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of Ontario

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**Official Report
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**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 20 November 2002

Mercredi 20 novembre 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

Wednesday 20 November 2002

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 20 novembre 2002

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

NATURAL GAS RATES

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): The Harris-Eves government must decide whether or not they are going to allow Union Gas to charge the one-million-plus customers the retroactive fee that they hope to be able to charge. This uncertainty is having a definite impact on seniors' ability to plan for the future. They don't know whether or not they are going to have a retroactive charge in January or February or March.

It's also having a very negative impact on small business in Ontario. In Sudbury alone, I've received copies of letters that Union Gas is sending out, stating that the one-time rate adjustment is going to vary. For example, in this business it's going to be \$14,349. For that business, it's going to be \$25,918. For another business, it's going to be \$40,507.

The government has to act. There is an appeal before cabinet. Ernie Eves and the wishy-washy Tory government must make a decision. The decision is simple. Union Gas cannot be allowed to do what they want to do. For once in Ontario, stand up for the seniors of this province. For once in your history, stand up for small business. For once, I ask Ernie Eves, the wishy-washy Premier of this province, to take a stand.

KEN WHITE

Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South): I am delighted to inform the members of this House that Ken White, the president and chief executive officer of the Trillium Health Centre, has won the hospital management category of Canada's Who's Who in Healthcare Awards. This award category recognizes an individual whose management performance has made an extraordinary contribution to the overall success of a hospital. The criteria are innovation, leadership, impact and overall contribution to the delivery of health care in Canada.

The fact that Trillium's board of directors and senior management team nominated Ken White for this recognition speaks volumes about the high regard in which Ken is held by both his staff and the community that Trillium serves.

I was honoured to be invited to submit an endorsement of Ken's nomination, and I was proud to do so. I have experienced first hand the skill with which he has piloted our community hospital through a major evolution. Since Ken's tenure at Trillium began in 1996, Trillium has undergone an amalgamation of two hospitals and opened several new services, including three major regional programs for stroke, advanced cardiac services and neuro/musculoskeletal. Trillium has also been named one of Canada's top 100 employers, a reflection of Ken's dedication to innovative employment practices.

I know the residents of Mississauga and Etobicoke join me in congratulating Ken White on this much-deserved award and in thanking him for his exemplary leadership of our community hospital.

HOME CARE AND EDUCATION FUNDING

Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain): I have here 3,000 cards signed by seniors from across the Hamilton region protesting the cuts to long-term care and to home care. Let me read from one of the cards.

"Dear Minister:

"I am extremely distressed by the recent drastic cuts, especially in homemaking services, by the community care access centres, to seniors and people with disabilities living in their own homes. Most people want to stay at home, but now are unable to access required help. I dread the thought that I, or people I care about, may be forced to give up independence and move into a long-term-care facility. Homemaking is imperative for persons attempting to remain independent in their own homes because it provides them with a safe and clean environment. I urge you to reinstate adequate funding to provide the essential services as described in the Long-Term Care Act."

I have under 1,000 cards here signed by parents across the region protesting the cuts to education. I understand that adequate funding for our children's education is the responsibility of the government of the province of Ontario. I don't believe that the current funding benchmarks are reflective of current costs. I want the education funding gap addressed immediately.

What is the connection between the cards and the cost to education, and the cards and the cost to home care? It's Jim Murray, the same Tory-appointed supervisor who is cutting education in Hamilton, the same one who set the criteria, who cut the criteria, and fewer of our seniors are getting good quality home care in Hamilton.

Shame on you. The Tory-appointed axeman should be ashamed of himself.

NATIONAL CHILD DAY

Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant): Today marks National Child Day across Canada. It's my hope that on this day and throughout the year we all strive to make our corner of the world reflect one of this year's National Child Day themes, A World Fit for Children, a world where all children get the best possible start in life and where adolescents are given opportunities to develop their capacities in a safe and supportive environment.

In my home riding of Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant we are lucky to have a grade 2 teacher who works tirelessly 365 days a year to make a better life for children, not just here in Ontario but around the world. For 15 years now, Emily Stowe, of Port Dover's Doverwood Public School, has dedicated herself to organizing her school's UNICEF campaign. When it comes to fundraising for children, Mrs Stowe thinks outside the orange UNICEF box. Emily Stowe has raised money through face-painting initiatives and hat day. This year funds were also raised through a haunted house display. If you ask her, Mrs Stowe will tell you that she doesn't do it all by herself; she receives help from many in organizing the annual UNICEF campaign.

However, this year Emily Stowe has been singled out as the Ontario UNICEF educator of the year. On this National Child Day I'd like to take the opportunity to thank Emily Stowe for her dedication to children of the world and congratulate her on her recognition by UNICEF.

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): Today is National Child Day. The day of the child is an opportunity to focus on the achievements and the great promise that our children represent in our society. We must take every opportunity to celebrate the potential, strength of purpose and hope that our children and our youth represent. A wonderful example occurred just this summer in this very city with World Youth Day. We were able to witness the positive impression hundreds of thousands of youth left in the minds and hearts of people from around the country and indeed around the world. They left us with a tremendous feeling of hope for our future and our world.

However, in Ontario there is still much that must be done for our children. Over 40% of those who use food banks are children. The fastest-growing demographic among the homeless is families with children. Children in Ontario with special education needs and mental health needs are not receiving the support and services they need and deserve. Dalton McGuinty has made a commitment to children in his Excellence for All plan. It is a plan that has been endorsed by child advocates such as Charlie Coffey and the Honourable Margaret McCain. Ontario Liberals are prepared to invest in programs and services that support families and our children because

we recognize that our children are our most precious resource and our hope for the future.

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): During constituency week it was my privilege to attend Remembrance Day ceremonies and events across my riding, which I enjoyed. I would like to commend the Royal Canadian Legion branch that does so much outstanding work to honour the memory of those who have served and those who gave their lives for the freedom we enjoy today. I'd like to extend my thanks to Jim Connell, president of branch 178, Royal Canadian Legion, Bowmanville, as well as Roy Thompson, president of branch 419, Port Perry. Thanks also to Doreen Park, who gave a Remembrance Day reading at the Bowmanville cenotaph this year, and each year, I might add. She is retiring, I believe.

These are just a few of the men and women who led in the Remembrance Day observances in my riding.

1340

I'd also like to briefly mention the remembrance cross program supported by branch 178 of the Royal Canadian Legion in Bowmanville. Small white crosses with a red poppy are placed on each grave of nearly 900 veterans at 10 cemeteries in Clarington. They mark the resting places of those who served in the War of 1812, the Boer War, World War I, World War II, and the Korean War, as well as peacemakers and members of the armed forces of Canada who have honoured us by their service.

This program was begun in 1992 by Norm Baker and Harvey Jones, both veterans of World War II. The present chairman of the program, Cecile Bowers, has 19 volunteers, including John Greenfield, veterans' service officer for branch 178. These tributes are placed at the end of October and removed after Remembrance Day. The inscription on the crosses sums up the attitude of all citizens of Durham riding, and that is that we serve and "We remember."

SITE OF EARLY PARLIAMENT

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): I rise today to bring to the attention of this Legislature an issue of extreme importance and concern to every one of us gathered here at Queen's Park, and all citizens of this province. That's the preservation of the site of Ontario's first Parliament Buildings.

Located near the southwest corner of Front and Parliament streets in downtown Toronto, an archaeological dig last year discovered the brick foundations and artifacts from the buildings that date back to 1798. The remains of these buildings are what is left of the original Parliament of Upper Canada. Amid the rubble are charred floorboards that remain from the torching during the American invasion of the War of 1812. These buildings were significant enough of a symbol of our emerging govern-

ment that the Americans went out of their way to burn them down in 1813.

This discovery is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. These remains of the birth of Ontario's democracy are in danger of being lost forever. A new Porsche dealership has applied for a building permit to pave over this historic site. The Ontario Municipal Board deadline of December 1 to arrange the purchase of the lot by the city or the province is fast approaching.

There has been support shown by the owners of the site and within the Ministry of Culture and the Ontario Realty Corp to have this site return to public ownership where it belongs, but there has been no action despite the looming deadline.

I am calling on this government, and in particular the Minister of Culture, to act immediately to preserve a jewel of Ontario's heritage and a jewel of the democratic foundations of this province.

HAZARDOUS WASTE

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): Yet again, northerners have descended on Queen's Park because they're feeling left out by this Tory government.

We all know that what's happened over the last couple of years is that a company by the name of Bennett Inc has been trying to build yet another one of these garbage plants up in northern Ontario. Imagine, they want to bring all of the toxic waste into the Timiskaming area and they want to be able to do what they want: pollute the area and run away with all of the profits.

Northerners are here today to say, "No, we're not going to accept that northern Ontario becomes the toxic waste dump of all the rest of Ontario and the rest of Canada."

What's interesting is that even the Ministry of the Environment, when they looked at the environmental assessment process that was undergone, and it was a scoped EA, had to agree that the proposal by Bennett was severely flawed. Bennett removed themselves from the process. But they're back again.

David Pond and Bennett Inc are saying, "We're back. We're going to come back with another application," and northerners again on their own, the people of Timiskaming, are going to have to get up, do everything they did once before, twice before, and fight this whole process yet again.

They're here to ask the Minister of the Environment, who is here in the chamber today, one simple thing: "Minister of the Environment"—that's you, yes, you standing over there. Hey, Chris, look over here. The people over here from northern Ontario want to know, are you prepared to restore full benefits when it comes to intervenor funding in order to assist northerners when it comes to the fight that they're going to have to undergo with Bennett? Will you restore full intervenor funding?

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Just before we begin, for our visitors in the gallery, unfortunately clapping isn't allowed. I would appreciate if you would honour that tradition.

Interjection.

The Speaker: Yes, I know, the member likes that, but unfortunately clapping isn't allowed. I appreciate your help with that.

CHILDREN'S TREATMENT CENTRE

Mr AL McDonald (Nipissing): Today I'd like to talk about the groundbreaking announcement that Minister Clement made Monday regarding the creation of a children's treatment centre in Nipissing. Located in North Bay, the children's treatment centre will serve children in Nipissing, Parry Sound and Muskoka. The children's treatment centre will enhance the recruitment, retention and ongoing professional development of a wide variety of pediatrics-trained health professionals to encourage doctors and health workers to live and work in the north. It will also create the required setting for parent support and education activities.

I'd like to thank a very special person, Mr Ian Kilgour, who was the task force chair and led this initiative from the very beginning. I'd also like to thank the members of the Northern Shores Children's Treatment Centre Task Force for all their hard work and dedication to children's services, as well as the Rotary Club of Nipissing and the Rotary Club of North Bay for their outstanding fundraising events.

Children and youth with special needs and their families will greatly benefit from this new facility. It's something that Nipissing and North Bay have been wishing for, for many years.

I want to personally thank Minister Clement for announcing the 20th children's treatment centre in the province of Ontario in my riding of Nipissing.

If you ask the average northern Ontarian what they believe is the top priority in their lives and what they believe the government should be pushing for, health care is one of them. I can honestly say that the people of northern Ontario will reap the benefits of having such a facility. I want to thank everyone who took part in making this dream a reality.

LÉGION D'HONNEUR

LEGION OF HONOUR

M^{me} Claudette Boyer (Ottawa-Vanier): J'ai l'honneur et l'immense plaisir d'annoncer à cette assemblée que trois grands personnages franco-ontariens ont reçu dernièrement, des mains de l'ambassadeur de la France au Canada, des décorations de la Légion d'honneur.

Indeed one of our former colleagues, the past member of Glengarry-Prescott-Russell, Mr Jean Poirier, was promoted to the rank of officier de l'ordre national du mérite, while M^{me} Gisèle Lalonde was awarded the rank of chevalier of the French Legion of Honour, and Senator Jean-Robert Gauthier the grade of officer.

Ces prix sont remis en reconnaissance de leur grand dévouement pour la cause franco-ontarienne.

Jean Poirier served in this House as a Liberal member from 1984 to 1995, winning four consecutive elections for his riding, and he was also Deputy Speaker from 1987 until 1990. Senator Gauthier, a tireless defender of francophone Ontarians' rights, was a sitting Liberal member of the federal government prior to his appointment to the Senate. Of course, you may have recognized the name of the lady who led the battle for the preservation of Montfort Hospital, M^{me} Gisèle Lalonde.

J'invite tous mes collègues à applaudir avec moi ces trois personnalités de la communauté franco-ontarienne.

VISITORS

Mr Dave Levac (Brant): On a point of order, Speaker: In the public gallery today are two constituents who have joined us here at Queen's Park to bring the cause of long-term-care issues and to learn about the democratic process in this House, Mandy Conlon and her mother, Judith, who have brought these issues and want the Minister of Health to understand that there are issues today. I'd like to welcome them here.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received the 10th report of the standing committee on government agencies. Pursuant to standing order 106(e), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE AND SOCIAL POLICY

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

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

Bill 181, An Act to amend the Legal Aid Services Act, 1998 / Projet de loi 181, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur les services d'aide juridique.

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

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1350 to 1355.

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

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Hardeman, Ernie	Newman, Dan
Baird, John R.	Hastings, John	O'Toole, John
Barrett, Toby	Hudak, Tim	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Beaubien, Marcel	Jackson, Cameron	Runciman, Robert W.
Clark, Brad	Johns, Helen	Sampson, Rob
Clement, Tony	Johnson, Bert	Spina, Joseph
Coburn, Brian	Klees, Frank	Sterling, Norman W.
Cunningham, Dianne	Marland, Margaret	Stewart, R. Gary
DeFaria, Carl	Martiniuk, Gerry	Stockwell, Chris
Dunlop, Garfield	Mazzilli, Frank	Tsubouchi, David H.
Ecker, Janet	McDonald, AL	Turnbull, David
Elliott, Brenda	Miller, Norm	Wilson, Jim
Eves, Ernie	Molinari, Tina R.	Witmer, Elizabeth
Galt, Doug	Munro, Julia	Young, David
Gilchrist, Steve	Murdoch, Bill	
Gill, Raminder	Mushinski, Marilyn	

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

Nays

Agostino, Dominic	Curling, Alvin	Marchese, Rosario
Bartolucci, Rick	Di Cocco, Caroline	McLeod, Lyn
Bisson, Gilles	Dombrowsky, Leona	Parsons, Ernie
Bountrogianni, Marie	Gerretsen, John	Peters, Steve
Boyer, Claudette	Gravelle, Michael	Phillips, Gerry
Bryant, Michael	Hampton, Howard	Prue, Michael
Caplan, David	Hoy, Pat	Ramsay, David
Colle, Mike	Kormos, Peter	Sergio, Mario
Conway, Sean G.	Kwinter, Monte	Smitherman, George
Cordiano, Joseph	Levac, David	Sorbara, Greg

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 46; the nays are 30.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Pursuant to the order of the House dated Monday, October 21, 2002, the bill is ordered for third reading.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

FUNERAL, BURIAL AND CREMATION SERVICES ACT, 2002

LOI DE 2002 SUR LES SERVICES FUNÉRAIRES ET LES SERVICES D'ENTERREMENT ET DE CRÉMATION

Mr Hudak moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 209, An Act respecting funerals, burials, cremations and related services and providing for the amendment of other statutes / Projet de loi 209, Loi traitant des funérailles, des enterrements, des crémations et des services connexes et prévoyant la modification d'autres lois.

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

The minister for a short statement?

Hon Tim Hudak (Minister of Consumer and Business Services): I'll defer to ministers' statements.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

BEREAVEMENT SERVICES

Hon Tim Hudak (Minister of Consumer and Business Services): I am pleased to introduce proposed legislation regarding the bereavement services sector in the House today. The proposed Funeral, Burial and Cremation Services Act, 2002, is part of the most comprehensive review of consumer protection legislation ever undertaken in Ontario. It is part of the Ernie Eves government's consumer protection for the 21st century package, which includes Bill 180, currently before the House. Bill 180, if passed by the Legislature, would consolidate six core pieces of consumer protection and three sector statutes. It is part of our government's plan to provide strong, efficient consumer protection and a level playing field for business.

This bill I am introducing today would strengthen consumer protection in the bereavement services sector. Bereavement is a topic that many of us are not always comfortable talking about. However, all of us can appreciate how important it is to ensure high standards of services and ethics in this area, given the value of the expenditure and the vulnerability of a person whose loved one has just passed away.

The death of a loved one means that those left behind must make decisions quickly during an emotional time. Often, family members have little or no experience in purchasing bereavement services.

1400

High standards for those who deliver bereavement services, including private businesses, charitable and religious organizations and municipalities, would not only benefit consumers but also provide a level playing field for the sector.

I would like to thank the many people who have been instrumental in developing this proposed legislation. Key among them is my predecessor as the Minister of Consumer and Business Services, Norm Sterling. Former ministers Runciman and Tsubouchi also did a great deal of work in this process. Also, members of the Red Tape Commission have offered the benefit of their counsel as the government worked toward this proposed legislation. I would also like to especially thank Gary Stewart, Steve Gilchrist, Joe Spina, John O'Toole and Marcel Beaubien for their assistance in this process.

For more than a year now, representatives from various bereavement services providers and consumer groups have met frequently to provide advice on reform. The group, which included members representing organizations as diverse as monument retailers and religious organizations, formed the Bereavement Sector Advisory Committee, known as the BSAC committee.

I want to thank each member of that committee for their hard work and dedication. Several of them are in the gallery here today with us. To mention a few names, of

course the Honourable George Adams, who led the process, Gary Carmichael, Mike Fitzgerald and Lynne Atkinson, Joe Richer and Scott Doney, John O'Brien, Eileen Fitzpatrick, Bob Youngs, Helen Anderson, Peter Niro, Pearl Davie, Zena Doogay and Norris Zooket, have joined us here today. I thank them for all their efforts on this legislation.

Superior Court Justice the Honourable George Adams QC, whom I introduced, deserves a special thanks for his leadership and guidance in helping to facilitate the advisory committee discussions. Thank you, Justice Adams, for your work.

The current legislation governing the bereavement sector was written close to a century ago, a time when people still drove horses and buggies, the Wright brothers were making their first flight, and the world wars had not yet been waged. Lifestyles and social attitudes have changed considerably since then.

As Pearl Davie, the chair of the legislation committee of the Federation of Ontario Memorial Societies/Funeral Consumer Alliance, has said, "Our modern multicultural society, as well as changes in societal attitudes, require that bereavement sector legislation ensures access to alternatives and increased consumer protection."

There are many factors that have changed the bereavement services sector in the last century. A hundred years ago, the vast majority of Ontarians were Christian. Today, we see the growth of other religions and funeral practices and greater ethnic diversity. The legislation must be flexible to respond to Ontario's evolving and diverse culture. At the same time, in modernizing the bereavement services sector, we must respect religious sensitivities and traditions and ensure they are maintained.

As minister, I want to strive to facilitate that by continuing to consult with the religious community and respond to their concerns as proposed reforms go forward. The proposed Funeral, Burial and Cremation Services Act, 2002, would combine two statutes, the Cemeteries Act (Revised) and the Funeral Directors and Establishments Act, into one modern regulatory framework. It would permit combinations, meaning that a funeral home can own and operate a cemetery, crematorium or scattering grounds and vice versa. This would bring Ontario into line with eight other provinces and 40 US states while providing greater choice for consumers who want to make all the arrangements in one place.

By permitting new business models, it would also allow businesses to grow and to create jobs. It would allow access to alternative or no-frills services, which many consumers are looking for today. To help provide some peace of mind to families at this vulnerable time, this bill would require service providers to offer clear information, including price lists. It would also require salespeople and operators to follow a strict code of ethics.

Our government understands that bereavement purchases are a major purchase at a very sensitive time. That is why this bill provides for industry-funded

compensation funds, so that consumers would be compensated if a licensee fails to provide the goods or service purchased. Currently, only funeral directors have a similar compensation fund. It would also protect those who choose to prearrange and prepay for their funerals and other bereavement services by providing expanded trust requirements to keep their money safe. Consumers would also have a 30-day cooling-off period to reconsider their purchases. Those who have purchased a burial plot or interment rights would be able to resell them at a fair price. Under the current legislation, consumers must sell at the original acquisition price even if they purchased their plot 20 years ago.

