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Wednesday 4 December 2002

Mercredi 4 décembre 2002

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 4 December 2002

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 4 décembre 2002

The House met at 1330.

Prayers.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex): A two-month campaign to educate drivers on school bus safety wrapped up in Chatham-Kent last week. During this blitz, police reported 107 violations where motorists drove past school buses while their overhead lights were flashing. We were very fortunate that no one was hurt or killed. One hundred and seven incidents of illegal passing in just two months are absolutely unacceptable. This blatant disregard for the law must end. We need an effective deterrent. We need to give teeth to the current law so that offending drivers can be held accountable.

I have spent six years lobbying the Harris-Eves government, six years gaining support from local, provincial and national organizations that advocate vehicle liability to protect the 810,000 children riding on 16,000 school buses in Ontario. What is it going to take for the Harris-Eves government to finally understand the need for Bill 112?

Our children must be protected from drivers who illegally pass school buses here in Ontario. How can this government justify the idea of vehicle liability for electronic toll roads, parking fines, red light cameras or flying truck tires if it is not prepared to extend the same practice to the protection of our children?

This government's double standard must end today. Pass Bill 112 immediately.

LAMBTON GENERATING STATION

Mr Marcel Beaubien (Lambton-Kent-Middlesex): I rise in the House today on behalf of the constituents of Lambton-Kent-Middlesex. I would like to encourage the Minister of Energy to continue working toward providing the residents of Ontario with a commitment to providing affordable, plentiful and environmentally friendly power, unlike the McGuinty Liberals, who want to close the Lambton generating station located in Sarnia township. Shame on you.

I would like to share a letter that the Sarnia Lambton Chamber of Commerce recently sent to Frank Chiarotto, the manager at the Lambton generating station:

"At its recent meeting, the board of directors of the Sarnia Lambton Chamber of Commerce recognized your achievement of significantly improving air quality at Lambton generating station. Your investment in scrubbers has considerably reduced emissions in an affordable manner for the taxpayer.

"The board made an additional motion that we will also forward to the Minister of Energy, Honourable John Baird:

"As a result of these environmental improving initiatives by OPG, the chamber supports the continued use of thermal coal-fired generating stations in Ontario, as a most cost-effective alternative to our supply concerns."

"Congratulations on your recent efforts and best wishes for many more years of improvements for our taxpayer and energy users."

ANAESTHETISTS

Mrs Sandra Papatello (Windsor West): What is so frustrating is that this Minister of Health with the Harris-Eves government wants to declare war on a particular type of specialist in Ontario. Today it's the anaesthetists. So he decides that he wants to publicly say he won't be intimidated or he won't be bullied.

Let me tell you what's happening to the residents in this province. They are the ones who are having their surgeries cancelled because we have a health minister who refuses to act; a health minister who knew last year that we have a significant problem, this time at the Toronto General and Toronto Western hospitals, dealing with anaesthetists; and that we have a shortage of these specialists across the province.

This minister says publicly that he won't let those operating rooms close. Guess what? They've already closed six of them. The current discussion is about closing yet another four. So we already have delayed surgeries because this government refuses to act on a problem they know has existed for some time.

He wants to bring it down to the base level of how much we are going to pay them. How about talking about what these people have to do for a living at the Toronto General and Toronto Western hospitals? How about starting their first surgeries at 7 am and working right through until 6 pm?

How many surgeries are being cancelled? Well, the hospitals are being honest with patients: "We don't know if we can keep up this kind of schedule with the limited number of anaesthetists that exist." They're suggesting

they need at least 30 more for the required surgeries they have booked.

This requires action, not just talk about bullying by this government.

MEDICAL ARTS BUILDING

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): I want to inform you, Speaker, and the other members that I was at a rally this past Sunday with Olivia Chow, a city councillor from my area, trying to prevent the closure of the Medical Arts Building at St George and Bloor.

Many of you will know that this building has housed many medical professionals providing essential services for many in the community, not just in my own little riding but in the surrounding community, for over 70 years. They have served about 200,000 people.

I understand the University of Toronto has bought the building and wants to close it down. My problem and my point is that I support the University of Toronto and its needs. They have many needs to take care of, one of which is the double cohort and the demographic changes that obviously will force the university to accept over 70,000, 80,000 or 90,000 more people in the next couple of years. I understand that. My point is that you don't serve your own needs by displacing the needs of our health care community, which has been well served by the Medical Arts Building.

The Medical Arts Building is strategically located and accessible to everyone, including people with disabilities, and it serves a number of the university students who are in the area.

My point is, Minister of Health and minister of post-secondary education, get together with the university and solve it so that all our needs can be taken care of.

DAIRY INDUSTRY

Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington): Today, I had an opportunity to meet with Bart MacLean, Hans Vink and Bill Mitchell, who are with us in the gallery. They represent the Dairy Farmers of Ontario, and I am honoured to say a few words about their industry.

