



Legislative Assembly
of Ontario

Third Session, 37th Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario

Troisième session, 37^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Tuesday 5 November 2002

Mardi 5 novembre 2002

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 5 November 2002

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 5 novembre 2002

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES LEGISLATION

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): One year ago today, Citizenship Minister Cam Jackson introduced the Ontarians with Disabilities Act. This, by the way, is the minister who gave new meaning to the phrase "meeting with stakeholders." Many of my Conservative colleagues have said, "How is the act working? Can we have an update on it?" I'm pleased to provide that today.

Since one year ago today, of the 13 major new commitments that were promised to Ontarians with disabilities, none have been kept.

One year after appointing a new provincial advisory council, only five of 12 have been appointed—not one woman.

One year ago today, this government committed to working to launch an incentive program to get all sectors to work together to remove and prevent barriers. No program has been announced. Cam Jackson promised no new barriers. Fifty special education teachers were laid off in Ottawa, a major barrier to special-ed students.

Former Citizenship Minister Isabel Bassett committed to amend the Ontario building code. Consultation took place in the winter of 2001. The reforms were passed in the spring of this year. Not one new measure included anything on disability access.

Your government said that you would lead by example. Over the seven years, you are still working to try to make your own Web sites accessible.

As far as private industry goes, Pizza Pizza in Toronto clearly demonstrated that they will not provide access to Ontarians with disabilities.

Ontarians with disabilities say to your government, "Where's the beef?"

WIFE ASSAULT PREVENTION MONTH

Mr AL McDonald (Nipissing): Honourable members, I rise to remind members that November is Wife Assault Prevention Month in Ontario. This is the 17th year that we have recognized this month to highlight the

gravity of domestic violence. As we increase awareness, we also underline our commitment to ending it.

Every person has the right to live in safety. The government of Ontario does not tolerate violence against women or their children. Preventing domestic violence is everyone's responsibility. We need to engage all Ontarians to end domestic violence.

Last September, this government expanded its commitment with a series of new initiatives, bringing spending for 2002-03 to more than \$160 million. Since 1995, spending to combat domestic violence has increased by 70%. While this government continues to improve supports and services for women who experience violence, provincial ministries, community agencies, courts and lawmakers alone cannot solve this problem. It is a challenge that must be tackled by the whole community. We know there is more to be done, and I encourage all Ontarians to play a part in stopping violence against women and children and to help make Ontario a safer place for everyone.

A husband and father's first role is to protect his family. Let's end the abuse now.

COST OF ELECTRICAL POWER

Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin): The latest attack on our families, on our businesses and on our communities continues as the Harris-Eves government's electricity fiasco is nearly bankrupting Ontarians.

Yesterday I met with close to 200 constituents, a lot of them unable to afford to pay their electricity bills. Most of the people I met with are Great Lakes Power customers. Great Lakes Power is a private company—I repeat, private company. It was before; it still is. Great Lakes Power used to provide power to customers at very competitive rates and did so for many decades. I assume they made a profit doing it. However, the Harris-Eves government has forced Great Lakes Power rates through the roof.

Premier, you have rushed forward in this ideologically driven government without regard for the people of Ontario, and it must be reconsidered. For example, Dubreuil Forest Products has now announced layoffs. They have announced these layoffs because of a 154% increase in the price of their electricity. Russell Reid of the Algoma public school board warned of school closures, teacher layoffs and classroom cutbacks because of increases to the school system's electrical bills. Frank Buerkle of Lady Dunn Hospital says he will have to cut

services just to keep the lights on. Gilles Begin of the Wawa Valu-Mart tells us that his bill has gone from \$5,000 to \$10,000 a month. He will not be able to keep his grocery store open.

Stop the rip-off. We need the rebates now and affordable electricity rates right now.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): I just returned from the Kimberly Rogers inquest in Sudbury. Kimberly died while pregnant and living in inhumane conditions as a result of the Conservative government's social assistance policies and cuts. I find it disturbing that a woman and her unborn child died. This government's policies likely contributed to their deaths, and Premier Eves doesn't even think the ministry responsible needs to be at the inquest. Conservative government policies are costing people their lives. Premier Eves should take responsibility for his government's mistakes, send representation from the ministry to take part in the inquest and implement the major policy changes needed to ensure that no one else dies.

Speaking of dying, have you heard the one about the homeless people who found an abandoned building and fixed it up so that they didn't have to live on the streets? All Premier Eves needs to do is sign the building over to the city of Toronto, who have agreed to turn it into affordable housing. Has he done this? No. Just as the weather is turning cold and the nights are going below freezing, the Conservative government ordered the forceful eviction of the people living there. People are freezing to death on our streets and Premier Eves still thinks investing in social programs is a joke. Nothing about the Conservative government's actions is funny.

It's time for Premier Eves to show some leadership. Invest in affordable housing. Stop the lifetime ban on social assistance, and commit right here today to sign over the Pope Squat property to the city of Toronto so they can immediately begin to build affordable housing so that more people don't die on the streets this winter.

OWEN SOUND SALMON SPECTACULAR FISHING DERBY

Mr Bill Murdoch (Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound): I rise in the House today to congratulate the success of an event in my riding of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound which took place on Saturday, August 31. It was the 15th annual Owen Sound Salmon Spectacular fishing derby. Many members in this House took time to enjoy the festivities and travelled to Owen Sound for the event. I would like to thank Minister Jerry Ouellette, Morley Kells, Minister Frank Klees, Gary Carr, Joe Tascona and Ted Arnott for joining in. You all made the day more spectacular.

The 10-day event is one of the largest and longest-running fishing derbies across North America. Co-chairs of the event Fred Geberdt and Rob Wilson, the derby

committee and the hundreds of volunteers are to be commended for their long, hard work and dedication throughout the year in preparation for this event.

The event is held annually by the Sydenham Sportsmen's Association, which is an active outdoor club across Ontario of which I am a proud member. The derby attracts anglers from all over North America and Europe. The proceeds go toward helping many fisheries and conservation projects, including operating the club's salmon and trout hatcheries. The success of these hatcheries includes the production of over 300,000 salmon and trout a year, all maintained through volunteer work.

The Sydenham Sportsmen's Association is to be praised for their ongoing contribution and dedication to local conservation. I look forward to next year's salmon spectacular and hope all members of this House will be able to attend the 16th annual fishing derby.

Mr Speaker, as I say, this is one of the great derbies across Canada, and I thank you for being there also.

1340

MUNICIPAL TAXATION

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): There is a strong wind blowing from the Kawarthas, bringing the call for change, a call for a return to democracy in Lindsay, Bobcaygeon, Fenelon Falls, Omeme, Sturgeon Point and Bexley. All across the Kawarthas people are fed up with a government that didn't listen to them, that forced amalgamation on them. Former Minister Clement didn't give them a say on amalgamation.

Now they're saying they're fed up with this megacity, where their taxes have gone up 30%, 40% and 50% in these small towns. The people in Fenelon are fed up. The people in Bobcaygeon are saying that this undemocratic dictatorship out of Queen's Park never gave them a say. In fact, Minister Clement even took away their name and gave them a name they didn't want. They want a return to Victoria county. They want their identity back. They want their low taxes back. They are calling for a full-fledged referendum so they can have a say on how they're governed in those small communities. They're fed up with being dictated to by the present member, who doesn't listen to them.

We had crowds here asking to be heard and petitions from Fenelon and Bobcaygeon. There were 650 people in the local arena in Manvers saying, "We want our democracy back." They're going to get it back. We're supporting a call for a referendum in Victoria county.

Long live Victoria county—forever. Long live democracy.

STRATFORD FESTIVAL

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): The 50th season of the Stratford Festival opened on April 24 with All's Well that Ends Well. As this historic season draws

to an end, it's apparent that the Stratford Festival is very well indeed.

This year the Stratford Festival once again sold more than 600,000 tickets and opened a fourth theatre.

The Stratford Festival success also means success for countless bed and breakfasts, hotels, motels, restaurants and shops in Stratford and the surrounding area. Visitors to the festival account for about 12% of southwestern Ontario's tourism. They spend an estimated \$12.5 million on accommodation and a total of about \$170 million in the region.

This year the program was scheduled to end on November 10. However, demand for tickets was so high that they've added two extra weeks of *My Fair Lady*. If any members of this House have yet to make it to the performance this year, there is still time left to see Cynthia Dale recite and sing, "The rain in Spain stays mainly in the plain."

I want to take this opportunity to congratulate the management of the Stratford Festival, especially artistic director Richard Monette and executive director Antoni Cimolino, and thank everyone involved in the festival for their contributions.

HYDRO RATES

Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale): Murray Campbell from the *Globe* dubbed the government "the Seinfeld administration" because it's about nothing. These days, the government caucus is doing their best imitation of George Costanza.

People like Frank Mazzilli, Cam Jackson and Brad Clark are so worried about themselves that they're panicking. They're pushing everyone aside to get out of the way of the Ernie Eves hydro disaster. They remind me of that Seinfeld episode where a fire starts at a children's birthday party. Instead of calmly leading the children to safety, George panics. He rushes out the door, pushes the children aside, tramples his girlfriend and breaks her grandmother's arm.

Interjection: Your name is George.

Mr Smitherman: I don't have a girlfriend. When the police question George about his cowardly behaviour and knocking over a grandmother, George's excuse is, "We needed a leader." My only hope these days is that the so-called leaders rushing to abandon Ernie Eves and his hydro rate hijacking don't injure Margaret Marland when they bolt for the door.

And poor Ernie. He clearly is no longer master of his domain. The outcry against his hydro rate hijacking has gotten so bad, I hear he's got them answering the phone in the Premier's office, "Vandelay Industries."

The Ernie Eves government truly is the Seinfeld administration.

WILMOT CREEK VETERANS PROJECT

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): That's a difficult act to follow. I am pleased to rise in the House today to pay

tribute to a project in the Wilmot Creek community that honours allied veterans of World War II and those who served in the Korean conflict.

The Wilmot Creek adult community has compiled the names of 201 veterans who are current or former residents. These names have been inscribed on a memorial scroll that is to be hung in a place of honour in the Wheelhouse Auditorium. The veterans in many communities are part of a living heritage, and I would like to congratulate all the residents of Wilmot Creek for their support of this project.

Special thanks are due to Madge Cadan, who first suggested the idea of the honour roll to the homeowners' association. Her committee members include Norm Baker, Frank Smith, Frank Boyle, Doreen Carpenter and others too numerous to mention. I would also like to commend David Rice and Ridge Pine Park for their contribution to the project by framing the scroll and building a memorial garden with a plaque in honour of this special purpose. Thanks also go to Bruce Hadji, president of the Wilmot Creek homeowners' association, and members of the board such as Don Bower, who supports the project enthusiastically.

The honour roll and plaque will be dedicated this Saturday, November 9, in a ceremony that will include the federal Minister of Veterans Affairs, Rey Pagtakhan, invited guests and the Wilmot Creek community. I will look forward to attending myself. This is just one of the many events taking place in my riding of Durham this weekend. All of us paid time to respect the veterans who gave their lives to support our freedoms.

VISITORS

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'm proud to have from the great riding of Essex a legislative page, Maureen Balsillie. With us today in the members' west gallery are her mother Leslie, father Doug, sister Janelle and sister Amelia. Please welcome the Balsillie family from Essex.

WEARING OF PINS

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I have two points of order relating to the same issue. Number one, November is Adoption Awareness Month and I would ask for unanimous consent to wear this multi-coloured pin to represent this month. That's the first point.

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

DISTRIBUTION OF LETTER

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): The second point of order—and I just want some clarification on this. I came in before the Legislature opened this afternoon and distributed from me, an honourable member in this Legislature, on every member's desk a letter

from me about my adoption bill, Bill 77. When I came back in I found that they had all been picked up, that the pages were ordered to collect them and I had to redistribute them, which I just did.

I want some clarification. I have done this before in the past. I am an honourable member here. I provided a letter from me to all other honourable members in this chamber and I'd like to know what the problem is.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): It is that you can do that to the members when they're here. We don't allow any member to distribute anything before because if we do that, the desks will become cluttered, with all members doing that. The only thing we do is, as you know, there is advisement relating to the Legislature to remind members for committee work. If you need to do that, you have to do it when the members are here. If they come in early and they are laid on the members' desks, we will remove them. So I would ask all members' co-operation in that. We don't allow anyone to do that. If you have gotten away with that in the past, it was only inadvertently that we didn't catch it. So I would ask all members' co-operation. If you want to distribute something, you must do it after we begin seating, not before.

Ms Churley: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I just wanted to thank you for your ruling and to thank Mr Murdoch from the Tory caucus for distributing these to his caucus.

The Speaker: I thank the member, who is always helpful.

VISITORS

Mr Dave Levac (Brant): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'd like to bring the attention of the House to visitors up in the gallery today. They are grade 11 students from Pauline Johnson Collegiate in Brantford, my alma mater, and their teacher, Jeff Goodall. They got lost in the mall or something and that's why they're a little late, but I'd like to welcome them to the House to watch democracy in action.

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): On the same point of order, Mr Speaker: I would like to welcome the grade 10 class from Oakwood Collegiate, who have come here today to pay us a visit. Let's welcome them as well.

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): Donald and Kathleen Robertson and Martha Lewis, grandparents and aunt to our page Alexander Steele, are in the House today from Cambridge and Ingersoll. Welcome.

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): I would draw to the attention to the members of the House in the opposition gallery, although constituents of the Honourable Brad Clark of the riding of Stoney Creek: my partner, Denise Doyle's family, Paul and Helen Brenton and their two children, Lucas and Kelli, are here today. Welcome.

1350

Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South): Mr Speaker, I am rising on a point of order. The member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale referred to something about me

being hit as somebody was coming through a door. I just wanted to assure the House that I'm actually very fit, capable and able and I have not sustained such an injury to which he refers.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Let's not get into it. It's OK. It was all done in fun, I believe.

ORAL QUESTIONS

HYDRO RATES

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My questions today are to the Premier and they are on a matter of the utmost importance to the people of our province, families and businesses alike: hydro.

Premier, people all across Ontario are expressing their outrage at what you have done to their hydro bills. We've heard from families, seniors on fixed incomes, small and large businesses, charities, and even legion halls who are telling us that they simply cannot afford to pay their hydro bills.

Here's a specific case. Suzanne Fairweather lives in Richmond Hill. She was laid off in April and she's trying to find work. She is struggling to make ends meet. Her hydro bill has now doubled on your watch. She is terrified that she will no longer be able to afford her house.

There are hundreds and thousands of people like Suzanne right across the province. They can't wait any longer for help. They're looking to you. You created this mess; it's up to you to take responsibility. They want to know about this rebate you've been talking about. When, Premier, are you going to help these people by providing them with a rebate?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): There are many factors that go into determining what hydro rates are. We acknowledge and we understand that there are many people across the province who are having difficulty with respect to, especially, the months of July, August and September, and the size of those bills and the amount that the rates went up. We understand that. The Minister of Energy is working with a team of individuals to produce a plan that will respond not only to the immediate situation with respect to rates but also to the intermediate and long-term solution for supply in the future as well.

Mr McGuinty: It's wonderful to hear the Premier express that he feels the pain being experienced by the people of Ontario and that he is actively pursuing some kind of a plan. Premier, why in the heck did you not prepare some kind of an intelligent, responsible plan before you let this thing unfold in the province of Ontario? You know, there was a small minority of people left in the province who assumed that somehow there was some minimum level of competence over there when it came to setting up this structure. It is non-existent.

Let me tell you about another case. The Inn of the Good Shepherd is a non-profit agency in Sarnia. They've got a client on social assistance who has a hydro bill of \$600. His power is going to be shut off today. He's terrified that if he loses his power, children's aid will come and take away his children. The Inn of the Good Shepherd doesn't have enough money to help him out. The best they can do for him is to offer him a food package.

Premier, I say to you again: you created this mess. You created yet another crisis. You didn't lay the groundwork properly and the people of Ontario are paying a terrible price. I ask you again: why are you not going to help Ontarians today? Where is the rebate that they need today?

Hon Mr Eves: With respect to the specific question, I presume that the relative utility will act in a responsible fashion and the individual's power, indeed, will not be cut off.

Mr McGuinty: Premier, I have no idea why you make that assumption. Something else you had better check into: those people who are on social assistance today in the province of Ontario—you haven't made any provision whatsoever, of any kind, to help out people who find themselves on social assistance, who find themselves in dire straits as a result of one new factor you've introduced, and that's an exorbitant hydro bill. Nothing has been done on your part to help those people.

Here are a few more cases, since you seem to be unaware of what's happening on this issue. Chris Grant in Ottawa: his bill went from an average of \$200 to \$420 a month. Sue Clark in Ottawa, on ODSP: her bill went from \$53 to \$112. Mark Powell, Stoney Creek: last year's bill, \$135; this year, \$253. Ian McQueen, Stoney Creek: last year's bill averaged \$70 a month; this year it's \$180 per month. Howell Printing Co in Toronto: last year they were paying \$89 per kilowatt hour; this year, \$172 per kilowatt hour. People are experiencing pain as a result of your gross mismanagement and incompetence on the hydro file. These people need help, and they need it today. I ask you again, on their behalf, where is the rebate?

Hon Mr Eves: It's great to be the leader of the official opposition and take a negative point of view on every single thing that happens. I would like the leader of the official opposition to predict for the House now what the weather will be like next July, August and September. I'd like him to predict now how many megawatts of power will be coming on stream next year at this time.

The reality is that there were some 2,000 megawatts of power that Pickering was supposed to have on-line that are not on-line. The reality is that 800 megawatts of power at Bruce were off, when they were expected to be on, because of a mistake made during routine maintenance. The reality is that we had the hottest summer on record in 50 years. The reality is that rates for residential consumers between May and now have gone up about 23% on average. That is the reality. We understand that even that is too high, and we will be taking specific

action to deal not only with the rebate, but with the interim and long-term supply of energy in the province as well.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY AND DEMAND

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is again to the Premier. The reality is that you promised us lower rates. The reality is that you failed to take the necessary and cautious steps to get this right. The reality is that the people of Ontario today are being hurt as a result of your gross mismanagement and incompetence on the hydro file. That is the painful reality.

Premier, we are now stuck in a situation where we have the worst of all worlds. We have skyrocketing hydro bills, we have a shortage of supply and we have a private sector that has effectively turned its back on you and said they wouldn't touch this situation with a 28-foot pole. You've left us with the worst of all worlds.

My question to you Premier is, now that we understand you have created a crisis in terms of a shortage of supply, what specifically is your plan to bring more supply to the province of Ontario?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): We will be delivering our plan in due course, but I want to correct a few things that he said. The leader of the official opposition—

Interjections.

Hon Mr Eves: They weren't fed today in caucus.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Member for Windsor West, come to order, please. There was patience while the leader of the official opposition asked his question. There was quiet. I'm going to insist on the other side as well. The people of the province want to hear the leader of the official opposition and the Premier, not the rest of the backbenchers yelling at each other, and if we have to throw people out, we will. They're capable of providing their own sides on the issue; they don't need the help of people shouting in their ears. Sorry, Premier.

Hon Mr Eves: The leader of the official opposition certainly will know that investment by the private sector and the energy sector is experiencing great international difficulties. According to Cambridge Energy Research Associates, in the first quarter of this year alone, 50,000 megawatts of power projects in the United States of America were cancelled or put on hold; 20,000 were cancelled outright, and 30,000 were put on hold pending changes in circumstances.

The situation we are experiencing in the province of Ontario is no different than it is in the United States of America or other places internationally at this time. We, like those other jurisdictions, will deal with the problem within our own jurisdiction.

1400

Mr McGuinty: You tell us you're working feverishly now to develop some kind of plan to meet our supply needs. I ask you again, why did you not prepare that plan and execute it properly long before we came to this

situation? Why are we desperately scrambling today to build new supply?

Here are the facts, Premier: you mismanaged Pickering. We're short some 2,000 megawatts there. We still don't have our ties in place to the province of Quebec. We're not going to get what we should be getting there. The NDP graciously cancelled any proposal we had to establish linkages with Manitoba. We find ourselves once more in a terrible crisis of shortage of supply as a result of your mismanagement. This was all able to be anticipated. You could have predicted it, Premier. I ask you again, what specifically are you going to do to bring more supply to Ontario?

Hon Mr Eves: The leader of the official opposition knows, in response to an answer to one of his first three questions, that what was supposed to be on-line was 2,000 megawatts of power at Pickering and another 800 at Bruce that was down for maintenance for tubes that were damaged during routine maintenance, and of course we needed a particularly high influx of power into this jurisdiction during the months of July, August and September because of the warmest summer on record in 50 years.

Maybe the leader of the official opposition has a great plan that is going to control temperatures in Ontario next July, August and September. I know what your plan is: your plan is to build a Beck 3, put it on-stream and create 650 megawatts of power, and take out 6,500 in coal-powered plants at the same time, leaving you with a net deficit of about 5,800 megawatts of power. That is your plan.

Mr Gregory S. Sorbara (Vaughan-King-Aurora): Call an election. Take it to the people.

The Speaker: Order. The member for Vaughan-King-Aurora, come to order, please. The leader of the official opposition for his final supplementary.

Mr McGuinty: Let's see if we've got this right. The Premier blames Mother Nature for our supply problems today in the province. He blames international markets. He blames Pickering, which you happen to be responsible for, sir, ultimately. At various courses during the course of the summer you blamed Ontarians for using too much electricity. I suggest to you that what you might want to do, when it comes to assigning blame for the crisis in which we find ourselves, is take a look in a mirror. One more time, Premier, you created this mess. You have put us in a serious predicament. I ask you specifically, what are you going to do to bring more supply to the province of Ontario?

Hon Mr Eves: The only person in this Legislature assigning blame is the member sitting directly opposite. He's very good at that. You see, on this side of the House, we have to deal with the real world. We don't have Tinker Bell advising us with respect to our energy policies for the future.