This government is proud to introduce the proposed Funeral, Burial and Cremation Services Act, 2002. This bill would provide stronger protections for consumers in the vulnerable time when they are purchasing funeral, burial or cremation services. I am confident that with the input of consumer groups, religious institutions and a variety of organizations in the bereavement services sector, we have developed a bill that will meet the needs of both consumers and businesses alike in the years ahead.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Responses?

Mr Mario Sergio (York West): I'd like to respond to the Minister of Consumer and Business Services with respect to the announcement of today. It is a very small, good step, but it doesn't go far enough with respect to offering the protection our consumers deserve.

I have to say that two years ago I introduced a bill in this House, Bill 54, which dealt with the major components that consumers in the community face, a much more complete, much more concise, much fuller bill which indeed would have given the consumers of Ontario the protection they seek from the government when it comes to that particular time. Some 80,000 people die on a yearly basis. It is a serious concern for the family members when it comes to dealing with the situation at that particular time.

Unfortunately, Minister, what you have introduced today does not address the major component, when you have to choose a funeral home or a service centre. A service centre can have a funeral home, according to your laws of today, but not according to laws, but they are doing it today. The legislation you have introduced today does not offer that protection to the consumers in Ontario—it does not.

Minister, as you say about your bill today that you're willing to combine the two bills to offer more protection to the consumers of Ontario, I say dig out Bill 54, read it very well and include it in this legislation so that indeed the consumers of Ontario can have that peace of mind at the time they most need it. It's fine to license the headstone retailers and casket operators, but it does not deal with the real problem, that at a time when people really don't need anything else—it's not addressed here.

I'm telling you today, Minister, to take a look at your legislation. Indeed you are allowing cemeteries today to have funeral homes. Your piece of legislation here does

not address the problem that you are associating with this piece of legislation by allowing that on cemetery property versus the private supplier/provider.

I believe that consumers today have a very serious problem when it comes to choices. You're saying in your legislation that you are allowing for more choices. Well, let me ask the minister, what choices are you offering the consumers when it comes to more protection? This piece of legislation only gives the consumers a choice of which casket or which headstone. With all due respect, you have to go deeper than that and say, "I'm offering more protection. I'm changing the act, which has not been changed in the last 90 to 100 years."

When it comes to reality, the protection is not here. We cannot support the bill as it is because it does not give any protection to the consumers. You're giving a 30-day cooling-off period. When someone has died and the family members have to make a choice at that particular time, they haven't got 30 days. Your 30 days is for those who want to make arrangements from now till God knows when, when they are called, and they can change their mind if they want a more expensive casket or headstone. That's fine and dandy.

I want you to say today to the consumers in Ontario, "I will indeed be looking at the funeral laws the way they are being conducted today," and offer them peace of mind. There is no protection with respect to the legislation that you have introduced today.

Minister, if you really want to strengthen and provide service and protection to the consumers of Ontario and to those 80,000 family members, then I would say to you, include Bill 54 in this legislation. Send it out for debate. Listen to both the consumers and the industry. Then hopefully you will come back to this House with a bill that is worth supporting by the consumers out there and by this House.

1410

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): New Democrats appreciate the advance notice we received of this announcement and of this bill being introduced. I appreciate the timely delivery of a copy of the bill. I've given it but cursory examination. The bill in many respects appears to be a consolidation of but existing legislation. This isn't atypical from this particular minister, because the House has been dealing with his so-called Consumer Protection Act, which is but a re-statement, in so many respects, of the existing law.

I want to tell you that members of this New Democratic Party caucus, be they from the north or Toronto or Hamilton or Niagara, have very good reports to give to this House about the conduct of funeral home operators in their communities. I speak very specifically about the types of funeral homes and funeral directors that tend to prevail especially in smaller-town Ontario, like the communities I come from, which are family-owned and family-operated funeral homes.

New Democrats ask other members of this Legislature to do as we intend to do, and that is to ensure that those small family-operated and -owned funeral homes have an

opportunity to examine this legislation, and to ensure that those same operators have access to a public hearing process, which necessarily should follow second reading debate on this bill.

First, it's acknowledged, it's been stated and it will be restated during the course of discussion around this that a funeral expenditure is one of the largest single expenditures any family faces. Second, the cost of funerals, according to the anecdotal evidence we're receiving, is increasing. Perhaps that's the nature of the beast.

One of the concerns we have is that legislation like this ensure that families of a deceased family member or friend have access to the most economically possible funeral arrangements that can legally be provided. We think it's imperative that that option has to be given to grievors at the time of making funeral arrangements. Quite frankly, we've witnessed far too many funeral scenarios wherein the costs accepted by the people, arranging the funeral at a point of incredible grief and intense emotion, have become almost crippling, if not indeed crippling, to those families after the emotions have soothed a little and there is the realization of what's happened to them as they've gone about making arrangements.

Of particular concern of course is the combination proposal, funeral home operators also owning funeral plots. I call upon members in this assembly to very carefully scrutinize it with the assistance of their owner-operated funeral homes, like I have down in Niagara Centre and like every other member of this caucus and most members of this Legislature have. I know it's been a matter of concern in the past. I suspect it will warrant some consideration now.

I regret to note there's very little in this bill addressing the heritage nature of burial sites in this bill, in and of itself. You know, Speaker, that there are a number of areas across the province where that issue is very much causing great concern with ethnic communities, among others, as to ownership and control of historical and heritage burial sites.

The act does make reference to aboriginal burial grounds. I noted with interest that one of the people consulted was Marcel Beaubien. We all know that Mr Beaubien has some very specific experience with respect to aboriginal burial grounds. I'm not sure of the extent to which he influenced the consideration in the bill of aboriginal burial grounds, but we know he's had a great deal of experience, most of it as of yet undisclosed, as we await discovery on the lawsuits that are very much in action and that this government clearly doesn't want to resolve with a public inquiry into the killing of Dudley George, now far too long ago but still in fresh in the memory of every member of this province.

Concern about the fact that the Red Tape Commission made submissions or had some impact on the bill causes us to be cautious about the legislation. It warrants consideration; it warrants thorough debate. Quite frankly, it warrants committee hearings. I don't know what promises the minister made to participants in the advisory process, but the minister had better be prepared to get this

bill called for second reading debate. He's scheduling it for committee. New Democrats are going to insist on it.

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): On a point of order, Speaker: To recognize National Child Day, Voices for Children sent every member of the Legislature a button which reads, "Listen to a child today." I would seek unanimous consent that we would be allowed to wear these buttons today in the legislature.

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

VISITORS

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: It is my pleasure to introduce today a delegation from my riding of Hamilton East, behind us, and along with the delegation my mother, of course, which means that one day of the year I'm actually going to behave in here. Thank you.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): We certainly welcome Mrs Agostino and her group again this year. Welcome.

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): On a point of order, Speaker: I ask for unanimous consent for third and fourth reading of Bill 204, the No Freezing in the Dark Act, since people continue to have their hydro shut off.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): I've never heard of a fourth reading.

The Speaker: We stand corrected. The member is asking for second and third reading of Bill 204. Is there unanimous consent? I'm afraid I hear some noes.

ORAL QUESTIONS

COMPETITIVE ELECTRICITY MARKET

Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's): The question is to the Premier. Premier, did you consult with Chairman Bill Farlinger of OPG prior to the electricity marketplace opening on May 1?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): No, I did not.

Mr Bryant: I find it unbelievable, or unbelievably reckless, that the Premier of Ontario did not contact the chairman of Ontario Power Generation before opening up the marketplace. One of the most momentous decisions that you made as the Premier of Ontario, after becoming the Premier, one of the biggest decisions that you had to make was with respect to the opening of this marketplace. It had enormous consequences. The question is this: what assurances did you receive from Ontario Power Generation that justified your opening the marketplace on May 1?

Hon Mr Eves: The honourable member goes on and on about Ontario Hydro. I see his leader is here to talk

about energy and his energy policy. I haven't checked the Web site today to see if they have one today. We do have ministers of the crown who are responsible to run their ministries. It's not appropriate for the Premier of the province to check every single decision that is made in every single ministry or by every single government agency.

Mr Bryant: This wasn't just any decision made by the Premier of Ontario. This was whether or not to open up the electricity marketplace. Your predecessor, Mike Harris, picked up the phone and called the Chair of Ontario Power Generation before announcing that the market would open on May 1. But you're telling us that you're just a little too busy and too taxed to do the homework and find out whether or not in fact the electricity marketplace was ready before you opened it? Either you didn't do your homework or you were reckless beyond belief in opening up the marketplace on May 1. Which is it?

1420

Premier, I'll tell you something. If you think the people of Ontario think it's OK that the Premier of Ontario was too busy to do his homework and find out, before the electricity marketplace was opened, that it was ready, I think you are going to receive a rude awakening at the ballot box. I would say to you, sir, what homework did you do before the marketplace opened on May 1 that justified your opening up—

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

Hon Mr Eves: To the honourable member for St Paul's, that was a great three-minute speech and 10-second question.

With respect to his point about OPG and the opening of the marketplace, first of all, as we have explained in this Legislature many times, there were several factors that contributed to high fluctuations in prices per kilowatt hour, being the hottest summer—

Interjections.

Hon Mr Eves: I didn't check with Bill Farlinger to see if it was going to be the hottest summer on record since 1955. I didn't check with Bill Farlinger to see if the experts at OPG, with respect to the nuclear facility at Pickering—to see if it was going to be delayed after the market opened, for yet a seventh time. I didn't check with Bill Farlinger to see whether or not one of the units at Bruce, during routine maintenance, might be accidentally damaged and therefore be down for two or three months.

But you are so wise, I say to the honourable member for St Paul's, you're taking so many acting lessons and you're so good on TV that I think you should tell us today what the weather's going to be like next July, August and September. You should tell us whether or not there's going to be any damage done to any unit during any maintenance next year, and you should tell us, because you're obviously smarter than any nuclear physicist out there—

The Speaker: The Premier's time is up. New question.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Joseph Cordiano (York South-Weston): I have a question of the Premier. Yesterday the people of Toronto learned that you are no different from Mike Harris when it comes to cutting services out of public education. On top of the \$2 billion you cut while you were Minister of Finance, your appointed supervisor wants to cut even more from the city of Toronto. The York Adult Day School in my riding and the Maplewood school in Scarborough are slated to close this year. Some 3,000 adult students will see their programs cut. The remaining adult education centres have waiting lists. They can't take on any more students.

Premier, you more than anyone should know that we are in a knowledge-based economy. At a time when we should be encouraging more people to acquire the skills they need, you are turning your back on these people. Is this the way you show your commitment, or your supposed commitment, to public education—by shutting these students out?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): To the honourable member, with respect to the Toronto District School Board, first of all, many Liberal members have stood up in this Legislature and predicted many things when a supervisor was appointed to go in—and in fact, when you go back to when an inspector was appointed to go in—and look at the Toronto District School Board. You said that special education would be cut; it has not been. You said that the number of teachers would be reduced; it has not been. You said that the pools would be closed; they have not been. On almost every single point that you and your Liberal colleagues made, you were wrong.

In fact, the supervisor has now managed to increase funding to the classroom, which is where it belongs, and in case you're interested, they put more money into textbooks, more money into computers, more money into the classroom, more money into hall monitors, more money into school safety.

For your information, the education system is about the education of the child, not about how many staff that are doing nothing we can have in an administrative building belonging to a union.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Supplementary?

Mr Monte Kwinter (York Centre): Mr Premier, in the age of information technology we learned yesterday that you are prepared to sit idly by while \$10 million is slashed from the Toronto school board's computer budget. Students that could have had access to the latest technology will instead have outdated, old computers or, worse, nothing at all. You're going from one out of six to one out of 10. Premier, it is frankly unbelievable that you're prepared to take this money out of the children's classroom.

It is unfathomable that in this knowledge-based economy you refuse to recognize that our children need and deserve to have access to the very latest technology available. Premier, would you tell Toronto parents and

students how cutting the budget for computers and technology is going to help them?

Hon Mr Eves: First of all, we are increasing the suggested budget by the supervisor, increasing spending on computers in the classroom. The previous question suggested that education spending has been reduced; it has not been reduced.

Interjection.

Hon Mr Eves: It has not. It started out at \$12.9 billion and it's now at \$14.36 billion. That's an increase, in case you're interested, of \$1.5 billion. Dr Rozanski is reviewing the funding formula on top of that, and we increased funding during the fiscal year by \$557 million.

I know Liberals have problems with numbers. Their problems with numbers translated into a \$10-billion increase in our provincial debt while they were there, and on top of that they increased the debt of Ontario Hydro by \$8 billion. They claim they balanced the books when they really had a \$700-million deficit. So I'm not about to take any advice from you about numbers. Only a Liberal could think 12.9 was larger than 14.4.

The Speaker: Final supplementary.

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): Mr Premier, for eight years I've seen you stand up in the House. I've seen John Snobelen, I've seen all your Ministers of Education and yourself stand up and say you cared about education. Well, here's what you've done. For the last eight years you have caused havoc in our public schools. You have closed schools, you have cut programs, you have created chaos in our public schools, and now you stand up and gloat about it. You're proud of it.

Yesterday you cut \$90 million out of our schools. That means there are 100 fewer secretaries in our schools. They're the gatekeepers in our schools. There's 65 fewer vice-principals. They take care of discipline in our schools. They're not going to be there any more. I've got schools in my riding where the roofs aren't going to be fixed. I have toilets that aren't going to be fixed. I have schools falling apart, and you have the guts to stand up there and say you are proud of this cut—

The Chair: I'm afraid the member's time is up.

Hon Mr Eves: First of all, money spent in the classroom is actually increased under the supervisor's recommendation. He talks about the commitment to education of this government. This government has increased education spending by \$1.5 billion and we are reviewing the funding formula, as we promised to do, at the same time.

We are the first government in the history of the province of Ontario that has made sure that special education funding actually goes to special education.

We have built more schools than David Peterson's government did or than Bob Rae's government did during a five-year period of time.

1430

We will continue to improve public education in the province of Ontario, but I can assure you of one thing: we won't say one thing in Timmins and another thing in Toronto, like your leader does, about public education.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. This is the last warning for the member for Eglinton-Lawrence. If he continues shouting across, we'll just throw him out for the day.

It is now time for the leader of the third party's question.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY AND DEMAND

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): Premier, this is a new report released by the North American Electric Reliability Council. They do studies across North America to tell us if there will be enough hydro this winter and they're warning that the situation in Ontario this winter "could spell trouble." They say that with just normal winter temperatures, Ontario's average electricity capacity margin is only 10%. It's over 18% in Quebec and over 20% in California.

Premier, you try to hide the skyrocketing cost of privatized, deregulated hydroelectricity from hydro consumers with your pre-election rebate scheme. How are you going to hide the brownouts and the blackouts?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): Mr Speaker, he's a great—

Mr Gregory S. Sorbara (Vaughan-King-Aurora): You'll declare them illegal: no brownouts under the Eves government.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): The member for Vaughan-King-Aurora, come to order, please.

Hon Mr Eves: Mr Speaker, I feel that the member for Vaughan-King-Aurora is feeling a little lonely. Maybe he'd like to join the NDP caucus so he could get a question on in question period.

Interjections.

Hon Mr Eves: On second thought, maybe that's not such a good idea.

We have taken steps to protect the consumer, as you are aware. I presume you're in favour of that and will support that when the legislation is introduced shortly.

A lot of fearmongering went on at this time about a year ago that the leader of the third party—

Interjections.

Hon Mr Eves: The leader of the third party then suggested brownouts and blackouts. Perhaps he'd like to itemize all the hundreds of blackouts and brownouts we've had in Ontario in the last 12 months. Would you like to itemize them all for us, please?

Mr Hampton: Premier, the question was—even international experts now are identifying that under your scheme of hydro privatization and deregulation over the last seven years, you've left us with not enough electricity. I just asked you, how are you going to cover up the brownouts and blackouts? It's so obvious that your rebate cheques for hydro are an attempt to cover up the high cost and an attempt, by the way, to buy a few votes before the election.

It's pretty clear that not enough electricity does mean the possibility of brownouts and blackouts and it does mean that those private hydro companies that you want to

see in the province will jack up the price, and then taxpayers' dollars will have to go to pay them off, to hide it from the consumers.

I know you believe that you can fool the people with a \$75 cheque just before the election, but how do you prevent the brownouts and blackouts?

Hon Mr Eves: First of all, there has not been a brownout or a blackout in the province of Ontario. He said the same thing a year ago. He was wrong then and he's wrong again. What has he got against consumers being reimbursed every cent they were charged above 4.3 cents per kilowatt hour since May 1? What has he got against that, and does he not want that to happen?

Mr Hampton: Premier, I'm not prepared to take part in what is so obviously a pre-election bribe. You have a tête-à-tête with Ralph Klein and he says to you, "Ernie, this is what we did in Alberta: we gave them a fat rebate just before the election, and then as soon as the election was over we took the rebate off and the hydro bills went sky high again." And what does Ernie do 10 days later? He announces the Alberta rebate and says, "Oh, before the election we're going to send you out a cheque, but don't ask what happens afterwards. Don't ask about electricity supply. Don't ask where the money comes from when the private companies jack the price of hydro up to \$1,000 a megawatt hour."

Premier, the question is this: if you think you can bribe people with a pre-election \$75 cheque, at least tell them as well how you prevent the brownouts and blackouts because your hydro privatization plan isn't drawing any new electricity supply to the province. You owe people that. What's the answer?

Hon Mr Eves: To the leader of the third party, first of all, he keeps talking about brownouts and blackouts, knowing full well that none has occurred and none is going to occur. He's the greatest fearmonger going. He's driven around the province in his little bus trying to tell people there's going to be a blackout any day now. He's been doing that for a year, and he's been wrong every single day for 365 days in a row. The odds are not good for your being right one of these days, Howie.

We have a nine-point plan that deals with protecting consumers as we go forward. We also have a plan that protects consumers until at least 2006. We also have a plan that will encourage people to locate generating facilities here in Ontario. You will have an opportunity to vote against the consumers if you want, to vote against the initiatives to try to encourage people to locate here and generate more power-producing facilities in the province. You can vote against all of that if you want to. We'll be interested to see how you vote.

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): Again, to the Premier: I would have thought that your painful experience with hydro would have taught you that privatization isn't the answer. But last week at midnight your government sends out requests for proposals

for private MRI clinics. Why would you send them out at midnight unless you have something to hide? You've already announced that you also want to get into private hospitals.

I know of course that the Liberals want to keep an open mind on privatized health care, but I want you to know where New Democrats stand. Privatized health care doesn't work for people. Privatized health care may work for corporate profits, but it doesn't work for people. Premier, while we're waiting for Mr Romanow to provide his report to the Canadian people, will you call off your scheme for private MRIs and privately built hospitals?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): Mr Speaker, I refer the question to the Minister of Health.

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): There are a few points that should get on the record. First of all, this initiative of greater access to diagnostic services, universally accessible, part of our publicly funded system, was announced in the throne speech; it was announced in the budget. I myself made an announcement that we were moving ahead with the project.

The honourable member, the leader of the third party, should get his facts straight. This has been part of public discourse for months. This government is committed to greater diagnostic services in hospitals and we announced three new MRIs last week as well, which he didn't mention in his question, I noticed. But the cities of Ottawa and Owen Sound are certainly grateful that we have moved ahead with MRIs in hospitals, and we are moving ahead with stand-alone clinics just as the NDP government moved ahead with independent health facilities in previous governments.

This is an established practice by the government of Ontario to increase accessibility. You use your OHIP card; universally accessible; consistent with the Canada Health Act; greater services to the people of Ontario—that's what this government is all about.

Mr Hampton: The Premier ought to know that the Romanow commission has already gathered together a number of studies that show that in fact the patient results from a privately operated health care system are substandard compared to a publicly operated system. Just today, yet another report was released showing that for-profit hospitals mean substandard care.