In Waterloo-Wellington, we understand that the success of our dairy farmers means success for us all: for our economy, our rural way of life, our nutrition and our health. The Dairy Farmers' own newsletter recently explained the significance of this sector by stating that the riding of Waterloo-Wellington is one of the largest areas for dairy farming in Canada, with milk having a huge economic impact.

The Dairy Farmers noted that last year Waterloo-Wellington's 731 dairy farms shipped about 284 million litres of milk, worth about \$170 million. To give a sense of how dairy farmers provide opportunities to people in Waterloo-Wellington, they stated that dairy farms directly employ 1,000 dairy families and provide jobs for nearly 2,900 workers.

The income value of Waterloo-Wellington's dairy farms is also massive. If we ever had to replace the in-

come from milk, manufacturing plants would have to create jobs for over 5,600 workers with salaries of more than \$30,000 a year.

This success in Waterloo-Wellington is a credit to the entrepreneurial drive of our farm families, and it's a clear and positive result of our supply management system. In the 12 years I have been privileged to serve in this House, I have always maintained that supply management is fair to both producer and consumer—quality and stability at a fair price. The maintenance of supply management is absolutely crucial to our rural economy in Ontario. I will continue to support it and encourage all members of the House to help keep this system strong.

1340

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): The abysmal record of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care when it comes to dealing with our long-term-care facilities and the people who live in those facilities goes on.

Back in 1995, the auditor reported that the ministry had "not developed either standards to measure the efficiency of facilities in providing quality care or models for staff mixes for providing nursing and personal care."

Not only have they not done that seven years later, but it's worse. The few standards that there were with respect to the number of hours of nursing and personal care and the fact that the seniors should get at least one bath per week have been deleted. There are no standards at all, as far as the ministry is concerned.

The auditor also noted that "the ministry had not addressed the results of a 2001 consulting report"—which he himself paid for—"that noted that residents of Ontario's long-term-care facilities 'receive less nursing and therapy services than [those in] similar jurisdictions with similar populations.'" We are dead last in the 10 jurisdictions that were studied.

Not only that, it gets worse. Of all the nursing beds that have been opened since 1998, not one licence has been issued. None of the nursing homes in Ontario currently had current ministry licences issued at the time of the audit.

Our seniors deserve better. Minister, shape up.

JADE SINNESAEEL

Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant): It gives me great pleasure to tell you a bit about a 13-year-old from my riding of Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant. She has earned the title of Lady Llama in the local press after overcoming setbacks to be named grand champion at this year's Royal Winter Fair.

Jade Sinnesael, who hails from the village of Wye-combe, wowed the Royal judges with her llama named Kit Kat, placing her first overall out of 49 competitors in the youth division.

What makes Miss Sinnesael's accomplishment even more impressive is the fact that a week before the com-

petition the llama that Jade had been training for months had pulled up lame. Instead of allowing the setback to defeat her, however, she rose to the challenge and began intensive training with Kit Kat that would earn her top honours a week later.

Following the award-winning show at the Royal, Jade's accomplishment and her reputation for drawing the best out of her animals will take her to a different stage. Television crews are filming her story for an episode of Animal Magnetism, a show that looks at the bond between people and their animals.

Jade Sinnesael is a shining example of what young people can accomplish on our farms across rural Ontario. I would certainly like to take this opportunity to congratulate Jade, better known as Lady Llama of the Royal Winter Fair.

GOVERNMENT CONSULTANTS

Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale):

All the Tory hogs are lining up at the Eves trough again. We learned yesterday that Ernie Eves is spending more than \$600 million on consultants this year, more than double what he spent just four years ago. It seems that the Premier of Ontario offers the best severance packages in the history of humankind: quit your job today and come back tomorrow at double or triple the pay.

I would say it's like winning the lottery, but in this case your odds of hitting pay dirt are virtually guaranteed. They don't have money for our schools or for our hospitals, they can't be bothered to go after killers or rapists, they couldn't care less that half of the corporations in our province don't even file a tax return, but they certainly care about looking after themselves and their friends in the consulting business. The taps are turned on and the pigs are lining up at the Eves trough.

I said in the Legislature a few weeks ago that it looked like Ernie Eves and his friends were driving their limos up to the Queen's Park loading dock and shovelling the money in by the millions. I was wrong. It was hundreds of millions of dollars. When it comes to slick government, this Tory bunch takes the cake.

Ontario wants a Premier that is honest, has integrity and leadership. They want a Premier who will put their needs first and not throw away hundreds of millions of dollars on their friends. They want a Premier who is the exact opposite of Ernie Eves. They'll get that Premier. His name is Dalton McGuinty.

EID UL-FITR

Mr Bob Wood (London West): Over one billion Muslims throughout the world have been observing a month of fasting and inner reflection during Ramadan. Ramadan ends with the sighting of the new crescent of the moon, which will be December 5 this year, and is celebrated by the festival of Eid ul-Fitr. Literally the Festival of Breaking the Fast, Eid ul-Fitr is one of the two most important Islamic celebrations.