HYDRO DEREGULATION

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Premier. May I say, it's interesting to watch Liberals and Conservatives argue back and forth about who would deregulate the most and who would privatize hydro the most.

Premier, this morning you finally admitted what everyone else in the province has known for some time: that hydro deregulation and privatization is a disaster for consumers. Your comment of, "Well, sometimes you're right and sometimes you're wrong," I think really doesn't speak to what consumers are feeling. I think your caucus members Mr Mazzilli and Mr Murdoch had it right when they said, "This is a crisis for people," because people have to pay the sky-high hydro bills. My question, Premier, is this: now that you've admitted you were wrong, will you finally do the right thing and cancel hydro deregulation and privatization?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I will give the leader of the third party this much: at least he's consistent about this issue.

Just to correct the record with respect to what was said in the scrum, what I said was, "People have to make judgment calls on the facts in front of them at the time, and there are some factors that crop up that nobody could have thought about." That is what I said in my scrum, not what he is alleging I said.

The reality is that over a period of time, we on this side of the House happen to believe that competition will be a good thing. There were several factors that intervened this summer that have resulted in a rise in electricity prices to the consumers of Ontario of about 23%, from May 1 until now. We will take steps to address that, we will take steps to address those consumers' concerns with respect to a rebate program, and we will take steps to address the intermediate and long-term supply of hydro in the province.

Mr Hampton: Premier, you talk as if suddenly you became aware of this. Were you not aware of California? Were you not aware of what happened in Alberta, that the Alberta government had to fork out over \$2 billion to try to hide the deregulation fiasco from hydro consumers in Alberta? Are you not aware that today in Montana they are actually voting to do away with hydro deregulation there? Have you ignored the advice of the Consumer Federation of America which came out a year ago saying, "Don't do this. Yes, it results in huge profits for companies like Enron, but it's a disaster for consumers"?

Where were you and your government when from all across North America the warning signs were coming over the last year that hydro deregulation is a consumer disaster? Where were you? Why weren't you listening and watching? Why wasn't your government listening to what's going on elsewhere in the world? What is your excuse?

Hon Mr Eves: This isn't the state of California; this is Ontario. We're in the country of Canada. The jurisdiction

in Ontario is capable of producing more power than it actually needs from time to time. Nobody could have predicted that OPG and Pickering would not be ready to go by now, nobody could have predicted that a tube would be damaged at Bruce while they were doing routine maintenance and nobody could have predicted the weather we've had, let alone the fact that the federal government would choose to charge GST on a debt reduction charge.

What we could do, though, is be guided by the IMO and the Ontario Energy Board, both of whom wrote letters to the then Minister of Energy on April 24 of this year saying that from an adequacy of supply point of view and a retail market point of view, the government would be quite proper and would be acting responsibly, as a matter of fact, to open the market on May 1.

Mr Hampton: Premier, you talk as if on the one hand it was just hot weather and on the other hand you couldn't have anticipated that maybe some generating stations would have to go down. But other jurisdictions were telling you that when you deregulate and privatize hydro, you create the incentives for profit-driven companies to do just that: to withdraw generation, to manipulate the market, to engage in price-fixing and gouging of consumers. All of that was on the record and your government did nothing.

I want to ask you from the perspective of the York region school board, whose hydro costs are up 40%—that's \$2.9 million—over what they were last year at this time. They can't afford those prices. They're not getting any more money out of the funding formula. Will you finally do the right thing now—you've admitted you're wrong—and cancel hydro privatization and deregulation?

Hon Mr Eves: We are going to address the issue of a rate increase. We're going to address that. We are not going to address the issue of a volume increase—if consumers make a decision to use more electricity, that is their decision—but we will compensate them for an increase in the rate.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): New question, the leader of the third party.

Mr Hampton: Premier, you and the Liberals banter back and forth about, "Should it be a rebate or should it be a price cap?" I want to remind you—because your energy minister, Jim Wilson, used to remind us. He said, "Oh, don't put in place a price cap. That's what they did in California, and when they put in place a price cap the whole system melted down."

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You and the Liberals can banter back and forth about who wants to deregulate the fastest, who wants to privatize the fastest, who wants to deregulate the most and privatize the most, and who would give the most lucrative price cap or the most lucrative rebate, but the problem is deregulation. In Alberta, the price that people pay at the bottom of the bill is up. In California, the price that people pay at the bottom of the bill is up. In Montana, it's up four times over what it was before privatization.

Will you recognize that rebates and price caps are a temporary thing? They will not solve the endemic problems of hydro deregulation. That's what people want you to do. Will you end it?

Hon Mr Eves: As I said in response to the leader of the third party's initial question, at least he's consistent. He believes that during the past 50 years the old Ontario Hydro ringing up a debt of \$38 billion wasn't costing anybody anything, just like he believed that when his party took over control of the purse strings of the province, a debt that went from about \$69 billion to \$114 billion or \$115 billion wasn't hurting the average taxpayer at all either. As a result of those actions you took and the huge increase in debt of all kinds, whether it be with Ontario Hydro, whether it be with the province of Ontario, whether it be with the Workers' Compensation Board in terms of unfunded liability, today it costs the Ontario taxpayer over \$10 billion a year in interest payments alone because of the credit card you ran up.

You sat at the cabinet table, you ran up the charge, and now you're asking everybody else to pay for it. That's where your philosophy gets you in time, but of course you aren't around to answer the bell now that you have tied the Ontario taxpayer with a debt of over \$115 billion, resulting in over \$10 billion a year in interest payments alone. How are you going to pay that back?

Mr Hampton: Premier, just to give you a little recollection of history, you were the government when Darlington was built. You were the government, with help from the Liberals, when Darlington went from a \$5-billion nuclear plant to a \$15-billion nuclear plant, a \$10-billion cost overrun. That was your government, with the help of the Liberals.

You, Premier, are the one who has put almost all the money, \$2.5 billion over the last three years, back into nuclear. You're the person who's running up the hydro debt and you're the person who is forcing people across this province to not only pay that, but pay the profiteers, the commission takers and the fee takers.

Premier, this question comes from the Hamilton credit counselling centre, who point out that people just can't afford to pay their bills. Will you recognize that you can't fool people with a temporary rebate and recognize that hydro deregulation and privatization is wrong for both you and the Liberals? Cancel it now.

Hon Mr Eves: It seems to me I can recall a certain party supporting everything the Liberal Party did between 1985 and 1987, when you're talking about those Darlington expenditures that David Peterson's government thought were great and invested billions of dollars in. And I seem to recall the Bob Rae government investing \$5 billion in NUGs that don't produce one single kilowatt of energy. Why did you spend that \$5 billion and where did that go? Why don't you tell the people in the gallery that, Howard?

HYDRO RATES

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):

A question to the Premier: Premier, the mess you've created in hydro, as I said earlier, is hitting everybody hard: families, businesses, charities and legion halls. It's also going to affect the government's funding partners. I'm wondering if you're giving that some thought. Hydro bills are hitting your funding partners like schools, universities, colleges and hospitals. These large institutions are going to be faced with enormous hydro bills they could not possibly have anticipated.

Premier, can you tell Ontario families who rely on hospitals, who rely on our schools and who rely on our colleges and universities what exactly you are going to do to make sure programs are not cut in order to pay for your failure to control hydro costs?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): Now there doesn't appear to be too much difference between the leader of the official opposition and the leader of the third party in terms of controlling different costs. They both seem to think that by socialist intervention, they can control the price of just about everything in our society.

We will take care of hospitals, as we did this year with a 7.74% increase to their budget, an \$8-billion-a-year increase in health care funding in the province of Ontario, since we became the government—\$8 billion a year. If your federal cousins in Ottawa did as well, they'd be spending between \$20 billion and \$30 billion more a year on health care, and they're not. So I would ask you to use your good offices to phone your good friend Jean Chrétien and ask him where the \$20 billion a year is.

Mr McGuinty: That is quite a creative flight of fancy. How can we go from hydro bills being paid by schools in Ontario to something somehow connected with the federal government? I can understand why the Premier doesn't want to talk about hydro, but you're going to have to sooner or later.

I'm talking about institutions that are funded by the government to provide essential services: health care for our families, education for our kids. You're putting those transfer partners into an impossible situation where they're going to have to choose between keeping the lights on or keeping the programs going.

Hamilton Health Sciences centre, an institution which is struggling today—they just recently made the decision to let 250 people go—tell us that their hydro bill this year will increase by \$2.2 million. The Greater Essex County District School Board estimates their hydro bill will soar this year by more than \$500,000. Every single hospital, every single school board, every single university and college is going to be hit with extravagant increases. Parents and families want some assurance from you, Premier, as the man who created this mess, that programs won't be cut in their schools, their hospitals, their colleges or their universities. Will you guarantee that right now?

Hon Mr Eves: We will take care of our transfer partners with respect to increases in hydro rates. But I don't want the leader of the official opposition to stand in his place and leave an impression with the public out there. The Hamilton Health Sciences centre, the very centre that he talks about, this year received an increase in base funding of \$36 million, or 8.5%, bringing their annual total to \$464.6 million, and we supplied them with an additional \$2.6 million in one-time funding in this fiscal year—a far, far cry from what Elinor Caplan did when she was Minister of Health in this province. We are spending \$8 billion more a year on health care; we are \$8 billion more committed to health care in this province than you were.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Come to order. We've had our little fun. Come to order. We will start the clock again.

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TELEMARKETING PRACTICES

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): My question is for the Minister of Consumer and Business Services—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. The member for Windsor West, this is her last warning. If I have to get up again, I will remove you.

You can start all over, member for Scarborough Centre.

Ms Mushinski: My question is for the Minister of Consumer and Business Services. I'm particularly concerned about telemarketers who are using Ontario as a base to scam Americans and people in other jurisdictions. Specifically, concerns have been raised about deceptive telemarketers who are peddling phony credit cards with a one-time advance fee. These scam artists look for the most—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order.

Ms Mushinski: I wish you would stop yapping over there and listen to this very important question.

These scam artists look for the most vulnerable targets: the elderly, the poor and even working families who are struggling to make ends meet. I've also heard of scams that try and convince individuals to pay an upfront fee for an incredible loan with a really low rate, only to find out that neither the rate nor the loan ever existed. Minister, could you please tell us what this government is doing to stamp out this kind of despicable crime in our province?

Hon Tim Hudak (Minister of Consumer and Business Services): I appreciate the question from the member for Scarborough. She's right: it's a despicable crime that tends to target seniors and other vulnerable individuals and working families. Fortunately, work like Project Phonebusters is able to shut this scam down on targeting Ontarians. However, there still is an ongoing concern

about using Ontario as a base to go after Americans and other jurisdictions.

The Ernie Eves government is doing its best, in cooperation with police forces and the federal government, to turn up the heat on these so-called boiler room operations. This ministry took the lead in 2000 and set up a strategic partnership with Canadian and US law enforcement. Here are some of the results. To date we have laid 134 charges and shut down 42 of these boiler rooms. The most recent bust on October 22 shut down two boiler rooms running one of these advance fee credit loan scams. We appreciate the partnership of Phonebusters and the police forces, which have commended the ministry and this government on their work in fighting these deceptive schemes.

Ms Mushinski: Minister, I'm really pleased to hear that you're taking telephone fraud so seriously. I would argue that forming a relationship involving the three levels of government in Canada as well as with US officials is definitely the best way to go. But it has also been pointed out that penalties are much tougher in the United States. I realize that most of these cases are tried under the federal Criminal Code or other statutes they administer, but I want to know, Minister, what we can do as a province through tougher laws and tougher enforcement to protect innocent victims.

Hon Mr Hudak: The member makes a very important point. In the partnership, we decide under which set of laws to prosecute, whether it's the Criminal Code or, in some cases, the Loan Brokers Act under provincial offences.

One common scam is the advance fee loan, as was mentioned by the member, where they demand a fee upfront and never deliver on the service—illegal in the province of Ontario. In fact, Bill 180, our CP21, consumer protection in the 21st century, that is before the Legislature now, if passed, will see the fines more than double as well as increased jail terms of up to two years less a day. Basically, our CP21 legislation, which I hope to see passed by all members of this House in the near future, will help us in partnership with the federal government, police forces and our colleagues across the border in the States to continue to crack down and shut down and take the steam out of these boiler room operations.

HYDRO DEREGULATION

Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's): My question is for the Premier. Week after week we have been standing on this side of the House calling for the government to roll out the rebate to compensate Ontarians for Herculean hydro prices. At first you and your energy minister thought that was a crazy idea; now you seem to think it's a pretty good idea. What people want to know now, Premier, is: when are you going to be rolling out the rebate and how much is the average rebate going to be?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): You're going to find that out in short order.

Mr Bryant: Don't you think you might have done this before you opened up the marketplace? Don't you think that when you were the finance minister sitting around the cabinet table you might have weighed in on how the marketplace was going to look? Don't you think that as the Premier of Ontario you had a responsibility not to open up a marketplace that wasn't ready?

You had an option, sir, to exercise leadership. You shouldn't have opened up a marketplace that wasn't ready for Ontario. You sold the consumers of Ontario a lemon, and now they're paying the price. You have lost the confidence of this province when it comes to the governance of Hydro and electricity. My question is, why didn't you do your homework before you opened up the marketplace in May?

Hon Mr Eves: The honourable member for St Paul's certainly does have a lot of enthusiasm. There's no doubt about that.

Throughout the last few months and throughout Ontario's electricity restructuring process, the Liberal Party of Ontario has been in favour of opening the market. That has been their stated position. Now, when there has been a fluctuation in prices, which we acknowledge and will take care of, they seem to be saying they're not in favour of opening the market. In a few more months, in six months, when all appears to be well, they'll be in favour of opening the market again.

I heard the member for St Paul's on a radio show the other day talking about, "Why don't we just split Ontario Hydro into four or five equal chunks and sell them to the nearest fire-sale bidder, and then we'll have equal competition?" That's your solution to the problem. No doubt your leader will have a different solution to the problem tomorrow, and the day after that you'll have another solution to the problem. But we're actually going to solve the problem.

BIOSOLID MANAGEMENT

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): My question today is for the Minister of the Environment. I was going to ask a question on Kyoto, but I think it was answered, so I'll ask a question on biosolids.

Constituents in my riding of Simcoe North have asked me about the storage and spreading of biosolids on agricultural land. I'm aware that the practice is approved by the Ministry of the Environment. Minister, can you explain what safeguards are in place to ensure that the spreading and storage is not harmful to the environment and to local residents as well?

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): Many of the more rural members of my caucus have talked to me about this. The members from Northumberland, Peterborough, Grey-Owen Sound, Wellington—a few of them—have come to me with respect to the biosolids issue.

The current practice of using biosolids on agricultural land is protective of the environment when conducted within ministry guidelines and rules. Management of biosolids—

Mr Gregory S. Sorbara (Vaughan-King-Aurora): Everyone else is leaving too, Chris.

Hon Mr Stockwell: There's only one guy I wish would leave right now.

Management of biosolids is controlled under the Environmental Protection Act, part V. MOE controls transport and land application. Only when biosolids meet provincial requirements and standards can they be applied to land.

Currently, work is being done under the Nutrient Management Act, and MOE is also conducting a review of its land application programs. The standards being developed under the Nutrient Management Act will be consistent with Justice O'Connor's recommendation. Furthermore, there needs to be more information given to local municipalities that accept these biosolids and to the communities around them, so they know how much, when and where it's going to be applied.

Mr Dunlop: A biosolids hauling company in my riding is concerned that the new nutrient management—
Interjections.

Mr Dunlop: Isn't this unbelievable?

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Come to order. Order. The yelling when the microphone is on is even worse. Come to order, please.

Mr Dunlop: As the former Minister of Energy, you know the IMO—

Interjection.

The Speaker: Last warning for the member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale. If he yells again, he's out too. I'm not just going to get down and two seconds later you're yelling. Last time.

Sorry again, member for Simcoe North.

Mr Dunlop: Minister, as the former Minister of Energy you know that the IMO changes every five minutes, just about the same number of times the Liberal Party flip-flops on this issue.

A biosolids hauling company in my riding is concerned that the new nutrient management regulations will adversely affect its business. What will the new regulations mean for small waste management businesses in my riding and across the province?

Hon Mr Stockwell: The proposed regulatory requirements will mean the haulers, which are often applicators, will need to be trained and certified. MOE and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food will be consulting on these regulations in the near future. We want to hear what regular citizens and people in the industry have to say. It's important to our government to find out what questions and concerns our stakeholders have. It's why Minister Johns and I have travelled across Ontario listening to those concerns and ideas. These standards will provide clear, environmentally protective standards that apply evenly to haulers and applicators, ensuring a level playing field.

I will say that when it comes to environmental issues and concerns, it is this government that has taken a lead on Drive Clean, on the 2005 closing of coal-fired plants, on emissions into the air and on cleaning up the environment. I'm proud of the record of this government with respect to the environment. Rather than talking about the issues, which is what the opposition parties did when they were in office, this government is taking real, better action that can be measurable and approved for a better environment for the people of Ontario.

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HYDRO DEREGULATION

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): My question is to the Premier. Finally, after months of defending the indefensible, many of your own colleagues are starting to listen to the thousands of people who are suffering on hydro privatization. The member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound says it best: if you ignore them, you ignore them at your own peril.

I have a few examples here. Sinead, who is under 30, lives in Toronto and worked so hard to start a business, said you and your government are going to bankrupt her. She asks that you call an election and she'll show you how she feels. Philip of Toronto said, "This is beyond bleeding. We are going to hemorrhage to death with privatization." Joan, a Toronto pensioner, writes, "I can't afford to pay \$333 in one lump sum—the excess wipes out my entire food allowance for the month." But Glen, who used to be a Tory supporter, says it best, "This is the most obscene decision this government has made. You have disappointed, failed and misled the exact people who are responsible for you being in the position you are in. I hope you realize when election time comes anybody and everybody who is remotely"—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. The member can't say that word, even though he's quoting somebody else. I ask him to withdraw it. He's got about five seconds to place the question as well.

Mr Prue: My question is, will you explain—

The Speaker: First—

Mr Prue: I withdraw the statement.

Will you explain today why you have not listened? Will you tell us today that you're going to cancel your plans for the sell-off and keep hydro in public hands?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): We are keeping hydro in public hands and we are going to respond to the concerns of not only his constituents but the constituents of every single member of this Legislature.

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): Premier, that's not going to cut it. People across the province are hurting and you want to sit there and laugh. Do you know there are seniors who are having to choose between buying food and paying their hydro bills?

Interjections.

The Speaker: I am naming the member for Simcoe North and asking him to leave the chamber right now.

We're not going to put up with this. Yelling and screaming and anger are not going to be acceptable. When there is fun-loving humour and some yelling, that's fine, but we're not going to have yelling and anger like that. There will be no warning and you're out if you do it.

Mr Dunlop was escorted from the chamber.

Mr Christopherson: I say again to the government members, there's nothing to laugh about. There a lot of people across this province, in my community of Hamilton and in other communities, who are hurting. There are people who are having to choose between paying their hydro bill and buying food, between paying their hydro bill and buying necessary medicine. These choices are being put upon people because of your decisions. You made this decision. You can blame it on the weather all you want. Your decision is hurting people. I personally find it insulting that a lot of you want to sit there and laugh. There are a lot of people in this province who aren't laughing.

Premier, rebates are not going to do it. Tinkering with the legislation isn't going to do it. Passing a new regulation isn't going to do it. Cancelling your privatization and deregulation will.

Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke North): Wrong and wrong.

The Speaker: Take your seat. Order. I'm also naming the member for Etobicoke North and asking him to leave the chamber as well. I won't tolerate members sitting there making faces at me either. If I have to clear you all out, I'll do it.

Mr Hastings was escorted from the chamber.

The Speaker: Sorry, Premier, it was your turn to speak.

Hon Mr Eves: Nobody takes the plight of Ontarians, especially those on fixed incomes and seniors, lightly. We are going to come up with a solution that not only addresses the cash outlay that these people have made, and many of them, as I appreciate, are on fixed incomes, but we are going to come up with a solution that deals with the intermediate and long-term supply of energy in Ontario.

I understand that he has a disagreement in principle with the opening of a retail market with respect to hydro. Nobody said there wouldn't be the odd glitch along the way, and there has been. I just want to assure him that on this side of the House we all have constituents who relay their concerns to us. We all have seniors—I was at a seniors' home last Friday in my riding—who relay these concerns to us. We appreciate the sincerity and the severity of their concerns in some cases, and we are going to act as quickly as we possibly can to address them.

RACIAL PROFILING

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Premier. Premier, here in Ontario we enjoy the privilege of experiencing cultures from all over the globe every time we leave our home, but not

every Ontarian feels that their culture is celebrated or that they are even treated equally.

You will be familiar with a series of articles that appeared in the Toronto Star recently. Those articles served to reinforce something that every black mother in this province knows: sadly, their sons are often treated differently.

Last week a coalition of leaders from the black community sent you a letter. I thought they made a very compelling argument to the effect that the time for study was over. They're asking that you take action. Premier, I'm sure you've now had a chance to review that letter. What action will you now be taking?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): This is an issue, as the leader of the official opposition points out, that I think a lot of Ontarians take very seriously, and certainly we do on this side of the House. Not only is it imperative to make sure that there is no such thing as racial profiling that goes on in this jurisdiction, or in this country for that matter, but it's also important to get home the point that it doesn't even appear to be going on, let alone going on.

I have consulted with various people in the black community and I will continue to do that. I was talking to the Honourable Lincoln Alexander just the other day. We do want to respond in a positive way to the concerns being raised by many in the black community, to make sure they can feel that there is no such special treatment, if you want to put it that way, of black youth in this province.

But I do want to say that the Toronto Police Services, I think, have an excellent reputation for dispensing justice in the largest cosmopolitan urban centre in the world. I can't think of any other city in the world that has the cultural diversity this city does and responds so well to it.