1440

It's quite interesting. You put out your request for proposals for private MRIs at 11:59 pm, one minute before midnight, as if you're afraid to let the public of Ontario see it. Premier, if you're that afraid and if the so-called meetings to discuss the request for proposals are closed to the public, if someone from the public who wants to go to them can't get in, why don't you call off your whole agenda and let the Romanow commission put forward a program for medicare—a program for publicly funded health care, publicly administered health care—rather than the backdoor privatization that seems to have such favour with you? Why won't you at least do that?

Hon Mr Clement: Well, we're having a little bit of fun on this side of the House. Perhaps he thinks we are using crop circles to announce these things as well. Did you not read the throne speech? Did you not read the budget?

The honourable member should be aware that this has been established practice to increase accessibility for the people of Ontario when it comes to diagnostics. In his own riding, in his own community, there are diagnostic services being performed right now by stand-alone clinics that have been part of the Ontario health system for decades.

The fact of the matter is, we have a system that ensures universal accessibility, that ensures that people have access through their OHIP card. That's what this government is committed to. That's what we are all about. The honourable member can talk all he wants about studies about what happens in Arkansas or Alabama or I don't care where, but that's a for-profit system where the patient is charged at source. That is not allowed under our acts, it is not allowed under the Canada Health Act. This government wants to increase accessibility, and we will use creative means and every means possible to do so, because we believe in accessibility.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): My question is to the Premier. Premier, I want to ask you about affordable housing in this province. As of today, in the city of Peterborough over 1,100 households are on a waiting list for affordable housing. It can be a wait of up to 10 years to get into one of these facilities in Peterborough. In the city of London there are 3,500 households with up to a four-year waiting period. There are 10% fewer rental units on the market in London today than there were since your government took office. In Guelph-Wellington, 26,000 households are on a waiting list, with a wait of three to five years; 4% less availability on the market today than when you took office.

Premier, we know what you've done. You've gutted rent controls. You've abandoned support for non-profit housing and affordable housing. Can you tell us the other side of the story? Can you tell us how many new affordable housing units have been built in Peterborough, London and Guelph-Wellington since your government took office?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I refer the question to the Associate Minister for Urban Affairs.

Hon Tina R. Molinari (Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): On May 30, 2002, the federal government signed a deal with the province to ensure funds for affordable housing under the affordable housing agreement. The Ontario government and the municipalities are pleased that the federal government has remained committed to seeing that the deal goes through.

We recognize that affordable housing is a joint responsibility requiring the support of three levels of government. The proposed new affordable housing program is a short-term step to encourage new affordable housing in construction. The province is close to launching the new program. The first project funded by the program will be starting this year.

Mr Agostino: That answer certainly helps the people of Guelph-Wellington, London and Peterborough who are waiting four to 10 years for housing. The deal you signed with the federal government is a joke. You have not put one new cent of money into that program. You've taken money that was in place and you've moved it around with the municipalities—not one new cent. In the city of Hamilton there are 3,500 households on a waiting list for up to five years, with 5% less market availability today than there was five years ago.

Interjection.

Mr Agostino: The member from London likes to heckle, but can he tell his residents why they have to wait five years to get affordable housing in the city of London? The reality is, you gutted rent controls, you walked away from the table, you abandoned municipalities, you abandoned individuals in Ontario when it comes to non-profit housing. It is a disgrace that in this province that people in cities such as Peterborough have to wait 10 years for affordable housing, that in London you have to wait five years and in Guelph you have to wait four years. It is an embarrassment to this province and this government. You are responsible for this, Minister. Again, today, can you explain to the people of London, Guelph, Wellington and St Catharines how many new units have been built since your government came to power in 1995?

Hon Mrs Molinari: This government believes in tax incentives and the creation of more affordable housing for business. Let me put on the record the Liberal government's housing record.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Keep it down. It's getting noisy in here. The same crew is always yelling and screaming across.

Hon Mrs Molinari: It's nice to have silence in the room when I put the Liberal government's record in the open. The average rent increase under the Liberal government was 12% yearly. The money they wasted: \$27 million for six housing projects in Toronto that were never built; the NDP and Liberal legacy of a \$1-billion housing boondoggle; \$300 million for consultants' fees—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Members, take their seats. The member for Kingston and the Islands, I'm naming him and I'm asking Mr Gerretsen to leave the chamber right now—number 34 that I've now removed during question period.

Mr Gerretsen was escorted from the chamber.

The Speaker: Associate Minister, we've lost a little bit of time, but you can start over and continue, please.

Hon Mrs Molinari: I can start over? OK. So the average rent increase during the Liberals' reign was 12% yearly. The money they wasted: \$27 million for six housing projects in Toronto that were never built; the NDP and Liberal legacy of a \$1-billion housing boondoggle; \$300 million for consultants' fees; \$550 million for architectural fees; \$50 million for legal fees. Philip Dewan, chief of staff for Dalton McGuinty and former president and CEO of Fair Rental Policy Organization, said, "Much of the criticism has justifiably focused on Ottawa, which has failed to act on urgently required measures such as fair tax treatment of rental housing to make new construction affordable"—

The Speaker: The minister's time is up.

AUTISM SERVICES

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): My question today is for the Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services. This past Monday I was very pleased to join you and the Minister of Citizenship in an announcement for substantial new autism funding. This announcement is particularly interesting to me because autism affects many families in my riding of Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale. I realize that you explained during the news conference that the new funding was for autism. I want to make sure that my constituents did not miss this very important announcement. Could you please tell my constituents and this House exactly what this announcement was about?

Hon Brenda Elliott (Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services): I thank my colleague for Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale for his attendance at the event and for the question today. I was also joined at the news conference by my colleague the Minister of Citizenship, the representative of Mississauga East. It was a wonderful announcement. Today, as we celebrate the International Day of the Child, we have a great deal to celebrate on this side of the House. We have done so much for children and we're particularly proud of this landmark announcement.

Over the last few years, Ontario has shown itself to be a leader in offering services to autistic children and their families. This new announcement has secured our position as a North American leader in both the scope and the breadth of the comprehensive program. I announced an additional \$58.6 million for services for children with autism, which will bring our government's total commitment, on behalf of Premier Eves, to almost \$100 million by 2006-07. This new money is going to two kinds of programs: intensive behavioural intervention and broad traditional programs.

1450

Mr Gill: I know that families across Ontario will be very pleased to learn about this new funding. It is especially good to know that this government is doing everything it can do to address the waiting lists by providing additional funding and the recruitment and training strategy. Minister, my constituents would like to more

about how the government plans to address the shortage of professionals to provide IBI, which is intensive behavioural intervention, and I would like to know how this new funding helps families with children over six years of age.

Hon Mrs Elliott: Thanks to my colleague. This program will invest in two kinds of programs—intensive intervention programs for children aged two to five. One of our difficulties is that we have a shortage of professionals. That is why we are looking for ways to find people to enter this field to eliminate the waiting lists that presently exist and to build capacity so that we can address the problem.

With the help of colleges and universities, as part of this program we are going to develop curricula for training programs. We are going to invest in a recruitment strategy. For children who are over the age of six, we are going to have different kinds of programs: a transitional and support service to ease children from the early intervention programs into the school age. We are also, under the Minister of Education, going to pilot autism program standards in the year 2003-04. These will be forums to teach teachers and special education teachers more about how to help children with autism.

Finally, it can't be forgotten that we have four other programs that offer services to children with autism, in addition to the \$500 million that we've increased in special education programs. A landmark program—

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

HAZARDOUS WASTE

Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming-Cochrane): My question is to the Minister of the Environment. Minister, as you know, on November 1, the Ministry of the Environment issued a deficiency statement regarding the Bennett hazardous waste incinerator EA that was unprecedented in its scope and magnitude. In fact, the four-page letter pointed out not only examples of the gross omissions, inconsistencies and discrepancies in the EA, but it ordered Bennett to overhaul their whole documentation and all its appendices. It is apparent you should have terminated the process, but instead you have given the company a second chance to resubmit their application.

Minister, isn't it clear that a company such as this that is so careless and reckless with its EA documentation can't really be trusted to run a toxic waste incinerator 1,200 metres from homes and schools in the town of Kirkland Lake?

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): No, that is not an accurate synopsis of the circumstances. What happened was, they made their application and the Ministry of the Environment reported back that it was deficient. We felt it was significantly deficient. We then issued that letter to Bennett. They have an option under the act to reapply within seven days; that's the law. They can choose to

reapply in seven days or not, but there's no way in the world that the Ministry of the Environment can say that if they don't apply within seven days, they can never apply again. It is a free country. It is a democracy. If they choose to make application, they may do so.

But this has got to be clear to you and the good folks around there: this Ministry of the Environment is very conscious, very cognizant, very aware of the environmental issues. They made a very straightforward and stern decision, addressed the issues, and said they were deficient; in some cases, woefully deficient. I think we should take our hats off to the good people at the Ministry of the Environment.

Mr Ramsay: It is very clear to the 50 people from my riding who have come down here today that basically the process allows a second opportunity and maybe a third opportunity—as you say, it's a free country—for this company to continually apply to position a hazardous waste incinerator in northern Ontario, in the town of Kirkland Lake.

By allowing this process to restart, you're again inflicting great pain and anguish on all the people who want to stop this and protect their environment. You will again be putting the onus on ordinary citizens to really do the public fight to protect the environment, a job that you should be doing, with their private resources and their time and their energy. That's the point of this. Hundreds of people have given their time and money and effort to protect their environment and their livelihood, and now you say they might have to start the battle all over again. This process is wrong and it's punitive to all the people in Ontario.

Minister, who's going to compensate my constituents for this continuing battle they have to wage to protect the environment? When are you going to provide intervenor funding so that we can get proper, professional opposition to these projects so that we can start to debate the science and make sure that Ontario's environment is safe?

Hon Mr Stockwell: The fact remains, and I suppose the second answer is going to be very similar to the first answer, we can't unilaterally tell somebody in this democratic free nation that we live in, "No, you can't make application for use of your land." What we can do as the Ministry of the Environment is to ensure that any application meets the very tough, stringent environmental laws and rules that were put in place by this government and previous governments.

The argument you make is rather moot, I suppose, because when both opposition parties were in government, you could have drafted a bill that said, "You get one application and one application only, and you may never make it again." But the point of the matter is simply this: we have a democracy where they can make application and the Ministry of the Environment can review that application with environmental goals and deeds as the end game. Now, they didn't meet the environmental goals and deeds of the end game. The Ministry of the Environment did their job. It is protecting the

people of this province. All I can tell you is that this was a system you worked under, it's a system we're working under, and we believe it's a good system.

HEALTH SERVICES

Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough): A clarification for Hamilton East: there are a number of affordable housing projects on the table at the moment in Peterborough. Get your facts straight.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Take your seat. Don't start with that. You don't get to—

Interjection.

The Speaker: Take your seat. Don't start doing that. That's what gets this place going, when you make stupid statements like that. I'd ask that you not do it. Member for Peterborough, ask your question.

Mr Stewart: I don't think it was a stupid question, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: You're not going to get in an argument with me. You're not allowed to go across to the other side during questions; you don't get to ask questions of the opposition. I ask that you not do it. Do you want your question or not? Otherwise, we'll go in the rotation to the next person if you want. It's up to you: do you want the question or not?

Mr Stewart: Yes.

The Speaker: Good. Go ahead.

Mr Stewart: My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. During constituency week, I had the opportunity to speak with a number of my constituents about a very important issue to rural Ontario: nurse practitioners. As you know, the pilot project for the nurse practitioner program is in my riding, in the municipality of Havelock-Belmont-Methuen. Since its inception last year, there have been a number of rumours and media reports within the community that the government is going to pull the funding and the area will lose its nurse practitioner.

Minister, can you clarify this situation once and for all so that I can assure the people of Havelock-Belmont-Methuen that their government is committed to providing them with access to primary health care?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): If I may, I'm glad that my colleague from Peterborough raised this issue, because I know it's one that he has taken a great personal interest in, providing a great deal of hard work on behalf of his constituents. I think that is appreciated, if I may say so, by my fellow caucus members as well.

I can announce at this time, and I can do so to this chamber and to the people of Peterborough county, that the nurse practitioner program will in fact continue in Havelock-Belmont-Methuen township next year. Last night, the Peterborough Victorian Order of Nurses advisory board came forward and agreed to sponsor this very program. The Ernie Eves government will now provide funds to the VON in order to ensure continuous nurse practitioner coverage in the township.

I would like to thank all of those who were involved for their effort and hard work on this issue, and I can tell you that the nurse practitioner program is another example of the Ernie Eves government providing the best publicly funded and universally available health care possible.

Mr Stewart: Thank you, Minister, for your response. I'd also like to thank you, the Eves government and all of the people in the community of Havelock-Belmont-Methuen for your involvement in this particular issue.

I also understand that the Ministry of Health attended the World Health Organization conference last week. I heard that at the conference, Ontario and the Ernie Eves government received a special recognition that praised Ontario's universal influenza vaccination program. This is a great accomplishment. As Ontarians, we all should be proud of this achievement. It just proves that if you want the best health care anywhere in the world, you should come to Ontario.

I was wondering if the Minister of Health could inform my constituents about where to find information about the vaccination program and where they can get the flu shot in the Peterborough area.

Hon Mr Clement: I'm happy to inform the honourable member in this House that it was an honour to represent Ontario at the World Health Organization conference, where in fact we as a province were recognized by Klaus Stohr, the program leader of the global influenza program for the World Health Organization, for Ontario's world-leading role in the fight to eradicate the flu, and we should be proud of this accomplishment.

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For more information on the flu shot, I encourage Ontarians to phone 1-866-FLU-NYU, or 1-866-358-6968. Of course, one can always access HealthyOntario.com. That is one other way to get that personal information. They can also phone the Peterborough County-City Health Unit at 705-743-1000, or they can visit clinics in their community, for instance the one at the Peterborough Regional Health Centre tomorrow and Friday of this week, located at One Hospital Drive. The clinic will be open from 10 am to 10 pm. Please get your flu shot. It's important for yourself and the health of your community as well.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): My question is to the Minister of Education. If your supervisor is allowed to cut hundreds of responsible adults from our schools, our students, I put to you, will be put in danger.

Vice-principals, lunchroom supervisors, educational assistants, school secretaries, caretakers, youth counsellors and attendance counsellors—all are responsible adults who watch over our children every day in more ways than one. Principals told me that cutting them from our schools is an accident waiting to happen. They warned of a Walkerton in our schools.

Why are you putting our children at risk by removing more responsible adults who watch over them from our schools?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): Unfortunately, we continue with the same type of dire predictions as we heard prior to Mr Christie announcing his balanced budget. You talked about the parenting centres going, the pools going, cuts in the classroom, cuts in special education: none of that has materialized. In fact, we have increased funding for classroom teachers, textbooks and classroom supplies. We have increased the spending on hall monitors, so we have increased school safety. Everything that has been done has been to focus on the child in the classroom.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Supplementary?

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): Minister, when I warned your government about privatizing the water testing labs, I got the same answer. Then Walkerton happened.

Let me tell you that a six-year-old child was sexually assaulted in a school in my riding. The accident has already happened there and the parents, that child and the community are still trying to deal with it. People are already concerned about their children's safety.

The administration that you're talking about are real people. They are the men and women, the eyes and the ears in the school, who watch and look after our children. When you mention administration, Minister, you are talking about the eyes and ears who watch our children. I'm asking you today to face reality. These children are now being put at risk. Tell it like it is. Tell us that you will put these people back in our schools.

Hon Mrs Witmer: I appreciate the member's concern for our children, but the member needs to keep in mind a couple of things: number one, our government has recognized that our schools need to be safe environments. That's why we introduced the Safe Schools Act. That is very important.

Furthermore, Mr Christie has responded to the need as well by increasing the number of hall monitors. This has been taken into consideration. I would just—

Interjections.

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): Hall monitors. That means more security.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. The member for Scarborough Centre can't continue with that. I ask Mrs Mushinski to leave as well. Her minister had to sit down because of her own member.

Mrs Mushinski was escorted from the chamber.

The Speaker: Stop the clock, sir. I think we lost track of time a little. I think the minister had some more time, if she wishes.

Hon Mrs Witmer: I simply wanted to emphasize the fact that the issue of hall monitors was a very important issue. The number of hall monitors in order to help and protect students and keep students safe under this budget has actually been increased.

IPPERWASH PROVINCIAL PARK

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): My question is to the Premier. Today we have more evidence of the need for a public inquiry into Ipperwash. You'd be aware that the judge at the trial involving the death of Dudley George said, "I find that the accused ... knew that ... Dudley George did not have any firearms on his person when he shot him," and that the story of the rifle and muzzle flash "was concocted ex post facto in an ill-fated attempt to disguise the fact that an unarmed man had been shot."

Today we find in the government document that the government is saying the protesters were armed. How in the world can the government say that the protesters were armed when the judge, supported by the Supreme Court of Canada, concluded that the protesters were not armed?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I refer this to the Attorney General.

Hon David Young (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): Indeed the honourable member has raised very similar issues in this assembly on numerous prior occasions. I have said on those occasions that this is a matter in front of the Superior Court of Justice of Ontario. I think we should be respectful of that fact. This is a matter that should be determined by an independent, impartial trier of fact. It is not a matter that a politician who is partisan should determine, regardless of which side of the Legislative Assembly they happen to sit on. These are all facts that are in front of the court, and I have the utmost confidence that in due course they will make the right decision.

Mr Phillips: I realize that former Premier Harris has a civil case. But just because there are civil cases before the courts does not stop me from asking questions here in the Legislature and should not stop a public inquiry.

I want to raise a second point that the government has said. You have said that the protesters were illegal occupiers. You should be aware, Attorney General, that your own crown attorney was forced in court, when he acknowledged that you had evidence of a burial ground, to drop all of the charges against the protesters. In fact, it says here in your own document from your crown attorney, "Further, it has been clearly indicated by the provincial division judges at pretrials that this defence will succeed in all instances when it is raised," ie, of the burial ground, and therefore the crown withdraws all charges.

Again I say to you, you have said in the court document today that they were illegal occupiers, but your crown attorney was forced to drop the charges against these people in court because you had no evidence that they were there illegally. Why in the world are you putting out documents saying they were illegal occupiers when you yourself, the government, dropped the charges because you knew you had no evidence that they were illegal occupiers?

Hon Mr Young: I say again that this is not the appropriate forum to determine matters in dispute that are in

front of the court. The honourable member has chosen a paragraph to refer to in what is indeed, as I have here, a 37-page factum that has been filed by the court. He's chosen to ignore all the other paragraphs. He's done so presumably because it advances his partisan case, his position.

I say to you, sir, with the greatest respect, we should leave this matter to the independent, impartial court that has been assigned to deal with it.

MUNICIPALITIES

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): My question is for the Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing responsible for urban issues. As you know, Scarborough East is a predominantly urban riding. I must admit I'm pleased to hear the dialogue coming from the government concerning the vitality of urban centres all across this province. I believe it's important for those who live in urban areas to be assured that we, the Conservative government, have invested in strong communities that will remain globally competitive in the 21st century.

Minister, yesterday the federal government finally realized, through the Sgro report, that different urban regions actually have unique needs. Can you please tell this House how our government has already recognized the unique needs of urban communities across this province?

Hon Tina R. Molinari (Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I thank the member for Scarborough East for his question and for his interest for his community. This is an important issue not only for the constituents of Scarborough East but for constituents in all of Ontario.

This year at the AMO conference, Premier Eves emphasized the need to respond to the challenges facing cities and urban centres. Our province is willing to join in the emerging dialogue as long as it addresses the real needs of our cities. The process surrounding this dialogue must involve all levels of government working toward co-operative, long-term solutions for municipalities rather than ad hoc, one-off solutions.

I am pleased to report that my urban forums have been an excellent way to better understand and address the issues of all the opportunities within the urban centres.

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Mr Gilchrist: I'm certainly happy to hear you are making great progress meeting with representatives from urban municipalities across the province to better understand their issues. I'm also happy to hear that the government's commitments are being followed up by actions.

But yesterday the federal government laid out its plans for Canadian municipalities in the Sgro urban task force report. I have to admit I was encouraged by the direction that was taken to ensure our cities remain competitive globally. But knowing that Ontario gives \$32 billion a year more to Ottawa than we get back, let me say it's

high time the federal government recognized that they should be making reinvestments in our province, the province that carries the rest of Confederation behind it.