Ed ul-Fitr is a day of joy and thanksgiving. At Ed ul-Fitr people dress in their finest clothes, adorn their homes with lights and decorations, give treats to children, and enjoy visits with friends and family.

A sense of generosity and gratitude colours these festivities. Although charity and good deeds are always important in Islam, they have special significance at the end of Ramadan. As the month draws to a close, Muslims are obligated to share their blessings by feeding the poor and making contributions to mosques. Eid ul-Fitr also honours the universal values that are embodied in Islam: love of family and community; mutual respect; the power of education; and the deepest yearning of all to live in peace—values that can bring people of every faith and culture together, and strengthen us as a people and nation.

I know I speak on behalf of all members of this House in extending our best wishes and greetings to the Muslim community in Ontario as they celebrate this auspicious occasion.

To our Muslim friends: Kullu am wa antum bi-khair. In Arabic that means, "May you be well throughout the year".

VISITOR

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would like to note the presence in the members' west gallery today of someone who is a truly great Canadian. He has been a mentor to many people on this side of the House, I know, and someone whom we all respect. He's known affectionately as the rainmaker, Senator Keith Davey.

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

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received the 12th report of the standing committee on government agencies. Pursuant to standing order 106(e), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

CONSULTANTS BOONDOGGLE FREEZE ACT, 2002

LOI DE 2002 SUR LE GEL DE L'ENGAGEMENT FUTILE D'EXPERTS-CONSEILS

Mr Colle moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill 219, An Act to promote fiscal responsibility by limiting payments to consultants / Projet de loi 219, Loi

visant à promouvoir la saine gestion des fonds publics en plafonnant les paiements versés aux experts-conseils.

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

The member for short statement?

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): As you know, yesterday, with the Provincial Auditor's report, there was some outrageous spending exposed, whereby \$662 million was spent on consultants by this government. We had consultants that were paid up to \$2,600 a day. We had people who were given \$360,000 for two years' work—just over and over again, examples of how spending for consultants is totally out of control in this province. The people of Ontario want this stopped.

I've introduced today a bill called the Consultants Boondoggle Freeze Act, which would cap the pay for consultants at a very good, hefty wage of \$100 per day. That would be the minimum. If this bill is passed, we will—

The Speaker: Order. I thank the member.

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POLICE SERVICES AMENDMENT ACT
(INDEPENDENT POLICE COMPLAINTS
COMMISSIONER), 2002

LOI DE 2002 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LES SERVICES POLICIERS
EN CE QUI CONCERNE
UN COMMISSAIRE INDÉPENDANT
AUX PLAINTES CONTRE LA POLICE

Mr Hampton moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 220, An Act to amend the Police Services Act with respect to the disciplining of police officers and to reinstate a fair and impartial process with respect to public complaints about police officers / Projet de loi 220, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services policiers relativement au processus disciplinaire d'agents de police et visant à restaurer un processus équitable et objectif pour traiter des plaintes du public concernant la conduite d'agents de police.

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

The member for a short statement?

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): The bill amends the Police Services Act to require an independent police complaints commissioner, appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, to deal with complaints by members of the public about the conduct of police officers. The commissioner is independent of police forces and reports annually to the Attorney General. Any member of the public may make a complaint, whereas at present a member of the public may make a complaint only if directly affected by the subject matter of the complaint.

The bill also amends the act to reinstate the process for disciplining police officers that existed before the repeal of part V of the act as of November 27, 1997.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY
AND RESPONSES

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Finance): I'm pleased to provide the Legislature and the people of Ontario with a report on Ontario's finances and the state of our provincial economy.

The Ontario economy is performing better than expected at the time of the June budget. Our economic growth and job creation are leading the average of G7 countries and the United States. The government's plan for a balanced budget this year, our fourth consecutive balanced budget, is on track. We're making the needed investments we promised in health care, education and the environment.

Here's the best news of all: since our government's first throne speech in 1995, the Ontario economy has created one million net new jobs. That represents more than 46% of all the jobs created in Canada over the past seven years.

Our government is keeping its promise to restore opportunity and prosperity to Ontario, but it hasn't been easy. My June budget noted that we were emerging from an economic slowdown that had negatively impacted our revenues. This year, I'm pleased to report that the performance of our economy is exceeding expectations. Despite ongoing challenges in the global economy, private sector forecasters now anticipate real economic growth of 3.5% this year, up from a consensus forecast of 3.2% in June.

This strong performance in the face of adversity did not happen by accident. In the first half of the 1990s, Ontario had one of the weakest economies in the industrialized world. High taxation, overregulation, huge deficits and spiralling debt came with a terrible price. When the recession hit in the early 1990s we fared much worse than our trading partners. Companies closed their Ontario plants first. Investment and jobs went elsewhere. By 1995, the welfare system was in crisis, with 1.3 million Ontarians relying on social assistance.