Mr McGuinty: Premier, I hope you appreciate that we have been studying this issue in one form or another since 1977. That's some 25 years. What we need now are some concrete steps that are going to restore confidence in our citizens and in our police.

I'm sure you can understand the frustration felt by members of the black community who see this come into fashion at different points in time. Then it disappears, and studies are collected and they gather dust on a shelf somewhere. We need to take those studies and turn them into action. My colleague Alvin Curling has called for an implementation task force to put those studies into effect. Premier, will you take this action so we can start addressing a very serious issue in a very serious way?

Hon Mr Eves: As I said to the leader of the official opposition in my initial response, I indicated right off the bat that I am prepared to—the very day they had their press conference here at Queen's Park I happened to be at the Royal York, speaking at the Terry Fox Foundation annual luncheon. I said immediately that I would be happy to sit down and meet with the leaders of the black community to see if we can't come to some agreement as to how we proceed from here to address the very concerns he has made.

CHATSWORTH FISH HATCHERY

Mr Bill Murdoch (Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound): My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources. Last week the Minister of Natural Resources was in my area—and I certainly appreciate that—and opened up a new fish hatchery which is state of the art. I understand it's probably one of the best fish hatcheries in Ontario. It has one of the best springs in Ontario.

I would like the minister to explain to the House some of the money that was spent there. Would he be interested in having a visitors' centre there so we could show the rest of the people of Ontario, not only the ones in Bruce and Grey but those all over Ontario. What a beautiful spot it is and what a great asset it is to our area?

Hon Jerry J. Ouellette (Minister of Natural Resources): I thank the member for the question. Yes, last Friday we opened a new hatchery in Chatsworth and I was very proud to be there. Something must have frozen over because I made it through the snowstorms and everything else. I wouldn't miss the member's opening up there.

It's 46,000 square feet and it cost about \$6.5 million. We're increasing the number of fish that are being produced there. Up to 2.8 million fish will be released annually in Ontario, and I think that's good news for natural resources here in the province.

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Mr Murdoch: As the minister knows, we did have some difficulty with some of the bureaucrats who work in his ministry. They just didn't seem to want the people of Ontario to see this spot. They have difficulty showing us. I would like to ask the minister if he's prepared to put some private discipline into this fish hatchery, or at least some partnerships with some of the sporting clubs in the area.

Hon Mr Ouellette: As I mentioned earlier, it was definitely a pleasure to be there, and I know the member is very active. We have a commonality in that youth programs are a strong initiative. I know and I expect that we will be seeing tours in that facility in the very near future. As well, we are always open to partnerships and bringing in relationships with other clubs—the clubs that were in attendance there, the Sydenham club or the Bruce Trail groups. We're always more than happy to sit down and discuss how we can best benefit natural resources in the province of Ontario.

SLOT MACHINES

Mr Monte Kwinter (York Centre): I have a question for the Premier. Last week, on Thursday, October 31, 2002, Mr Flaherty revealed that the decision to allot up to 800 slot machines to Picov Downs under certain conditions was made in December 2001. However, in a letter to Mr Norm Picov dated April 10, 2002, Minister Tim Hudak stated that in December, cabinet directed the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp to complete a business case for slots at Picov Downs and Quinte Exhibition

Raceway. Mr Hudak goes on to state that in March, four months later, cabinet reviewed and approved the business case as part of the provincial gaming strategy. It is clear from a leaked cabinet document, as revealed by Susanna Kelley of TVO's Fourth Reading, that the decision to allocate up to 800 slot machines under certain conditions was made on March 6, 2002. Premier, your Attorney General, in several responses to me, stated that no decision has been made and that one of several options being considered is not providing any slot machines to Picov Downs. Could you tell us which of these positions is the correct one?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): It is my understanding that a decision was made with respect to Picov Downs but that the decision that was made, as he pointed out, said up to a certain number of machines. There are certain protocols, procedures and processes that one normally goes through. As he would know, 15 of 18 licensed tracks in Ontario have licensed slot machines today. There are three, of which I believe Picov Downs is one, that do not. With respect to that, it's my understanding that the Ontario Racing Commission, which is a totally independent body, as I'm sure he is more than aware, has their input, and the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp has their input. That has been the way these decisions have been arrived at for every one of the other 15. I'm sure that's the same process that Picov Downs or for that matter any other track that doesn't have licensed machines but is a licensed track will have to go through.

Mr Kwinter: Premier, if I understand you correctly, you've just confirmed that the decision has been made, subject to certain conditions. If that is the case, then your Attorney General is wrong, because he keeps saying that no decision has been made. The other question I'd like to ask you is that there are two other dates that have been put on the record, one by Mr Flaherty saying the decision was made in December and another by Minister Hudak that says it wasn't done until four months later, in March. Could you please confirm today on what date that decision was made?

Hon Mr Eves: I don't believe that's what the Attorney General is saying at all. I believe what he is saying—and unfortunately he's not here today to respond himself—is that “up to 800” means that. There's a big range between zero and 800, and the number, according to the advice we receive from the Ontario Racing Commission and the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp, could be zero or it could be 799.

AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYMENT LEGISLATION

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): My question is to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. I know you have introduced, and we have debated here in the House, legislation that is an important part of protecting agricultural workers in this province. My thoughts immediately go out to my constituents in the riding of

Durham and I think of Price's fruit and vegetable market and Pingle's fruit and vegetable market, and of course other agricultural business. I and a number of my colleagues have discussed this proposed legislation with family farms across our ridings, and there is no question that the agricultural sector supports our approach.

Minister, could you inform this Legislature of the consultations your ministry has conducted on this important legislative initiative and what you've heard during those meetings?

Hon Helen Johns (Minister of Agriculture and Food): I'd like to thank the member from Durham for the question and thank him for his involvement with his agricultural community, which he has been doing all summer long.

Subsequent to the Supreme Court of Canada decision, our ministry has consulted widely on the legislation that's before the House. We talked to the labour issues coordinating committee, which is a coalition of farm groups all across the province. We talked to the United Food and Commercial Workers. In addition, we had public meetings in Vineland, Kemptville and Leamington during September of this year.

The farm community is very supportive of the proposed legislation. They understand that there are constitutional requirements to provide workers a framework with which to approach their employers about workplace issues, and this bill provides the opportunity for them to be able to do that. This bill is a balanced approach where the agricultural employees are treated in a consistent manner. However, it is also important to ensure that the farmers of the province are not vulnerable to risks of labour dispute.

Mr O'Toole: Thank you very much for that informative answer, Minister. I also want to compliment you on the passion and hard work that you bring to your ministry.

Minister, we know the farm community's position; you've just outlined that. Our government's position is very clear and it's clear that the NDP has a position staked out on this. But what's puzzling to me is, what is the opposition Liberals' position on this important issue to rural Ontario? It seems, like everything, they're on both sides of the picket fence. Minister, could you explain what the Liberals are doing on this proposed bill?

Hon Mrs Johns: To the honourable member, you are quite correct: the Liberal stance is quite confusing. I recall that on first reading the Liberals abstained from the vote because, as they said at the time, they hadn't sufficient information to be able to make a decision.

But as I said earlier, we had consulted quite extensively with stakeholders before the introduction of the bill, and some of those stakeholders had spoken to the Liberals. So it was surprising. Furthermore, last week as we were working on the second reading debate, the Liberals again seemed to want to derail the legislation and they asked for adjournment of the debate on second reading, which was very surprising because of course the farm community wants this bill passed.

They then voted against a time allocation motion, when the farming community had once again asked them to move forward because it is very important to the community that we get this finished before June—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I'm afraid the minister's time is up.

HYDRO DEREGULATION

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): My question is for the Premier. Premier, day by day the pressure is growing on you to stop the hydro sell-off. Bribing people with their own money isn't going to convince anyone that your scheme is good for consumers. All over the north people are suffering real financial pain because of hydro privatization. Ann and Morley warn you not to fall into the deceptive trap of privatization and deregulation of our hydro power.

All across the world they say it is being demonstrated what a mistake that is. Even now, in our own town of Wawa we have an advanced warning of just where that leads. That's Wawa, where the private company you sold to drained a lake to maximize its profits this summer and where everyone is paying more for hydro.

How many more thousands of citizens do you need to hear from before you call a halt to this silly idea of yours to sell off the people's hydro and deregulate hydro prices?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I will say this for the NDP members: at least they are very consistent on this issue. Despite what the answer is to any question that we have given in the House, they have their scripted questions and, come hell or high water, they're going to ask them.

I think I have addressed the concerns raised by the honourable member in response to the leader of the third party and in response to some of his colleagues in question period today.

First of all, nothing is being privatized in hydro. You preface every one of your questions with "privatization of hydro." What did happen of course is that the market was opened on May 1. That is not privatization; that is opening the market for competition so that other players besides Ontario Power Generation can compete with respect to generation of power in the province.

1450

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

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): To the Premier for the supplementary: The people who have to get off their script, quite frankly, are you on your whole script of privatization and deregulation, because what's clear is that people across this province are waking up to their hydro bills. Once they open up the envelope, they're looking at it and falling to the floor.

I've got a number of examples here from people from my constituency, people from Kapuskasing. Morris, who sent me a copy of his hydro bill from September of last year, quotes his hydro bill as being \$103.74 for

September 2001. Guess how much his hydro bill is for September 2002? It's \$322.59.

If anybody's got to get off the script, Premier, it's you, your Minister of Energy and your entire government. When are you going to cancel privatization? When are you going to get off the deregulation kick and allow people to get back to some sanity when it comes to their hydro bills?

Hon Mr Eves: We are going to respond to the concerns from Ontarians with respect to their electricity rate increase, but we are also going to try to lay out a plan with respect to the intermediate and long-term supply of energy in Ontario.

To the honourable member and the members of his caucus: I don't hear them, when they stand up and ask this question, explain how they spent \$5 billion on NUGs that don't produce one kilowatt of power. Why did you do that? Why did you raise the debt in the province from \$60 billion to \$114 billion, \$115 billion or \$116 billion? Why do you think it's more important to spend over \$10 billion a year on interest payments instead of spending it on the very people you claim to be concerned about?

SLOT MACHINES

Mr Monte Kwinter (York Centre): I'd like to go back to the Premier. The information that I want and haven't got from you as yet is this. We now have two options. Mr Flaherty stated last Thursday, October 31, 2002, that the decision to give Picov Downs up to 800 slot machines, under certain conditions, was made in December 2001. Mr Hudak, the Minister of Tourism, sent a letter to Mr Picov on April 10, saying the decision was made March 6. We have December 2001 and March 6, 2002. On which date was that decision made?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I don't believe that is exactly accurately what those two individuals said. I think the combination of those meetings in December and March led to the result, but the result is going to be determined by independent bodies, as it should be: by the Ontario Racing Commission and the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp. They are independent bodies, and they will come forward with the recommendation to the government, and the number will be somewhere between zero and 800. He will have to wait until they have finished their deliberations to give him the actual answer as to how many machines, if any, Picov Downs will be allowed.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): On a point of order, Speaker: You know that this afternoon, unfortunately, Mr Garfield Dunlop was ejected from the House. I don't want to get into the reasons why, but the point of order I want to make is this: we're supposed to be at the estimates committee this afternoon doing the estimates for the Ministry of Intergovernmental Affairs. Mr Garfield Dunlop is the parliamentary assistant, along with Mr Raminder Gill. Does that now mean we can have Mr Gill represent the estimates on behalf of Mr Dunlop, who can't be there?

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): On the same point of order, Mr Speaker: That's something we'll worry about.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Mr Dunlop cannot go in there, unfortunately. He won't be able to be in the committee.

VISITORS

Mr Cameron Jackson (Burlington): On a point of order, Speaker: It's my distinct pleasure to welcome another Lauren as a page in the House. Lauren Wilson from Burlington is here with her father, Rick Wilson; her mother, Susan Montgomery; her sister Catherine; and her best friend, Marla Patterson, from John T. Tuck school. I know everyone in the House would like to welcome the Wilson family.

PETITIONS

HYDRO RATES

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): It's time for petitions, and we'll start with the member for St Catharines.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I will tell your mother you've been kind to me this week.

This is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas electricity bills have skyrocketed under the Harris-Eves government's flawed electricity plan; and

"Whereas some consumers have signed higher fixed-rate contracts with retailers, without adequate consumer protection; and

"Whereas the Harris-Eves government has failed to address electricity supply shortages in Ontario, forcing the purchase of American power at premium prices, driving up prices still further; and

"Whereas the Harris-Eves government appointed a board of directors for Hydro One that has been paying themselves extravagant salaries, compensation packages and severances for senior executives; and

"Whereas Hydro One bought 90 municipal utilities, serving about 240,000 people across Ontario, at premium prices and with borrowed funds. These purchases with borrowed funds have increased Ontario's debt burden; and

"Whereas the Harris-Eves government has added additional fees and taxes on to local electricity distribution companies. These charges have also been passed along to consumers;

"Therefore be it resolved that we, the undersigned, demand that the Harris-Eves government take immediate action to ensure that Ontarians have fair and reasonable prices for the necessary commodity of electricity in Ontario, and that the Harris-Eves government and its leader, Premier Ernie Eves, call an election on the

instability of the energy market so that Ontarians may have a voice on this issue.”

I affix my signature.

COMPETITIVE ELECTRICITY MARKET

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“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 maximum 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.”

On behalf of my constituents, I add my name to this petition.

HIGHWAY 69

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and it concerns the multi-laning of Highway 69 between Sudbury and Parry Sound. It is part of the 28,000-name petition I have.

“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 lost their lives needlessly along that stretch of highway; and

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

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

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

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

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

I of course affix my signature and give it to Hin-Hey, our page, to bring to the table.

1500

ADOPTION DISCLOSURE

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): November is Adoption Awareness Month and I have many petitions calling on the government to pass Bill 77. This petition reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas in Ontario adopted adults are denied a right available to all non-adoptees, that is, the unrestricted right to identifying information concerning their family of origin;

“Whereas Canada has ratified standards of civil and human rights in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the UN Declaration of Human Rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child;

“Whereas these rights are denied to persons affected by the secrecy provisions in the adoption sections of the Child and Family Services Act and other acts of the province of Ontario;

“Whereas research in other jurisdictions has demonstrated that disclosure does not cause harm, that access to such information is beneficial to adult adoptees, adoptive parents and birth parents, and that birth parents rarely requested or were promised anonymity;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario to enact revision of the Child and Family Services Act and other acts to permit adult adoptees unrestricted access to full personal identifying birth information; permit birth parents, grandparents and siblings access to the adopted person’s amended birth certificate when the adopted person reaches age 18; permit adoptive parents unrestricted access to identifying birth information of their minor children; allow adopted persons and birth relatives to file a contact veto restricting contact by the searching party; replace mandatory reunion counselling with optional counselling.”

Of course I will affix my signature to this petition.

SERVICES DE SANTÉ POUR ENFANTS

CHILDREN’S HEALTH SERVICES

M^{me} Claudette Boyer (Ottawa-Vanier): « À l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario :

« Attendu que le gouvernement planifie la fermeture du service de chirurgie cardiaque à l’hôpital pour enfants de l’est de l’Ontario;

“Whereas the Conservative government plans to centralize all cardiac services for children in Toronto;

« Attendu que la chirurgie cardiaque est un service essentiel pour les enfants de l’est de l’Ontario et pour les enfants francophones de toute la province;

“Whereas the lives of children may be at risk if forced to travel to Toronto for cardiac care;

« Attendu que les enfants et leur famille se verront imposer des dépenses et des soucis inutiles s’ils doivent se rendre à Toronto pour obtenir des services cardiaques;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature to demand that the Conservative government halt immediately its decision to close cardiac surgery services at the Children’s Hospital of Eastern Ontario in Ottawa.”

J’y appose ma signature avec fierté.

COMPETITIVE ELECTRICITY MARKET

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

“Whereas the Ernie Eves Conservative government has legislated the opening of the Ontario electricity market as of May 1, 2002, and the price per kilowatt hour for electricity in the province of Ontario has nearly quadrupled since May 1; and

“Whereas the Conservative government of Ontario has done very little to address key issues such as energy supply, which forces the province to import power and causes the price of electricity to skyrocket; and

“Whereas Ernie Eves has done a poor job in educating the public as to the ramifications of an open energy market in the province of Ontario and has done little to punish the unscrupulous sales practices of door-to-door energy retailers; and

“Whereas the government of Ontario has saddled the population of Ontario with additional debt reduction charges, which further increases the amount that the citizens of Ontario have to pay per kilowatt hour, yet the Hydro debt continues to increase; and

“Whereas the Mike Harris-Ernie Eves government appointed the board of directors of Hydro One, who approved exorbitant salaries and compensation packages for Hydro One executives;

“Be it resolved that the Ontario government move immediately to protect our province’s electricity consumers by addressing the serious generation problem in Ontario, by punishing unscrupulous electricity retailers and by moving forward with a rebate to offset the increasing costs of electricity in Ontario.”

This is signed by a number of residents from Blenheim, Charing Cross, Chatham and Morpeth. I too have signed this petition.

CHILD CARE

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have petitions that have been sent to me by Mulberry school in Kingston, Norah Love Children’s Centre in Sioux Lookout, CUPE

Local 1764 in Durham region, and Last Tango Productions in Toronto. The petition reads as follows:

“Whereas 70% of Ontario women with children under the age of 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 and I affix my name to this.

DÉRÈGLEMENTATION DE L’ÉLECTRICITÉ

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): J’ai une pétition de 739 noms. Maintenant nous avons atteint 3 000 signatures et il y a des milliers d’autres à venir.

« À l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario:

« Attendu que le gouvernement Harris-Eves a déréglementé le marché de l’électricité ontarien le 1^{er} mai 2002 sans que cela ait fait partie de ses programmes de 1995 ou 1999 et sans mandat de la population de l’Ontario;

« Attendu que le prix de l’électricité a atteint des niveaux outrageux, augmentant parfois de 100 % depuis le 1^{er} mai 2002 et causant de graves difficultés financières aux Ontariens et Ontariennes;

« Attendu qu’Ontario Power Generation (qui appartient au gouvernement de l’Ontario) a demandé à la Commission de l’énergie de l’Ontario la permission de réduire de 20 % le rabais promis aux Ontariens et Ontariennes si le prix de l’électricité dépassait les 3,8 cents le kilowattheure...;

« Attendu que le gouvernement Harris-Eves a autorisé le versement de salaires et primes exorbitants de l’ordre de 2,2 \$ millions par année à l’ancienne présidente de Hydro One et au-delà de 1,6 \$ millions par année au vice-président d’Ontario Power Generation;

« Nous, soussignés, demandons au gouvernement Harris-Eves de prendre des mesures immédiates pour faire en sorte que les Ontariens et Ontariennes payent ce service essentiel qu’est l’électricité à un juste prix et demandons également que le gouvernement conservateur et son chef, Ernie Eves, déclenchent une élection générale sur l’instabilité du marché de l’énergie pour

ainsi donner aux Ontariens et Ontariennes la parole à ce sujet. »

J'y ajoute ma signature.

COMPETITIVE ELECTRICITY MARKET

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have another petition that reads 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 we, 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’ve signed my name to this petition.

CHILDREN’S HEALTH SERVICES

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): I have close to 1,000 signatures out of over 120,000 submissions from people from the Ottawa area. It has to do with the children’s hospital, and it says:

“Whereas the Ontario government is shutting down the heart surgery unit at the Children’s Hospital of Eastern Ontario; and

“Whereas the closure of this program will restrict the accessibility” for children facing surgery; and

“Whereas every year CHEO treats 140 cases of seriously ill children close to home; and

“Whereas centralization of children’s heart surgery in Toronto would force patients and their families to travel 400 to 600 kilometres away from home....

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately override the government’s decision to close this life-saving program and to ensure that top-quality accessible health care remains available to every child in eastern Ontario.”

I affix my signature to this petition as well.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): The petition reads as follows:

“Whereas the Conservative government increased fees paid by Ontario seniors and other vulnerable people living in long-term-care facilities by 15%, instead of providing adequate government funding for long-term care; and

“Whereas the Conservative government has therefore shifted the cost of long-term care on to the backs of the frail elderly and their families; and

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

“Whereas in 1996 Ontario abandoned its minimum requirement of 2.25 hours of nursing care per nursing home resident; and

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

“Whereas, according to the government’s own study, government cutbacks have resulted in Ontario seniors receiving just 14 minutes a day of care from a registered nurse ... ; and

“Whereas the report also found that Ontario residents receive the least nursing, bathing and general care of nine other comparable locations;

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

“We demand the Conservative government eliminate the 15% fee increase for residents in long-term-care facilities, increase the number of nursing care hours for each resident to a minimum of 3.5 hours per day, and provide stable, increased funding to ensure quality care is there for Ontario residents in long-term-care facilities.”

I agree with the petitioners. I’ve signed my name to this.

1510

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon Doug Galt (Minister without Portfolio): I move that, pursuant to standing order 46 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 148, An Act to provide for declarations of death in certain circumstances and to amend the Emergency Plans Act, when Bill 148 is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the third reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That the vote on third reading may, pursuant to standing order 28(h), be deferred until the next sessional day during the routine proceeding “Deferred Votes”; and

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

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Just before the member begins, and it apparently does need to be the member too, I wanted to make some announcements.

Pursuant to standing order 37(a), the member for Davenport has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given yesterday by the Minister of Health concerning foreign-trained doctors. The matter will be debated today at 6 o'clock.

Pursuant to standing order 37(a), the member for York Centre has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Premier concerning Picov Downs. Again, this matter will be debated today at 6 pm.

Further debate? The chief government whip.

Hon Mr Galt: I'm concerned about Bill 148 as an important piece of legislation, and it certainly gives me a lot of pleasure to be able to speak on this particular bill that's so important to the government and to our emergency services workers.