Tell me, Minister, as you've been meeting with the people you described in those urban town hall meetings across the province, are they encouraged by the federal report and the federal Liberal promises?

Hon Mrs Molinari: We are encouraged by the direction the federal government laid out in the Sgro report. Our government agrees that the continued competitiveness in urban centres is important. We are pleased that the feds have also clearly recognized what we, the province, have been saying all along; that is, the feds have a significant role to play in the long-term needs in helping municipalities deal with infrastructure challenges.

We will continue to demand that the federal government play a greater role as a full partner to help fund infrastructure needs and that they are coordinated with the provincial governments and for municipal priorities. Our government looks forward to working in partnership with the federal government once they make long-term funding guarantees for municipalities. They must also recognize the fiscal imbalance that is existent between the federal government and the province of Ontario and all the provinces.

HAZARDOUS WASTE

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): My question is for the Minister of the Environment. On November 6, I asked if you had stopped the tar pond sludge from Sydney, Nova Scotia, from being accepted into Ontario and dumped into the landfill in St Clair township. From the response you provided at the time, you obviously didn't understand the question, nor did you know your facts.

On November 8, 2002, the waste management branch of the environment ministry confirmed that the Brigden site near Sarnia is the only site in the province with a permit to bury untreated hazardous waste. I'd like to go further: it is the only place in North America that allows this type of dumping. So I'll ask you again: will you stop the highly toxic tar pond sludge from Sydney, Nova Scotia, from being dumped in Ontario?

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): The fact is that we have harmonized with the neighbouring jurisdictions our levels for dumping with respect to sludge. There is a certain requirement that anyone who wants to do that would have to meet according to Ontario provincial standards. The only way they can do the dumping is that they meet the Ontario provincial standards, which have been harmonized.

To put the case to the point, if you look back to the dumping in previous administrations, hazardous waste imports have now gone down by over 31%. Why did they go down 31%? Because we changed the regulations to force people who were trying to dump this sludge in the

province to conform to tighter regulations that conform to other jurisdictions around us. So it's going down, and next year we expect it to go down again. Our regulations are tough, we've made them tougher and the fact of the matter is that they have been harmonized, something previous administrations didn't do.

Ms Di Cocco: Minister, you've harmonized it so well that we're trucking it in from Sydney, Nova Scotia. There's nothing closer that will take the waste. I'll tell you, you really are a piece of work. How is it in the best interests of Ontario to allow 9.3 million pounds of this highly toxic substance from the Domtar tanks in Sydney, Nova Scotia, to be dumped in Ontario? You tell me how that is in the best interests of the public and the best interests of the people of Ontario. Your ministry doesn't know that you've changed the regulations, and neither does the site in Brigden. Have you changed their certificate of approval? I don't think so. Minister, will you stop that substance from coming into Ontario?

Hon Mr Stockwell: Well, here's how the system works: you change it by regulation. The regulations were changed by this government to force any people who are importing this stuff to meet the requirements and regulations that the government has set down. We changed the regulations. That's why it has been reduced by 31%. The question that you put forward is that the staff doesn't know about this—

Interjection.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Oh, that's way out of order. I saw what she said. It was far worse than what my friend the minister said the other day, and I think you should stand up and withdraw that.

Mr Speaker, the honourable member did the honourable thing yesterday and withdrew. I think that honourable member should do the honourable thing and withdraw that comment.

Ms Di Cocco: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I will withdraw the comment that I made.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I thank the member, and the minister I think has about 10 seconds to wrap up.

Hon Mr Stockwell: What I want to say is that that material—and I'll go even further. If you have a community group that would like to meet with me so I can explain the new regulations and tell them all the work that we've done to make sure that this meets the requirements, I'll be happy to meet with that community and explain to them the process. I think we should get into direct dialogue between me and that community rather than you and that community, so I can get them educated.

INTERJURISDICTIONAL SUPPORT ORDERS

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): My question is to our Attorney General. Minister, I know that the people of Durham and the people of Ontario share your commitment that families and children who rely on support orders receive the payments they are entitled to. It's simply a question of fairness and respect, not the least of

which is the law. I'm very disappointed that some individuals try to avoid their legal responsibilities by moving out of the province, indeed out of the country. These people feel that by leaving Ontario's borders they are able to turn their backs on their communities, perhaps their families, and indeed the law.

Minister, these people need to know that leaving Ontario—they should realize they can run but they can't hide from their obligations—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. We'll let the member speak. Order, please. We almost have—time's up, and the member wants to ask the question. I'll let the member start over again.

Mr O'Toole: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: You're almost done now.

Mr O'Toole: In that case, there's more to be said on this issue, but certainly I want to leave our Attorney General an appropriate amount of time to respond in defence, not just of the people of Durham, but in fact of Ontario. You can run but you can't hide from our Attorney General, and I can tell you that those individuals fleeing the law and the court orders are denying access to their families and their children.

What recent actions, Minister, have you taken to ensure that the money owed to these families will be collected regardless of where the parent lives? Indeed, Speaker, this is all about protecting children. I know our Attorney General wants to respond to this.

Hon David Young (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): This is indeed an important point. I appreciate that it's the end of question period, but there are a lot of individuals across this province, and indeed across the country, who would be very interested in this very positive development.

No child should ever go without simply because one parent moves into another jurisdiction across this country, or for that matter anywhere. What we have done under the leadership of Premier Eves is we have brought forward legislation that was signed into law yesterday, Bill 131, the Interjurisdictional Support Orders Act, that will simplify the method by which parents in one jurisdiction can have support orders enforced in other jurisdictions. It is reciprocal. I'm very proud of that fact. I'm very proud of the fact that literally thousands of families will now find it easier to have those support orders honoured and to have the funds delivered to where they are supposed to be delivered, in most cases to some of the most vulnerable people in our society, young children.

1520

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

Mr Joseph Cordiano (York South-Weston): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I wish to express my dissatisfaction with the Premier's answer to my question today. I have filed the appropriate document challenging

the Premier. I know he won't show up—but it would be different—to a late show.

Interjections.

Mr Cordiano: Why not? That would be the appropriate—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I thank the member. He has filed that; that's very good. We will make sure that happens.

RESPONSES TO PETITIONS

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): Mr Speaker, on a point of order: On September 23, I tabled a petition in this House and it was to be responded to by the Minister of Housing. We have no response to date, and the 24 sessional days are long past. I am seeking that an answer be given.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I thank the member for the point of order. The members will know that the requirement has gone past the time, I do believe, so the minister, hopefully, will get a chance to respond to that and I'm sure he will.

PETITIONS

HAZARDOUS WASTE

Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming-Cochrane): I have a petition here signed by 8,080 people from Timiskaming-Cochrane in regard to Bennett Environmental toxic waste application.

"Whereas the Ontario Environmental Assessment Act has been significantly weakened with regard to the regulations concerning the siting of landfills, incinerators and other project proposals, thereby allowing northern Ontario to be unduly targeted as a waste zone; and

"Whereas American experience has show that all, even state-of-the-art, incinerators produce and emit dioxins, furons, lead, mercury and cadmium at levels that create significant measurable health impacts on the affected communities; and

"Whereas the proposed Bennett incinerator is in violation of the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment guidelines;

"We, the undersigned, petition you, as the Premier of the province of Ontario, to turn down the current application for the Bennett toxic waste incinerator proposed for Kirkland Lake; and

"We, the undersigned, further petition you, as Premier of the province of Ontario, to replace the current Environmental Assessment Act with legislation that gives affected communities a full environmental assessment including intervenor funding and a comprehensive and public hearing."

I will affix my signature to this.

CHILD CARE

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): This petition has been sent to me by Jubilee Heritage Family Resources in Sudbury. It reads as follows:

“Whereas 70% of Ontario women with children under age 12 are in the paid workforce;

“Whereas high-quality, safe, affordable child care is critical to them and their families;

“Whereas the Early Years Study done for the Conservative government by Dr Fraser Mustard and the Honourable Margaret McCain concluded quality child care enhances early childhood development;

“Whereas this government has cut funding for regulated child care instead of supporting Ontario families by investing in early learning and care;

“Therefore, be it resolved that the Ontario government adopt the NDP’s \$10-a-day child care plan and begin implementation by reducing full child care fees to \$10 a day for children aged two to five currently enrolled in regulated child care, by providing capital funds to expand existing child care centres and build new ones, by funding pay equity for staff, and by creating new \$10-a-day child care spaces in the province.”

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

HYDRO RATES

Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington): I’m presenting this petition on behalf of the member for Oakville. It reads as follows:

“Whereas the province has stated its commitment to ensuring affordable hydro rates for the citizens of Ontario;

“Whereas the province’s recent move to deregulate hydro rates and place them within the competitive context of the open market has resulted in actual and high rate increases, including retroactive ones, for Ontarians, summer heat waves notwithstanding;

“Whereas these hydro rate increases, above and beyond what citizens have paid before deregulation, present a great burden to many young families and those who are on fixed incomes;

“Whereas the province itself admits that a review of hydro rates is necessary and has inaugurated one, albeit one with an overly lengthy mandate;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

“That the province be directed to freeze hydro rates to last year’s levels immediately during its current review of its deregulation policy and move forward to protect citizens of Ontario against such exorbitant rate hikes.”

It’s signed by many hundreds of constituents of the riding of Oakville. Might I add, the member for Oakville was absolutely right.

NATURAL GAS RATES

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): I have more petitions related to the Union Gas retroactive delivery charge and the need for the government to act, which backs up the plea made earlier in the day by my colleague from Sudbury, Rick Bartolucci.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

I am strongly in support of this and am happy to sign my name. I will pass it off to Jared, one of our new pages. Thank you very much.

CUSTODIAL CARE

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“The regional council of Niagara have presented to the social services minister the following recommended changes to the legislation:

“(1) That the province of Ontario amend the Child and Family Services Act to recognize custodial care by extended family members as a legitimate intervention and that the related funding to support these care arrangements be made available;

“(2) That the temporary care allowance rate pursuant to the Ontario Works Act be altered to reflect established rates for similar care by foster parents;

“(3) That the regional municipality of Niagara, along with the Niagara Family and Children’s Services, train their respective staff on the program options available to extended family members wishing to care for children;

“(4) That the region of Niagara, along with Family and Children’s Services, advocate for the recommended changes with the Ministry of Community and Social Services as well as relevant associations, such as the Ontario Association of Children’s Aid Societies;

“(5) That other consolidated municipal services managers be informed of this issue through circulation of this committee report;

“(6) That the province of Ontario be encouraged to consider a legislative change to permit open adoptions;

“(7) That the regional chair correspond with the Minister of Community and Social Services to advise the minister of these recommendations;

“We, the undersigned support these recommended changes to the legislation.”

I of course have affixed my signature as well and I send it to you with page Brian from Sarnia.

SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex): To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas some motorists are recklessly endangering the lives of children by not obeying the highway traffic law requiring them to stop for school buses with their warning lights activated;

“Whereas the current law has no teeth to protect the children who ride the school buses of Ontario, and who are at risk and their safety is in jeopardy;

“Whereas the current school bus law is difficult to enforce, since not only is a licence plate number required but positive identification of the driver and vehicle as well, which makes it extremely difficult to obtain a conviction;

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

“That the measures contained in private member’s Bill 112, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act to protect children while on school buses, presented by Pat Hoy, MPP, Chatham-Kent-Essex, be immediately enacted. Bill 112 received the unanimous all-party support of the Ontario Legislature at second reading on June 13, 2002.

“Bill 112 imposed liability on the owner of a vehicle who fails to stop for a school bus that has its overhead red signal lights flashing...”

“And we ask for the support of all members of the Legislature.”

I have affixed my name to this petition.

COMPETITIVE ELECTRICITY MARKET

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): These petitions are from residents of Hamilton. They read as follows.

“To the Ontario Legislature:

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

“Whereas selling coal plants like Nanticoke to the private sector will lead to more pollution because the private owners will run the plants at full capacity to earn a profit; and

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

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

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

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

1530

HIGHWAY 69

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): This is a continuing petition with regard to the multi-laning of Highway 69 between Sudbury and Parry Sound. It’s to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

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

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

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

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

Whereas so far this year 10 people have been tragically killed on that highway between Sudbury and Parry Sound; and

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

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

Whereas the Premier of this province, Ernie Eves, will be in Sudbury tomorrow night; and

Whereas the community of Sudbury demand that the Premier of this province announce a start date for the four-laning of Highway 69 tomorrow night in Sudbury; and

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

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

I affix my signature to this petition and give it to Lauren, our new page, to bring to the table.

KIDNEY DISEASE

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): This petition is signed by people from Hamilton. It reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas we, the undersigned residents of Ontario, draw the attention of the Legislature to the following:

"Whereas kidney disease is a huge and growing problem in Canada;

"Whereas real progress is being made in various ways of preventing and coping with kidney disease;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to encourage the Canadian Institutes of Health Research to explicitly include kidney research as one of the institutes in its system, to be named the Institute of Kidney and Urinary Tract Diseases."

I have affixed my signature to this.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Eves government has increased the fees paid for by seniors and the most vulnerable living in long-term-care facilities by 15% over three years, or \$3.02 per diem in the first year and \$2 in the second year and \$2 in the third year, effective September 1, 2002; and

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

"Whereas this increase is above the rent increase guidelines for tenants in the province of Ontario for 2002; and

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

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

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

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

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

"Demand that Premier Eves reduce the 15% increase over three years in accommodation costs to no more than the cost-of-living increase annually and the provincial government provide adequate funding for nursing and personal care to a level that is at least at the average standard for nursing and personal care in those 10 jurisdictions included in the government's own study."

I affix my signature. I'm in agreement with the petition.

COMPETITIVE ELECTRICITY MARKET

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): This is a petition addressed to the government of Ontario.

"We, the undersigned residents of Ontario, recognize that:

"(1) Electricity rates in deregulated, private, for-profit markets such as Alberta and California fluctuate wildly in supply and price, and are a much higher price than in comparable public power systems;

"(2) Deregulation in California caused more blackouts than Ontario has suffered from ice storms or other natural disasters while public power has protected us from market fluctuations in supply as well as price;

"(3) At-cost electricity has helped build and support Ontario's economy, while deregulation would destabilize the economy, with soaring rates, reduced reliability and increased production costs leading to plant closures, job loss and economic decline;

"(4) Soaring electricity rates would put a significant burden on school boards, hospitals, public transit and other public services which cannot afford to pay double for their electricity;

"(5) Seniors and other members of our communities on fixed incomes would be hard-hit by increasing rates, and the living standards of millions of Ontarians will be harmed;

"(6) Privatization will trigger NAFTA provisions, making it practically impossible to reverse this dangerous experiment and would cost us Canadian control over electricity;

"(7) Privatization, deregulation and loss of sovereignty would close the door on public accountability of the industry in regard to environmental safety and energy security concerns; and

"(8) An alternative exists in the form of a truly accountable, transparent and affordable publicly owned and controlled system operated at cost for the benefit of all Ontarians;

"Therefore, we demand that the Ontario government immediately halt the planned privatization, sell-off and deregulation of the public electricity system."

I have affixed my signature as well, as has Ms Martel from northern Ontario, my colleague in the NDP caucus.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Progressive Conservative government promised in 1995 not to cut classroom spending, but has already cut at least" \$2 billion "from our schools and is now closing many classrooms completely; and

"Whereas international language weekend classes are a needed part of learning for many students in our neighbourhood; and

"Whereas the Education Act, specifically regulation 285(5), mandates provision of these programs where demand exists; and

"Whereas the Conservative government funding formula is forcing the Toronto District School Board to cancel these Saturday classes for groups who want this programming;

“Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to instruct the Minister of Education to restore meaningful and flexible funding to the Toronto District School Board, to ensure that they are able to continue to accommodate these Saturday international languages classes.”

I wholeheartedly agree with this petition, as do my colleagues, and I have affixed my signature to it.

OPPOSITION DAY

COMPETITIVE ELECTRICITY MARKET

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): The Chair recognizes the leader of the third party, Mr Hampton from Rainy River.

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): I move the following resolution:

Be it resolved that skyrocketing hydro bills have shown beyond any doubt that Ontario's hydro system must be operated as a non-profit public service;

That no portion of Hydro One or Ontario Power Generation should be sold or otherwise transferred into the control of profit-seeking corporations;

That hydro bills for all customers, including the price of the electricity itself, must be regulated on the basis of power at cost by an independent public utilities commission;

That Ontario Power Generation should get back into the business of building generating capacity, starting with a major commitment to green power, conservation and efficiency but also including a significant amount of gas-fired power. Enough new generation should be built to allow all Ontario's coal-fired generating plants to be shut down by 2007. OPG's plans for new capacity should be subject to public review and a final decision by the independent public utilities commission; and

That it is now urgent to terminate the disastrous experiment with a so-called competitive market in electricity.

The Deputy Speaker: Mr Hampton has moved opposition day number 3. There was one misprint in mine. Should that be 2007?

Mr Hampton: Yes, 2007.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. The Chair recognizes the leader of the third party, from Kenora-Rainy River. I'm sorry to have missed the “Kenora” earlier.

1540

Mr Hampton: That's all right, Speaker. I know that as constituencies change with every federal redistribution, your constituency may disappear in this election.

I can think of no issue that is more urgent for people across this province. We have seen over the last four years a Conservative government tell the people of Ontario that privatizing our hydro system, turning what has been a not-for-profit hydro system into one that is owned by several profit-driven companies, and deregula-

ting the price would be good for consumers. That was the government's line. In fact, they spent millions of dollars on television advertising campaigns, on newspaper advertising campaigns, telling people across the province that privatized, deregulated hydro would increase supply and lower the price.

For our part as New Democrats we pointed out time and time again to people that no matter where you look, privatized and deregulated hydroelectricity has indeed not worked very well. Certainly the instant examples that come to mind include the situation in California, where prices literally went through the roof and where there were rolling brownouts and blackouts. And we learned after the fact that there never really was an electricity shortage in California; it was just that when profit-making companies get their hands on the generation and supply of electricity, they have every incentive to engage in market manipulation, creating artificial electricity shortages and then driving up the price and gouging consumers. That happened in California, and people know about it.

Then we saw the episode in Alberta, where people literally saw, after deregulation and partial privatization of the system, that people's hydro bills went up 500%. Montana: people saw their hydro bills, after deregulation in the state, go up four times. If we want to look farther abroad, many parts of urban New Zealand went without hydroelectricity on a continuing brownout and blackout basis for months following hydro deregulation there. And then we have the case of Great Britain, where they essentially had to re-regulate the system in order to cut out some of the market manipulation, but the re-regulating of the system has meant that some of the companies that were in fact gouging consumers before are now bankrupt; British Energy comes to mind.

New Democrats pointed out time and time again that deregulation-privatization was not going to result in adequate or reliable or predictable supply of electricity; if anything it would create conditions of chaotic supply. And what do we have now? Today a report comes out from an independent body, the North American Electric Reliability Council. It's their winter report for 2002-03, and what do they say about Ontario? They say that the reserve capacity in Ontario, for those days when you have peak demand or peak need for electricity, isn't sufficient. They say that we've only got a 10% reserve supply. Even California has an oversupply of 20%. Quebec, next door to Ontario and which has not-for-profit, publicly owned hydroelectricity, has an over 18% reserve capacity. But following five years of this government's fascination with privatized, deregulated hydroelectricity in the province, we are in a situation where we could well face brownouts and blackouts this winter. Imagine, when it's 20 below zero or 30 below zero in a community in this province and the power goes off and there's no electric heat.

This government wants to pretend that's not a problem. In fact, this government believes that by mailing out some \$75 rebate cheques they can cover up the problem,

they can hide the problem. This government has created a very, very serious problem indeed, and merely mailing out some pre-election hydro rebate cheques, a sort of pre-election bribe to people, in the hope that they can cover up the problem by doing that just illustrates how bankrupt this government is in terms of its whole misguided hydro privatization and deregulation—completely bankrupt.