Our government addressed these challenges directly. We chose prosperity. Since 1995 the people of Ontario, and governments, led first by Mike Harris and now by Ernie Eves, have worked together to put this province back on track. By cutting taxes, balancing the budget and restoring prudent fiscal management we have positioned Ontario for growth and jobs. Ontario has truly gone from worst to first in its economic performance. Between 1985 and 1995 our real per capita GDP grew by only 6%, less than one third of the G7 average and only half the average of the other provinces. By contrast, since 1996 the per capita GDP has risen almost 17%, well above the average of the G7 countries and the United States. The recently released second quarter economic accounts show continued strong growth in real GDP of 4.4% at an annual rate following exceptionally strong growth in the first quarter.

We are also reducing the mortgage on our children's future, represented by the provincial debt. With a surplus of \$375 million for 2001-02, Ontario achieved three consecutive surpluses for the first time in nearly 100 years. Since we've turned the corner on deficits in 1999, our government has paid down \$4.5 billion of net provincial debts.

We continue to manage spending carefully. Since 1995-96, real program spending per person, excluding health and education, is down by close to 30%. As a result of getting our fiscal house in order, our credit rating has been upgraded three times in the past two years, and we've regained the ability to invest in those priorities that mean the most to our economic prosperity and our quality of life.

A growing economy and tax cuts have raised the average after-tax and after-inflation income of two-parent families with children from over \$57,000 in 1995 to over \$68,000 in 2000, a 19% increase. In the same period, single-parent families have seen a 33% increase, and more than 600,000 people have left welfare since our government took office in 1995.

Despite the strong gains we've made in growth and jobs so far this year, many uncertainties remain in the global economy as we move toward 2003. Ontario is not immune to external influences. Private sector economists have lowered their forecasts for real growth next year from an average of 4.3% last June to 3.5% today. This more cautious outlook reflects the fallout from the economic events of the past year coupled with many uncertainties on the horizon. World stock markets remain weak. Tension is high in the Middle East, and oil prices continue to be volatile. Prospects for the US economy remain unclear.

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At the same time, demands continue to grow for additional investments in priority programs. That's why we must remain committed to our prudent fiscal and economic plan. This government's strong record of lower taxes, smaller government and balanced budgets has encouraged business and consumer confidence in the past year, and it has helped keep the economy on a path of strong growth.

Lower taxes are central to our plan to increase the competitiveness and the productivity of our economy. We cut Ontario's personal income tax rate by 30% between 1996 and 1998, and subject to approval by the House, an additional 20% personal tax reduction will be fully in place in 2004. This year alone, a typical two-earner family of four with \$60,000 in net income pays over \$2,000 less in Ontario income tax.

Ontario's small business income tax rate was 9.5% in 1995, one of the highest in the country. We are bringing the rate down to 5.5% on January 1, and by 2005, it will be further reduced to 4%.

We have lowered the general corporate income tax rate from 15.5% in 1995 to 12.5% today. This rate would drop to 11% in 2004 and reach 8% in 2006.

Consumers are also benefiting from other tax cuts. For example, the retail sales tax on auto insurance premiums

has been cut from 5% to 2%, and it will be reduced to 1% next April and entirely eliminated in April 2004.

When you put it all together, Ontarians are now receiving a total of \$14 billion a year in tax relief. Sustained and long-term tax cuts are the engine that has helped the economy create one million net new jobs since 1995.

We will complete our current multi-year plan to make tax rates more competitive. We will outline additional steps in next year's budget. I look forward to the upcoming pre-budget consultations for advice on a new multi-year plan to ensure that Ontario's tax structure continues to drive increased economic growth and prosperity.

Ensuring that Ontarians receive the best health care in the world remains one of our highest priorities. This year alone, we have increased our commitment to health care by almost \$2 billion. Since 1995, our commitment has increased by \$8 billion, and these investments are paying off. Ontarians have more access to increased diagnostic services, improved cancer care, cardiac care, dialysis services and more nurse practitioners. More long-term-care beds are coming on stream.

But no province can indefinitely continue these kinds of increases to health care without additional support from the federal government. The recently released Romanow report recognizes this, but the solution that it proposes falls far short of what is required.

Over the years, the federal government has cut its share of health care spending from 50% to 14%. If Mr Romanow's recommendations are implemented, next year's federal contribution would represent only 16% of provincial health and social spending. His proposed \$15 billion over three years is almost \$5 billion less than the minimum need identified by the provinces.

The financing of health care is a long-term and growing challenge, particularly for provinces. The Conference Board of Canada forecast that health care spending will grow at an average rate of 5% over the next 20 years, far in excess of the projected average provincial revenue growth of 3%. In addition, federal surpluses are forecast to grow rapidly, while provinces continue to face huge challenges in balancing their budgets in the foreseeable future.