I'd like to take a few minutes to address some parts of the legislation that unfortunately can affect Ontarians even in times of peace. I'm of course referring to the loss of loved ones where, for whatever reason, there is no absolute proof of death or a person disappears and is presumed dead but no body is ever recovered. Boating accidents and plane crashes are just two good examples of this.

Prior to our government's introducing Bill 148, the surviving family members were required to go through a long, painful and often frustrating process, making individual applications for declarations of death with insurance companies, probating a will, with pension plan administrators, with the courts for purposes of marriage and a host of other situations.

I'm pleased to say that Bill 148 provides a new process for obtaining a court order declaring that a person is dead in circumstances where no physical evidence is available, but it is reasonable to presume death. It streamlines this process by enabling the person or persons seeking a declaration of death to make one, single application that will cover all these circumstances.

The new legislation will allow the courts to make an order declaring that an individual has died if the court is satisfied that the individual has disappeared in circumstances of peril or, in the absence of a specific peril, that the person has been missing for at least seven years. In order to obtain a declaration, the applicant must also show that the individual hasn't been heard from since the disappearance, that no other person has heard from the individual since the disappearance, that there's no reason to believe the individual is still alive and there is sufficient evidence to find that the individual is in fact dead.

This legislation will lighten the hardship families and other survivors frequently experience when a loved one disappears under unusual circumstances.

Before, they were severely restricted in their ability to go about their daily lives due to the fact that joint assets, for example, were frozen in the event the person was later discovered to still be alive. This legislation can never eliminate the hurt associated with losing a loved one under unusual circumstances, but it can and does make it easier for the survivors to deal with the reality that the person won't be found alive. It enables family members to make a single application for a declaration of death so they can get on with their lives.

There is a second important component to this legislation that I'd like to discuss here today. If necessary in times of emergency, the Attorney General can recommend to the Lieutenant Governor that provisions in certain statutes, regulations, rules, bylaws or orders of the government of Ontario be suspended temporarily by an order in council. It is important to note that this power is limited and applies only to legislation that establishes a limitation period, provides for a benefit or compensation payable as a result of the emergency or requires a payment of fees in respect of court proceedings or in connection with anything done in the administration of justice.

Bill 148 would have been a big help, for example, during the ice storm in eastern Ontario that occurred in 1998.

In addition, the power can only be used if, in the opinion of the Lieutenant Governor in Council, temporarily suspending the operation of the provision would facilitate providing assistance to victims of the emergency or would otherwise help victims and other members of the public to deal with the emergency and its aftermath. This aspect of the legislation is meant to be temporary and has a maximum time frame of 90 days from the time it is enacted.

In addition, the Ministry of the Attorney General is providing help to victims of crime and their families; dedicating a specialized crown attorney to provide expert advice on terrorism; committing to vigorously prosecute the perpetrators of terrorism related to hoaxes to the full extent of the current law; calling on the federal government to enact a new Criminal Code offence to specifically deal with the terrorist hoax; and introducing legislation that will improve the security of vital statistics documents and protect Ontario citizens' birth certificates and other important documents.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to make a short presentation on the time allocation motion on Bill 148.

Mr Dave Levac (Brant): I appreciate the opportunity to once again talk about 148, but I want to bring a couple of things to the attention of the House first as a reminder.

This is a time allocation motion. I want to let people know that in this session, as of May 2002 to now, there have been 18 bills that were sent to time allocation situations out of 36 that were introduced. So 50% of all the bills we've had in this House have been time-allocated.

As the member indicated in his first remarks, this is an important piece of legislation and I would assume that

anyone who was interested in creating the best possible legislation would want this debated fully, to ensure that all of the points are brought up. A little later on I'm going to go over and review with you some of the things that have been suggested that have yet to be acted upon by this government in terms of this particular bill.

On the government side, I would grant that some of these pieces of legislation may not necessarily have needed to be debated as fully and as deeply as possible because they were a little bit on the straightforward and simple side. But 18 out of the 36 pieces of legislation, 50%, needed time allocation? I think not. I think this was more, "We're going to shoot for a record here to see how many times we can do that."

I would also point out to the House that I looked back at some of the records. I did a little bit of homework and digging. In the 32nd Parliament of Davis-Miller, from March 1981 to 1985, how many times was time allocation used? Three times. And how many government bills were passed? Some 292. So time allocation was used only three times, out of 292 bills. I think people need to know this in here.

I will get to 148, Speaker, because there are some ideas I floated earlier and I think we may hear rumblings that the ministry might get into talking about them because they realize they are good. But we're stuck with time allocation and unfortunately we can't really digest those ideas that are necessary.

1520

The 33rd Parliament, the Peterson minority government, from 1985 to 1987: how many times was time allocation used? Once. How many pieces of legislation? There were 129. The Peterson majority government from 1987 to 1990: three time allocation motions. How many pieces of legislation? There were 183. We're talking about a very small percentage, like point something per cent, of legislation that needed to go to time allocation.

What are we talking about? In this session alone, 18 out of 36—50% of all our legislation—going to time allocation. I say it's time for us to take a good, hard look at what the agenda is. What's the agenda on that side? Is the agenda to say, "We passed legislation and got it done, because we had a busy"—or did we pass the best possible legislation for the people of Ontario?

We're now finding that amendments are being offered on this bill by that side. Amendments were offered by both the opposition parties, and some of them got acted upon and some got defeated. But here we go again. I want to remind the constituents out there. What happened in the year we started to do that tax law stuff? How many different bills had to be introduced? Eight different bills had to be introduced on the municipal tax laws to get it right. Time after time they kept messing it up. They didn't take the time.

Now we've got an example of 18 out of 36 times where we're using time allocation. It could be devoted to honest-to-goodness debate, understanding, more information to make good legislation. That's the part I'm disappointed in about this.

Will we be supporting the bill? Of course we support the bill because of what it's trying to do. I want to refer to the presentation of the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association. They made it quite clear that in Bill 148 they like the direction the government is going in, but they would make sure that all stakeholders, as referred to by Minister Turnbull when this was first introduced—it's now Minister Runciman—would be involved in the formulation of those emergency plans and that the legislation would be made such that participation was mandatory, not that you're going to ask those people to say, "What do you think? You want your two cents in?" Get them to the table, because regulations are as important as the legislation itself, and we have to make sure that's protected.

I've got a litany of things I could go over, but I'm going to make sure that some of the things we've referred to on this side of the House are brought to the attention of the government on that side. We ask that we reconvene the Legislature's all-party committee on terrorism. That was done back in the 1980s. As we know, a lot of the response that has taken place in Bill 148 has to do with responding to September 11. Because of September 11, a lot of the responses in this bill are to basically make things a little easier and more convenient.

Let me speak to that. In 1980 a select committee on the Ombudsman prepared a report on the ways in which the assembly may act and have its voice heard against political killings, imprisonment, torture, terror and terrorism. In 1989—nothing's been done since that point. We had the introduction in 1980; nothing's been done since 1989. Dalton McGuinty went on record quickly after September 11 and said, "We've got to reconvene this all-party committee that the Ombudsman suggested in order to put it back together." It was scoffed at by members on that side. All of a sudden I'm hearing good things: "Do you know what? It wasn't such a bad idea." This is the last time we have an opportunity to put it to the table. This is the last time we have an opportunity to make sure we're doing the right thing.

I'm disappointed it took this long for them to acknowledge that an idea came from this side and it was an improvement to the legislation, not an embarrassment but an improvement, to ensure we get it right the first time.

The other thing we asked was for all the mayors to review their emergency plans and to make sure we had that. Then what happens? We have a report that immediately comes out after that fact. It's interesting to point this out. We find out in a report that after the ice storm in eastern Ontario and Quebec we weren't prepared. The report came out and said we weren't prepared. Did any action get taken after that? Absolutely not.

Let me talk to you for just a moment of the problem I pointed out—I was hoping it would get addressed and it wasn't—that we had people understanding that the municipalities said that 91% of our municipalities already had an emergency plan. But this is what's going to disturb people: 72% of the municipalities had not con-

ducted the exercises in over a year to evaluate whether those plans would be successful.

We've got 91%, and I know that in actual fact that's grown since this report was done, so we are talking about over 95% of our municipalities now having that emergency readiness plan in place, but unfortunately and sadly, 72% have not even practised them. It makes no sense to have a plan that's not going to be enforced, that's not going to be practised, that's not going to be put to use in order for us to do that. Why do I say that?

I say that as a principal on leave from education. Inside my 23-year career, 12 years as a principal, I had the responsibility of doing fire drills. We had to do three a year. Inside of that, we practised them over and over again, not to be tested, but we had to do them. If the fire marshal or an official came to your school and they said, "Do a drill," you didn't have any preparation. You simply had to do the drill, cross your fingers and hope that all that practice came into being. I referred to this once before in my leadoff on 148 and I refer to it again. The schools that I am aware of across the province all have done fire drills and practised. When they do go through these practices, the people who are doing the investigation, whether they be from the fire marshal's office or the local fire department or the emergency measures department inside a municipality, tell us that schools do an exceptionally good job of doing their evacuation process and their emergency response. Why? Because they practise over and over again. Quite frankly, it costs teaching time, it costs time on task for the kids to learn, but tell me that it's not the most important number one priority that a school principal or a teacher or parents or anybody else wants: the safety and security of their children. That comes first.

Once we have this practice done, we know that when that bell goes off, those kids are out of there. Most times it's under a minute, or between a minute and two minutes. Each time you practise it, the idea is to shoot for a better time in getting out safely and securely. Sometimes they throw a little curve at you. Sometimes the police or fire marshal's office or whoever is doing that testing will come and put a rod in one of the exits, because you're supposed to have two exits, or an alternate route. That's happened. In particular, it happened to me, as a principal. They put a rod inside the door and it was blocked off. The kids couldn't go through, and they automatically turned around and went down to the other exit. They knew exactly what to do because we practised.

I look over at our pages, and I know they've gone through it over and over again. They've done fire drills. Sometimes they do it to you in the middle of winter, don't they? You sometimes even have to go outside without your coats, because it's the rule and you do it.

Let's go back to 148. The very premise I'm talking about is practice. So what are the municipalities saying? What are the firefighters saying? What are other groups saying? Well, you know what? It's pretty easy to set those standards, but the municipalities have been down-

loaded. This is a different time and era in municipalities. First of all, they are not taxing. Second of all, they are downloading. They've been given more responsibility and very few funds to do that. Now the ministry is going to step up and say what? "We are going to have to do all this practising, and you've got to forfeit some money in order to do that." Well, quite frankly, I'm challenging and I've charged the government with the responsibility of providing the resources in order for them to do those things. Those evacuation plans, those emergency response plans, they cost an awful lot of money.

I want to bring up at this point the fact that in my riding, the county of Brant put on one of these exercises, and they had so many people involved: they had industry; they had an oil refinery; they had hospitals. It was amazing. As soon as they said they were doing it, they all got on board and said they wanted to be part of this great big massive exercise. I say, compliments to them. And do you know what happened? What happened was they found out there were some glitches in their plan, but it was a rather good plan. The volunteer firefighters responded, and they didn't know—not everybody knows about this, so they had it all planned and the day that it happened only those people up at the top knew that it was going to happen and the rest of them had to respond. They passed with flying colours. They did a great job. But do you know what I found out? It cost a lot of money to do that exercise. They didn't have one dime given to them by the province, unfortunately; no provincial funding.

I'm suggesting to you that the bill is flawed in terms of not providing those resources. I'm hoping that when it comes to regulations and forming the essence, the meat and potatoes, behind this, they're going to say, "We're asking them do a lot, but we're going to come to the plate and help them out. We're going to make sure of that." That's an important aspect here.

1530

I want to bring up another point I made in my lead, and that was Bill 141. Bill 141, a private member's bill I introduced, is An Act to amend the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997. I want to read it to you; it's a short bill, but it would help the government in this particular attempt—in 148—to improve our emergency response. It's very simple: "The purpose of the bill is to require that any proposals to reduce or restructure fire protection services be approved by the fire marshal before being implemented. The fire marshal would be required to report annually to the minister on the proposals reviewed."

How simple is that? It's simple, but do you know what? It doesn't happen. I am not chastising any municipality, but I'm saying generically to municipalities that reduce their fire services, "Shame on you if you haven't looked at the consequences of what you're doing." In some cases, unfortunately, do you know what has happened? We've had one firefighter on a truck go to a call. That is absolutely unacceptable, unheard of and dangerous.

Interjection: And they're probably going to cut him.

Mr Levac: And they're going to probably cut him too, because they can't afford it.

Somebody on the other side told me at one time, "We've never given money to fire services. It's a municipal responsibility, and it should stay that way." Guess what? Times have changed. We've had our lives changed. And your priority, apparently, as you've said, and as many people on record have said, 148, is an extremely important piece of legislation. Well, if it's changed that much and we have to reprioritize, I think it's time for you to buck up. Step to the plate and say, "We really do respect our fire services. We really do respect our emergency services. We're going to provide you with some funds in order to do that." That's an important aspect of it.

What's important to understand is that the first questions that come out of the mouths of people on that side are, "How much do you want? How much do you want? How much are you going to raise taxes?" That's the first thing they say. Yet they turn around and tell municipalities, "We're going to regulate you. We're going to tell you exactly what standards to meet." But then they say to the municipalities, "Tough luck. Do it yourself. You find the money." How's that for a partnership?

What I'm looking for is a partnership from this government. The one thing I ask for—I got giggles from the other side when I asked this; they thought it was funny when I asked them the first time. I said, "I think it requires municipalities to sit down with all the stakeholders out there and start formulating improvements to our system, so that all our citizens get protected. Let's go the federal government. Instead of yapping at them all the time, let's go to them and say, 'We need to talk about this. We need to protect our citizens.'"

Instead of doing that, we're going to rush a bill through and find out later on that maybe we had an opportunity to put some regulations in there that say we're going to sit down to the table for a change, and why not? It's for the citizens; it's for the individual citizen. They're expecting that, they demand that and they want that. It's time for us to step forward and say, "We're tired of fighting." If you haven't heard it, I have. They're tired of fighting with government after government to try to make sure these things work.

It's easy to set those standards. It's easy to say, "You must do this," because you've put responsibility on everybody else to pay for it.

Get up to the plate. Show them where their money is. We offered that; we had the Ontario security fund proposal: \$100 million. Simply reprioritize some of the spending, like partisan advertising and a few other things. Simply take that \$100 million and split it in half; \$50 million for province-wide services and \$50 million directly to municipalities, instead of the \$25 million this government said.

Is this the right direction to go? Of course it's the right direction to go. As a matter of fact, it was interesting that you finally got it.

There are so many things I wanted to talk about, but there are other people who want to continue. I want to simply challenge the government to stop the bickering and fighting, get along with people and make sure we can collectively solve the problem that is outlined in 148.

Thank you for the opportunity. I appreciate it.

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): It's a pleasure for me to participate in the debate this afternoon. I should state that this is going to be the second of three time allocation motions the government is moving this week. I say that because last week I couldn't be here on Wednesday afternoon, which is my normal House duty day, and as you know, if it's Wednesday, it's time allocation day in this place. My colleague Tony Martin had to cover for me because I was at the opening of Collège Boréal here in Toronto.

The government has obviously made up for it because this week we'll do not one, not two, but three: yesterday we were dealing with a time allocation motion on Bill 175, which is the government's water and sewer bill; today, of course, we're dealing with time allocation on Bill 148, which involves emergency measures; and tomorrow, unless the government changes their agenda, we will be dealing with a time allocation motion on Bill 180, consumer protection.

It is the week for the government to get down and ram legislation through as quickly as it possibly can, to yet again cut off and terminate or abandon any further legislative debate on issues the government says are important. I say to the government, if the issues are important, why is it you're in here three days out of four this week, putting through time allocation motions that effectively shut off debate on those important issues?

The last time I checked the point of the exercise was for us to be here to use legislative debate to raise the concerns of our constituents, yet it's very clear that this week, for example, as with many other weeks—but it must be a record this week—three out of four days in the afternoon are dedicated to time allocation motions. The government is clearly intent on not wanting to hear, and making sure they don't hear, what MPPs have to say with respect to the concerns coming forward on these bills from their constituents.

If I look at the particular motion that was moved earlier by Mr Galt, what's even more interesting is that this is a motion that effectively wipes out debate on third reading, which is a new tactic this government is starting to implement. We have got used to—I suppose that's the only way I can describe it—the government moving time allocation motions that effectively limit committee hearings, for example. So if there are any to be had, they are very truncated, very limited, one afternoon, maybe two if we're really lucky, here at Queen's Park, which leaves a handful of people in a position to actually come forward and have their say.

That is clearly a change from some of the earlier years in which I was here, Speaker, and in which you were here as well, where particularly on very important pieces of legislation there was committee travel. On some really large pieces of legislation there was quite extensive committee travel, not so much when the House was sitting but certainly in the break. The government of the day would make some effort to travel away from here, because Queen's Park isn't the be-all and end-all of the universe and neither, frankly, is Toronto. There are a lot more views to be had out there in the rest of the province, and the government would make it a point that committees would be able to travel to a number of communities to hear from a cross-section of people who lived in the province about their particular concerns.

Now we have gone to a situation where, if there are committee hearings, those are usually held at Queen's Park, one or two afternoons, and then we have a time allocation motion that says we move immediately into clause by clause, and that as well is time-limited. By 4 o'clock on the second afternoon of the public hearings, all of the questions shall be put, all of the amendments shall have been deemed to be debated, even if they haven't been, and that is the end of that process as well.

The government traditionally hasn't used what they are using today, which is to also say that there will effectively be no third reading debate. That's a bit of a new one they're adding to their agenda of how many ways you can actually limit debate, limit amendments and limit discussion, and that's what we have with respect to this piece of legislation.

As the time allocation says, "...the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the third reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

"That the vote on third reading may, pursuant to standing order 28(h), be deferred until the next sessional day."

That's the beginning and the end of any debate on third reading. As a point of fact, there won't be any. I guess we should expect to see that in more and more of the time allocation motions the government brings forward; not only a very limited, very truncated public hearing process limited to Toronto, but probably now, added to that, will be a provision within the motion itself that says, "By the way, there won't be any third reading after you have that very truncated amendment process."

What can I say? The government has the majority. The government has the ability to put forward time allocation motions in that fashion. The government has all the ability in the world to eliminate debate in that way. I'm not sure it's particularly helpful for the democratic process; I don't think it is.

1540

I'm not sure we can really feel that people have had a chance to have their say, because they don't under that process. If we've got concerns about why people are concerned about government generally or cynical about the political process particularly, I guess we have to say

these are some of the reasons why. When it becomes painfully obvious that important bills just aren't going to get the kind of hearing they should, then people really do wonder, "What's the point? What's it all about? Why should I get involved? Why should I even send a letter saying I'm concerned? By the time I do that, the whole thing's going to be over."

I don't think that bodes well for trying to engage people in a positive way in becoming involved in the political process at any level, from expressing their concerns to watching the legislative channel to maybe other forms of involvement as well. I think that just makes it much more difficult to get rid of the perception people have or the cynicism they have about politicians and the democratic process generally.

With respect to this bill, I spent some time listening to my colleague Mr Kormos, who is our critic with respect to this matter, on the debate on second reading that took place some months ago. I remember it was quite an interesting debate because the minister was actually at the debate that evening. I give him credit for doing that. A lot of ministers don't come and deal with debate on their own bills; he did.

But what I found a bit concerning to me was the tone he adopted near the end of his debate. He was quite good to outline what the government hoped would be achieved—we don't agree with all of that and we don't believe what the government wants to achieve will be achieved by this bill, especially in relation to funding—but near the end of his remarks he said he really didn't want the bill to be held up. He didn't want the bill to go to public hearings. He wanted to make sure the bill was passed before the next anniversary of the terrible September tragedy, and wouldn't it be terrible if the NDP held it up by asking for committee hearings.

I found that rather offensive because the bill was introduced last year and then it wasn't brought forward for debate. The government finally decided to bring it forward for debate some time in June of last year, which to me clearly indicated that it wasn't much of a priority for the government if they would wait all that time to actually bring it forward for debate.

I also found it a bit offensive because the minister should have had in his possession—at least his colleague Mr Turnbull, who had been the minister before him, had in his possession a letter from the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association expressing some very serious concerns about the bill and asking for full public hearings.

My colleague Mr Kormos had the said letter in his possession and spent some time that evening reading it into the record. It was a letter that had been dated, I'm saying, around December 6. I could be wrong about which date, but it was early in December 2001, just after the bill had been introduced. They had certainly been on the ball. They had been quick to respond and sent quite a detailed letter to the minister of the day, Mr Turnbull, saying they would like some full and adequate public

hearings so that their concerns around response times in particular could be addressed.

It was really passing strange that here we were in June dealing for the first time with the debate on second reading and we had the next minister of public security saying very clearly to members in this House, "I don't want public hearings. I'm not interested in that. I'm going to do whatever I can to have that not happen," completely disregarding this letter that had been sent. It could be that his colleague Mr Turnbull had never given him a copy of the letter. Maybe that's what happened. I hope that wasn't the case because the professional firefighters' association is a pretty important group of folks. They represent the unionized firefighters in this province, and there are thousands and thousands of them. They are also at the front line when it comes to the provision of emergency services. I certainly think they would have something important to say at public hearings and I would have hoped the new minister would have wanted to hear what they had to say at those public hearings.

It was interesting that during the course of debate that June evening, a debate that was quite entertaining with respect to the performance by my colleague Mr Kormos, the existence of the said letter came about. A copy was given, I think at that time or soon after, to Mr Runciman and, probably because of it being raised, there were some limited public hearings that finally took place. I gather the professional firefighters were there to raise the concerns I'm going to relate. But it was too bad that the way the matter was presented was one where essentially we were told we have a gun to our head. "Get this bill done. We don't want to have this bill hanging over our head a year after the September 11 tragedy," which would make it look like the government wasn't interested in emergency measures. "We want to get this bill wrapped up tonight," that being June.