In the months of August, September and October, people across the province started to figure this out; in the months of June and July, they started figuring it out too. The government said there'd be lots of power, but the hydroelectric Independent Market Operator, about every second week during the summer, was putting out an advisory, "Please, consumers of Ontario, can you shut off the air conditioner? Can you stop using the electricity that you need, because we're in a brownout situation?"

It was very interesting in question period today. The Premier tried to deny that there had been brownouts. Somebody needs to inform the Premier that this summer the IMO categorically states there were no less than six brownouts in the province of Ontario. A brownout is defined as a situation where there is not enough electricity to meet the demand, and you then either face rolling voltage problems or you have to ask people to reduce their demand for electricity in order to avoid a real disaster. Somebody needs to inform the Premier that there were in fact six brownouts this summer.

In the summer you can perhaps deal with those without too serious consequences, but in the winter when it's 30 below, or colder in many communities in the province, and you face a brownout, that is very serious stuff indeed. This government needs to recognize that it is its misguided hydro privatization and deregulation scheme that has led us to this point and put people at this kind of risk.

The people discovered, this summer and this fall when they started getting their hydro bills, what hydro privatization and deregulation means when they started getting all these warnings from the IMO: "Please turn off your air conditioner. Please turn off your lights." I don't think the government's propaganda campaign is going to fool anyone. I don't think the \$75 pre-election bribery cheque is going to fool anyone either.

People know what happened in Alberta. They know that the Premier had a tête-à-tête with Alberta Premier Ralph Klein two weeks ago. Ralph Klein told Premier Eves two weeks ago, "After the price of electricity went through the roof in Alberta following privatization and deregulation, we were in political trouble there too. But we just floated some pre-election rebate cheques and people swallowed it. And then after the election we ended the rebate cheques, and their hydro bills went through the roof—but we still got re-elected." That was the Alberta strategy.

It's very clear that Premier Eves and the Conservative government think the same pre-election bribery will work here in Ontario. But I have to tell you, I think Ontario people have been watching what happened in California,

Alberta and Montana. People are aware that Montana, in the state elections two weeks ago, voted overwhelmingly to get rid of the deregulation scheme and re-regulate the price and supply of hydroelectricity in that state. So I don't think people are going to fall for this pre-election bribe, this \$75 gift in the mail, just before the election.

There are very serious issues here that have to be addressed. I want to address them. Unlike our counterparts in the Liberal Party—it's hard to say what their policy is now on electricity. It was pretty clear, though, for four years there that they wanted to tell the public one thing; meanwhile, they were trolling up and down Bay Street telling the companies interested in private electricity, "Contribute money to the Liberal Party, because if we form the government we're going to continue privatization and deregulation." I think it's only as the Liberals have been found out, when the microphone has been pressed in their face and they've been forced to clarify their position, that they've move around a bit. It was interesting.

On Monday, the Liberals said that they were going to abandon privatization and deregulation of hydro, but on the same day a fundraising letter went out to those same Bay Street companies that want privatized and deregulated hydro, that want the hydro prices through the roof, and this letter, the same day the Liberals were out there saying, "We're opposed to deregulated hydro, opposed to selling off the hydro system," this fundraising letter is out there saying to the same companies that want privatized hydro and want deregulated hydro, "With Dalton McGuinty's Liberals, we'll get the plan Ontario needs to attract investments"—private investments in hydro. And then it says, "I urge you to contribute today. Your maximum annual contribution to the Ontario Liberal fund is \$7,500 with the opportunity to donate an additional \$5,000 to individual riding associations."

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They're still doing it. They are still telling the public of Ontario, or trying to tell them, that they are opposed to hydro privatization and deregulation, but then they're out there trolling up and down Bay Street saying to the same companies that want privatized hydro and want deregulated hydro, "Send your cheques to the Liberal Party. Wink, wink, nudge, nudge. After the next election, if the Liberals form the government, don't worry, hydro privatization and hydro deregulation will continue."

Talk about duplicity. Talk about saying one thing on Main Street and the opposite thing on Bay Street. The Liberals continue to think they'll get away with that. I've got news for you. You, the Conservative government, won't get away with a pre-election bribe, and the Liberals won't get away with telling two different stories, one to the consumers who don't want hydro privatization and another to the investors who want it so badly. Neither of you will get away with it.

What do we need to do? I want to point out, for all those people who hear this propaganda that you should privatize and deregulate hydro, look at Hydro-Québec, in the province immediately to the east of us. Quebec isn't

privatizing or deregulating their hydro. Quebec recognizes that the supply of hydroelectricity is something that is fundamentally essential to the operation of their economy, fundamentally essential to people in their daily lives and to the schools and the hospitals and the colleges and the universities, and that something that is a fundamental public necessity should not be put in the hands of profit-driven corporations that will have every incentive in the world to create artificial electricity shortages so they can drive up the price and make more profit. Quebec recognizes that this public necessity should be kept in public hands and operated on a not-for-profit basis so that people will be able to afford to turn on the lights and turn on the heat. When it's 30 below in the winter, by God, they'd better be able to turn on the lights and turn on the heat.

Manitoba, to the west of us: Manitoba isn't privatizing their hydro. Manitoba Hydro is publicly owned, publicly operated, not-for-profit, and has the lowest electricity rates in North America. Imagine that. When in my constituency of Kenora-Rainy River, people in Kenora were getting hydro bills this summer, they expected a hydro bill for \$80, which is what it had been in the past, but they got one for \$160. And then they'd phone up their son or daughter or niece or nephew in Winnipeg and say, "What are you paying for hydro in Winnipeg?" And they would say, "We have the lowest prices in North America. Our system operates on a non-profit basis. We don't have to worry in Manitoba about Enrons trying to force up the price." They don't have to worry in Manitoba about Brascan funding the Premier's leadership contest to the tune of \$140,000 and then driving up the price of electricity in places like Wawa or Sault Ste Marie. They don't have to worry about those situations.

I just say to the people of Ontario, no matter where you look in this fiasco of hydro privatization and deregulation, a number of things happen. One, the supply of electricity becomes more chaotic. If I were a profit-driven hydro company, would I want to build new supply if I could create an artificial electricity shortage and then drive up the price? No. I'd want to have a situation where in fact there was almost a chronic shortage of electricity. I'd want the highest prices possible. That's how I'd line my pockets; that's how I'd make a lot of profit.

Wherever you find privatized, deregulated hydro systems, the supply of electricity—what you need when it's 40 below, what you need when it's midnight and you need some lights—is chaotic. The other thing that happens in a privatized, deregulated system, as people in Ontario found out, is that the price goes up. Why? Because the generating company wants a profit. If they can make a 40% profit, good. If they can make a 50% profit, if they can double the price and make a 100% profit, they'll do it. Then the transmission company wants a profit. If they can get 15% or 20%, they'll take it. And the distribution company wants a profit. If they can make 15% or 20% profit, they'll add that to the bill.

Then you've got the door-to-door electricity marketers that this government has brought into Ontario. You

know, Direct Energy, that literally went to people's doorsteps and lied to them to get them to sign contracts, that forged contracts. People discovered after they had listened to the flim-flam that they were going to be paying at least 40% more for the raw price of electricity. Imagine when people got their hydro bill, expecting it would go down, and it doubled. So when you add in all these new profit-takers, fee-takers, commission-takers and then the people standing in the background, the Bay Street people who want their fee, it's no wonder people's hydro bills doubled. That's the difference between not-for-profit hydro and a hydro bill where you've got eight or nine profit-takers, fee-takers and commission-takers who are all trying to get into the consumer's pocket. That's what people have discovered here in Ontario.

What do we need to do? Again I make this point to people: this is an essential public service. It is a public necessity. It's not like buying a car. If General Motors, Ford, Chrysler, Honda, Toyota and all the rest doubled the price of cars next week, as a consumer I would still have a choice. I could say to them, "I'll keep my old car and fix it up," or I could say, "I'll buy a second-hand car," or I could talk to my colleague here from Niagara Centre and say, "We'll car pool for a while. But I'll be damned if I'm going to get ripped off by somebody who's doubled the price of cars." Do you know what? Those cars would sit there on the lot for six months or seven months until they brought the price down.

It's not like that with electricity. First of all, you can't store electricity on the lot. Second of all, I need it every day. Try to run your refrigerator without having electricity every day. See what happens to the safety of your food. Try running your furnace at 40 below when you don't have electricity and see what happens. That's the reality of electricity. It's a necessity every day. You can't store it, and you can't say, "Because you've doubled the price, I'm not going to buy any for a week."

The other reality is that it takes four, five or six years to bring on new supply. So when you privatize and deregulate the market and the Enrons and the Mirants and the others jack up the price, what are consumers supposed to do for six years? Get down on their knees while the private companies jack up the price? Or, the other side of things, the government announced last week, much for the cameras—actually I think they made the announcement for Hydrozilla—that they were going to engage in some kind of immediate conservation plan. The reality of hydro electricity is that you can't implement some sort of immediate conservation plan. If you are going to have an effective, workable conservation plan, it has to be something that you implement over a period of time and that you work at consistently for a period of time.

So Hydrozilla really did quite enjoy this bogus, phony, public relations announcement by the government, where they drove up in a car fuelled by bacon fat as if to suggest to people that bacon fat was the answer to high electricity prices. You know, this government thinks a pork barrel will do many things. But a pork barrel will not get us out

of the privatized, deregulated hydro mess they've created.

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What do we need to do? I just want to lay it out here straight. The Liberals can flip-flop and the Conservatives can try to hide and cover up, but what we need to do is to get all the profit-takers, fee-takers and commission-takers out of the system. We need to recognize that hydro is a public necessity and should be provided on a not-for-profit basis across the province. That's what New Democrats would do. We would pass immediate legislation telling the Direct Energys who have been lying to people and manipulating people on the doorstep, "Get out of the province. We don't want you." I realize that would be some sacrifice to the Conservative Party, because Direct Energy has made a number of financial contributions to the Conservative Party. But I'm sorry, fellas, you just have to suffer. The needs of electricity consumers, the needs of the Ontario people come before your need for money—payola—from Direct Energy. So you get rid of the profit-takers.

The second thing we need to do is re-regulate the price so it is power-at-cost, not power-at-cost plus 40% profit or commission.

The third thing we need to do is stop privatization, stop selling off what are essential assets for the province, the most important economic assets for us in terms of the fundamental underpinning of the economy. Initially, the government tried to say, "The reason you have to sell off hydro is because hydro has a debt." Yes, hydro has a debt. The reason hydro has a debt is because Conservative governments that this crew doesn't want to think about, doesn't want to remember, had this deep love affair with nuclear power. They thought, in the late 1970s and early 1980s that nuclear plants would be cheap to build, would require no maintenance, and you didn't have to worry about storing the nuclear waste—that wasn't a problem—and you didn't have to worry about the cost of decommissioning the nuclear plants when they reached the end of their lifetime. That was the Conservative line then. So they started building a lot of nuclear plants.

Just as an illustration of where the debt comes from, the Conservatives in 1978-79, when they proposed Darlington, said, "It will cost less than \$5 billion." They said it would cost less than \$5 billion. In 1989, when it was finished, the final price was \$15 billion. I have to be very clear here. The Conservatives started Darlington; the Liberals, between 1985 and 1990 also got on the nuclear bandwagon.

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Energy, Minister responsible for francophone affairs): Did you support them?

Mr Hampton: The Minister of Energy wants to know, what was the NDP position? We voted against it. We consistently voted against it.

Hon Mr Baird: You propped them up.

Mr Hampton: No, between 1985 and 1987 Darlington was actually discontinued. After the Liberals got a

majority government in 1987, then they started rebuilding it. I just want that to be clearly on the record.

The first thing we discovered is that the cost of nuclear power, of building it, was tens of billions of dollars more than they'd first anticipated. The second thing learned was that the cost of maintaining these nuclear plants on a year-to-year basis came to hundreds of millions of dollars in maintenance; they aren't maintenance-free. And now the bill starts to come home for storing the nuclear waste and for decommissioning those nuclear plants.

So who built up the debt at Ontario Hydro? None other than the same Conservative outfit that thought they had a fast answer then, the same Conservative government that now says to the people of Ontario, "We'll send you a \$75 rebate cheque. Just pretend that there's no problem out there. Just pretend that hydro prices didn't go through the roof. Just pretend that the IMO didn't tell people this summer there were six brownouts. Just pretend that the North American Electric Reliability Council isn't telling people that brownouts and blackouts this winter aren't a real risk in Ontario."

The government says you have to privatize because Ontario's hydro system has a debt. Here's the government solution: they stick the people of Ontario with the debt and then they turn the Hydro assets over to private companies that get to collect the profit.

It's like this, Speaker: imagine if you bought a new home and took out a \$100,000 mortgage, and then the Conservative government came to you and said, "Speaker, move out of your home. Let someone else live in it, but you continue to pay the debt." That's this government's answer with respect to hydro. They want to sell the assets so that British Energy and Brascan get to take the profit, but the people of Ontario get stuck with the debt. What an absurd scenario. People get it at both ends. They have to pay the higher cost of privatized hydro, but then they have to pay the debt that's left behind as well.

The government says that's a sound policy, but it's not. I just want to recite for government members the statements of the former—he's still the chair of Ontario Power Generation. He is the chair appointed by the Conservatives to Ontario Power Generation. His name is Bill Farlinger. In 1995 in the Hydro annual report he actually comes out and says that in fact, as a result of some of the changes that were made in 1992, 1993 and 1994, Hydro's debt is being paid down, that the pay-down of the debt is accelerating and will continue. Hydro's debt was actually being paid down. There is no magic answer in privatizing it, sticking the people with the debt and then the private owners with the profit.

I just want to point out something else. It's reported in the media that a number of the private, for-profit hydro companies across North America are having huge problems having their debt refinanced. This wonderful solution that the government proposed, that somehow privatizing answers all the questions, clearly isn't the answer. The private hydro companies—Duke Energy, Mirant—many of them are facing bankruptcy this year because they can't finance their debt.

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): Look at British Energy.

Mr Hampton: British Energy comes to mind. It was supposed to be the answer for this government in terms of leasing out the Bruce nuclear facility. Now we find that British Energy is technically bankrupt. It's only being held afloat by an emergency loan from the British government.

New Democrats want to be very clear: hydroelectricity is an essential public service. It should not be privatized. It should not be put in the hands of foreign corporations. It needs to be publicly owned. It needs to provide hydro at cost, not at cost plus all the profit-takers and fee-takers this government has brought into the system. We need to focus overwhelmingly on a long-term conservation strategy, not just one that's done for the television cameras and for the benefit of hydro zealots; a long-term conservation strategy that looks at retrofitting buildings and homes that are not energy-efficient.

We need to look at retrofitting some of our power dams as well, because the turbines in many cases were built 30 and 40 years ago. More modern turbines will in fact increase the output of electricity at very little additional cost. We need to move on, as Manitoba and Quebec are, doing research and allocation programs for wind turbine energy, actually physically locating the sites and starting to build the plants.

This should be done publicly. It must be done on a non-profit basis so the people of Ontario will continue to enjoy environmentally responsible electricity, affordable electricity and a reliable supply of electricity, free of the profit-takers, fee-takers, commission-takers and parasites this government has brought into the system.

1610

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): I'm very pleased to have an opportunity to respond to the comments made by the Leader of the Opposition and to the opposition day motion.

I guess we breathed a sigh of relief when the Clerk was corrected. The original motion read that he wanted all the new generation in place to allow coal-fired plants to be shut down by 2001. Even for the NDP, the idea of sucking back all the pollution that has gone out in the last year would be a little obtuse and extreme, to say the least. But we're dealing here with probably as great a contradiction in one resolution as we have ever seen in all the years that my colleagues have been here in the Legislature.

In the same breath Mr Hampton suggests that we need to stop doing anything to bring competition to the marketplace, we have to stop attracting private money, private expertise, the most advanced technology that's in place in countries all around the world, and instead we want to go back to that hidebound monopoly that did such a masterful job of providing electricity that its greatest legacy is a \$38-billion debt. Three thousand dollars is owed by every man, woman and child in this province for the electricity that we used this past year, this past decade, in fact going all the way back to the late 1960s.

Mr Hampton suggests that there is an option out there to sell electricity at cost, that if we go back to the future, if we go back to that tired old model, that monopoly, the dinosaur that served Ontario so poorly for certainly the last 30 years, somehow we're going to have a panacea out here that there is going to be all sorts of new generation and new creativity.

That is not what we're seeing. The greatest contrast, and we haven't heard it from a single member of the NDP or of the Liberal Party for that matter, is the fact that the only significant asset that was owned by the old Ontario Hydro that has been leased or sold to the private sector is the reactors up near Kincardine, known as the Bruce nuclear facility. That facility has six reactors. Four of them are functioning; two of them are laid up. They are laid up as a result of the extraordinary lack of proper maintenance, the lack of discipline, a number of problems that under the old Ontario Hydro had rendered them not only uneconomical to operate, but in one case OPG definitively, in writing, said one of those reactors could never be made to work again. It had suffered an accident as a result of human negligence and it was absolutely a write-off.

You would ask yourself, why would any company, why would anyone in their right mind, put hundreds of millions of dollars to lease a facility if in fact all it boasted was reactors that could never work again? Well, by applying the same kind of technology that allowed them to upgrade many reactors over in Great Britain, the new lessee, British Energy, put their own money in, brought the new technology in, and at a fraction of what that great public utility Mr Hampton is trumpeting here today has spent down at Pickering. On budget, on schedule, those two reactors that have been laid up since 1997—yes, including the one that would never work again, according to OPG—will be operational this coming spring, the first one probably late spring, the second one a few weeks later in the early summer, adding in each case 769 megawatts of power, between them enough power to supply the needs of almost half the city of Toronto.

It gets better than that. This resolution suggests that only by giving more money, going back to the monopoly of Ontario Hydro, making sure no one else ever darkens our door who might have a new or better way to bring efficiencies to the generation of electricity—Mr Hampton should be challenged by the reality that if he went to Sarnia, if he actually took that diesel-powered bus in which he's been touring the province, trying to whip people into a frenzy about the state of electricity in this province—driving, I might again suggest, a vehicle with the dirtiest form of motive fuels that are used in this country, again a contradiction if ever there was one.

If in fact he'd headed over toward Sarnia, he would have seen that the TransAlta natural gas cogeneration facility is already up and running, undergoing its trial tests. It's going to come on-line, fully, early in the new year: another 490 megawatts of power.

Down near Brighton Beach, you'd find that ATCO, in a partnership with Ontario Power Generation—but you

can guess who's coming up with the money and the drive—they've got another natural gas facility that will be up and running one year later: another 578 megawatts of power.

I've got to tell you that any one of these new operations would have given enough breathing room this past summer to have reduced our reliance on foreign—including the province of Quebec—sources of electricity to something in the neighbourhood of only 26 days this entire year. You would have seen far greater price stability, and that's what we had always expected when the original date for the opening of the marketplace was selected well back in 2001.

Unfortunately, the commitments made to us, again by the publicly owned utility, as to when the reactors in Pickering would come on-line proved to be, to be kind, less than accurate.

The minister has responded by laying down the law with OPG and suggesting that an external review is going to be applied to find out precisely why, in stark contrast to the private sector, in stark contrast to the extraordinary success that is the operation of the Bruce nuclear facility, Pickering continues to miss its deadlines and continues to see taxpayers' money going down into a black hole, a black hole that was supposed to have been filled after \$1.1 billion and now we're told might gobble up two and a half times that.

Oh, I left something else out that really should be on the record when we're talking about the difference between the private operations and the publicly owned operations of nuclear reactors in this province. In that same barely two-year period that British Energy has been operating those nuclear facilities up in Kincardine, they have taken that entire complex, and working in partnership with the Power Workers' Union, one of the shareholders in the company, active participants in the crusade to bring private sector involvement into electricity generation in this province, together they have taken that facility and have now made it the most efficient Candu nuclear reactor anywhere in the world—in the entire world. That means that of the publicly owned electricity operators in Argentina, in India, in Romania, in South Korea, in New Brunswick, and yes, here in the province of Ontario, not one of them is able to get as much power out of a Candu reactor as the one private sector operator is doing up at Bruce.