Ontario will continue to balance its budget and respond to our citizens' health care needs. Ottawa must pay its fair share, and it should not be making matters worse by attempting to claw back over \$1.3 billion from the province to cover mistakes that it made in calculating tax payments to this province.

Excellence in education is the key to opportunity for our young people. That's why we have put in place a new, more challenging curriculum, higher standards, and comprehensive testing to ensure our students are learning.

It's important that we support them with a funding formula that remains fair and equitable. To ensure that it does this, we have appointed Dr Mordechai Rozanski, president of the University of Guelph, to review the

formula. His report will be released shortly, and we are committed to addressing his recommendations within the government's fiscal plan.

Mr Speaker, as we committed in the June budget, we will also continue with our plan to invest in other priority areas that support our quality of life and our prosperity. These include a clean and safe environment; innovation for a more competitive economy; healthy and growing communities; and infrastructure investments in transportation, schools, hospitals, colleges and universities.

Ontario's economy is sound. The fundamentals our government has put in place—lower and more competitive taxes, balanced budgets, reduced debt and key investments—have set the stage for Ontario's turnaround. They have produced a period of outstanding job growth and economic prosperity that is unparalleled in our history. Our approach is helping this province withstand the challenges of a difficult world economy.

But we all know more needs to be done. We want more opportunities for our citizens. We want the Ontario economy to create even more jobs. With the pre-budget consultations about to begin, I look forward to hearing advice from members of this House, as well as the comments and suggestions of Ontarians from all walks of life, on how we can accomplish this.

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): I am pleased to respond. One of the great urban myths is that the Conservatives know how to manage finances. The first piece of evidence is yesterday's auditor's report. Nothing I could say could be more damning than the Provincial Auditor's report of yesterday, where he essentially said you're incompetent.

He said half the corporations in the province of Ontario aren't even filing their income tax return, let alone paying it.

He said you laid off 40 people and hired them back within days and paid them twice what you were paying them.

There are 10,000 people out there on arrest warrants and nothing is being done about it, and the minister said, "Well, that's not a problem. There are only 6,000; there aren't 10,000."

The negotiated deal with Accenture put a cap of \$180 million on it and you paid \$60 million more.

1410

I want to focus on the second shoe that dropped on your fiscal management today, and I want to point out several things to the people of Ontario about what I call the urban myth about the Conservatives being able to manage the finances.

The first thing I want to point out to the people of Ontario—it's on page 53—is that the only way this budget is balanced is with a fire sale of \$2 billion of our most treasured assets in the next four months; that's the only way. We saw this before. Premier Eves, then the Minister of Finance, sold the 407 in one of the worst deals for the public ever, on May 5, 1999, when the last election was called, and we see today that the only way these books are balanced is by selling \$2 billion worth of

prize assets in the next four months; otherwise, the books aren't balanced.

Second, I urge the public to turn to page 59. Since Mr Eves became Premier—he was then the finance minister—the debt of the province of Ontario has gone up more than \$21 billion. According to this document, it's now \$112 billion. On March 31, 1995, it was \$90 billion. Those are the numbers—almost a 25% increase in the debt of the province under Ernie Eves.

Two days ago, Mr Baird said, "Oh, it was immoral"—he used the word "immoral," referring to Mr Hampton—"to run up the debt \$21 billion." I would say to the people of Ontario, do you know how much you're paying in interest on the debt now? It's \$700 million more than when Premier Eves took over as Minister of Finance—\$700 million more in interest; again, on the books.

The prime interest rate in the province of Ontario in 1995 was 8.5%; it's now 4.5%. It has dropped almost in half, and we in Ontario today are paying \$700 million more interest on the debt. Since the Conservatives took over, the average household in Ontario has had \$5,000 in debt added to it by this \$22-billion increase in debt.

Again I say it is an urban myth that the Conservatives can manage the books. The auditor yesterday pointed it out, and this points it out today.

I hate to break the news to you on the job front—and I'm simply quoting the numbers from your economic table. The unemployment rate in the year 2000 was 5.7%; in 2001, 6.3%; and in 2002, 7.1%. I'm just saying to you that the unemployment rate is going up.

Standard and Poor's is the organization that rates our credit. In 1990 the province had a triple-A credit rating. It was downgraded three times. We still have a credit rating two points below the triple-A we used to have. It has been upgraded once, not three times as the minister said.

I say to the people of Ontario, don't listen to what they say; watch what they do. Watch the debt going up. Watch the auditor's report saying it's incompetence. It is an urban myth that these people know how to manage the finances of the province. Look at the facts of the matter here in this book.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Further responses? The leader of the third party.

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): Speaker, I always listen with interest whenever the Minister of Finance—

Interjections.

The Speaker: I will allow the member to start over. We'll reset the clock at five minutes and make sure it's quiet when he begins, as he was quiet for the Minister of Finance and the critic for the Liberal Party as well.