I'm glad we said, "No, it's not going to be this way. People who directly provide front-line emergency services have concerns. They also should have a right to have their say, since it's going to impact on them and their municipalities directly." We said no to the minister. We were not going to let the bill go second and third reading that night, and have it pass so he could stand up and say, "We did something as a result of the September 11 tragedy."

I still think that because of the very limited nature of the debate that took place in committee with respect to the public hearings, we don't have a bill that responds to all of those concerns and that a lot of this could have been done much better. What can I say? I don't think it really was a priority for this government. If it had been, it would have been debated last December. We could have had some appropriate hearings during the break in the early spring and we could have been back dealing with this when the House resumed last April, after the Tory leadership. We could have had it done in June, but we could have had a much better bill, I think, than what is before us. We continue to have some major concerns.

Let me deal with some of those. They come really around the emergency measures provisions that are listed. For example, we agree that municipalities should have plans in place in the event of an emergency. That just makes common sense. But we don't think that should just be in the unlikely event of a terrorist attack. God forbid that that will happen in this province; people didn't ever think it would happen in the United States either. But we should have those things in place much more due to the natural tragedies that are going to occur, like fire or flood, for example, or, God forbid, the roof of an arena caves in in the middle of a hockey game in someone's community. Those are the much more likely occurrences with respect to emergencies that we should be dealing with, and it is true that every municipality should have in place a plan to deal with the same.

Our first concern was that, yes, obviously every municipality should have that in place and it should be updated on a regular basis. All those in the community who deal with emergency services should participate in the initial setting of the plan if it's not in place, although most municipalities have already done that without this legislation. But for those who didn't, there should be a broad cross-section of the community involved in the provision of emergency services who deal, first, with the establishment of that initial plan, and then, on a regular basis, are part of both the monitoring of how effective it is and part of any process that requires change in it.

Secondly, flowing from that is that you can put a plan in place that calls for these many emergency personnel, be it fire, police or paramedics etc, and you can have standards that are set by the province with respect to how many you should have per population and what your response time should be for each of those emergency personnel, but the real dilemma and the problem we continue to have with this bill is that if you don't have the funding in place to support that, to back it up, then you're going to continue to have problems dealing with emergency situations. If you cannot, as a municipality, afford to hire the firefighters you need to deal with provincial standards with respect to response times, what does that do for someone who is having their house burn down or their business burn down? It does nothing.

The reality of this bill is that while the government will be setting standards with respect to many of those important provisions, the government has done nothing with respect to stepping up to the plate itself to put the money on the table to allow municipalities to hire the personnel to ensure that those standards are met. So this process is a sham. The process of setting standards with no money on the table to hire the personnel to make it happen is a sham. You give false protection to people in municipalities who think that somehow, because standards are passed, everything else will fall into place: that municipalities will be in a position to hire the firefighters they need, to hire the paramedics they need, to hire the police officers they need. We know that with this government's downloading, that just is not the case.

1550

This is a government that, several years ago, downloaded 100% of public transit on to municipalities. It's a government that downloaded 20% of all childcare and family resource costs on to municipalities, 100% of all library services down to municipalities, 100% of all ambulance services down to municipalities, 100% of all assessment services down to municipalities, and the list goes on. While this government—

Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain): Second-stage housing.

Ms Martel: Thank you very much. Second-stage housing cancelled totally: that's now a responsibility of the agencies at the local level.

There is an enormous list of the responsibilities that this government has handed down without providing the corresponding funding that used to be there for the provision of those same services. You've got municipalities that are already cash-strapped because of the download of all these services with no corresponding provincial funding to make it happen, and now the government says, "We're going to develop some new standards with respect to response times. By the way, municipalities, we're going to add to your financial burden even further, because it's going to be on your backs and on the backs of your ratepayers to find the money necessary to have those personnel in place so those response times can be matched." I can tell you, there's going to be a whole whack of municipalities out there that aren't going to have the money to do it. We are doing nothing for people in terms of providing adequate or sufficient or effective emergency protection when we don't give them the money to back up those standards.

That is a particular concern that we have had throughout the course of the limited debate of this bill, and it was a concern that my colleague Mr Kormos raised again during the public hearings. I suspect, although I didn't have time to see the transcripts of those that came forward, that was probably a concern raised by the professional firefighters as well when they were before the committee. They certainly do see the need to deal with better, faster, quicker response times, but that means more firefighters, and that means municipalities paying for those firefighters, and that means having municipalities in the first place that can find the money to do that. Most can't. I'm concerned that in trying to adhere to the standards, municipalities will be forced one more time to go back to their taxpayers and raise their municipal taxes again to cover off standards that this government should be dealing with by providing the provincial funding to those municipalities to make these standards and adequate protection and increased hiring actually happen.

When my colleague Mr Kormos was at committee, he moved three amendments on behalf of our party. I regret to say that none of the three were accepted by this government.

The first had to do with section 3 of the bill, which talked about training and exercises. It read as follows:

"(3) Section 3 of the act is amended by adding the following subsections:

"Training and exercises

"(5) Every municipality shall conduct training programs and exercises to ensure the readiness of employees of the municipality and other persons to act under the emergency plan.

"Review of plan

"(6) Every municipality shall review and, if necessary, revise its emergency plan" every three years.

"Offence

"(7) A municipality that fails to comply with subsection (1) or (6) is guilty of an offence."

You see, it's not enough just to have the plan. It really is imperative—it's critical, vital—that the training exercises be undertaken so that all of those emergency personnel who are involved can respond, and respond adequately: know the details, know them in and out, know them clearly and be able to respond at a moment's notice. But there's a cost attached to that too. Here again the government falls down on the job, because for municipalities to be able to conduct the training programs and exercises to make sure their emergency personnel are ready to deal with any broad range of emergencies that could occur, they really do need some money to do that.

I said earlier that most of these municipalities are already cash-strapped. They're not even sure where the money is going to come from to hire the emergency personnel that are required, much less on a regular and routine basis have training exercises that allow those emergency personnel to be very clear that they are going to be ready. It's a question of funding. It's a question that the government has refused to deal with.

The second amendment we moved was to section 8 of the bill. We said that it should be struck out and the following substituted:

"8. Subsection 6(2) of the act, as amended by the Statutes of Ontario, 1999, chapter 12, schedule P, section 4, is repealed and the following substituted:

"Training and exercises

"(2) Every minister of the crown described in clause (1)(a) and every agency, board, commission or other branch of government described in clause (1)(b) shall conduct training programs and exercises to ensure the readiness of crown employees and other persons to act under their emergency plans.

"Review of plan

"(3) Every minister of the crown described in clause (1)(a) and every agency, board, commission or other branch of government described in clause (1)(b) shall review and, if necessary, revise its emergency plan every three years.

"Offence

"(4) A minister of the crown described in clause (1)(a), in his or her capacity as representative of the crown in right of Ontario, and an agency, board, commission or other branch of government described in clause (1)(b) that fails to comply with subsections (1) or (3) is guilty of an offence."

That would have made it mandatory for all government agencies involved and municipalities to ensure the readiness of their own crown employees and the persons who are designated to act under emergency plans. I just think this makes some sense. I mean, why wouldn't you want to ensure that your own personnel are ready, not only the personnel in the municipality who are on the front line, but in the case of crown agencies and communities as well, why wouldn't you want your own staff to be ready?

I don't understand why the government didn't accept this amendment. It seems to me to be a reasonable one. It seems to me to be one that would guarantee that people understood what the plan was, were prepared to respond to it, could be in a position to update it on a regular basis if necessary, and yet the government refused to accept this amendment that was put forward. I just clearly do not understand why.

The other amendment that was put forward by Mr Kormos, relating to section 16 of the bill, said the following:

“Emergency response standards

“(1.1) The chief, Emergency Management Ontario shall set emergency response standards for emergency plans, based on consultations held with the persons or organizations that the chief considers appropriate including,

“(a) employees of municipalities, crown employees and other persons who are responsible for the provision of necessary services in emergency response and recovery activities;

“(b) the associations or unions that represent the employees and other persons described in clause (a);

“(c) the fire marshal; and

“(d) municipalities.”

Here, what we were trying to encourage the government to do was to have a broad consultation with the parties who would be most affected or who would have the most expertise and/or to have a broad consultation so that the standards that are set out with respect to emergency plans are appropriate, are adequate, make sense, can be followed, can be managed etc.

If you want to set out standards that you're asking municipalities to live by—and the government is doing that in this bill—you want to have standards that are realistic, that are reasonable, that are logical, that make sense, that can be adhered to, that can be carried out. So you need a broad range of people for the government to consult with, and we made it very clear who some of those should be: municipalities, who themselves have to also have their own emergency plans; crown employees; unions that represent many of those personnel, unions representing paramedics, the police, or firefighters; the fire marshal etc.

This is a really good provision. It calls for broad consultation with those people who have the expertise with respect to emergency standards that will be required for emergency plans. Again, regrettably, for a reason that I cannot fathom, the government members voted against that particular amendment too. That has nothing to do

with money. It has nothing to do with the government actually providing some money to municipalities to increase the number of emergency personnel. It had everything to do with open, intelligent and broad consultation with people in the know about emergency services and emergency situations.

I don't understand why the government wouldn't even accept that simple amendment, which would have encouraged them—more than encouraged; said to them directly—“These are the types of people you as the government need to consult with when you develop the standards that you talk about in the bill.” I think it would have made inordinate good sense for the government to adopt that recommendation. I'm sorry they didn't, and I don't understand why they didn't.

The other thing that could have been done at committee—and I regret that it was not, and I say this in all seriousness because I'm not sure where these things are then going to be dealt with. There was a terrible tragedy in our community in April 2001. It was a house fire in a residential neighbourhood. A grandmother and two young children were killed in that fire. It was a horrific, terrible tragedy and it has really struck a chord throughout our whole community.

1600

As a result of the three deaths that were involved, of course the coroner's office had an inquest. A coroner's jury sat for 20 days in our community earlier this fall to hear the testimony and evidence and to hear about what had happened from a broad range of people who had been implicated or involved. That testimony was very gut-wrenching. It was very difficult for those who were involved because of what happened. Many people have pointed the finger at the firefighters and have been very vicious in their condemnation of those firefighters who were involved. I found that to be most regrettable, because I know that not one of those firefighters would have ever wanted to see those three people die. But that's what happened—not by everyone, but by some. That came out over the course of the testimony during the coroner's inquest.

What also came out at the end of the inquest was a list of the recommendations from the coroner's jury. These came out on October 4. They are quite extensive. I congratulate the coroner's jury. I think they took their job very, very seriously. They were very affected by the testimony that was heard at the inquest, and they have come forward with a number of recommendations that affect the provincial government, the municipality and the Ontario fire marshal's office. I really hope that the government will respond to these.

I would have hoped that the government would have seen Bill 148 as an opportunity to incorporate some of the coroner's recommendations, because some of them call directly on the government to do a number of things. I think the government has missed a very important opportunity by not incorporating into Bill 148 the coroner's jury recommendations with respect to this fire. I think that is an opportunity that has been lost. It would

have been an excellent opportunity for the government to show clearly that they too were concerned about the recommendations that affect the province directly and that they were committed to dealing promptly, adequately and effectively with those recommendations.

I think I will go through some of the ones that affect the province. I really want to encourage this government, because it's not going to happen through the course of Bill 148, to deal with these in a timely fashion to show our community that the government is responsive to the jury's recommendations and will act on them to ensure that a tragedy like this is never going to happen again. They include some of the following:

"To the provincial government...that radio and television air time be made available for disseminating fire safety information targeted at adult education." The jury suggested short, repetitive messages be developed by the Ontario fire marshal's office.

Secondly, "The Ministry of Education should make mandatory programs such as Risk Watch for children in all Ontario elementary curriculums as well as licensed daycare facilities and private schools. The rationale is inquest evidence indicated this is at the local school board's discretion and the deceased's guardian was unaware of the Risk Watch program.

"The ministry should also make mandatory fire drill procedures for all educational facilities. As an example, head counts.

"The Ontario fire marshal's office should develop a fire safety program for secondary schools that would be made mandatory in the curriculum. The fire marshal's office should also develop a training record for fire-fighters and then be responsible for receipt of accurate, precise and up-to-date data....

"The fire marshal's office should also develop a standard operating procedure for accurate timing of personnel arriving at a fire scene as evidence indicated there was no method for determining the arrival time of fire personnel....

"The province should formally adopt a standardized incident command system that would be developed by the Ontario fire marshal's office to be used by all fire departments. Further, the Ontario fire marshal's office should monitor, police and enforce compliance.

"All municipalities"—should—"be required by regulations to prepare a master fire plan in the form and manner as specified by the fire marshal's office. Master plans should be submitted to OFM for review and comment every five years and be developed using a comprehensive risk assessment and resource rationalization process....

"The Ministry of Public Safety and Security should establish minimum fire protection and public education requirements specified in the OFM guideline be incorporated as a regulation under the Fire Prevention and Protection Act. This should include completion of a comprehensive risk assessment, smoke alarm program, escape planning, distribution of public information and inspections on complaint or request.

"The Ontario fire code should be amended to include a smoke detector on every level of each residence in Ontario, smoke detector in every bedroom and carbon monoxide detector on every level of a home.

"The province adopt a standard for installation, maintenance and use of emergency services communications systems and dispatch facilities and centres in Ontario, and further, the OFM investigate, monitor and enforce compliance.

"An independent and comprehensive audit be conducted of the operations of the Ontario fire marshal's office by fire service stakeholders to review the role and effectiveness of the Ontario fire marshal.

"A pilot project be launched to include a province-wide survey to determine the effectiveness of dissemination of public child/adult education relating to fire protection."

Finally, "The province consider amending the building code to include sprinkler systems for new construction of all residential buildings."

There were a number of recommendations made that have very much to do with the province of Ontario; I've tried to highlight those. It's clear that they weren't incorporated during the limited public hearings that took place on Bill 148, and it's also clear that the government needs to respond. This was a terrible tragedy. It caught the attention of our whole community in a way that many things haven't in such a long time, because it was so tragic and because of the evidence that was heard during the coroner's inquest. People in our community really need to know that this government is taking those recommendations seriously and is going to act on them.

One of the recommendations that I didn't make mention of was a recommendation to the city itself to hire full-time firefighters in Valley East where this tragedy occurred. The recommendation was full-time, 24/7, in the three stations in that community. That's going to cost the city of Sudbury probably a million dollars to implement. I think that is money this province should give this municipality to make it happen. We are already a community that, as a result of forced amalgamation by this government, is probably facing a deficit well over \$31 million—directly as a result of that amalgamation. Those are all new costs that have been downloaded to us as a result of the amalgamation. I can tell members in this House, not one of those seven municipalities had a deficit before the forced amalgamation, and now we have a cumulative deficit in the order of about \$31 million. We should not be burdened—

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): They shortchanged us by \$10 million.

Ms Martel: We're absolutely shortchanged, as the member for Sudbury said. It's no wonder that the government stopped the amalgamation processes after the situation in Sudbury.

This municipality should not have to try and find another \$1 million to respond to the coroner's jury recommendations. The municipality has to respond; we need full-time firefighters in Valley East—all the evi-

dence that came out made that clear. But it should not fall on the backs of ratepayers in the city of greater Sudbury to pay for that to happen. This government has an obligation to ensure that our municipality and other municipalities have adequate, appropriate emergency personnel services that are staffed to the limit they should be staffed in order to respond appropriately. That is an obligation this government should bear, and it is a responsibility the government does not want to bear, because it's clear during the course of the debate on Bill 148 that they will set new standards but not provide a dime to municipalities to hire the personnel necessary to meet those standards. I think that's shameful.

I think we have a bill before us that will essentially do nothing with respect to improving the situation in so many municipalities, because municipalities will not be able to afford to hire the personnel necessary to live up to the standards. We are offering people false hope and false protection, and that is wrong. I think this government, before they finish dealing with this bill, and this minister in particular, if he's really serious about emergency services in municipalities, should stand in his place and make a commitment that the province of Ontario is going to get up to the table and is going to put the money on the table to make sure we can hire the personnel we need, not just in the city of Sudbury with the new full-time firefighters we will need at a cost of \$1 million, but in all the other communities that are going to have to increase their personnel to respond to the standards. That's what the government should do if it's really committed to emergency services in Ontario municipalities.

1610

Mr Bob Wood (London West): It will come as no surprise to members of the House that I'm going to support the time allocation motion. I'm going to do that because I support the bill. What I'd like to do is take a few minutes to put part of the government's position on record, and a few minutes after that to put on the record some of my personal views on the best possible use of legislative time.

Since the tragic events of September 11, 2001, this government has taken significant steps to improve the safety of all residents, and to enhance security in Ontario. In addition to introducing the Emergency Readiness Act, the government has invested more than \$30 million in a variety of significant and important public safety initiatives, including appointing former Royal Canadian Mounted Police Commissioner Norman Inkster, retired Major-General Lewis Mackenzie and Scott Newark, vice-chair of the Office for Victims of Crime, as security advisers on dealing with terrorist threats; and appointing Dr James Young, Chief Coroner of the province of Ontario, as commissioner of security;

Doubling Emergency Measures Ontario's budget—\$3 million—to enhance its ability to respond to emergencies and assist municipalities; providing \$2.5 million per year and \$1.4 million in one-time funding to improve Criminal Intelligence Service Ontario's intelligence

gathering capabilities; providing \$709,000 in new funding recently to enable small and mid-sized police services to enhance their criminal intelligence gathering capabilities by providing 23 new positions under the community policing partnership program; bringing to 1,023 the number of new front-line police officers working in communities across the province since 1998;

Investing \$2.5 million per year to train people who are first at the scene of emergencies—this includes training in heavy urban search and rescue, responding to chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear emergencies and dealing with hazardous materials; adding \$1 million to expand the mandate of the provincial repeat offender parole enforcement unit, to target individuals who are illegally in the province; building an anti-terrorism training facility for police services at the Ontario Police College, \$3.3 million in one-time capital funding; increasing the number of new recruits at the Ontario Police College to help police services increase public safety;

Building an emergency management training centre, \$3 million in one-time capital funding, for firefighters and ambulance personnel at the Ontario Fire College in Gravenhurst; creating the provincial emergency response team, a new rapid-response unit of the Ontario Provincial Police that will be specially equipped to combat terrorist threats, \$4.5 million, and an anti-terrorism unit that will investigate and track down terrorists and their supporters, \$3.5 million; investing \$1 million in protective equipment for front-line police officers who may have to respond to chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear attacks;

Establishing CERV Ontario, volunteer community emergency response teams, \$1 million, made up of Ontario residents who volunteer their time and expertise in preparing for and responding to emergency situations; working with the owners and operators of large buildings to develop evacuation procedures—the office of the fire marshal received \$600,000 in one-time funding to create a guide to help the owners and operators of large high-rise buildings and high-risk facilities develop emergency management and evacuation plans for their buildings;

Developing more specialized forensic capacity in the Centre of Forensic Sciences and making modifications to the current morgue, \$600,000, to allow for testing of explosives and toxic or chemical agents, and larger scale testing of DNA; expanding the Ontario Provincial Police hate crimes and extremism unit, \$400,000; investing \$200,000 to establish a new, alternative provincial operations centre for Emergency Measures Ontario; hosting a counter-terrorism summit of international experts and representatives of Ontario's front-line police, fire and other emergency services personnel, February 17 to 19, 2002, in Niagara Falls, with one-time funding of \$500,000.

In addition, the Ministry of the Attorney General has undertaken significant steps to protect residents of Ontario, including dedicating a specialized crown attorney to provide expert advice on terrorism; committing to vigorously prosecute the perpetrators of terrorism-related

hoaxes to the full extent of crown law; assisting victims' families and loved ones by proposing the legislation before the Legislature today that will, when passed, allow a single application for a declaration of death to be brought for all legal purposes, rather than forcing survivors to make a number of individual applications, and allow the province to exceed statutory benefits to victims; calling on the federal government to create a new Criminal Code offence to specifically deal with terrorist hoaxes; introducing legislation that will improve the security of vital statistics documents and protect Ontario citizens' birth certificates and other important documents; and providing help to Ontario families whose loved ones were victims of the September 11, 2001, attacks.

As you can see, this government takes this issue very seriously. At the same time as we are implementing the initiatives I've outlined, the Minister of Public Safety and Security continues to press the federal government to ensure our borders are safe. The majority of the people coming into Ontario from the United States enter Canada at one of the border points in Ontario. Windsor, for example is one of the busiest crossings anywhere in Canada. About 80% of all truck traffic entering and leaving the country does so via Windsor. Our economy depends on goods and services moving freely back and forth. Bill 148 will enable bordering municipalities to take positive steps to ensure the safety of citizens in those communities.

If I may be permitted a more general observation, if we take some of the successes we've had in the area of our ministry over the last 50 years—by which I mean a dramatic drop in the number of fire deaths per capita in Ontario; a dramatic drop in the number of deaths, injuries and property damage per kilometre travelled by motorists in Ontario; a 30% drop in reported crime, from 1995 to 2001, in Ontario—these successes have occurred because we have had a good overall strategy which has led to incremental progress over a long period of time. I think this bill is part of that strategy and is going to achieve the same kinds of positive results that our strategies have over the years.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to make a few observations about time allocation motions and how I think we might make better use of parliamentary time than we do now. These, of course, are personal observations which I am working very vigorously to attempt to turn into government policy.

The principle of time allocation, in my opinion, is this: I think once a bill is introduced, the opposition and the government members should be given sufficient time to fully understand the bill before the Legislature, and to give all the citizens of Ontario a chance to understand it and offer their comments. There are some bills where this is not possible, where there is urgency, but in the case of most bills I'd like to suggest to the House that is possible and desirable. Indeed our time allocation rules do require a certain minimum period which works out to something like one week. I think that's important and very positive.