I don't know why the facts continue to be lost on the NDP and, for that matter, the official opposition. Because you know, this is called opposition day, and I know the author of this resolution happens to be from one of the two opposition parties. But I was struck by the most recent flip-flop in the Liberal electricity policy.

1620

I'm sure you heard yesterday, Mr Speaker, that anyone going on the Liberal Party Web site would have just seen a little note saying, "Comin' soon. We had an energy policy up until yesterday, but unfortunately our leader went out into the scrum and managed to fit both feet into his mouth at the same time." And scant minutes—

minutes—after standing in his place, not once or twice, but eight or nine times, with questions and supplementary questions and castigating the government for putting in place a price cap and suggesting it was unworkable, and damning the government for proceeding with certain aspects but changing other aspects of the original vision we had in the marketplace based on the supply we thought would be there, Mr McGuinty took a couple of steps outside this chamber and proceeded to take diametrically opposed positions on the very questions he was posing in this chamber. I don't think the electorate is so blind that it won't notice such a stark contrast. If that wasn't bad enough, they patched things up today. If you go on the Liberal Web site, you'll find they have an electricity policy. Again, you have to be somewhat tolerant, because this has been cobbled together in less than 24 hours. I know one of their members suggested our policy was written on the back of an envelope. I would think theirs has been scribbled out on the back of one of the Orders and Notices motions here in the time it took somebody to run upstairs to their Web master after listening to Mr McGuinty's scrum.

When you go through this, it's really quite staggering. In the one breath they say they're going to keep the caps in place, and unlike the very specific recommendations our government has now made to promote green power, to get people committed to investments in wind, solar, biomass and geothermal—not airy-fairy speculation but tax incentives, tough new product standards, inducements to buy energy-efficient equipment—the Liberal Party has said, "We absolutely believe everything else the Tories are saying is good. We'd put the price caps on there and take time to review things." They even have, I think, a fairly glowing testimonial to the changes we've made to encourage green power. To give them credit, they don't suggest this is an original thought on their part.

But I think you've got to be struck by one section in particular. Without in any way coming up with concrete, specific suggestions—they don't say what taxes they'll cut, they don't say what technology they will promote—they're going to take 20% of all the electricity supply out of the marketplace less than one year, in fact seven months, after the price caps are removed, and somehow they think the prices are going to remain the same. I don't know how long members of the Liberal Party have been shopping for various products, but I would think it's fair to suggest that any time the demand stays the same and all of a sudden 20% of the supply in the marketplace is withdrawn, even they know that prices will go up, and not by a little bit.

Mr Hampton, in a question earlier today, tried to make it sound like a bad thing that the North American Electricity Reliability Council, which is a group composed of the utilities, large users, the federal regulators for electricity in the United States and many of the provincial regulators, has suggested there will be fully a 10% surplus in the amount of power available here in Ontario over the coming winter. He suggested 10% isn't good enough. If I had another hour, we could go into great

detail about why traditionally the margin has been more like 2% or 3% and going to 10% is an extraordinary step forward, and that too does not recognize all those other facilities that I suggested would be opening by the springtime and early summer.

At the same time he's suggesting that 10% isn't good enough, we've got the Liberal Party suggesting they can take 20% like that—like that—out of the available supply to consumers and small businesses across Ontario and it won't do anything to drive up the price.

I will say to my colleagues in both parties that I will be opposing this resolution, not because it doesn't have some elements—again, the NDP goes on to flatter us. Remember this was tabled this week; that is, a full week after the government already announced what we're doing for clean, green power, already announced what we're doing to promote energy conservation, already announced that we're shutting down all the coal plants by 2015 but in the interim are going to be encouraging green power and, as we get more green power, obviously we'll need less coal power.

I don't want to suggest there aren't some elements, but it is absolutely ridiculous to suggest that the balance of this resolution has any merit. It is the private sector that has demonstrated the only efficiencies and effectiveness in rehabilitating reactors. They have demonstrated the greatest efficiency in operating reactors that were already up and running. They have demonstrated a willingness to make investments here in Ontario. I can tell you that this past week, after our announcements of the tax incentives, the wind and water power associations in particular have identified over 2,000 megawatts of new development that will be coming forward, that will be adding to supply, that will be driving down prices, that will be guaranteeing that we have cleaner electricity generation than has ever occurred in this province or that certainly hasn't occurred since the 1950s, when we started coal plants and, latterly, oil and natural gas plants.

There is a vision that takes Ontario to adequate supply, to clean air, to choices, to competition, that will always moderate and drive down prices. Only the government has offered that plan with any specific details.

The members opposite each had five years to bring their vision of how electricity could be generated better, cleaner and with greater supply in this province, and both failed miserably. Both allowed the debt of Hydro to reach astronomical proportions. Both allowed the air to get dirtier under the watches of Mr Bradley and Ms Churley. In both cases, we increased our use of coal.

This government has drawn a line in the sand. We were the first party to announce the closure of any coal plant. We are still the only party that has supplied any specificity, that has supplied any detail, that has told people how we're going to get from here to there.

So forget glib resolutions that try and cover all the bases, and forget the flip-flopping we are seeing from the official opposition. People can trust that the vision Premier Eves has brought to the table this past week is the one that is going to take us to a stable, secure, clean and adequate supply of electricity for decades to come.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I find it most amusing to watch a lecture by a member of the government about flip-flopping on anything after the colossal flip-flop I saw by this government last week. I actually predicted it.

People were saying, "What do you think they're going to do?" I say to my good friend Mr Turnbull I said, "Don't be surprised if its a 180-degree turn."

They said, "No, it can't be. It's a Conservative government. They have extolled the virtues of the wide open market of deregulation, of all kinds of privatization. They wanted to sell off Hydro One. They wanted to sell off OPG."

I said, "No, do not be surprised. You will see a complete reversal."

So when I hear a lecture from the government side about flip-flopping, I say to my friend from Oxford, I saw them out there, bringing in a trampoline for the Premier so he could do his flip-flop in Mississauga. There was a trampoline just outside that house he went to in Mississauga and was reading the teleprompter as to what he was going to say.

So there are no lectures. You could say a lot of things, if you want, but the last thing we need from government members today is a lecture on flip-flopping on anything. We saw, as one person said, the government go from right-wing idealogues to almost socialists on the other hand. It must make some of the government members shudder to think of this.

People asked me, "Do you think they'll put a price cap on?" I said, "Sure they will."

They said, "No, they won't, because they'll know that the wholesale price is going to be much higher than the retail price."

Hon David Turnbull (Associate Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation): What are you going to do?

Mr Bradley: I'm just telling you what I said was going to happen.

I said, "There'll price caps and they'll be rolling out the rebates. I don't think it'll have anything to do with an upcoming election at all. I don't think their timing will be anything to do with an election, surely."

Mr Marcel Beaubien (Lambton-Kent-Middlesex): Are you running again?

Mr Bradley: The member from Lambton says it probably is going to be and so I suspect that's what's going to happen.

I was listening to your favourite radio station, I say to my friend from Don Valley West. You can guess which station that was—government radio, as some people say—CFRB. They were talking about flip-flops. I was going to call in and try to sound like Chris Stockwell phoning in, with his voice, but I couldn't quite match it, to tell them, "Had you missed something? Had you not seen the action in Mississauga on that particular day?" So I find it amusing. Everybody's got all these quotes that are rather interesting to read back to one another, but all I say is: please, no lectures from the other side after the

mammoth flip-flop that Premier Eves initiated on behalf of the government on this issue. I think what it points out is how complicated the issue is and how governments can do a major change in policy almost overnight.

1630

I should tell some of my friends on the government side that I was down to the edge of the Niagara River again. I've been down there many times to extol the virtues of proceeding with more generation at Niagara Falls, a project we call Beck 3. Every time I mention it to any of the government members they said: "Well, of course, it can't be done because it costs too much." I think even the former energy minister must have said that at some time or other. He denies it, but I think it's just that his recollection is fading a bit in these days of Kyoto.

I wanted to mention that Dalton McGuinty and I were down at the Niagara River again asking that the government proceed with Beck 3. That was just a few weeks ago that we were down there. The government members were saying: "Well, this is not possible." My good friend Steve Gilchrist, member for Scarborough East, said the following: "Beck 3 was stopped for a very good reason." He said that on September 30, 2002. Back in September they were arguing that, "Ontario Power Generation can't deliver Beck 3 without having its power costs more than 4.5 cents a kilowatt hour. If the competitive market keeps the price of power below that, Beck 3 would inflict a 20- or 40-year legacy of loss on taxpayers." That's again Steve Gilchrist, September 30.

So what I wondered was how on earth I could go down to Niagara Falls, where the Maid of the Mist launching pad is, and see the Minister of Energy announcing Beck 3, which his own members had denounced just a few weeks before. Well, what had happened was, panic had set in on the government benches. Some of the smart political operators—I'm sure my friend from Etobicoke Centre would be one of those because, if anything else, he's a smart political operator. I don't know about environment minister, but he's a smart political operator. He would have been counselling, along with some of the others, "It's time we turned this train around and headed in the opposite direction." And so they did. Even on Beck 3, which they were denouncing a few weeks before, they changed their minds. They were saying all this stuff about energy conservation—"It's not going to work." I think the members of the select committee might have thought it would, but some of the others were dismissing it out of hand. All of a sudden, the next week we have this announcement in Mississauga and rolled out over the next few days about government energy conservation, alternative fuels, and five or six other things. What we find out of course is that the government, in full panic mode, changed its policy completely.

Now, you say, what has to happen out there? I watched them follow the pattern of, first of all, Walkerton. They blamed the NDP. Some of my colleagues might join in that, but the government blamed the NDP. They said: "They're at fault for it." Then they blamed

Floyd Laughren, who was the Chair of the Ontario Energy Board. Everybody knows that the government of Ontario dictates the conditions under which the Chair of the energy board works. The energy board doesn't have much flexibility. It works under the mandate that is set up by this government. They appoint everybody to the energy board. Then they blame the local utilities for raising the prices. They were looking for everybody to blame, when in fact their own backbenchers were saying that the government was to blame. That's why we saw this complete reversal on the part of the government.

Well, there's only one option that's going to be left in the foreseeable future, and that is, like them or not, the major player is going to be what I still call Ontario Hydro. Heaven knows, anybody who has sat in government, particularly in a cabinet position in the past, knows the record of Ontario Hydro when it comes to the environment, when it comes to the cost of producing electricity and so on, and when it comes to providing—shall I be kind and say "complete"—information to members of cabinet, to Premiers and to members of the Legislature, because not all the information was complete or, again, I'll use the word "accurate" because we can't use other terminology in this House. So we are stuck with that. When the government made this major change last week, it really leaves no alternative but to move in that direction.

Does that mean that we can't have some green energy companies come on-line? I hope not, because we—and the Chair of the select committee on alternative fuels is in the House. He would remember some of these non-profit, green-energy-type companies that wanted to get some juice on the grid.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): NUGs.

Mr Bradley: "NUGs" is the terminology used: non-utility generating systems. I think that's what that stands for. Also I think there's going to be a place for cogeneration obviously coming up as well. So there are many ideas. I think conservation is going to be exceedingly important now.

One of the things we talked about on our select committee on alternative fuels was dealing with demand. I know some people who are skeptical about environmental things tend to discredit efforts at energy conservation. I see the Minister of the Environment trying to write a message on there. I know he can't hold it up because that would be against the rules, but the message is about that. Yes, and I want to say he is a person who, if he had his way, obviously would be burning coal from now until the end of this century. However, we know that he has promised to close one plant, which we will have closed—that is, the plant just outside the city of Toronto.

The government did everything it could to thwart any plans to close the plants by 2007—not with your government, because you're not going to make those plans—but you will see a major change in attitude: a massive conservation program; alternative fuels being provided; natural gas being provided for electricity out there and all

of the other fuels that my friend the Chair of the select committee on alternative fuels knows exist. If that one machine works that will retain electricity and not lose that electricity, we could be in very good shape indeed.

Someone in the whip's office will tell me when I'm supposed to sit down in this regard. Is it yet?

Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East): No, you've got a minute and a half.

Mr Bradley: I have a minute and a half yet to extol the virtues of our committee, because we're together on that.

I believe that, for instance, wind turbines are going to be very viable. I believe that we're going to see solar power in this province. I believe that we can use a taxing mechanism which will help to bring this on. We recommended that as a committee. I believe we don't have to increase the rates by some 40%, as happened under the previous government. I believe that we should be renegotiating those contracts with the province of Alberta, contracts which were terminated by the Rae administration, because I think those contracts which were at very favourable prices with hydroelectric were good. I think the transmission lines to both the province of Quebec and the province of Manitoba are going to be an important component of what we are doing.

What we have witnessed is a complete reversal on the part of the government, which has changed all the rules of the game completely. We now must proceed, whether we like it or not, putting most of our eggs in the basket of Ontario Hydro. It's going to need much more supervision, very careful supervision and direction, if we're not to have those huge wastes of money taking place, if we're not to see the continued pollution that exists in Ontario, and if we're not to see these grandiose plans, again, not coming to fruition but still costing the province a lot of money.

I think this resolution points generally in that particular direction, and for that reason I believe it probably commends itself to the support of the members of this House.

Ms Martel: It's a pleasure for me to participate in the debate today, obviously because it's our opposition day motion and I'm supportive of it, but I really do believe that electricity—the price of, the supply of—is really top of mind for consumers these days. So it's quite appropriate that we are, as New Democrats, using our opposition day to highlight once again our ongoing commitment to public power at cost, which has been our commitment from the day this government brought in Bill 35, and we have not wavered in our position from that.

It's also very important that we put out some of the alternatives and other things we need to do in an electricity system that is managed in a non-profit way. I think that the opposition day motion my leader has outlined speaks to some very important issues. I know he spent some good time outlining them, so I will not go over all of them in detail.

1640

Where I want to start from is the announcement made by the government on November 11. As I listened to

some of the details trickle out on CBC as I was driving down from my last Remembrance Day service, I thought to myself, "If there was ever a reason to abandon hydro privatization and deregulation, it came with Monday's announcement." If there was ever an admission by this government that the dirty deal of hydro privatization and deregulation hasn't worked in Ontario, it came with the announcement on November 11.

It hasn't worked just in Ontario—and that is clear—it hasn't worked in Alberta, it hasn't worked in California, it hasn't worked in Montana, it hasn't worked in the UK. Why did the Conservative Party think it was going to work here? The problem is that the Conservative Party was so busy trying to kowtow to some of its major financiers of election campaigns that it was quite prepared to put our supply at risk and see consumers gouged with high energy prices. It is only because of the crisis that finally erupted in this province with respect to the high hydro bills consumers and small businesses were receiving that this government finally had to intervene.

Isn't it interesting? Here's a government intervening in a massive way in a system that they said needed to be competitive. I was at more than one of the public hearings on Bill 35, the government bill that led to this fiasco of hydro privatization and deregulation. I was there when the parliamentary assistant, Ms Johns, repeated over and over that competition in the electricity marketplace was going to lead to lower rates—lower rates—for consumers and small businesses. She said it time and again at those public hearings.

At every opportunity we had at those public hearings on Bill 35, our party—Mr Lessard, who was the critic at the time—moved a motion to say the government should then incorporate that into the law. If the government was so confident that privatization and deregulation of hydro was going to lead to lower rates, then put that right into the legislation. Well, of course, the government didn't do that, and the chickens have come home to roost. We have not seen lower hydro rates for residential consumers, farmers, hospitals, schools, colleges, universities, small business or big business. On the contrary, we have seen those people, those organizations, those companies gouged because of hydro privatization and deregulation.

Under this scheme, as my leader pointed out, everyone has a hand in picking the pockets of consumers. The folks out there like Direct Energy, with misleading information, other utilities that are now trying to make a profit because they've been told by this government that's what they should be doing—some of those energy companies are quite happy to take their power off-line during the summer, under the guise of maintenance or anything else so that those prices can be driven up, and we saw that happen this summer. All those people, all those Enrons, have been in the mix. All of them, because of their intervention in what is now a privatized, deregulated system, have driven prices up to the extremes we saw, which finally forced this government to intervene.

If competition was working so well, why did this government have to intervene in the way they did on

November 11? If hydro privatization and deregulation was the mecca and the answer for Ontario, how come the government was intervening in the way it did on November 11?

The answer to that question is that hydro privatization and deregulation is not working, and the best thing this government could do is admit it now, end the dirty deal now and return to a system of public power in Ontario so that the needs of consumers and farmers and businesses could appropriately be served.

I know the government is hoping that the rebate scheme they announced and the cap on prices to individual consumers are going to be enough to buy them the next election. I know that's what they're hoping, because that's what the Alberta government did under Ralph Klein, when just before the election Alberta consumers had been gouged in the same unfortunate and regrettable way. Ralph Klein, who was, oh, so interested in winning the election, spent 2.3 billion taxpayer dollars to try and bribe Alberta consumers, \$2.3 billion in a province whose population is far less than Ontario's. How much do you think it's going to cost for the government to try the pre-election bribe here? How much, Speaker?

It's interesting. We asked the question of the Minister of Energy on Monday: how much is this rebate system going to cost? The Minister of Energy, who is here today, didn't have an answer. He said, "We have a four-year plan, and we believe we will be able to manage it." Well, I would like to know what the costs are going to be. I think the public has a right to know what it's going to cost them for this government to try to implement a rebate scheme.

Not only would I like to know that, because I think the public should know that, but I think if that became a public matter, the hue and cry from the public would be even greater and the call to end the dirty deal would be even greater.

I was at a number of my post offices last week with our new leaflet on NDP support for public power, and I was talking to a number of people after the announcement on November 11. What was interesting was that two of the three people I spoke to, in two of the three different communities I was in, were the very people whose cases I had raised in the Legislature just the week before to show how they were being gouged under a deregulated, private scheme.

Bill Hedderson of Levack had seen his September hydro bill this year rise 36.3% in comparison to his bill last September. The other person, Cindy Bond of Capreol, had seen her family's September hydro bill rise 62% in comparison to the bill from the September before. The one person I didn't see whose case I raised was the person who had the highest increase, Benoit St Amour of Val Therese, who last October paid \$75.05 for his hydro bill and this October paid \$408.13 for his hydro bill, a 543% increase.

So I raised those cases, and there I was at the post office in Capreol and Ms Cindy Bond came up to say hello and thank me for raising her case. She said, "You

know what? This government's rebate scheme, I'm not fooled by that. I know that I'm going to pay for that. I'm going to pay for that through my taxes or I'm going to pay for it through my property taxes. That's money I've been gouged out of, and the government's giving money back that I should have in my pocket already, that I shouldn't have had to put out on a hydro bill." She wasn't fooled.

Then I was up in Levack on Thursday, and I ran into Bill Hedderson. I thanked him again for allowing me to use his case, and he said, "No problem. Continue to use it in every way, shape or form you may need to. And by the way, I don't buy the government line about a rebate. I'm not going to be bought off by this government. The money for that rebate has to come from somewhere. That's going to come out of my taxes, and I'd like to know how much money is going to come out of my taxes to pay for that rebate."

1650

So I don't think people are fooled. I think this government has a huge problem. They're trying to do what Klein did in Alberta, but people saw what Klein did in Alberta. As soon as he was elected, the price caps came off, the rebates went away, and people's hydro bills were jacked up one more time, and people know that's what is going to happen in this province; that's what this government is trying to do. That's why this government is so interested in getting these cheques in the mail before Christmas, if they can. That's exactly what they're going to try to do: a little pre-Christmas gift in the mail of \$75 that sure isn't going to go anywhere for most of these people, and then call an election soon after, "so that we never have to disclose the price of those rebates and we don't really have to implement it after all."

What has also been very interesting is the Liberal flip-flop, flip-flop position. I've got to tell you that the reason I like this leaflet is that we say very clearly, "Don't be fooled by the Liberals. They're with the Conservatives. They support hydro privatization and deregulation too." We've got the quote from October 31, 2001, where the Libs said, "Dalton and the Ontario Liberals have been consistent supporters of the move to an open electricity market in Ontario," or when Dalton McGuinty said to the Toronto Globe and Mail on December 13, 2001, "Rates may very well have to go up. We've been getting a free ride here in Ontario."