Order. Come to order. It's now the turn of the leader of the third party for a response.

Mr Hampton: I'm always interested whenever the Minister of Finance stands to give a selective accounting of Ontario's economy, because I'm always interested in what she leaves out.

What did she leave out today? She left out the fact that Ontario's unemployment rate is increasing, that in this so-called era of prosperity for the government's consultants and corporate friends, there are more people unemployed this year than last year and more people unemployed last year than the year before.

I also look for some indication that after eight years of freezing the wages of the lowest-paid people in this province, people who work for minimum wage, the government might recognize some element of fairness and increase the wages of the lowest-paid people. But eight years after freezing the minimum wage at \$6.85 an hour, this government still boasts about more tax cuts for the well off, more tax cuts for its corporate friends, but is freezing the wages of the lowest-paid people. That tells us in a picture what's going on here.

We saw yesterday from the auditor's report: 40 people laid off in the Ministry of Public Safety and Security. They go out the door, and they come back in the door three days later as this government's private sector cronies and get paid more than twice as much. If you're a private sector crony, a corporate crony of this government, then there is no limit. But if you're one of the lowest-paid people in this province—and I think the Minister of Finance deserves to know that most of the people who work for minimum wage are women: women who are trying to support a family; women who are often working not at one minimum wage job but sometimes two or two and a half minimum wage jobs to make ends meet. This government thinks nothing of giving more loot, more tax cuts, more consulting contracts to your friends. Meanwhile, you attack the lowest paid.

Then there is the auto sector. Isn't it interesting that recently 23 mayors from southern Ontario communities came together to point out that after all this government's ballyhooing about tax cuts, we continue to lose in the auto sector; that the Ford truck plant in Oakville is headed for closure unless this government realizes that tax cuts aren't working and it has got to come forward with an auto policy; that the Chrysler van plant in Windsor is going to be closing unless this government recognizes that simply giving Chrysler and GM more tax cuts is not doing the job. And the auto parts sector points out that after you close the Chatham international plant, you lose tens of thousands of auto parts jobs as well.

Then there is the pulp and paper sector. The minister doesn't mention that we just had another closure in Sault Ste Marie; that recently the manager of the sawmill in Wawa came forward and said that deregulated hydro prices will put their mill out of business. Then we've had closure of a paper mill in Kenora, another 150 jobs, and Sturgeon Falls, where the company is going to close the mill and lay off 140 employees but is going to continue to run the hydro dam because, under this government's crazy set-up, you can make more money laying off the employees and simply selling the hydro power into the private market and watch the prices go to \$1,000 a megawatt hour. No jobs for people, no future for the community, but the corporate friends of this government do just fine.

Then there is this government's statement about hydro debt. It's so interesting to read the statement. It points out that in order to hide the high cost of privatized, deregulated hydro, this government is actually going to run up the hydro debt.

Then we have the other point: the government doesn't have a balanced budget but for the fact that it's going to sell off about half of Hydro One. What's this like? This is like a farmer who sells off a piece of his farm every year to temporarily impress his friends, without noting that two or three years down the road you don't have a farm any more. This government is selling off one of our strategic economic assets, our power system, and the whole of the economy, not to mention the consumers, is going to suffer as a result.

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VISITOR

Mr Marcel Beaubien (Lambton-Kent-Middlesex):

On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I draw to your attention that my youngest and tallest daughter, Danielle, is sitting in the members' gallery.

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

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: As you know, the Provincial Auditor is an officer of the Legislature. He reports to us as members of the Legislature. It has come to my attention that the Minister of Public Safety has called the auditor's report "inaccurate and misleading." An officer of this Legislature, according to a member of the crown, has been accused of being "inaccurate and misleading." He further made the inference that the Provincial Auditor was motivated by a political bias. When asked to be specific, he said: "I can't talk to what his motivations are."

I believe this is very offensive to this Legislature. I believe it is very offensive to the process we try to carry on here and to the examination we're here to conduct on behalf of the people of Ontario. I request that the Minister of Public Safety withdraw those remarks and apologize to an officer of this Legislature forthwith.

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

On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I appreciate the point of order of the member of the third party, but I don't believe the member is in the House at this point in time. It becomes rather difficult to even talk, or speak or accommodate the member of the third party when he's not here. I beg your indulgence, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: Thanks very much. The members will know that we can't ask a member to withdraw things that are said outside the House. We have enough trouble with what members say inside the House. There's nothing out of order. What members say outside the House cannot be policed by the Speaker of the House.

Mr Hampton: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The member is now present. I repeat the request I made

earlier. If that is not the case, I ask you to consider whether or not contempt has been shown for this Legislature and an officer of this Legislature.

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Minister of Public Safety and Security): On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: I would ask the member opposite not only to withdraw, but to apologize. He's basing this on innuendo and rumour. I have never said such things, and I would ask him to apologize to all members of the House.