The other half of that is, however, that the government is also entitled to a vote after a reasonable time on any matter they have before the House. To provide otherwise would be I think a fundamentally anti-democratic step. I think our rules are basically fairly sound in terms of that principle.

1620

Where we perhaps tend to have rules that are not what they should be is in the role of the individual members in terms of legislating. Our rules have a long way to go before we can say that these are rules that truly meet the needs of the 21st century.

Let me talk a bit about what I think should indeed be happening in the House. I think it's very important that we have partisan presentations and partisan activity in this House. It's important that this House be used in part for people to understand what the personalities are, what the platform is, what the experience is of the three parties in the House that obviously are going to seek support in the next general election.

What I'm going to propose by way of changes in the standing orders and the rules by which we do business are not intended in any way to take away from that function. What they are intended to do, however, is to give the individual members a chance to be more involved in legislating so that their ideas, particularly when they are not central to the government's agenda or the opposition's agenda, can be considered more on their merits and more in a non-partisan way.

The feeling among much of our population is of course that private members' public bills do not go anywhere in our Legislature or, for that matter, in the federal Parliament. Certainly in this Legislature, the record shows that to be wrong. If you were to take a look at the record of the last sitting, the spring 2002 sitting, approximately one quarter of the public bills passed were private members' public bills. I think that shows that we're headed in the right direction. We are indeed giving individual members more opportunity to legislate and I think that's very positive; however, we have to look for ways to enhance that opportunity and to give them more opportunity to put their ideas forward and have them fairly considered by the House.

Members will be aware of the motion I have put on the order paper whereby if a member could get 75% of the sitting MPPs to sign a petition supporting the motion, a private member could move a time allocation motion and a motion which would require a bill to be called by the House. In other words, the member would not be dependent, at any stage, on the government calling the bill. If it was the will of the House that this bill be dealt with, that member would be entitled to the same consideration the government is now entitled to, which is, of course, it will be called and the time will be limited on which debate can occur.

I think eventually—and I hope “eventually” is sooner rather later—if such a measure were to be adopted, I would hope that the threshold might drop from 75% to maybe 60%. That would give the individual members a

lot more opportunity to have their ideas put forward in the House.

I also think that if we're going to do that, as I believe we should, we also have to make more time in our legislative week available for the consideration of private members' public business. Right now, it tends to be about 10% of the time that's available for the individual member's business and about 90% of the time is devoted to either government or party business, by which I mean opposition days and that sort of thing. I would suggest that a better division of that time is probably one quarter to the private members' public bills and three quarters to the other business. I think there are some ways that we could find more time.

I have not formed firm conclusions on all of the ideas I'm putting forward today, but I would invite all members of the House to give some thought to some of these ideas. As members know, the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly is currently looking at the role of the private member in this assembly. I have sat in on some of the deliberations of the committee and have participated in some of them. I think there are some very good ideas being put forward and, indeed, some consensus being developed by the members of that committee as to some things that should be done.

I'd like to make a couple of suggestions, which are really areas where we might look to achieve more time out of our weekly schedule for private members' public business.

One possibility is to add a couple of hours to the Thursday morning sitting. That, in and of itself, obviously would double the amount of time available for private members' public business.

Another thing we could look at is to take the last hour of every day—in other words, from 5 to 6 o'clock—and make that available for consideration of private members' public business. If there were a couple of hours available for public business prior to that, they could always be tacked on after 6 o'clock, pushing the whole calendar back. This might have the effect of getting us a little more quickly to business earlier in the day, so we don't have to work later at night. That may be a naive hope from my point of view, but I think we could have a full sessional day's debate of public business and also get one hour's debate at the end of each day, if we wanted to do so, for private members' public business.

I also think that if we want to empower individual members, we've got to give them more flexibility as to what they can do with their hour, by which I mean that perhaps we should say in effect to the private member, "You can do what you want with your hour. If you can squeeze three bills into your hour, that's fine. If you want to have third reading of a bill, if you want to have a resolution for part of it, and you can get the rest of the House to support what you're doing, maybe you should in effect be able to call the business for that hour."

If we're going to do that, we should make it possible for members to call other members' business. If we gave that kind of flexibility, you would find that bills that

really aren't that controversial and really should go through would start going through. There tends to be a diminishing view among some that if we gave the MPPs more opportunity to legislate, we'd get bad legislation. I'd like to respectfully suggest to those people who are still concerned about this that that is not what the record of this House shows. When we look at private members' public bills in the past, I think time has shown that by and large they have been very good bills. I think what we're going to do is increase the productivity of this House by giving individual members more authority to legislate, and the province as a whole is going to be the better for it.

There's one bill I have before the House that I do want to refer to, because it relates as well to the use of legislative time. Members will be aware that some time ago I introduced a bill that would provide that the Legislature set the criteria for the appointment of judges and justices of the peace, and for legislative approval of those who are nominated to the position of judge or justice of the peace. I think if we were to do that, most of the work, if the standing orders were drafted properly, would happen in committee, but there would be some work done on the floor of the Legislature. What we would really get out of that would be pretty much what is proposed. What you would find is that elected politicians would be setting the criteria by which the appointments were made, and they would be enforcing those criteria in each and every case.

We sometimes hear our friends to the south being criticized for political circuses over the appointment of judges. When it gets right down to it—and there have been some excesses; I would acknowledge that—I think they get a better quality of appointment and wider input from elected members, and therefore from the population as a whole, in their judicial appointments. It is the 21st century, and the public expects more input and wants more accountability. I think that looking to the people they have actually elected to the Legislature to achieve that accountability can lead to some much more positive results and much greater public satisfaction with judicial appointments.

If you were to ask the general public about this, and I've done this on many occasions throughout the province, they don't really feel there's enough accountability to them from the judicial system. That would be a useful and appropriate use of some legislative time.

1630

I'd like to also talk a bit about committees, because they are an important part of this Legislature. Normally, time allocation motions deal with how something has to be dealt with in committee. I might, by the way, mention to the previous speaker that in actual fact we accepted a couple of NDP amendments in committee on this bill. We didn't accept all of them, and I guess that's politics, but the views of her party were not ignored when we got to the amendment process. The member for Niagara Centre was at the committee that day and he actually commented on how he thought the committee process

had worked rather well on this bill. I thought that was a fair comment and I endorse it as well.

What we have is very uneven results with respect to the use of committee time. Some committees work very well. They get good input from the public. They get informed consideration of the provisions of the bill. Certainly in the case of this bill, I think it is a better bill today than it was when it was first introduced because the committee process worked well.

The issue becomes, of course, how do we improve the functioning of the committees in order to get good input where it's needed and to get good clause-by-clause consideration and fair consideration of the views of all members of the Legislature? I'm not going to stand here today and say that I have all the answers, but I would like to suggest a few areas where we might look for answers.

Obviously, the House is always going to allocate a certain amount of time, unless there's agreement, to consideration by committee. It might be that we should require a reasonable amount of clause-by-clause analysis as a requirement under the standing orders. It may be that once we've allocated a block of time, we should give the Chair of the committee the responsibility of moving the debate forward. So if, to take a figure, five hours have been allocated for clause-by-clause, it would then be the responsibility of the Chair to move the debate along so that all clauses are fairly considered within that five-hour period. That means more work for the Chair, but—and I think all of us can think of instances good and bad in this area—where there has been reasonable substantive consideration of the clauses and the amendments, it's tended to make a better bill. Where that has been lacking, for whatever reason, the legislative process really has not, at that stage, added any value to the bill.

I would hope we might look at ways to make the committees function better. If we were to take a look at ways of using technology to make the committees function better, I think that would be important and helpful. I've been at a few committees where we have used technology so that people have made submissions by teleconferencing. They seem to have been favourably impressed by the experience. Certainly the committee members have found the input to be good and helpful.

We may also have to take a look at some vetting of whom we hear from, not from the point of view of excluding anyone because obviously we can hear from all by way of written submissions, but we may have to look at ways of avoiding repetition. Some repetition is obviously useful and helpful, but we sometimes tend to hear the same point again and again in some of the public submissions. We may have to look for ways we can get all the public points of view, but avoid some of the repetition that the process tends to end up with as we do it now.

There's one other thing I think we have to look at if we're going to make better use of legislative time, and that is, do we have to strengthen the research function of some of the committees? This tends to be a little stronger in the American Congress than it is here. I'm not going to

stand here today and say I have firm ideas as to how that might be done, but to the extent we might do that and get the members to use it, I think we would have more effective use of committee time.

Overall, if we give some thought to all these ideas for parliamentary reform and all the ideas that are being considered by the Legislative Assembly committee, at the end of that process we're going to have much more effective use of the time of this Legislature and its committees, and the public is going to see a higher quality of law-making as a result.

I would commend those ideas to the consideration of all members of the House. I would encourage all members to make their views known to the Legislative Assembly committee, and let's see if we can't give the people a better final result by way of making our own procedures and efforts better organized and more 21st century.

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): I am pleased to speak to this bill. Bill 148 is a good bill. I wish I could vote for it, but I can't because it gained the time allocation that has been called on it. The difference between being a good bill and a great bill is time allocation. By restricting the debate, it restricts the opportunity for there to be some fine-tuning, for some tweaking to happen to make it a better bill.

This government says, "Unless we have time allocation motions, we just can't get it through the Legislature." I looked back over the history of this fine institution, and during the time Bill Davis and Frank Miller were Premier—they certainly had some strong sense of how to work within the parliamentary rules—they had three time allocation motions and passed a total of 292 bills. Of the 292, only three required time allocation.

With the David Peterson minority, 129 bills were passed—one time allocation motion. During the majority government of David Peterson, 183 bills were passed, and there were three time allocation motions.

This government has passed 225 bills, not as many as Davis and Miller—292 for Davis and Miller, 225 for this government—and Davis and Miller had three time allocations and the Harris-Eves government has had 99 time allocation motions so far.

Time allocation motions restrict the ability of interested parties to provide input. This is a bill that requires consultation with municipalities. This is a bill that directs municipalities to do certain things, things that need to be done. They're now requiring the municipalities to have emergency measures planning; interesting, and 86% of the municipalities already did. The requirement is good, but it shouldn't be done as an edict from above; it should be done through consultation with the municipalities.

So I certainly support the concept of Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberals, and in fact it was immediately after that horrendous day on September 11 that Dalton McGuinty called for some measures to happen to address

the fact that our world changed terribly in that hour period in New York City.

What Dalton McGuinty also advocated and urged was that there be some money put forward to make it happen. Rhetoric won't make us prepared for the situation. It requires some cash. Municipalities are already being hit time and again with downloading. We're seeing municipalities take on responsibilities for ambulances and so many other things and they're struggling financially. This government that purports to have cut taxes in fact has transferred them to property owners in virtually all of the cases. Here's a bill that is the essence of a good bill, but it is just not fine-tuned as far as it could be.

I was struck the day of September 11 when a spokesperson for an Ontario hospital said that at that particular instant in time there were 43 empty hospital beds in all of Ontario. When the Premier offered to take people who had been injured in New York City and provide accommodation for them in Ontario hospitals, I thought that was a most appropriate gesture. That was the right thing to do. We may quarrel from time to time, but they are our neighbours and our friends. But then I was struck when this official said, "We have 43 empty beds to accommodate emergency cases." There is no point in being prepared for emergencies if we do not have hospital beds.

1640

Our hospitals continue to be in crisis across Ontario. In my community this government created the Quinte Healthcare Corp. It consists of four hospitals. We had Trenton, Picton, Belleville and North Hastings or Bancroft. Each of these four hospitals, prior to amalgamation, had never run a deficit, had offered full services, had enjoyed the support of the community. In fact, the community worked aggressively to fundraise and purchase many of the things, but we had four great independent hospitals that were fiscally responsible. This government said, "We've got to fix that."

All kinds of red flags went up. Here's a system that was working. An amalgamation was forced on these four hospitals and we're now seeing staff, whether it be administration, doctors or nurses, working their hearts out literally to make the system work. But the challenge they're facing is that as the government purports to make things more efficient, they make them more inefficient. They fund these four hospitals as if they are all located in one spot. They don't provide the funding for so many of the services that each of the communities value.

Here we had in Ontario, in many cases, hospitals that were functioning in just an excellent manner. This government fixed it by plunging them into crisis. Now Quinte Healthcare Corp is trying to make plans knowing that they face maybe a \$5-million budget deficit this year. I would suggest they didn't fix it; they made it considerably worse.

Our ambulances: it is important in an emergency that we have enough ambulances available in all of Ontario. I'm now hearing some concerns from some parts of the province that they don't have enough ambulances. The

service provided by ambulances should not depend on the local tax base, because in our province we very clearly have some areas that have a much stronger tax base with industrial-commercial than we have in rural areas.

Indeed, in rural areas the province changed the rules for taxation on farms. It used to be that farmland had three quarters of the farm taxes rebated by the provincial government. This government changed it so that the three-quarter tax rebate now comes from municipalities, with no compensating money to the municipalities. Farmers are having an extremely difficult time. The three quarters is traditional and fair, but transferring those costs is just a typical example of how the local taxpayer is being hit by this government.

Now we have to worry about ambulances, and ambulances are no longer guaranteed the standard that exists across Ontario. Oh, I know the province has passed even tougher laws that raise standards for ambulances, but they don't fund it. How can we be prepared for that?

I would suggest that the issue of the doctor shortage is critical to a province if a disaster were to occur. We can't get a family doctor for about 20% of my constituents. They're simply not there. In the event of an emergency, where are the doctors who would provide that? It may look great on paper, but I would suggest it won't look that way when you actually need a doctor.

The same thing with nurses; we saw nurses sacrificed for financial reasons and we're now unable to attract them. We say there aren't enough beds, but in actual fact there aren't enough people—I'm being distracted.

Hon Jerry J. Ouellette (Minister of Natural Resources): Your electronic device just went off.

Mr Parsons: Yes, it did. It reminded me I'm supposed to be here.

Hon Helen Johns (Minister of Agriculture and Food): It's not supposed to be on.

Mr Parsons: You're right. If I put it in my pocket, it scares the daylight out of me because I never know whether it's my heart or the machine.

Interjection: I think staff is going to look after that.

Mr Parsons: I'm sure they will, but thank you very much.

I wish we could be as open in discussing this bill and its amendments as we are on the petty little things. It's great to talk petty things, but when we get to substance, this government doesn't want to talk about substance.

For all these concerns I've just talked about—we've got hospitals and ambulances in crisis—the hydro deregulation has only dramatically worsened the situation. Now hospitals that were projecting a \$5-million deficit don't know what's going to happen. The government says, "We're going to do things that will make the province better prepared for an emergency." That's not happening. The hydro alone is creating dire circumstances for all our service providers.

The government says they want to make our area safer. I remember, not with fondness, the great ice storm in 1998. It actually wasn't in my area, but just to the east

of us was Kingston. We have a son who lived there. We saw the entire community literally shut down. It was eerie to drive along the 401 and see the service centres black; there was no electricity to them. We went into the city of Kingston. At night there were trees down over the streets, hydro lines down, and the city was black. That cost a lot of money to restore. To put those power lines back up and put the massive towers up cost a considerable number of dollars. It happened because all of Ontario, even though the disaster was only in eastern Ontario, went together and indirectly funded Ontario Hydro or Hydro One to restore that.

With privatization, goodness knows what this government is going to do, but if they adhere to the concept of actually breaking the grid up and if we get another horrendous disaster like in eastern Ontario with the towers going down, then those people served by that company are going to be faced with massive charges to restore the power to put the system back to work. The Hydro One sale begs to be left as a monopoly, because it is a public service monopoly that will enable the rest of the province to work together and support whatever part is hit.

We also had occasion to be in Florida when Hurricane Andrew struck—absolutely awesome and terrifying. I watched as the people in that community fled the area. They got on to the interstates and the highway systems and they got out of that community. To pick Toronto as an example, with no disaster, how does the road system work here at 4 o'clock? How do people get out of Toronto on an ordinary day? Well, it's absolute gridlock on most of the highways. Can you picture this road system if there was a disaster that required the evacuation of downtown Toronto or of any of our large cities?

This government has allowed the infrastructure to deteriorate. By saying, "We're not going to fund the TTC to any significant extent and we're not going to fund GO Transit," they're encouraging worse gridlock rather than decreasing it. It has had the effect of hurting business and citizens, who now have to face a two-hour drive into work. Even worse, it puts us in the position in much of Ontario that we couldn't react to a disaster if it required us to evacuate the people out of the city. We need a strong public transit system. We need to put money into rail. We need to put money into all forms of mass transit, which are inherently more efficient than cars parked on the Don Valley, which they named "parkway" quite aptly. So the government needs to address that reality.

The government wants to be prepared for disaster, yet we have seen them strip money out of the school system. How does money going out of the school system have any reflection on being prepared for a disaster? We have small rural schools. I have them in my riding. I visit them all across the province. With the funding formula, if you have a small rural school, it doesn't generate enough money for a principal, a secretary or a custodian. So we have small rural schools in this province that have teachers in the classroom and not another person in the building.

It was brought to my attention by a parent who had a personal problem. Their spouse had been in an accident and they needed to phone the school to tell them that they were on their way, were going to pick up their daughter and were going to go to the hospital. They got an answering machine at the school. This government doesn't feel it's important to have someone at a school to answer the phone. They had to leave the message that they were on the way, and then the school would pick the message up at the end of the school day when one of the teachers went into the office and retrieved the messages.

1650

Safety? Not at all. We've got those kids in the school with no circle of protection around them. We don't have a gatekeeper in far too many of our schools. With emergency readiness, it can be a major disaster or it could be one individual doing actions—we've seen hostage-takings in parts of the world that were horrendous. We need to restore to our schools a sense that this province values the students and will ensure that they are safe. The teachers are doing a great job, but the empty offices at the front door just increase the risk for our young people.

We need to ensure, in the event of a disaster, that we can provide some essential services. We live in a rural area, and if the electric system goes down, we lose not just the heat and the light but we lose our water supply. And if we're going to have urban areas struck by disaster, we need to have in place things that ensure that power continues to flow to the pumps. People need water to drink. We need water for fire protection.

There are so many things that I'm sure this bill wanted to address, but they are things that have to be accommodated by discussions, co-operation and indeed funding to the municipalities involved. That is not going to happen under this bill. This bill arbitrarily says, "Here's the new bar. We're setting it a certain height." I agree with that height, but it's no use to say—we have a number of children. I can't say to one of my children, "Go to the store and buy a loaf of bread. I require you to go and buy a loaf," but give them no money. So they're pretty hollow words when we say, "Municipalities, you have to do this. You have to meet these standards. You have to be ready."

It needs to be done. We have neglected it. I think everybody's been guilty of that. I can remember the day, with Emergency Measures Ontario, when we used to have these sirens up on the school roofs. They used to go off from time to time. And you know how we fixed them from going off? We cut the wires going to them. That was the way we silenced them, because we lived in a world where we had a sense that we weren't worried about terrorism, weren't worried about bad things happening to us. The world has changed so dramatically now that we need to recognize that it's not enough just to talk about it. We have to fund it.

As the member for Brant said earlier, this province has traditionally not funded things such as our fire services. Very clearly, we're asking them to take on roles that we didn't ask them to take on 10 years ago. We're asking

municipalities to do more things. In my community, with Highway 401 running through it, I watch the volunteer fire departments from my area spend, I don't know, a third or maybe half of their calls out on the 401, which is really a provincial responsibility. They're out on the 401 extracting victims from vehicles, helping with fires etc.

We're all in this together. It is not good enough to simply give orders to someone. We're all in this together. I support the concept of the bill, but I have no choice but to vote against it, because yet again the invocation of time allocation on it will prevent this bill from becoming what it truly could be, which is a great bill.

Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener Centre): I listened with great interest to the member opposite, the member from Prince Edward-Hastings. Let me start off by saying that I'm truly disappointed to hear how bad, how depressed things are in his riding of Prince Edward-Hastings. My son-in-law Ryan Bell comes from that area, comes from that riding, as a matter of fact, and his parents and his grandparents still live there and they've told me about what a great place it used to be. When we had a different member here, four years ago, we never heard about how depressed it was but rather how good it was, so I would suggest that maybe after the next election it would be a lot better if we had another member from the Progressive Conservative Party, and we will take every step we can to ensure that we do have another member from the Progressive Conservative Party in that riding at that time.

It's really interesting when I hear the members opposite talk about the need for another time allocation motion and about how much legislation was passed in a previous government without time allocation. But a member from that previous government was here recently and I had a long chat with him. He said in all his years in his government, he had never seen the vicious tactics employed by an opposition that he is seeing, that he is witnessing here now. He said, "You know, there was a level of co-operation between government parties and opposition parties back then. It's shameful the tactics the opposition employs now." I just pass that on for the record.

I have to say that I also heard my colleague Bob Wood, the member for London West, speak about the need for Bill 148, An Act to provide for declarations of death in certain circumstances and to amend the Emergency Plans Act. I think September 11, 2001, if we can go back to that, changed life for all of us. I remember—and I'm not afraid to admit this—I was out golfing the morning of September 11. I was golfing with a couple of business people who wanted to use that opportunity to discuss some issues of concern to them in my riding. We came off the golf course and the one student who works there for the summer said, "Did you hear the news? The World Trade Center has just been bombed." Then he explained that airplanes had flown into it, that many people were killed and that the World Trade Center had collapsed.

The feeling of disbelief that came over me—I actually smiled, because I was looking for the punchline. I thought it was a joke. I could not believe that this had actually taken place.

This feeling of security and complacency that we have as citizens of this wonderful country called Canada, in this lovely continent of North America, was shattered. I can only say that it was devastating. It was devastating for me; it was devastating for everyone who lives here.