I don't know what their position is today. I was listening really carefully, but I don't think the public is going to be fooled by the Liberal flip-flop on this either.

Hon Mr Baird: I am pleased to participate in this debate from my friends in the New Democratic Party. They don't like competition in electricity generation. They said that when they voted against Bill 35 back in 1988; they said that in virtually every part of the province, when the committee on Bill 35 travelled the province. They've always been against competition in generation. I have a begrudging respect for that.

On November 11, I had the privilege of attending Remembrance Day services in Nepean-Carleton. I'd

attended the weekend before that, on the 9th and 10th, services in Vernon, in Kenmore and in Osgoode village, and I attended events in Nepean and Manotick. I went to get on the plane to make a late afternoon announcement with Premier Eves, and do you know whom I ran into at the Ottawa airport? I ran into Dalton McGuinty, and I wondered why Dalton was going back to Toronto. Dalton and I met as we were getting on the plane and I said, "Dalton, I hope you'll support my policy that we're going to announce today. You're a fellow Ottawa member. Your riding is right next to mine," and I never could have imagined that Dalton would. I've always brought in a lot of policies but Dalton has never agreed with any of them, but we finally found a policy that Dalton has embraced.

I was on the Liberal Web site. On Monday they had one policy which said they were consistent supporters of a move to an open wholesale market in generation. By Monday afternoon—this is the Liberal Web site—it said, "Energy. Update coming soon." We found this out before we heard about the scrum. Dalton McGuinty had a scrum outside this place which one journalist called a "melt-down," called it "the worst scrum of his life." Well, I haven't seen many of his scrums. But now the Liberals have a new policy. They've just updated the Web site and the first thing they talk is, "Price caps will stay in place." I want to thank Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberal Party for supporting the Eves-Baird plan to provide relief to consumers. Not only is—

Hon David Young (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): Better late than never.

Hon Mr Baird: "Better late than never," the Attorney General says. Not only has Dalton McGuinty endorsed my plan, I wanted to congratulate him, to thank him for endorsing our plan to provide relief to consumers, to working families, to small business and to farms. I wanted to thank him but I haven't seen him, Speaker. He's gone missing in action.

Hon Doug Galt (Minister without Portfolio): We're looking for him.

Hon Mr Baird: We're looking for him. If you're watching at home, if you're in the Liberal research office, where is Dalton? He has not been seen around Queen's Park; he has not faced the music with the media or with the government. We hope Dalton will come back tomorrow, because normally the leader of Her Majesty's official opposition wants to be here when the Premier of Ontario is attending question period. They normally choose to attend that day so they can go after their direct critic.

I say to the Attorney General that he should return my—if he touches it, I'll get him.

So Dalton has disappeared. He cannot be far. I wanted to congratulate him and thank him for supporting my policy but he has disappeared. Call him.

Ms Martel: He always has supported your policy. Come on.

Hon Mr Baird: No. He supports my price caps. I fear, though, the worst for Dalton McGuinty. I fear the NDP

Hydrozilla has eaten Dalton McGuinty, because he has changed his mind again. When he said on November 18 that Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberal Party now were against deregulation, were against a competitive market, the Liberals were also busy on November 18. Do you know what they were doing? They were sending out Liberal fundraising letters. The Ontario Liberal Fund, on the same day that Dalton McGuinty made his policy change, sent out a letter looking for money to the energy sector, where he was trolling for bucks on Bay Street. He said, "We've seen flip-flops, knee-jerk 'solutions' and apparent disregard for the grim consequences" of their actions. This is what the Liberal fundraiser said. This, when he had on the Web site that day, "Update coming soon," on the Liberal policy. But it gets better, I say to the associate.

Ms Martel: How much money do they want?

Hon Mr Baird: Just a minute. It says, "With Dalton McGuinty's Liberals, we'll get the plan Ontario needs," and—this is the part I like—they'll have "the leadership to stick to" the plan. This isn't the fundraising letter that they sent out last year; this is the fundraising letter they sent out on the very day that Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberals changed their policy. I thought, "Were they asking for the \$350 that they asked in the previous fundraising letter they put out?" No: "I urge you to contribute today"—\$7,500. I think the honourable thing to do is that the poor schmucks in the energy sector who sent in \$7,500 should get their money back. That would be the right thing to do.

They send out other fundraising letters. They do a lot of fundraising.

Ms Martel: What about the \$5,000? There's more.

Hon Mr Baird: There's more. Oh, you're right. I say thank you to the member for Nickel Belt. Big help. If you're mad about Ernie Eves providing some relief to families and you're in the energy sector, you can do \$7,500 to the Liberal Fund, but you can also send \$5,000 to individual riding associations—an extra \$51,000—which is most interesting. And this isn't the first time the Liberals have gone trolling for bucks on Bay Street. On October 31 last year, Halloween, they sent out a letter to the energy stakeholders. And you know what they said in that letter? They said, "Throughout Ontario's electricity restructuring process, Dalton and the Ontario Liberals have been consistent supporters of the move to an open electricity market in Ontario. Tickets are \$350." So when they had the same policy as the government, they wanted \$350. When they didn't like my price caps, they wanted \$7,500. I want to know—we're going to give rebates. Ernie Eves wants to send rebates out to consumers right across the province to help them pay their hydro bills and provide some relief to them in the future. The rebates for Dalton McGuinty's energy fundraiser, the tax credits, they should be returned. I think if Dalton McGuinty wants to do the right thing, he will send back the \$350 to all these people.

And who was the letter signed by? It was signed by Sean Conway, the MPP, the Liberal critic for energy. He

hasn't asked any questions lately, this week. I suspect he's embarrassed by the policy because I know—if there's been a sighting of Dalton, please call us and let us know. We're still looking for Dalton.

The Toronto Star said:

“Let's See Liberals' Plan....”

“Here's what their electricity plan says: ‘We will create a genuinely competitive power generation environment that will include a mix of electricity providers—public and private, large and small, and those providing green power. Genuine competition and strong regulation will ensure sufficient power supply and is the only way to lower rates.’”

This was on the Web site on Monday morning. But they changed their mind.

Interjection: Again?

Hon Mr Baird: They've changed their mind again and it's quite remarkable. But this isn't the first time this has happened. Last December, McGuinty said, in a scrum on December 12, “I think it's important that we move ahead with competition both in terms of generation and in terms of the transmission.” I don't know how the heck you get competition in transmission. Are you going to have two sets of competing transmission towers go across the province of Ontario? But that was part of Dalton McGuinty's plan. What did Sean Conway say? “Let me be clear, we need a competitive marketplace.” I guess they've changed their minds, which is usual, for a Liberal to change his mind this often.

1700

On October 28, Michael Bryant said, “The only way we're going to get more made-in-Ontario electricity is to permit the private sector to come in and build made-in-Ontario electricity.” Well, that's gone, because Dalton McGuinty doesn't agree with Michael Bryant any more. We're not going to have the private sector building electricity in Ontario.

Let's just enumerate this: Dalton McGuinty said on Monday he wasn't going to guarantee that he was going to close the coal-fired generating stations; now he's saying he is, on his new Web site. The promised update arrived. Now he's saying he'll continue to close down all of the coal-fired plants by 2007 but he's not going to have any private sector generation being built in the province. He says none will be built now and he won't have any built when he gets elected. That means \$6 billion or \$7 billion of new infrastructure in debt in Ontario. So under Dalton McGuinty, the debt of Ontario Hydro will go up from \$38 billion to \$45 billion. Most interesting. I don't know what that will do to natural gas prices, because if we close one coal plant alone, that would use 24 billion cubic metres of natural gas. I'd like to be in the natural gas business if he does that; the private sector natural gas producers will make big bucks because the prices will soar.

I know another person who's going to be disappointed about Dalton McGuinty's announcement: my good friend Marie Bountroggianni. She said recently, “We on this side of the House are not against competition, particularly in

green energy. We know that in some areas of the province you wouldn't have energy if it wasn't for privatization.” I guess the green energy is gone, because Dalton McGuinty has changed his mind again.

What else did Dalton McGuinty say? “The responsible thing to do would be to bring the private sector in with the public sector and say, ‘Look, folks, we're going to have to work together here in this place where there is real competition and tough regulations to make sure we have a sufficient amount of electricity.’” When was this said? This was said after the announcement of November 11. So once the world changed, Dalton McGuinty was still supporting his old policy, which is most interesting.

I wish Dalton McGuinty was here to defend himself, but he's gone missing. He's AWOL.

Hon Mr Turnbull: He's in a cave in Tora Bora.

Hon Mr Baird: He's in a cave in Tora Bora. I think the lizard, Hydrozilla, will find him. I was actually hoping the Liberal leader would stick to his position for once, because I was hoping the Hydrozilla would chase him around. But there's no justice in that.

What did Dalton McGuinty say about rate relief? “I'm saying today that I'm guaranteeing that we're going to leave this particular package in place.” That's good. He said that we couldn't pay for our program, but several bond rating agencies have said that the plan is manageable. Dalton McGuinty says it will require billions to be borrowed, but he'll support it, which is rather interesting.

So we have a rather interesting scenario in the province of Ontario. I hope there will be a sighting of Dalton McGuinty by 6 o'clock, because I want to know whether he's changed his mind again and whether he'll vote for this.

Hon Mr Galt: Do you think he'll be here for the 6 o'clock vote?

Hon Mr Baird: Do I think he'll be here for the 6 o'clock vote? I don't know. If anyone in Mr McGuinty's office is watching, could you get him here for the 6 o'clock vote? I'll be wanting to see if the member for Renfrew North comes because I want to see what he thinks, as I listened very attentively to him during the Bill 35 committees. He was a very passionate spokesman and knows a lot about this issue.

On the issue of the rebates, we hope we can have a debate about that, because I think there would be a lot of value in that. There was a lot of discussion about what the rebate should be; there was media speculation as to what it would be. Dalton McGuinty himself was asked on Thursday, November 7, “What do you think it should be? How much do you think the rebate should be?” Now, he's the leader of Her Majesty's official opposition, once again riding at 50% in the polls, given a \$4-million budget for research to help him do his job, and to “How much should the rebate be?” he said, “Well, I don't know. ‘I mean, you know. I think you know.’ ‘No, I don't know.’ Then it was asked again, ‘What would make enough of a difference to people?’ Do you know what he said? ‘I don't know. I honestly don't know.’”

Well, you've got to know. Working families in Ontario, small business people, farm operators and the

hospitality industry want to know. We've said we'll refund the difference back to 4.3 cents from May 1 and provide some stability to deal with the bumps along the road. But on this side of the House we still believe in an open competitive market on the generation side. We've always been very consistent in that.

What else did Dalton McGuinty say? "Rates may very well have to go up." He's changed his mind again. He said that on December 13, 2001—most interesting.

Another time, on June 1, he said, "I've been very consistent with respect to Hydro One. I think it should be left in public hands. I've been very consistent with respect to generation. There should be competition." This is what the guy says: "I have been very consistent"—like he's hectoring anyone else for changing the position. I don't think he should hector anyone else about changing his position.

I hope the APB we put out on Dalton McGuinty works and he'll show up for the vote at 6 o'clock, because I want to know where he stands.

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): People all over, certainly in my riding and I think the province of Ontario, have taken this issue of their hydro bills very seriously. It's no wonder we're in the mess we're in when we see the Minister of Energy, the member for Nepean-Carleton, make a big joke of the thing as he's been doing from day one. He thinks this is funny. He thinks this thing is one big laugh as he's laughing, walking around the room. He doesn't have any appreciation or sensitivity for the mess they've created, the anxiety they've caused in people's homes.

The people have come to our MPPs' offices asking for help on how they pay their bill and are afraid they're going to be evicted out of their apartments, out of their homes, and they've got a Minister of Energy who clowns around about this type of thing. He has the audacity to clown around and spend all this time making jokes when they have upset the most important asset we have in this province next to health care and education, and that is our hydro.

He, his party members and Mr Eves have made such a farce of this thing from day one, where they did this on the back of a napkin. The Minister of Energy, the member from Nepean-Carleton, has the nerve to stand up in this House on this date to still make jokes about it when they have fouled up a most important thing to the people of Ontario as no one has ever fouled up something before. It's like a group of cowboys, from day to day, from hour to hour, playing with this thing. Now you see, if you just heard this member, the Minister of Energy, stand up like a teenager in this room making jokes about the damage they've done to hydro, damage they've done to people's lives and this reckless journey they've brought us on because they didn't take this seriously.

The Minister of Energy has never taken it seriously—he's still smiling now—because he doesn't appreciate the fact that people have to work and save to pay things like hydro bills. I don't think he's ever paid a hydro bill in his life, I'd bet. We knew he could never read one. He didn't

know how to read one. That's why he thinks it's a big joke. He thinks it's a big joke to see hospitals and institutions unable to pay their bills because of this reckless, just total amateur hour they've taken us down in the last months since May or before when they never planned any of this. They didn't really know where they were going.

1710

Premier Ernie Eves came in and from day to day he changed his policy. Talk about changing and flip-flopping. The Minister of Energy and Mr Eves should get the gold medal for what they've done, and they're supposed to be the government, who have hundreds of lawyers and researchers at their disposal. They've hired people to advise them, spin doctors, and they have fouled this up and made such a mess of this file, Ontario Hydro, which affects the lives of so many Ontarians, and they joke about it. That's what we've seen. To this party, the Conservative Party, and to Mr Eves, this whole thing is a joke. They treat it that way, and the people of Ontario suffer because we've got a juvenile in charge of the Ministry of Energy who thinks it's more important to make fun of things than find solutions. Well, he'd better start growing up, get the smirk off his face and get down to work and fix this mess you created and the millions and billions you're wasting because you think this is one big joke. I'll tell you, Minister of Energy: you're the joke who keeps treating this like some kind of prank when you're dealing with people's livelihoods. You have caused so much grief in this province that you couldn't measure it, and you have the audacity to start pointing fingers and blaming others when you won't come up with solutions.

You said you had the solution last Monday. Here we are, into the next week, and still no legislation. Where's this plan that all your high-paid consultants, your hundreds of staff people in your ministry, in the Premier's office—how could you have screwed this up so badly? Tell us that. Do you know why you did? Because you took this as some kind of juvenile prank, and that's how you've treated it. You've treated it not as a serious issue, which we've seen from our residents—we've seen people come to the office saying, "I cannot pay this hydro bill. It's more than I bring in. My pension is only \$9,000 a year. I've got to pay rent; I've got to pay groceries. This bill is going to basically mean I either turn off my lights and my heat or I have to go without food."

This was not a rare occurrence. If you ask your own members, they will tell you this was coming to their doors, day in and day out. The Minister of Energy has the gall to consider what he did to them a joke. That's what he's saying. It's one big joke to him. I'll tell you, it's no big joke to put people through what they went through in the last number of months. With his record on this file for the last number of months, can you imagine what he's going to put us through for the next number of months as he tries to clean up the mess of the century that he helped create, along with Mr Eves?

He and Mr Eves have the gall to say, "It's the opposition, it's the local municipalities, it's the weather." Do you know why they do that? Because they know they can't defend the grossest screw-up ever perpetrated in this province. No one has mishandled such a major part of the government of Ontario like the Minister of Energy and Mr Eves have. It has never come to this level. Any objective observer will tell you that if you stop this battle of who said what when and what was quoted by whom and where who was at what time, if you get down to the bare facts, hydro is a critical, crucial, important issue for this province's economy, for this province's households, for everybody. We rely on it. You don't have to tell the people of Ontario that. Yet they have basically treated it like some kind of political game from day one, where they could manoeuvre and shift and change and blame others and hide information.

You knew something was up when they passed that act where they said that hydro could not be subject to freedom of information requests. Why would you do that? Why would you block the public right to access information about this biggest change to hydro in the history of this province? They put a clause in the act that said the public could not find out what hydro was doing as it went through this change. They put that in on purpose because they didn't want people to see what they were up to and what their friends were up to. We know one thing they're up to: they're determined to sell off the rest of Hydro One, the other 49%, just like they sold off Highway 407 for a song. They sold it off to their friends at SNC-Lavalin, who then sold off part of it for four times what they bought it for from the taxpayer.

Here's the taxpayer who has this Highway 407 we've built with our money. The government sells it off at a fire sale. Now this private consortium is reaping a windfall profit daily by the highest tolls in North America, and they're doing it with our money. So we're getting gouged twice. We paid for it with our tax dollars and now the highest tolls are being collected.

This is the kind of deal they want to make with Hydro One. That's why they're going to sell it off in a fire sale to their friends, and again somebody like SNC-Lavalin or that Spanish consortium will be rich and the Minister of Energy will sit there and joke about it. He'll be here in this House laughing about it, as he has been for the last number of months on this issue.

How can the people of Ontario really take this seriously when they look at this Minister of Energy and the Premier basically treating this like some kind of juvenile prank? You hear him stand up here and joke and chortle and laugh. The people of Ontario have seen this government in action and have seen the way they have been recklessly bulldozing through our hospitals and what they've done to our schools—they cut another \$90 million out of our schools yesterday in Toronto on top of the other \$300 million they've cut out.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: We don't have shouting across. If you'd like to stay with us, don't do it.

Mr Colle: It just shows. We've gone through so much grief, especially the parents and the students in all our schools in Toronto for the last seven years, with the likes of the member from Oklahoma, who takes off to Oklahoma, creates a crisis. They closed down our hospitals. They left our emergencies closed with people laying on gurneys and stretchers, and they still are today.

Then they do the same thing with hydro. These are a bunch of cowboys, like the Minister of Energy, who thinks this is all one big joke. You close the hospitals—it's funny. You cut another million dollars from our schools—he thinks it's funny. Hydro, what's happened to people—he thinks it's a comedy show where he can stand up and make fun of everybody on this very serious issue.

I'll tell you, the people of Ontario will not forget the fact that you made a big joke of this, Mr Energy Minister. They will not forget what you're doing and they're not going to be fooled by your spinning and massaging of the facts. You have created a mess and you're making fun of it, which is doubly worse.

Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): We appreciate the opportunity to address this House this afternoon on such an important issue as hydro. We as a government have always put our electricity customers first, from designing our new wholesale market to consumer protection to safeguarding our future electricity supply, thereby ensuring safe and reliable power will continue to be supplied to our consumers. We have heard from our Minister of Energy about the position the Liberals don't have; in fact, it changes by the day.

I'd like to quickly address some of the issues and policies we have put forward in the last number of weeks to deal with the hydro situation. Over the past four months, many Ontarian households and businesses have experienced significant increases in their hydro bills. Many of my constituents expressed concerns about dealing with high and volatile prices.

The government is listening, and Premier Eves last week announced a series of measures to lower and stabilize prices while we work over the next few years to ensure a sustainable, cost-competitive and reliable electricity system for the province of Ontario. But we know those reasons don't matter much to seniors, single moms or small business owners facing large hydro bills. All that matters to them and to everyone in Ontario is acceptable electricity prices, and that's what our proposed action plan would achieve. That is true consumer protection.

With this in mind, the government will soon introduce legislation to lower hydro costs. Should it pass, the proposed legislation would lower the price families and small business consumers pay for power to 4.3 cents per kilowatt hour, effective December 1, 2002, until at least 2006. Our aim is to refund every penny of the difference between the 4.3 cents price of power and what consumers have actually paid, retroactive to May 1, 2002. The first instalment of the refund, a cheque for \$75, would be sent out as soon as possible, in most cases before the end of

the year. The remainder would be credited on future bills. Local distribution companies would credit the remainder on consumers' bills as soon as they are able to achieve that.

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We are putting forward these measures to protect the consumers of Ontario. Some people have suggested that 4.3 cents per kilowatt hour of electricity is too low. I suggest that Ontario's electricity consumers would disagree with that assessment.

Under the government's proposed legislation, not only the price of the power itself but the price families and small businesses pay for the delivery of electricity to their homes would be capped at the current level. Consumer protection is all about ensuring that bills are fair and reasonable. Why would a monthly charge for residential electricity consumers be different in different areas, ranging from \$5 to \$25 a month? To answer this question and to ensure charges are reasonable, the government is ordering an independent review of how customer charges on electricity bills are calculated. Our review will also include the charges of the Independent Electricity Market Operator.