The Speaker: I thank the minister for his input. You will know that there are disagreements about what people say. Members can disagree on things and I certainly can't ask all members to withdraw when they disagree; otherwise, we'd never get anything done. But I thank all the members for trying to set the record straight.

ORAL QUESTIONS

GOVERNMENT ASSETS

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): My question is to the Minister of Finance. We're now coming up to eight years of the Eves-Harris management of the province's finances. Today's fiscal statement shows that in order to balance the budget this year, you are going to have to sell off about \$2-billion worth of provincial assets over the next four months. That's the only way, I gather, that you can balance the books. My question to you is this: why, after almost eight years of managing the finances of this province, are we in a position where the only way the province's books can be balanced is by a fire sale of the province's assets?

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Finance): There are a number of forecasts and expenditure plans in the budget. The total picture gives us a balanced budget. We laid it out very clearly in June. We are following our plan. Job growth is up. Revenue is up. The take-home pay for our families is up. The budget will be balanced.

Mr Phillips: Again, I go back to the incompetence. The people of Ontario simply want an answer, Minister. You just presented a report here, that you were talking about selling off \$2 billion worth of the province's assets in a fire sale over the next four months. I simply want to know, on behalf of the people of Ontario, who have a right to an answer to this, how in the world is it that you and Mr Eves got the province into a position where the only way our books are going to be balanced is by a fire sale over the next four months of \$2 billion worth of the province's key assets?

Hon Mrs Ecker: Coming from a representative of a government that never balanced its books, I can appreciate that he might find this a bit of a different situation, because we're balancing ours.

The plan that we laid out in the June budget is very clear. We made revenue and expenditure forecasts. We talked about how we could go forward. We are following that plan to do what we said we would.

Mr Phillips: This kind of drivel, frankly—

Interjections.

Mr Phillips: You just got up and presented to the people of Ontario a report. We, on behalf of the people of Ontario, are asking you a question about that report, and it is this. You said you are going to sell off a major chunk of our province's assets. You said yesterday you're going to sell off a major part of Hydro One. The auditor, in this report condemning the government, urged you caution in it. In fact, I would say he went further than that.

So on behalf of the people of Ontario, I want to know why you got us in the position where you've got us in a fire sale to sell off half of one of the most treasured assets in the province of Ontario, that being Hydro One. Why did you get us in a position where we've got to do this in a fire sale in the next four months to balance the books? I'd like an answer perhaps.

Hon Mrs Ecker: I appreciate that the honourable member doesn't agree with this government, but no one is parting with control of Hydro One. We've been very clear what the plan is. We recognize the need for a strategic partner. We've laid that out. The government will retain control of Hydro One as the people of Ontario asked us to do, but we need a strategic partner for the private sector discipline that that will bring, for the investment that will bring, to make sure that Hydro One can continue to be depended on by families in this province.

GOVERNMENT CONSULTANTS

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): I have a question for the Premier.

Yesterday, Premier, the Provincial Auditor delivered a stinging indictment of your government. He exposed that when it comes to consulting contracts you're wasting literally hundreds of millions of dollars. In fact, he said that your government is bending and breaking its own rules when it comes to awarding those rather lucrative contracts.

The Provincial Auditor points to a number of untendered contracts that your government awarded. In some instances he says that they purposely broke up contracts into smaller parts to avoid having to go to public tender and the type of scrutiny that those tenders would yield. In effect you were avoiding or you were attempting to avoid complying with your own rules.

Now that the auditor has exposed this, will you do the right thing and release every single untendered contract your government has signed in the last seven years?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I believe the Chair of Management Board can respond directly.

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Culture): First of all, yesterday I indicated we welcomed the recommendations of the auditor. I also indicated yesterday that almost all, if not all of them by today, have those recommendations, have them implemented into the directives. We have the intention to make sure we follow his advice.

Having said that, I don't believe we've gone far enough. We've taken his recommendations. His recommendations are good, but I believe we need to do a more comprehensive review of the way the government does business. That's part of what we're doing now, and that's what we intend to do.

As I said yesterday with respect to these contracts, yes, there were some circumstances that had occurred. The auditor has pointed them out to us and we've taken all the steps we have to do to make sure this does not occur again in the future.

Mr Duncan: Minister, in the Common Sense Revolution, on page 3, you said you would do more with less. It turns out you're doing less but it's costing us more. On page 9 of that same document you complained about the NDP hiding the number of government workers by putting the vast majority of them on contract. That's a quote. You said that you would stop that, but in your government, staff quit one day and are hired back the next day at double and triple the cost. For example, when the Premier was Minister of Finance, Bev Hammond was given an \$84,702 consulting contract after she left his office.

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The auditor looked at consulting contracts in just six ministries. In every single ministry he found abuses totalling in the millions of dollars.

