numbers in front of me.

#### 2120

In the Report of the Walkerton Inquiry Part One—where he deals with more of the technical things and reductions and budgets and things like that, he says, "Shortly after the election," in 1995, "there was a reduction to the MOE's budget of \$30.8 million. In August 1995, the central agencies of the government directed the MOE to develop a plan for reducing its budget by a further 40% for 1996–97, and then by another 20% for 1997–98. These reductions added up to \$200.8 million over the two-year period. In January 1998, an internal MOE document reported that the ministry had been 'particularly hard-hit' in comparison with other ministries. It stated that since 1995–96, the MOE budget had been reduced by 48.4%."

He says, "The budget reduction targets were not set by that ministry," the people who knew the impact these cuts would have on the environment. "They also did not involve a review of the question of whether the reductions could be achieved without sacrificing the MOE's capacity to fulfill its statutory mandate. Rather, the reduction targets were initiated by the central agencies"—that means the Premier's office—"and the MOE's responsibility was to develop strategies for reaching those targets." He goes on about the business plans and the actual warnings that Mr Bradley talked about earlier, that I won't repeat again, as these cuts were coming forward to cabinet. They were warned about impacts to the Ministry of the Environment and chose to ignore them.

So that's the backdrop here, and Mr Justice O'Connor is extremely clear that those cuts had an impact on what happened in Walkerton, ie, the ministry's ability to respond was severely limited.

The other thing that Justice O'Connor talks about is the closing of the public labs. On very short notice, all of a sudden all the municipalities had to—I think the time frame was four weeks or something like that, four to eight weeks. They didn't have to be accredited; they were



all scrambling to find a lab to test their water. And there's another myth: just the other day when I was speaking to another bill, one of the government members said, "You're the guys who closed the labs and made Walkerton use the private lab in the first place." Well, that too is not correct.

What people tend to forget that Justice O'Connor pointed out, and we don't even talk about it much here, is that not only were there four Ministry of the Environment labs which tested water; there were 13 public health labs operated by the Ministry of Health and they too were all closed, in 1996, I believe. In fact, Walkerton was using one of those Ministry of Health labs in Palmerston, I believe, until after they were closed and then they had to scramble to find a private lab. That too contributed, because of what happened with the reporting structure, as Mr Justice O'Connor said, to the events in Walkerton.

On several occasions the ministry, the minister and the Premier were warned, time and time again, that something terrible could happen. I know Mr Bradley and I were at some of the inquiry hearings. In fact, we were there the day Brenda Elliott, who had been the minister previously, was there, and when Mr Harris testified. Counsel for the inquiry was questioning Mr Harris and told him, "You know, there were at least four or five warning bells that told you directly that there could be a problem with the cuts, the downloading, the Red Tape Commission, and in particular the closing of the lab." Indeed, he cited me and two questions I had asked in this Legislature after they closed the labs on such short notice. Eva Ligeti, the then Environmental Commissioner, had pointed it out in a report as well and I pointed it out. I asked questions here in the Legislature and pointed out to the government that there was a real danger and that they should look into it. There were many, many warnings, which were cited earlier, and they were ignored.

So when Mr Stockwell, the Minister of the Environment, stands up and says it was mostly the Koebel brothers and that it could have happened under anybody and we over here have never done anything, I just want to put that to rest. When the Minister of the Environment stands up and says that, and then says, "Let's be non-partisan about this, because this is a good thing," he can't very well expect me to stand up and let those myths—and I'll call them "myths" for the purposes of being parliamentary here tonight instead of what I'd like to

say—we cannot let those myths go without some kind of correcting of the record.

I want to speak briefly about the Red Tape Commission. As I said earlier, and it was quoted in Justice O'Connor's report, indeed the Ministry of the Environment seemed to be the hardest hit. We knew that at the time. We watched it all happening and kept warning the government. It was appalling, what was going on within the ministry. Then the Red Tape Commission was brought into the world.

**Mr O'Toole:** It's a good commission.

**Ms Churley:** Yes. You say it's a good commission. It too picked on the Ministry of the Environment. The Ministry of the Environment was seen as just red tape that got in the way of doing business. It too was the hardest hit of any other ministry. The Red Tape Commission, particularly under Frank Sheehan, spent more time trying to cut important regulations from that ministry, and in fact did, than any other ministry at the time.

It's worth noting, because I know that in a couple of minutes I'm going to close for the night, while I'm referring to the Red Tape Commission: when I asked a question to the then Minister of the Environment—there have been many Ministers of the Environment; it was Dan Newman—about my bill, the Safe Drinking Water Act, and asked him if he was in favour of it and if he'd be willing to pass it, he said that it was just an example of more red tape. That was the attitude of the then Minister of the Environment. It's in Hansard. He was referring to some of the requirements in the bill, for instance the Water Advisory Council, which is part of my bill, which is now one of the things the government did adopt from mine, although it's not as thorough in terms of what that council should be doing and how it should be appointed and who should be on it.

In summary tonight I just want to give that as the backdrop. When I come back—I believe we're going to be debating this bill again on Monday—I will go into more detail about the bill itself, compare it to mine and talk about the need for public hearings clear across the province so that people can have input and so that we can make necessary amendments.

**The Speaker:** I thank the member. It being 9:30 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock on Monday.

*The House adjourned at 2128.*

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Mississauga South / -Sud	Marland, Margaret (PC)	Scarborough East / -Est	Gilchrist, Steve (PC)
Mississauga West / -Ouest	Snobelen, John (PC)	Scarborough Southwest / -Sud-Ouest	<b>Newman, Hon / L'hon Dan</b> (PC) Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre associé de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Nepean-Carleton	<b>Baird, Hon / L'hon John R.</b> (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	<b>Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim</b> (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	<b>Galt, Hon / L'hon Doug</b> (PC) Minister without Portfolio, chief government whip / Ministre sans portefeuille, whip en chef du gouvernement	St Paul's	Bryant, Michael (L)
Oak Ridges	<b>Klees, Hon / L'hon Frank</b> (PC) Minister of Tourism and Recreation / ministre du Tourisme et des Loisirs	Stoney Creek	<b>Clark, Hon / L'hon Brad</b> (PC) Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
Oakville	<b>Carr, Hon / L'hon Gary</b> (PC) Speaker / Président	Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh	Cleary, John C. (L)
Oshawa	<b>Ouellette, Hon / L'hon Jerry J.</b> (PC) Minister of Natural Resources / ministre des Richesses naturelles	Sudbury	Bartolucci, Rick (L)
Ottawa Centre / -Centre	Patten, Richard (L)	Thornhill	<b>Molinari, Hon / L'hon Tina R.</b> (PC) Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre associée des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Ottawa-Orléans	<b>Coburn, Hon / L'hon Brian</b> (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	<b>Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet</b> (PC) Minister of Finance / ministre des Finances	Whitby-Ajax	<b>Flaherty, Hon / L'hon Jim</b> (PC) Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation / ministre de l'Entreprise, des Débouchés et de l'Innovation
Prince Edward-Hastings	Parsons, Ernie (L)	Willowdale	<b>Young, Hon / L'hon David</b> (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)
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		York South-Weston / York-Sud-Weston	Cordiano, Joseph (L)
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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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