Suddenly a couple of weeks ago there was a bombing in Bali. We have a terrorist group around the world that is determined to destroy our economy, destroy our way of life, destroy tourism throughout the world. They will do anything they can to achieve their own ends, even to the point that when sniper assassin attacks take place, as they did in Maryland, people are searching to see whether or not that is related to al Qaeda or some other terrorist organization.

That's why it was important for our government to move quickly, as we did after September 11, 2001, to ensure the ongoing safety of our residents in this great province. This government has invested more than \$30 million to fight terrorism. The members opposite say, "Oh, \$30 million isn't enough." Every time we make an announcement of money being spent in this province, the people opposite say, "It's not enough." How many times have we heard that in this place?

Interjection.

Mr Wettlaufer: You people opposite would increase spending on absolutely every area in this province. You could increase spending to \$100 billion so fast you would increase the debt to \$30 billion or \$40 billion each year. You don't have any concept of how much \$30 million is; the people in Ontario do. You people are out of touch with your own constituents.

1700

This government can't go it alone. The federal government must also act to close the gaping holes in our immigration laws. They need to protect our borders. They need to identify and stamp out terrorist cells. We've read recently—well, in the last couple years, I guess—about the marijuana home-grow operations. There's been some suspicion in some parts of the country that the proceeds from these home-grow operations are being used to finance terrorist activities throughout the world. Maybe they are, maybe they aren't, but the point is there are thousands of these going on throughout Canada right now and it is not inconceivable that they can generate \$300,000 to \$350,000 of tax-free, ill-gotten income every two to three months. One of these home-grow operations in a home can generate 350 plants. At \$1,000 a plant, you're looking at \$350,000, and you have thousands of these throughout the country. Perhaps this money is going to terrorism.

Hon Mr Galt: Two crops would pay for the house.

Mr Wettlaufer: Yes, two crops would pay for the house—you said it. One crop would pay for the house.

Our Minister of Public Safety and Security, Bob Runciman, asked the federal government yesterday or a

couple days ago to impose much stricter minimum penalties in order to ensure that some of these home-grow operations are cut out. Right now what is happening is that judges are handing out very minimal sentences, often conditional sentences. I have to say, this is subject to federal law. They provide for very weak minimum penalties.

Municipalities also have a role to play, and this government will work with them. The bill changes the name from the Emergency Plans Act to the Emergency Management Act. It improves or expands the scope of the act. If passed, and I expect it will, the act is being amended to provide for every municipality in the province developing and implementing an emergency management program. Presently the act permits municipalities to develop a plan; now it will be mandatory. The local council will pass a bylaw to adopt such a program and that will ensure that all residents will know that their local council is in sync with the rest of the province. There will be consistent standards throughout the province.

The emergency management program will be more than just a document; it will be real, current and complete. Not only will the municipality have to implement a plan, but its employees will have to be trained and regular exercises of the plan will have to be carried out. What we have found is that while 90% of the municipalities presently have plans, less than 50% of them actually have training programs in effect for their employees.

The public will also have to be notified on the risks to public safety and will have to be made aware of plans for preparedness for emergencies. Speaker, you're as old as I am—unfortunately, you are. You will remember back in the 1950s we used to have air raid sirens going off all the time. As children, we were being prepared in the event of an air raid. We had to get under our desks in the schools and be prepared. It may be necessary to have an education program again in effect so the people of the municipalities, the people of this province can be prepared for an emergency.

In developing the emergency management program, every municipality will have to identify and assess the various hazards and risks to public safety that could lead to an emergency if certain infrastructures, such as our nuclear plants around the province, are compromised. And in those geographic areas where a specific type of emergency might exist, municipalities, under direction by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, can be directed to ensure their emergency plans address their special circumstances.

Because the nature of emergencies, whether man-made or natural, is constantly changing, municipalities will be required to review their emergency plans annually to make whatever changes are required. These plans, therefore, are not just going to gather dust on somebody's bookshelf someplace, but they will change to reflect the needs of the municipalities and the province.

We realize that Bill 148 will put additional pressure on municipalities to be prepared, but we are also putting additional pressure on ourselves, the government of Ontario. We are going to take positive steps, through this act, to ensure that all ministries that would be affected by emergencies are also prepared. Every minister of the crown who presides over a ministry of the government, and every agency, board, commission and other branch of government designated by the Lieutenant Governor in Council must develop and implement an emergency management program. All ministry employees must be trained in the plan and know the procedures to be followed in emergency response and recovery activities. Each of those 12 designated ministries must identify and assess the various hazards and risks to public safety that could cause emergencies and, like municipalities, they must review and, if necessary, revise their emergency plan every year.

All municipalities and all ministries must submit their emergency plans to the chief of Emergency Measures Ontario, thus ensuring that EMO, a central repository for emergency plans, will have the latest version of those emergency plans. Emergency Measures Ontario will become Emergency Management Ontario to again reflect its expanded mandate.

The legislation we are considering today is very important. It is very vital to the ongoing safety of our communities and the government. We have doubled spending. And although the bill was introduced as a direct result of the terrorist activities of September 11, it is important to note that it will also apply in those cases of natural disasters, natural emergencies, like the ice storm in eastern Ontario in 1998.

I ask all members to give very strong consideration to passing this bill. I ask them to give very strong consideration to co-operating with the government in an effort to ensure that the people of Ontario are adequately protected. I know some of them feel that it's not adequate. They may honestly feel that it's not adequate or they may be acting politically and opposing it for the sake of opposing it, as they often do. I'm not going to question their motive; I don't do that. But I ask them to consider themselves, that if they are opposing the legislation or if they are opposing time allocation only for the sake of opposing it, to give strong consideration to their motives because the people of Ontario deserve adequate protection. They don't need this adequate protection a year from now. They need it now. That is why it is so important that we move ahead with this.

1710

For the sake of the members opposite and the people of Ontario, I want to go back to some quotes of support back when we passed the emergency act. I refer to Fred LeBlanc, president of the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association. He says, "Bill 148 ... is a good first step and opportunity toward making the citizens of Ontario safer. By ensuring that municipalities must have emergency planning in place will force long overdue inventories of our emergency services and their effective-

ness to respond to large-scale incidents.” He said that. I directly quoted from what Fred LeBlanc said.

Ann Mulvale, the president of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, says, “This legislation will certainly assist Ontarians and their communities to prepare for emergencies and save lives in the future.... Municipal leaders are committed to ensuring that their emergency plans work and that emergency services are ready to respond.”

J.P. Bernier, vice-president and general counsel of the Canadian Life and Health Insurance Association, said, “We would like to commend the government for taking this legislative initiative in response to the 9/11 tragedy, of seeking to remove many of the legal and procedural obstacles standing in the way of families and representatives endeavouring to settle the estates of persons who have either disappeared in known tragic circumstances and whose remains cannot be found or of those persons who have simply disappeared and have not been seen or heard from for many years.”

All three of these experts want the legislation passed. They support it in the interests of Ontarians. They don't support it thinking it might pass six months or a year from now. They want it passed now. The interests of Ontarians are served if this legislation is passed now. I urge the members opposite not to oppose this for the sake of opposing it, but to please consider the interests of Ontarians.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): There's both a benefit and a liability to a time allocation motion. The liability, of course, is that it's yet another example of the government trying to close down debate on an important issue before the House. The advantage is that it allows the flexibility for those of us who wish to offer an intervention, the flexibility of being able to speak of a number of issues despite the fact we are talking about a time allocation, so I will utilize the latter to some advantage.

First of all, I must say that in principle I vote against time allocation motions. I think everyone in opposition should do so. I think there are some in government who should, if not vote against the time allocation motion, absent themselves from time to time because they recognize this is the crushing of debate on yet another subject before the House.

What people have to know is that the government will win every vote in this House. They have a majority and if their whip, the person in charge of getting everybody together for the vote, does his or her job, that means the government has guaranteed winning every vote in the Legislature. So the concern that somehow, if the opposition votes against a time allocation motion, it has some effect is nonsensical.

I wish that instead of discussing a time allocation motion this afternoon, once again we were dealing with the issue that's on the minds of all members of the Ontario Legislature, and that's the issue of their hydro bills that are coming in at skyrocketing rates. On a daily basis I receive probably a dozen telephone calls, letters,

e-mails and other communications from people who are expressing their concern about the skyrocketing hydro bills they're facing.

They would understand if it were a very modest increase, particularly in light of weather conditions and so on; they're not people who are not understanding of that. But what they're seeing is a doubling and a tripling and a quadrupling of those bills, and it's particularly difficult for people on a fixed income or people who have a very modest income from which to pay their bills. At the same time they're receiving these huge hydro bills, I have to say that they're also receiving huge insurance bills because insurance rates are going up. Water bills are now increasing. Even before the legislation is passed, municipalities are now increasing their water bills. Natural gas bills are going up. If you go to the pump, despite the fact there were the gas-busters on the other side who were going to bring down the price of gasoline at the pump, we see that that has gone up as well. This is what is confronting people and this is what they want us to talk about in the House.

I suspect that tomorrow or some time this week the government will withdraw from its present position; that is, it will start to either cap or freeze or promise an instant rebate, something of that nature, because even members of the government are expressing behind closed doors to the Premier and members of the cabinet their concern that this is having a devastating effect on the people they represent and, second, that it will have a devastating political effect on the government if something isn't done to stop it.

Unfortunately, the people of this province were promised when the government brought in its plan that there would be a reduction in the cost of electricity and there would be all kinds of new generating capacity coming on. Exactly the opposite has happened. Even those who were applauding the government for its initial plans out there in the private sector are saying today that the government has botched the way it has implemented them and as a result we have neither new capacity nor lower prices. We have capacity which seems to be diminishing and prices which are escalating at an unacceptable rate.

I expect some time this week we're going to see the government retrench. You'll hear the bugle of retreat being sounded, you'll see the white flag coming up, and the government will understand that it has made a drastic error and that unless it withdraws from that error it will be in considerable trouble.

Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls): What's the error? Tell us what the error is.

Mr Bradley: I want to say to my good friend from Niagara Falls, because he would agree with me on this, that one way of increasing capacity to a certain extent would be to proceed with what he and I would call the Beck 3 project, increasing capacity at Niagara Falls. It would create for his riding and for the Niagara region hundreds upon hundreds of new jobs in construction alone. It would also of course increase the generation

capacity for Ontario Power Generation to come on to the grid, enough to light a city such as Kitchener, for instance, that kind of capacity. The member for Kitchener would love to have that, I'm sure, on the grid.

Best of all from an environmental point of view, it would be benign. The Chair of the alternative fuels committee is with us this afternoon and he will recall our many discussions in committee about the advisability of proceeding with the Beck 3 project. So I hope that the Premier will listen to what the Leader of the Opposition, Dalton McGuinty, had to say when he was in Niagara Falls and in this Legislature, and what I have said for a number of years, that it's advisable to proceed with Beck 3. I know I can count on my good friend from Niagara Falls. And the Deputy Premier would be in favour of it; I know that as a fact.

We would all be happy if the government proceeded with it. I would applaud. Of course, I would point out the government was capitulating to pressure from the opposition, that would be my role, but I've got to tell you—and from our committee. Doug, from our committee, was very positive about that opportunity. He and I would agree on that. So I hope that announcement is to be made. I suspect it might well be made, because the government needs this capacity.

1720

I want to say as well that this afternoon, rather than a time allocation motion, I would like to be discussing the disaster situation facing the ambulance dispatch service in the Niagara region. I received a call that said the dispatch service is down this afternoon. Apparently there's a technical problem, and they're operating with some kind of makeshift technical equipment at this time. That is totally unacceptable.

If you had asked me two years ago, "Do you think the province should be in charge of land ambulances and the dispatch of those," I would have said, "Yes, the province should have that service if it invests the proper funds in it and so on." A decision was made by this government to transfer land ambulances to the local municipalities. Now that that decision has been made, the local municipalities are saying, "We would like the opportunity to be in charge of the last aspect of it, the ambulance dispatch."

In Niagara, people such as the member for Niagara Falls and me face this situation: we would like to have people working in that office who know Niagara and its street and grid systems intimately, so that the risk of mistakes being made is considerably diminished. What we have instead is a central dispatch system in Hamilton which is drastically underfunded, the people are not appropriately trained by the Ministry of Health, the equipment is outdated and the people aren't familiar with the local road system because they must deal with several municipalities. In exasperation, the regional municipality of Niagara, like the city of Ottawa—and successfully in the case of Ottawa—has asked for the transfer of that to the local municipality with appropriate compensation for the transfer and for assuming that responsibility.

It makes sense. We need a Niagara dispatch service. Tragically, there have been some errors made in dispatch and, as a result, it is alleged that people have died. In some other cases, people have been delayed getting to the hospital, so that their state of health is worse than it might otherwise have been. I can think right off the top of my head of three individuals I know personally who have experienced that situation.

One was with the recent death of a person I happened to know extremely well. I was at the funeral and somebody came up to me and said, "Do you know what the situation was in terms of the ambulance dispatch?" In the opinion of this friend of the deceased, that person would have easily lived if the ambulance had been there on time and the dispatch had been done appropriately. That's sad. It's a situation that will be left up to the coroner and, if there are any, up to the legal proceedings.

I say to members of the government that you have to move expeditiously to transfer this responsibility now, along with the funding, to the regional municipality of Niagara. They're prepared to take it on, as was the city of Ottawa, and I think that's probably the best solution.

As for the central dispatch centre in Hamilton, operated by the Ministry of Health, it will still require updated equipment. It will require people who are well compensated, so that you don't have a turnover of people on almost a monthly basis, and you don't have a workload that's so great that it makes the job stressful, people want to leave and mistakes can be made.

There was secret report—my friend from Kitchener would be interested in this. The government actually kept a report on this secret for several months. Finally, an enterprising reporter was able to obtain a copy of the report, and it was a report condemning the Ministry of Health. But what I think is of even more concern to many people was that the report was kept secret. I know my friend from Niagara Falls was concerned when he learned how the government had kept that report secret, because he's obviously as concerned as I am about the dispatch situation in Niagara.

I heard my good friend from Kitchener again mention, "Where would you get some of the money?" Well, that's always a lovely open question, because this government has spent in excess of a quarter of a billion dollars on government advertising. If you took the money from government advertising and spent it on worthwhile projects, he'd be happy and I'd be happy. Now, the whiz kids in the Premier's office who say, "You have to do this advertising to make the government look good," wouldn't be happy, but I think most of us in this House on both sides would rather see that funding invested in real services.

The Minister of Long-Term Care is with us today. He knows how people reacted vehemently against the 15% increase for the fragile and elderly who are in our long-term-care homes and nursing homes, and only after a major uproar was there a little bit of a back-off on the part of the government. At first the government said, "You just have to put up with this."

Some of the members over there might think I'm just being too suspicious, but I said at the time, "You know what it was? Those people dared to sign these cards and send them in saying the level of care in our nursing homes compared to, say, Saskatchewan in 1999 is rather bad."

I see a prop on the other side being held up by the Minister of Long-Term Care. I think he's holding up a figure that says, "\$100 million," which is, I would say, about a third of what this government has spent on government advertising. I think that's what he said.

But petition after petition has been presented in this Legislature asking for a substantial investment in improving the care in our long-term homes and not pushing the cost of this on people who are often on fixed incomes, the frail and the elderly in our province. Those people are still angry by what this government did in the summer; even though it tried to make it better, it still did that.

I recognize that sometimes these petitions have some effect, and that's why I come to this House on almost a daily basis to present those petitions about matters of great concern.

Interjection.

Mr Bradley: I do sign them because members are required to sign the petitions, saying that they're in complete agreement with their contents, and I'm happy to do that.

In terms, generally, of this bill, for those on the government side, I bet you were as surprised as I was by the last provincial budget when my good friend Bob Runciman had his budget cut by at least \$60 million, because I had thought that this government wanted to portray itself as a law-and-order government. I even offered to my good friend Bob Runciman to help him get some of that money back that they had taken out of his budget, because it was a shock.

As for this bill that we have before us, I think it is important—and I hope all members of the Legislature would understand—to have a coordinated effort in terms of emergency response. Municipalities have some onerous new obligations as a result of this bill—I think they expected that was going to be the case—and I think we have to be able to respond to all emergency situations. The situation in New York and Washington, where airplanes were used as weapons, certainly brought home to us in a very sober way what can happen, and there's a need for a response to that. There's also a need for a response to other disasters. But our local municipalities are saying, "You have foisted upon us, and sometimes with a good deal of justification, new obligations which are costly. We as municipalities have only the municipal property tax, which does not take into account a person's ability to pay, or local user fees to raise funds. So we would like you, the provincial government, to be a funding partner, hand in hand, so to speak, with the municipalities."

If you want to implement the provisions of this bill, and I think there are some good provisions in this bill, I

think that it's necessary to provide those municipalities with adequate funding to be able to make the adjustments to purchase the new equipment, to train the people and to hire new people in this province. If you're to do that, I think this bill would be even better received than it has been to this point in time.

I do not project and have not projected a prolonged debate on this legislation. I can't speak for the NDP, but I don't see things in this bill that make us want to vote against the bill. I know there are some things missing in this legislation, but I think this time allocation motion, this motion closing off debate, is entirely unnecessary. I find it unfortunate that the government is employing this tactic once again.

1730

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): I appreciate the opportunity to participate in the debate. Let me say at the outset that as a former Solicitor General responsible for the Emergency Plans Act, I have a great deal of sympathy for making this a priority, and quite frankly I don't have a lot of problems with the idea of making the guidelines, the regulations, all mandatory as opposed to just enabling legislation. But having said that, there are a few things that need to be said.

First of all, I want to respond a bit, like my friend from St Catharines, to the comments of the member for Kitchener Centre. You said in your comments—through you, Speaker—that the people of Ontario deserve protection now, given the nature of the bill, and made reference to what happened on September 11 and talked about other disasters, and rightly so. But let's keep in mind—don't put this on us again. First of all, my friend from St Catharines is absolutely correct: you've got a majority. At the end of the day, you can do virtually anything you want. In fact, you can even do things that are unlawful. We and citizens have had to take you to court on a number of occasions and challenge your government under the Constitution and under the charter, and you've lost them.

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): Five times.

Mr Christopherson: One of my friends, Mr Patten, is saying, "Five times." Out of that, I'm not sure how many they lost, but probably the majority.

Mr Patten: All of them.

Mr Christopherson: He's saying, "All of them." It may be, but I certainly know, a lot of the big ones. You were told at the time, "Don't do this. It's against the charter. It's against people's rights. It's against the Constitution," and you went ahead and did it anyway. With that kind of context, don't roll in here today and try to make the argument that this thing is not law because the opposition is holding you up.

When you say that the people deserve the protection now, I look at the first and second readings. It's printed right on the front of your bill. It was introduced December 6, 2001. The member claims it was as a result of September 11. I'll take him at his word that that's what happened. They probably had these amendments under consideration in the ministry and they were

probably fast-tracked to bring them forward. Totally understandable, totally acceptable. Makes a lot of sense.

We had another session after December. You could even argue that if it was that important, you would have done it that December. If you wanted to bring in time allocation, you could have rammed it through and made it law before the end of last year. But you didn't do that. Let's give you the benefit of the doubt and say there were good reasons. I don't recall what they were, but let's just say they're there.

Now we're into the spring session. You didn't call this bill until June 27. That's probably within a handful of days of when the House rose. If this is that important, I say to my colleague from Kitchener Centre, that Ontario deserves protection now, where were you last spring? Why didn't you call this up as the first order of business, or at least within the first week? How about within the first month? Then if you wanted to make the argument we're preventing it from being law as fast as it could be and make all your arguments, you might have a case. But you let that whole session go by, all of it until the dying days on June 27, when you called it for second reading.

Now here we are into the last third—certainly the second half, and probably the last third—of this session, given that next week is constit week for Remembrance Day. You didn't even make it a priority this time around.

We may or may not decide that's something we want to attack the government for, because they let this thing lie around, but it sure takes on a whole different life when one of the government backbenchers gets up on his hind legs and says that it's all our fault, that this thing is such motherhood in terms of the protection it offers the people of Ontario that we, the awful opposition benches, ought not to be blocking this. Give me a break. That really is a bit over the top. You wonder why things that otherwise should get some support don't. You're the majority. If you want co-operation, what you do is use that power you have to give us things that we want. Usually it's more time, either on the floor of the House here or in committee. That's usually all we ask. But when there's this kind of attitude, it makes it difficult for us to stand up and want to be co-operative. I would advise the member that when he wants to point blame, he ought to start with his own government House leader and ask, "Why didn't you make this law earlier this year?" Don't point the finger at us. That just doesn't wash.

There was no need for that argument. It looks gratuitous. There was just no need to do that. It's almost like you've got a little plaque on each of your desks that just says, "Blame someone," and no matter what, during the course of a speech you've got to find somebody to blame for something. In this case, it was supposedly us for holding this up, which is nonsensical.

Interjection.

Mr Christopherson: With that, I'm about to move off, unless you want to say something else. I've got nine minutes. What have you got to say?

Mr Wettlaufer: I just said that you're a good scapegoat.

Mr Christopherson: What can I tell you? I give him a chance to heckle me and all he says is, "You're a good scapegoat."

The bill itself and changing the name from "emergency plans" to "emergency management": I don't know the history of that. There probably is a very good reason, other than just a modernization of the name. Certainly it reflects what you do in an emergency, which is manage your way through it. That's what emergencies are: crisis. All the usual systems, everything that normally happens in the course of a day, procedures, are blown out the window because you've got this crisis. So I don't know. There may be good reason, but even just from a common sense point of view, if you will, I certainly wouldn't have any problem with the fact that you've changed the name.

If I have a problem, however, it's two things. One is, once again you're making this mandatory and you want to take all the credit. It sounds a bit like what you did with brownfields and a couple of other issues where you wanted to stand up and take the credit for having done something but you weren't coughing up the bucks to pay for it.