Right now there are no standards, no consistency between various hydro bills in Ontario. Consumers have seen some that are so complex and so confusing as to make a precise and itemized breakdown of the costs and services being billed next to impossible. That was certainly not the intent when this government required unbundling of bills. As recently as this morning, I had a consumer call me with two hydro bills from two separate properties received, and he could not identify the similarities or the differences and figure out whether he was paying the same price or what he was actually paying for the different hydro bills. That needs to be corrected. We believed then and we still believe now that an informed consumer is a protected consumer.

As part of our proposed review of electricity costs in Ontario, we will create a standard province-wide electricity bill that all of us can read and understand. We're not just proposing a graphic design exercise. The new standardized province-wide electricity bill format that we propose would ensure consumers can see at a glance what it is they're paying for.

Some things, consumers do control. The average household is using more electricity this year than it did last year. Ontario's electricity consumers can reduce their costs and help the environment by using less power. We're going to help consumers save money and let them take control. Our proposed action plan includes measures to promote electricity conservation. So while we are proposing measures to ensure that consumers' electricity bills do not go up, we're also proposing methods to help consumers actually reduce electricity costs.

Our long-term plan would include measures such as tax incentives and tax holidays to promote conservation, encourage alternative fuels and support clean electricity production. It would also include public education to help households reduce their electricity consumption. For

example, we propose to allow municipalities to claim a tax credit for the cost of solar panels. We urge the federal government to follow suit on that.

Additionally, we believe that homes should have access to interval meters. In Woodstock we have meters called powerstats where consumers can purchase the power up front. As they see that, they can see the amount of power they are using and indeed I'm told by consumers that that helps them conserve energy.

We propose local hydro companies should promote this service. The Commissioner of Alternative Energy will begin discussions with the Electricity Distributors Association and the home builders' association on this proposal. Our proposed plan provides immediate help to Ontario consumers without sacrificing for one moment our long-term goals. The immediate measures of our action plan to lower the province's hydro bills would be in place at least until 2006. They would continue until sufficient supply, at reasonable prices, is available to meet Ontario's long-term needs. Ours is a balanced plan, not a simple recitation of some ivory tower ideology.

We are protecting consumers by creating an electricity sector that works, and will work long into the future. Our approach is to protect Ontario's electricity consumers while at the same time continuing to work toward a solution that keeps prices reasonable and ensures a stable supply of electricity for Ontario.

There's been a lot of rhetoric from the opposition about our electricity restructuring in Ontario. The truth is that the government has worked hard to ensure there are helpful and meaningful regulations to protect consumers and ensure a stable and efficient energy sector.

To that end, our government has launched a review of the Ontario Energy Board mandate. There have been ongoing changes within the energy sector, and the rules and procedures governing the energy board need to be examined. We want to ensure that the energy board can continue to protect consumers in a changing energy world.

There are a lot of things people can do without, but electricity isn't one of them. Ontarians rely on having a safe, secure, and plentiful supply of electricity.

And just as other necessities such as groceries aren't taxed, we don't charge provincial sales tax on electricity. We don't believe the federal government in Ottawa should be charging GST on the electricity bill either, so we will continue to pressure the federal government to quit gouging the consumer by charging GST on the repayment of the debt that has been created by buying electricity on the credit card for so many years.

Some would have us turn back the clock, returning us to the time of a bloated, inefficient monopoly which was wasteful of the public's electricity. Our government has acted to correct the mistakes of previous administrations.

As a fiscally responsible government, we plan to continue to repay the \$38-billion debt created by mismanagement and inefficiency at the old Ontario Hydro under previous governments, and plan to accelerate payments as soon as new supplies of electricity are on stream.

Who is responsible for the debt? Obviously, responsibility lies with successive governments and management teams who operated Ontario Hydro in the red. But we too, as individuals, bear some responsibility to fix the problem. After all, every one of us who has used electricity in past decades has used power paid for by credit card. This government took action to restructure the old Ontario Hydro so this would never happen again. But the billions on Ontario Hydro's old credit card still need to be paid off.

We are listening to the people of Ontario, and no one has told us they wish to go further in debt. We thank you very much.

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this opposition day motion. Before I start to analyze some of what is going on with hydro—I certainly am getting calls at my office from constituents saying, "Will there be a hydro rebate?" My advice to you is, when it comes, buy a generator. You'll need to use it as your first payment on a gasoline generator and have it ready so that when the brownouts come, at least you'll be able to provide some basic services in your house. I think this is in effect a gasoline generator down payment cheque that will be coming. The government, I give them credit, recognize that the plan isn't going to work and we need to get some money out for that.

I've also had a request from the Ontario archives that if the government would kindly give them the envelope they put this energy plan together on, the archives believe it is a historical document and they would like to keep the envelope. They have some belief that it may be the same envelope that they planned health care and education on. It's probably getting half full now, but please keep that envelope and turn it over to the archives so that people can see how this government planned for our hydro in Ontario.

I think we could describe in many ways that to this government the province of Ontario has been a science lab to conduct experiments in. We've seen experiments conducted in our health care where any other government would have said, "OK we've got this plan. Let's try it at one hospital site or let's try it in one area and see how it works. If it doesn't work, we won't do it, and if it does work maybe we need to tweak it." This government said, "Let's change every hospital in Ontario." From an education viewpoint, "Let's try these major changes." There's an expression—we have old expressions that I think are developed for a reason. One of them is that if you want to truly understand something, try to change it.

This government has radically changed education in their first year and they now have spent the next six trying to fix what they broke. They're trying to fix health care, which they broke. Every announcement they made—whether it be increased costs for seniors in long-term care—is followed by a reannouncement trying to undo the damage they did with the first announcement.

It is intriguing to me that everyone in Ontario believed that the electricity plan that the Harris-Eves government

put together would not work. The people on the street, who are a long way from stupid, who understand the way things work, said it won't work. Everyone saw the problems coming except Premier Harris and Premier Eves, who had this innate belief: "Let's go ahead and give it a try." We've seen them go ahead and give a try to changing our water. They went ahead and gave a try to changing our electricity. We got to where we are because certain decisions were made that couldn't be quickly changed on a philosophical, "Let's see how it works."

1730

I have perhaps said before that people have stated to me that a definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result each time. It did not work in California. I don't care how you massage the message, it did not work in California, and now they do have stabilized prices in California at US 11 cents per kilowatt hour. Those are stabilized prices. It did not work in Alberta, but it's been made to work because they're using government revenues to send cheques back to the very people who send the money to the government. When you get a cheque from the government, you know, you're getting some of your own money back. I think people understand that.

The plan was troubled from the beginning; the experts said it wouldn't work. But Premier Harris and Premier Eves said, "Let's give it a try," and people have paid a substantial price for that. Not only did they radically change our electricity system in Ontario; they conveniently moved it into an arrangement that precluded the public from knowing what was going on under the freedom of information act. The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act is, in a sense, the Freedom of Information and Protection of the Government Act, because even where there is access under freedom of information, this government has all too often put such costs on to it that organizations and individuals can't pay them.

As we've seen with the 407, as we've seen with the Bruce nuclear plant and as we've seen with privatized medical clinics in Toronto, the public couldn't get access to what was going on at Hydro One and OPG. Very conveniently, public business was moved behind closed doors—fundamentally wrong. If a decision is a good decision, if the actions are good actions, they will withstand the light of public scrutiny. This government moved to curtail and restrict as much information on it as they could from getting to the public.

I'm going to state some things that I think the average person in Ontario would say if they had an opportunity to speak in here. We are dealing with the bill today because Premier Eves broke the system. Eves told us on more than one occasion that prices would go down. They went up. Eves told us there was more than enough supply. We now find out there was a shortage of supply from the get-go. The people on the street, the consumers, were sheltered from knowing we didn't have enough electricity in Ontario to meet our own needs. I've had more than one citizen say to me, "Would it help if we stopped

selling electricity to the US?" The answer is that we need to buy their electricity. During the peak periods, Ontario, which at one time had a richness of electricity, can't meet its own needs. The government knew that.

I was privileged to be on the select committee on alternative fuels, and we heard repeatedly that we need to purchase electricity from other sources. We don't have a glut of it; we have a shortage of it. You can't deregulate when there isn't enough of a particular commodity, a commodity that is so time-sensitive, a commodity that can't be saved and stored and used. When we needed it at 4 o'clock in the afternoon, we knew we couldn't produce it. The government knew the nuclear plants weren't producing, or they should have known. They are the government. They should have known we couldn't meet our own needs and that we're buying electricity at whatever the current price is.

Now we have a very real possibility of blackouts in Ontario, something unheard of, something that is a nuisance at our homes but catastrophic to our industry. I met today with a group of people representing the cement industry. They cannot tolerate a blackout. The auto production plants cannot tolerate a blackout. So industry that has to compete on a worldwide basis is now going to have to incur the additional cost of having alternate energy supplies that will kick in instantly so that they do not lose market share for the vehicles, cement or whatever. Now they're faced with additional costs, having to compete in a world market.

Premier Eves told us consumers would be protected. They were absolutely ripped off by Ontario Power Generation, our company. The government may appear to control it, but every person in this province owns Ontario Power Generation and we've been ripped off by the very industry we founded and own.

The Premier chose to ignore all the advice and the warnings. I don't understand that. The people who were giving advice were very articulate, intelligent, knowledgeable people, and the Premier chose to ignore them. Remember, although former Premier Harris is getting the credit for this hydro boondoggle, Premier Eves had been in power for five weeks when the market opened, and he owns it.

I referred earlier to the envelope that directed their plans for this. There is an impression in Ontario that Premier Eves kept all his promises, that if he said he was going to do something, he did it. He didn't do that, but he did say lots of times that he kept his promise. I don't remember him promising to close hospitals. I don't remember him promising to slash funding to classrooms. He created that image, but Premier Eves very clearly has not kept, in any sense, any clear path of, "This is what I'm going to do."

He said on April 26, "It's important Hydro One be privatized." That's in the Ottawa Citizen. The Toronto Star on May 2: "The largest privatization in Ontario history is in jeopardy after Ernie Eves, the Ontario Premier, said yesterday the \$5.5-billion sale of Hydro One is 'off the table for the immediate time being.'" Now

he did say "for the immediate time being." There was a nice little waffle phrase in there. People need to watch for these waffle phrases with this Premier.

Then, on May 8, Hydro One was back on the table. On May 15, he wanted the investment firms to give him advice because he didn't know what he was doing. On May 16, the Sudbury Star quotes him as saying, "I think that keeping it as a crown corporation or a public entity is indeed an option for the government."

How many waffles have there been over those two months?

May 30: The Premier tabled legislation to sell Hydro One. On June 7, he said he'd like to scrap the public stock offering and have it as an income trust. Then on June 13 it was said that he had killed the key initiative of his predecessor, that "the Tories would not turn over control of Hydro One to the public sector through a share offering."

I hope somebody's keeping track of how many changes we've had at this point.

Then, on July 6, they said they would seek a buyer for a minority stake in Hydro One, although interestingly the legislation allows them to do anything they want. This is a pre-election, "We'll sell part of the share off." I'm not so sure they'll get a purchaser for it now. But the people of Ontario need to realize that when he sells 49% of our distribution system, the other 51% is probably still on the table to go. If we look at the Highway 407 privatization, it is very good for the private purchaser, but not for the people of Ontario.

Our member for Scarborough East reviewed commitments they had made, and I think we need to review some of the things he said. On June 18, the member for Scarborough East said, "The government believes there'll be lower prices. Everyone in the industry believes that. You're going to see it." Everybody in Ontario knew that wasn't going to be the case.

"The competition is going to be marvellous, and the results will be equally significant, because the projections we have heard in the last few weeks range from 5% to as high as 20% reduction in the price of electricity that can be expected once the competition takes hold." We didn't see that reduction; we saw up to 300% and 400% increases.

"Many of us remember the days not long ago when Ontario could boast having the cheapest electricity rates in North America. That day will come again. I have every confidence, and this bill is a guarantee of that." Well, this government clearly broke and put in jeopardy the financial and personal strength of everyone in this province. It is a disgrace. We acknowledge as Liberals that we didn't create the mess but it is very obvious we have to fix it.

1740

Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming-Cochrane): I'm very pleased to get up on this opposition day debate today because I think, in my 17 and a half years that I have been in this place, I have never seen an issue that any government has mishandled in such a way as this

Harris-Eves government has mishandled the energy and electricity market in this province.

Unlike any other product or responsibility that Ontario has responsibility for, I would say energy is the one that affects everybody's day-to-day life every day. We depend on it. The people of Ontario depend on their government to manage that for them. Whether you're a big business, small business, you're a senior, a parent, a child, you're an institution, you're a householder, you're a tenant, all of us depend on electricity. We want two things: we want to make sure it's affordable but we also want to make sure it's there when you need it, because we need it for subsistence; we need it there for our existence; we need it for our heating and our cooking; we need it to make the economy go. That's why it has been a function of government, and we depend on the government to do that.

This government totally mismanaged this. I had people coming into my office over the last few months, absolutely petrified by what was going on. Unlike any other discretionary purchase, you can't put off this purchase. We depend on it. It comes into the house; we need it for everything that we do. We're using it all the time, constantly. I suppose we're using it without ever thinking about it. We expect when we go to the light switch and turn it on, that it works; when we put on our electric stove, that it works; that if you're on electric hot water, that it works. You depend on it; you count on it. We need it. And what did this government do? It put everything into chaos—one of the biggest crises that has ever happened in Ontario.

People came in afraid that they were going to lose their businesses. I had people who run meat shops in the south end of the riding coming in and saying, "Look what the cost of running our coolers is doing now. We're doubling and tripling the cost of running our business." One business person came in and said, "I've got 10 employees in my employ in this town of Noëlville. The town depends on my business. I can't continue with this business because this electricity bill is now eating up my profit. I am no longer profitable. What am I going to do?"

All of a sudden, overnight, people's worlds turn inside out. They were left absolutely helpless because they had nowhere to go, because something that they depended on, something that I suppose we take for granted, was all of a sudden out of control. What the problem was, what was causing the panic and the crisis there, was the total, uncontrolled volatility of the pricing of electricity. People just feared when that next bill would be coming up. Before, you could count on it. You knew you had a constant rate. Now you opened up your bill and you didn't know what you were getting. I saw bills that were as high as 9.6 cents per kilowatt hour, and also those new service charges that were all broken out. Obviously somebody was taking advantage of that too, because those were representing, in some cases, up to 70% of that bill.

So somebody was ripping off the people. The people were being ripped off and they were being put in a panic.

They were depending on their government to keep their power at an affordable rate, and the government failed them. I have never seen the voters across this province as angry and as mobilized as they were in the last few months. No wonder the government had to do an extreme about-face on this policy, because it wasn't working. And the people of Ontario were not just angered about this; I think they were frightened. The people of Ontario were absolutely frightened of what was happening with their power system.

It's a power system that, I guess, as Ontarians, we've had a great pride in. We were one of the foremost jurisdictions in North America that developed our hydraulic resources, particularly at Niagara. In the beginning of the last century we developed Niagara Falls. We're very, very proud that, with Sir Adam Beck, we developed one of the cleanest, most reliable, low-cost sources of power in the province. At the very beginning Niagara Falls could serve all of Ontario's needs and then some, and we exported right across the United States. As this province grew, so did Ontario Hydro.

But what this government did was to totally drop the ball, cause panic and fear across this province with people very upset and concerned that their electricity would no longer be reliable or affordable. That's the failure of this government and that's going to be the history of this government; it's going to be why, when the people go to the polls next time, they are going to remember that fear and panic that the Harris-Eves government put them through in threatening the supply of electricity. That is going to be the legacy.

I would tell you that we're going to make sure that we're going to do our job and remind the people of what happened: that one of the greatest responsibilities that people depend upon from their Ontario government was absolutely fumbled, and fumbled in such a bad way that caused fear and panic amongst everybody in this province. I had big businesses coming to me and saying, "We made a decision that we're not going to be processing a lot of this ore that we're bringing into Ontario. We're going to move it right over to Manitoba, miss north-eastern Ontario, because in Manitoba we can get power at 3.2 cents a kilowatt hour."

I quite frankly remember when we were going to have a deal with Manitoba on some of their hydraulic generation, and it was the previous government that decided to cancel that. We've basically got to open our borders to Quebec and to Manitoba and say, "We want your clean power coming in here." We've got to get on with Beck 3. We've got to get on with green power generation. We've got to encourage all our companies to start getting into cogeneration. All of us have to be more self-reliant in our conservation and producing power. We need those interval meters so that we can be rewarded for conservation, because a kilowatt hour saved is better than one more we have to produce.

The people of Ontario, given the incentive, would get on the conservation bandwagon. We'd all work together to make sure we used electricity in a more effective and

efficient manner. We can all do that. We can give people the financial incentive to do that. That would be the way to go. We could start to lead rather than follow in this province, and say we want to make sure we have a strong economy and reliable power. The people of Ontario can do that together as a team. The government should lead that. Conservation is the way to do that, and we can all be part of that solution.

The Deputy Speaker: I wanted to draw to the attention of the House, in the members' west gallery, Bud Wildman, a long-time member of this Legislature representing Algoma. Welcome, Mr Wildman.

Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, minister responsible for women's issues): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: My colleague Marcel Beaubien from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex has here parents of head-injured boys. I would really like to take this opportunity to introduce representatives of the Ontario Association of Community-Based Boards for Acquired Brain Injury Services, who are visiting here at the Legislature this evening.

Marilyn Shaver is here from Thunder Bay. Willemien Stanger is here from Peel and Halton. Tom and Janet Brereton are here, again from Peel. Ernie Allen is here from Peel again. Len Pearson is here from Peel and Halton. And a special person, Danny Kemp, is with us tonight. He is a client in Kingston, Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker: Welcome to your Legislature.

Mr Hampton has moved opposition day number 3. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1748 to 1758.

The Deputy Speaker: Don't let it ever be said that I don't congratulate you. Congratulations: you're all on time.

Mr Hampton has moved opposition day number 3. All those in favour will please rise one at a time until named by the Clerk.

Ayes

Agostino, Dominic	Colle, Mike	Marchese, Rosario
Bartolucci, Rick	Cordiano, Joseph	Martel, Shelley
Bisson, Gilles	Di Cocco, Caroline	McLeod, Lyn
Bountrogianni, Marie	Dombrowsky, Leona	Parsons, Ernie
Boyer, Claudette	Gravelle, Michael	Prue, Michael
Bradley, James J.	Hampton, Howard	Ramsay, David
Brown, Michael A.	Kormos, Peter	Sergio, Mario
Caplan, David	Kwinter, Monte	Smitherman, George
Churley, Marilyn	Levac, David	

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: I'm just sorry that the superb deportment left us so quickly.

All those opposed will please rise one at a time until named by the Clerk.

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Gill, Raminder	O'Toole, John
Baird, John R.	Hardeman, Ernie	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Barrett, Toby	Hastings, John	Runciman, Robert W.
Beaubien, Marcel	Jackson, Cameron	Sampson, Rob
Chudleigh, Ted	Johns, Helen	Spina, Joseph
Clark, Brad	Kells, Morley	Sterling, Norman W.
Clement, Tony	Klees, Frank	Stewart, R. Gary
Coburn, Brian	Marland, Margaret	Stockwell, Chris
Cunningham, Dianne	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tsubouchi, David H.
DeFaria, Carl	Maves, Bart	Turnbull, David
Dunlop, Garfield	Mazzilli, Frank	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Ecker, Janet	McDonald, AL	Wilson, Jim
Elliott, Brenda	Miller, Norm	Witmer, Elizabeth
Eves, Ernie	Molinari, Tina R.	Wood, Bob
Galt, Doug	Munro, Julia	Young, David
Gilchrist, Steve	Murdoch, Bill	

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 26; the nays are 47.

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the resolution defeated.

It being well past 6 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until 6:45 this evening.

The House adjourned at 1802.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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

Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Gary Carr

Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers

Deputy Clerk / sous-greffière: Deborah Deller

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

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

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

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

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

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

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