Anybody who knows anything about what's happening in municipalities and our communities, whether it's health care, the school board or the management of municipal services, will know that the municipalities can't take any more downloading. I can tell you from my experience in Hamilton and our neighbours in St Catharines, Grimsby and all across the Ontario, that every elected councillor and every elected mayor makes the safety and security of their citizens the absolute number one priority. So every dime they can squeeze out of their budget to go to police services, to go to fire services, and now ambulance services, they do that. But it's not the end of their responsibilities. You've given municipalities a lot more.

I've got to tell you, I don't have a lot of hope that this government is going to change its tune toward municipalities because, yes, it does come down to dollars at the end of the day. Let's remember that you thought there was certainly cash enough to give out billions of dollars in tax cuts, tax cuts that benefited the very wealthy a lot more than the average working family in Hamilton. You had billions and billions—it's got to be getting close to \$10 billion annualized now—that you felt you didn't need in terms of managing the province, and so you spent it. It's an expenditure. You spent that money on a tax cut. As the books work, it makes no difference whether you spend it on a tax cut or spend it on municipal police and fire and emergency services; it's all an expenditure. That was your priority.

Yet today, they want to stand in their place and say, "The opposition wants to spend money"—I was going to say "like water," but water is becoming very much a commodity like oil. But you seem to think that we only want to spend money. I want to put it back on you that you spent all those billions, only you spent it on tax cuts. And here we are, rightfully so, talking about the security and safety of Ontarians as an absolute priority,

which it should be, but you don't have any money. So your tax cuts are more important than giving firefighters and police officers and ambulance personnel the money they need to protect our citizens on the street. That was your choice.

1740

Further to that, while you want to tell everybody else they should be responsible for the safety and security of their citizens, the line ministry that's responsible in Ontario, the former Ministry of the Solicitor General, now known as the Ministry of Public Safety and Security—you cut that operational budget by \$73 million. Since you're not spending money on very much else, it all has to be going to more of your tax cuts. You know, \$73 million would go a long way in municipalities, especially smaller ones that don't have the same base as some of the larger communities. I'm not saying the larger ones are on easy street by any stretch, but certainly \$100,000 or \$50,000 goes a long, long way in smaller communities, and there's still enough money for you to support the larger communities.

Why should this matter to all citizens? Because emergencies don't just happen in somebody else's community; they happen in your own, or perhaps you're visiting another municipality. The member for Kitchener Centre rightfully pointed out the ice storm as an example of a natural emergency. It was a good example. But it would have been just as easy for someone who lived in western Ontario to have found themselves on the border of Ontario and Quebec, caught up in that emergency and stranded without power and water and all the other services that were denied as a result.

So I agree entirely that this is a matter for all of us, and it's not just terrorists. I would say that probably most emergencies and crises that happen within our communities are not terror-related but are either some kind of structural problem, like a roof caving in on something, or indeed a natural disaster, as my friend has pointed out. So this is important. It affects all of us.

In the last couple of minutes I do want to point out and brag a little about Hamilton. Hamilton has been providing the major conference on emergency planning that is recognized around the world, and we've been doing it—I should know the year—for probably the better part of a decade now. Long before September 11 was imagined in anybody's worst nightmare, long before the ice storm disaster, Hamilton was developing expertise in this area. The conferences, the symposiums that are held every year are now attended by government and business representatives from around the world. That's how far advanced Hamilton is in terms of emergency planning. But even we in Hamilton would like to do a better job, and whether or not we're going to meet these standards remains to be seen, because we don't know what those final regulations are. And since you won't put in the bill a guarantee that you'll at least consult—not even consider, just consult—with anyone else, we don't know what those standards are going to be or who's going to get the final say in what they look like. I'll bet that even

Hamilton, as advanced as we are in emergency planning, is still going to have some difficulty meeting some of the standards you're rightfully going to want to set but don't want to give us any money to help out.

I don't normally go out of my way to say nice things about Liberals, but I will give Paul Martin this much. I was at the FCM conference, because it was in my riding, and I was sitting in the front row when he made a commitment to municipalities that I have never heard before from any federal minister of any political stripe. Unfortunately, he was fired within 48 hours and it remains to be seen where that is at the end of the day.

I want to end my remarks where I began them: I don't have a lot of hope that you're going to do anything different between now and the next election, and we debate that point virtually every day here. I do have hope that the federal Liberals will honour the commitment. If it's Paul Martin who's elected, or somebody else, so be it, but somebody's got to step in and start supporting municipalities. And I'm not just making these comments for what might appear to be obvious reasons. I'm not the only one saying that. Municipalities, at the end of the day, are where our families are raised. That's where we live. That's where local economies work or don't work. It's defined by how well our municipalities function, and they're in crisis. So, good idea, the right thing to do, but the municipalities need some money to do the job properly.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): This completes the time allocated for debate.

Mr Galt has moved government notice of motion number 51. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All in favour will say "aye."

All opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1746 to 1756.

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

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Hardeman, Ernie	Newman, Dan
Baird, John R.	Hudak, Tim	O'Toole, John
Barrett, Toby	Jackson, Cameron	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Beaubien, Marcel	Johns, Helen	Sampson, Rob
Chudleigh, Ted	Johnson, Bert	Snobelen, John
Clark, Brad	Klees, Frank	Spina, Joseph
Clement, Tony	Marland, Margaret	Sterling, Norman W.
Coburn, Brian	Martiniuk, Gerry	Stockwell, Chris
DeFaria, Carl	Maves, Bart	Tascona, Joseph N.
Ecker, Janet	Mazzilli, Frank	Tsubouchi, David H.
Elliott, Brenda	McDonald, AL	Turnbull, David
Flaherty, Jim	Miller, Norm	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Galt, Doug	Molinari, Tina R.	Wilson, Jim
Gilchrist, Steve	Munro, Julia	Witmer, Elizabeth
Gill, Raminder	Murdoch, Bill	Wood, Bob
Guzzo, Garry J.	Mushinski, Marilyn	

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

Nays

Agostino, Dominic	Cordiano, Joseph	Martin, Tony
Bartolucci, Rick	Crozier, Bruce	McGuinty, Dalton
Bisson, Gilles	Curling, Alvin	McLeod, Lyn
Bountrogianni, Marie	Di Cocco, Caroline	McMeekin, Ted
Boyer, Claudette	Duncan, Dwight	Parsons, Ernie
Bradley, James J.	Gravelle, Michael	Patten, Richard
Bryant, Michael	Hoy, Pat	Peters, Steve
Caplan, David	Kennedy, Gerard	Phillips, Gerry
Christopherson, David	Kormos, Peter	Prue, Michael
Churley, Marilyn	Kwinter, Monte	Pupatello, Sandra
Cleary, John C.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Ramsay, David
Colle, Mike	Levac, David	Ruprecht, Tony
Conway, Sean G.	Martel, Shelley	Smitherman, George

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The eyes are 47; the nays are 39.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): Pursuant to standing order 37, the question that the House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made. The member for Davenport has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given yesterday by the Minister of Health. The member for Davenport has up to five minutes to debate the matter, and the parliamentary assistant or the minister may reply for up to five minutes.

DOCTOR SHORTAGE

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): I was not satisfied with the answer the minister gave me when I asked him about the crisis that some communities are experiencing in terms of doctor shortages in Ontario.

I had indicated to him that his exciting, what he calls “fast-track” program accepted only 44 out of 709 doctors who applied.

But let’s start from the beginning. Ontario is desperate for doctors. Right now, the province is short 1,585 positions, including specialists. That number could double in 10 years as more than 3,000 doctors approach retirement age. The Ontario Medical Association estimates that the doctor shortage will negatively affect nearly one million people in Ontario. That is unacceptable.

The Harris-Eves Tories commissioned several studies into the doctor shortage but failed to act for months, despite urgings from Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberals. In February 2001, Dalton McGuinty released his physician shortage action plan, which detailed several ways in which the government could take action to address the problem. To date, the government has acted on some of these recommendations that were contained in the Dalton McGuinty plan, but more needs to be done.

One short-term solution to addressing the physician shortage is accessing foreign-trained doctors who are living in Ontario. There are no accurate statistics on exactly how many licensed physicians from other countries have immigrated to Canada and live in Ontario.

The Association of International Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario represents over 1,000 internationally trained doctors, but they estimate that twice as many may reside here in Ontario.

Right now in Ontario there are 90 positions available to allow foreign-trained physicians to become licensed, 50 positions within the traditional accreditation program that can take up to five years, and 40 new positions within the six-month assessment period.

In 2002, over 500 people applied for 40 positions available in the fast-track program. Some 327 foreign-trained physicians applied for the family medicine portion of the fast-track program, but do you know how many were accepted? Only four.

The barriers facing foreign-trained physicians trying to get licensed in Ontario are varied:

(1) There are not enough residency positions to accommodate foreign physicians who have been deemed qualified to fill them. Without this residency, most foreign-trained doctors cannot be licensed. We need to increase these residency positions.

(2) Various exams and residency requirements do not offer enough flexibility.

(3) The cost of the qualifying process: the cost of tests alone can amount to over \$5,000.

Ontario Liberals believe that accessing foreign-trained physicians is a key part of the solution to our doctor shortage. We believe the high standards for professional accreditation must be maintained, but that more foreign-trained physicians must be licensed to practise medicine here. These two objectives are not mutually exclusive.

Finally, Dalton McGuinty and Sandra Pupatello have created a foreign-trained physician registry that will record information on the number and whereabouts of foreign-trained doctors living in Ontario. The purpose of the registry is to gather information that will allow Ontario Liberals to better gauge how many foreign-trained doctors are living in Ontario—but not only Liberals; every party is interested in this program and should therefore listen—and to assess what obstacles they encountered while trying to become licensed to practise medicine here in Ontario.

I want to announce right here that Dalton McGuinty’s foreign-trained physician registry can be accessed at www.daltonmcguinty.com. If anyone is interested in this program and wants to register, please follow this: www.daltonmcguinty.com is the way to go.

So I say to this minister, he has not properly answered my question: why is it that we have created a bottleneck in Ontario? It makes absolutely no sense to have foreign-trained physicians living right here—the numbers are great, some estimate over 3,000—and at the same time we have a doctor shortage. This cannot be.

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I would like to thank the member for Davenport for allowing me this opportunity to inform not only this House but all Ontarians about the initiatives of the Eves government in the field of physician supply.

First, with your indulgence, Mr Speaker, I would like to dwell upon several accomplishments of the Eves government that we have made up to this point in health care. In 1995 health care spending stood at \$17.6 billion. Today we are spending \$25.5 billion, or 47 cents on the dollar. To put it another way, this government has increased spending on health care by 45%. Our government has increased per capita spending on health care by almost 25% since 1995. We have increased spending on hospitals by over \$2 billion, or almost 30%. We have increased the number of MRI machines to 43, an increase of over 350% from the 12 that were operating under the NDP and Liberal governments. Not only that, our government in May of this year announced plans to add up to 20 new MRI machines over the next little while.

This government has introduced initiatives such as Telehealth Ontario and the universal influenza immunization program. We've also added over 1,300 products to the Ontario drug benefit program. We're doing all this despite the fact that the opposition's Liberal cousins in Ottawa have failed to live up to their end of the bargain in funding health care. In 1995 the Chrétien-Martin government contributed 18% of health care costs. Today, due to the decreases in transfer payments, the federal Liberals have contributed only 14 cents on the dollar.

In response to the member for Davenport and his question on physician supply, I would be happy at this time to inform him of what the Eves government has done so far and what we are planning to do in the future. Since 1999 our government has increased enrolment in medical schools by 30%, to almost 700 first-year positions. We are offering up to \$40,000 in tuition reimbursement and location incentives for medical students to practise in underserved areas upon their graduation. We are creating a new northern medical school with campuses in Sudbury and Thunder Bay. In September 2004, over 50 first-year students will be enrolled to help serve northern Ontario's need for health care professionals. This is the first new medical school to open in Ontario in over 30 years. We sponsored the 2002 health professionals recruitment tour. Since this government was elected in 1995, the number of active physicians has increased by 4.4%.

In terms of international medical graduates, our record is one of innovation second to none. Since 1999 we have increased the number of physicians in the international medical graduates program. Today 90 foreign-trained physicians are eligible for the program every year. We believe that foreign-trained doctors and medical specialists represent an invaluable source of skilled providers who can bolster the supply of doctors in underserved areas. Yes, it is true: this government will be making an important announcement very soon regarding international medical graduates. While I realize the member for Davenport is anxiously awaiting the announcement, he, like everyone else, has to wait for the final details to be resolved, and at that point we will be making the announcement. I'm sure that he will agree with me on the importance of this announcement, and I'm looking

forward to his support once the announcement has been unveiled.

Talking about international medical graduates, it's interesting to see how the Liberals are addressing this issue. So far the only peep of policy coming from across the floor can be found on their Web site. I noticed, as the honourable member mentioned, that they are initiating the foreign-trained physician registry. It reminds me, perhaps, of The Bay's on-line bridal registry in terms of the paucity of information. I noticed as well that you can also get Gerry Phillips's treasury watch on this particular Web site, but it says you need the Adobe Acrobat Reader. I always knew he was very acrobatic when it came to his figures, but I'm glad to see that's available.

When average Ontarians look at the facts and see the progress the Eves government is making on international medical graduates, and compare this to the Liberals, they will once again come to the conclusion that the Ontario Liberals and Dalton McGuinty are still not up to the job.

1810

SLOT MACHINES

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Pursuant to standing order 37(a), the member for York Centre has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Premier concerning Picov Downs.

Mr Monte Kwinter (York Centre): The reason for my dissatisfaction is that I am trying to get a very simple answer and am getting sort of a partial answer. The reason for my concern is that this issue is very, very confusing, in that different positions by different ministers are being put forward.

For example, on April 10, Tim Hudak, who at the time was the minister responsible, wrote to Norman Picov, who is the operator of Picov Downs, and said: "I am writing to advise you that the OLGC has been directed to begin discussions with you for the establishment of a slot machine facility, with up to 800 slot machines...." What he's saying is that they have been directed to enter into discussions for them to get these slot machines. He said, "This decision is further to a cabinet direction in December for the OLGC to complete a business case for slots at Picov Downs" and Quinte Exhibition Raceway. This means that in December the cabinet direction was, "Do a business case and see whether it makes any sense to put these slot machines into this facility." The letter goes on to say, "In March, cabinet reviewed and approved the business case as part of the provincial gaming strategy."

This letter is very clear. It talks about a direction to the lottery corporation in December to do a business case. In March, cabinet reviewed it and approved it. You'd think that would be very straightforward; that's the end of it.

What has happened is that we have two confusing statements by Tim Hudak, and then on October 31, 2002, last Thursday, Mr Flaherty, when he was debating my motion to call for a public inquiry, revealed that at the

December 2001 cabinet meeting a decision was made to permit Picov Downs to implement a slot machine facility.

On one hand, we have Mr Flaherty saying it was done in December, and on the other hand, Mr Hudak says it was done in March. Compounding the problem, Susanna Kelley of TVO, on her program, Fourth Reading, showed a leaked cabinet document that said the decision was made on March 6, 2002. So here we have confirmation that it was in March, and on the other hand we have one minister saying "December" and one minister saying "March."

Why is that important? The reason is that there's another whole element to this, because the Attorney General, who now has responsibility, keeps saying they may not get any slot machines. That, of course, was confirmed today by the Premier. He said, "He will have to wait until they have finished their deliberations to give him the actual answer as to how many machines, if any, Picov Downs will be allowed." Why would you, as the Finance Minister and the member for the Durham region, announce that you got it if there's a possibility you might not get any?

The other problem is that today in question period, when I questioned the Premier, he said, "It is my understanding that a decision was made with respect to Picov Downs...." So now the Premier has confirmed that a decision has been made. When I questioned why one minister was saying one thing and the other minister was saying something else, he said, "I don't believe what those two individuals said is exactly accurate."

That presents a whole new range of issues. If the Premier is saying that what Mr Flaherty is saying and what Mr Hudak is saying is not exactly accurate, then whom are we to believe? All I want is a definitive answer, just so I know what we're dealing with. Was the decision taken? We've seen a leaked cabinet document that says the decision was taken March 6. Minister Hudak wrote a letter to the applicant saying that in March the cabinet reviewed and approved the decision. We have Mr Flaherty saying it was done in December. Not only

that, Mr Hudak says the decision in December only says there is to be a business—

The Deputy Speaker: The member's time has expired. The Chair recognizes the member for Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale.

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): In answer to the member's question, in December 2001, cabinet directed the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Recreation to proceed with allowing Picov Downs to implement a slot facility once—this is important—the OLG completed a business case for Picov Downs. That is important.

This government will continue to take a responsible approach to gaming. We are still going through the process. The final number of slot machines for Picov Downs has not been decided. I think that was one of the questions. Picov Downs will follow the exact same impartial process that has been used for more than a dozen racetracks all across Ontario.

The government's decision to locate slot machines at Picov Downs is based on a business case prepared by OLG and the existence of approved local zoning bylaws. Before the government is in a position to confirm any number of slots, Picov Downs must, among other things, meet Ontario Racing Commission licensing requirements, develop a business plan supporting a racetrack with slot machines, negotiate a revenue-sharing agreement with the province and enter into a site-holder agreement with the OLG.

Across the province, the slot machine initiative has proven to be extremely successful, as you may know. It has created more than 3,000 new jobs, helped develop the 45,000-person-strong horseracing industry and provided almost \$112 million to municipalities which host slot machines at racetracks. I know at Woodbine, which I live close to, there are a number of slot machines, and I suppose it's a mutually beneficial type of arrangement.

The Deputy Speaker: The business of the House is finished, and it stands adjourned until 6:45 this evening.

The House adjourned at 1818.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Gary Carr

Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers

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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
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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)
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Burlington	Jackson, Cameron (PC)	Kenora-Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)		Gerretsen, John (L)
Chatham-Kent Essex	Hoy, Pat (L)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	Wetlaufer, Wayne (PC)
Davenport	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Kitchener Centre / -Centre	Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth (PC) Deputy Premier, Minister of Education / vice-première ministre, ministre de l'Éducation
Don Valley East / -Est	Caplan, David (L)	Kitchener-Waterloo	Beaubien, Marcel (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	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W. (PC) Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Dufferin-Peel- Wellington-Grey	Eves, Honourable / 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	Lanark-Carleton	Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W. (PC) Minister of Public Safety and Security / ministre de la Sécurité et de la Sécurité publique
Durham	O'Toole, John R. (PC)	Leeds-Grenville	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
Eglinton-Lawrence	Colle, Mike (L)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Wood, Bob (PC)
Elgin-Middlesex-London	Peters, Steve (L)	London West / -Ouest	Mazzilli, Frank (PC)
Erie-Lincoln	Hudak, Hon / L'hon Tim (PC) Minister of Consumer and Business Services / ministre des Services aux consommateurs et aux entreprises	London-Fanshawe	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
Essex	Crozier, Bruce (L)	Markham	Sampson, Rob (PC)
Etobicoke Centre / -Centre	Stockwell, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC) Minister of the Environment, government House leader / ministre de l'Environnement, leader parlementaire du gouvernement	Mississauga Centre / -Centre	
Etobicoke North / -Nord	Hastings, John (PC)		
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Kells, Morley (PC)		
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		

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
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Mississauga South / -Sud	Marland, Margaret (PC)	Scarborough East / -Est	Gilchrist, Steve (PC)
Mississauga West / -Ouest	Snobelen, John (PC)	Scarborough Southwest / -Sud-Ouest	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, Honourable / 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, Honourable / 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.

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
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Estimates / Budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Gerard Kennedy
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Alvin Curling
Gilles Bisson, Ted Chudleigh, Alvin Curling,
Gerard Kennedy, Frank Mazzilli, Norm Miller,
John R. O'Toole, Steve Peters
Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Finance and economic affairs /
Finances et affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Joseph Spina
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Ted Arnott
Ted Arnott, Marcel Beaubien,
David Christopherson, Monte Kwinter,
John O'Toole, Gerry Phillips,
Rob Sampson, Joseph Spina
Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

General government / Affaires gouvernementales

Chair / Président: Steve Gilchrist
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Norm Miller
Marilyn Churley, Mike Colle,
Garfield Dunlop, Steve Gilchrist, Dave Levac,
Norm Miller, R. Gary Stewart, Wayne Wettlaufer
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

Government agencies / Organismes gouvernementaux

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Michael Gravelle
James J. Bradley, Leona Dombrowsky, Michael Gravelle,
Bert Johnson, Tony Martin, Frank Mazzilli,
Wayne Wettlaufer, Bob Wood
Clerk / Greffière: Anne Stokes

Justice and Social Policy / Justice et affaires sociales

Chair / Présidente: Toby Barrett
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: AL McDonald
Toby Barrett, Marcel Beaubien, Michael Bryant,
Garry J. Guzzo, Ernie Hardeman,
Peter Kormos, AL McDonald, Lyn McLeod
Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

Legislative Assembly / Assemblée législative

Chair / Présidente: Margaret Marland
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Julia Munro
Caroline Di Cocco, Jean-Marc Lalonde,
Margaret Marland, Bart Maves,
Julia Munro, Marilyn Mushinski,
Michael Prue, Joseph N. Tascona
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

Public accounts / Comptes publics

Chair / Président: John Gerretsen
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Bruce Crozier
Bruce Crozier, John Gerretsen,
Steve Gilchrist, Raminder Gill,
John Hastings, Shelley Martel,
AL McDonald, Richard Patten,
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**Regulations and private bills /
Règlements et projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Rosario Marchese
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Garfield Dunlop
Gilles Bisson, Claudette Boyer, Garfield Dunlop,
Raminder Gill, Pat Hoy, Morley Kells, Rosario Marchese, Ted
McMeekin, Bill Murdoch, Wayne Wettlaufer
Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

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