Will you now agree that a special audit needs to be done that includes every single ministry of your government? Will you agree that in order to find out how the Eves trough got so full, we need to have a full, independent, forensic audit of the consulting contracts of every single ministry?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: I indicated yesterday that in addition to what we're doing in terms of reviewing the procurement and consulting areas, the government has now embarked on a tremendous exercise, called program review, to review everything in government. That has never been done before in a very comprehensive way.

I will tell you as well that not only do we take the auditor's recommendations to heart, but have implemented almost all of them and will implement all of them before the end of the year. We'll go further than that and take a very comprehensive look at the way government does all business. We intend to do this in any event.

Yesterday, when the leader of the opposition stood up—he's not here right now—he indicated that I shouldn't talk about their past record because it was the last millennium. I wonder whether that means he's saying people like Jim Bradley or Alvin Curling are dinosaurs, because they were around then, and I guess they survived that ice age. Yesterday he indicated many instances of the type of circumstance the people across are pointing out to us. What they were criticized for by the auditor in their day—

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

Final supplementary?

Mr Duncan: This is the government that has sent in forensic auditors to look at school boards. This is a government that set up snitch lines on welfare recipients. In fact, the Provincial Auditor has pointed to some serious rot in your own government.

Let's look at some examples. Paul Rhodes was rewarded with \$248,142 worth of contracts. The person running your next election campaign got a contract from the Ministry of Finance for \$67,157.

While your cabinet ministers are out in the hallway feebly attempting to discredit Mr Peters, we think it's time to see some real action and close off the Eves trough. Will you now agree to table in this House every single untendered contract your government awarded in the last seven years, as well as all contracts awarded to former political advisers, whether tendered or untendered, in your government, and will you agree to a full, independent forensic audit of every ministry and its untendered contracts and documents, so there can be an honest, full and clear accounting of what I think, and what the auditor believes, is an abused process—

The Speaker: The member's time is up.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: It's fairly ironic: yesterday I stood in my place quoting the auditor's report about some of the abuses that occurred, whether it was consultants being paid more than ministry staff or a consultant being paid more than ministry staff hired on a continuous basis or poorly defined cost of government. By the end of my statement and the quote from the auditor's report, they were quite surprised that the government I was talking about was the Peterson Liberal government.

You stand up there with a holier-than-thou view of life, but let me tell you what we've done. We've embraced what the auditor has said. We've accepted his recommendations; we've accepted them all in this area. We're moving forward with them, and in fact we're using that as a jumping-off point. We're going to implement more stringent rules, because we believe it's important to have accountability. That's what we're going to do—not what you did, which was nothing.

HYDRO ONE

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Premier. Over the last two years, your government has sold off part of our hydro system, the Bruce nuclear station, to a British company that is now bankrupt and is allowed to operate only because of loans from the British government. Through hydro privatization and deregulation, we have seen hydro rates go through the roof in the province. Over the last two days, we've seen the Independent Market Operator issue warnings of an emergency regarding hydro supply. Now the auditor raises the point that selling off part of Hydro One is not a very good idea.

In view of all the things that have gone wrong with your strategy of hydro privatization, could you tell the people of Ontario why you want to continue on the course of selling off 49% of Hydro One?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): First of all, Bruce A is being brought back on stream, which never would have happened if somebody hadn't taken it over. Hydro rates in the province are guaranteed for consumers until at least 2006. He criticized the way Hydro One was being run every day in this House, stood up on his feet and screamed and yelled and said, "It's being run terribly." We are bringing some private sector discipline to that entity without parting with control of the entity. So I think he should be very happy today.

Mr Hampton: I want to talk about this private sector discipline. The only thing that's keeping British Energy and Bruce nuclear running is a government bailout. The only thing that is hiding the high cost of privatized, deregulated hydro is another government bailout. The only thing we got from the first move to privatize Hydro One was Eleanor Clitheroe's \$2.5-million salary, a \$6-million severance payout and a yacht. Is this what you refer to as private sector discipline, Premier, and if so, how does this help Ontario's hydro consumers?

Hon Mr Eves: No, exactly the opposite. That's why we have to bring private sector discipline to the entity. The government he talks about bailing out happens to be a Labour government in Great Britain. I'm not surprised.

Mr Hampton: I gather the Premier is thankful that a Labour government is throwing him a lifesaver.

The auditor's report is like a how-to guide for people who want to make big bucks off the government. This government handed a consultant a \$3-million SuperBuild consulting contract even though everybody else bid half that price. Then untold numbers of consultants were paid over and above the absolute ceiling for consultant payments. Get this: consulting rates went from \$725 a day in April to \$1,800 a day in May to \$2,600 a day in September. This is private sector discipline. Premier, is that the kind of private sector discipline you want to bring to Hydro One, by selling it to your corporate friends?

Hon Mr Eves: I don't know what this supplementary has to do with the previous two questions, but I'm sure the Minister of Finance can answer this different question that the leader has now posed.

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Finance): The auditor has pointed out that an inaccuracy occurred in one of the particular tendering processes. That has been corrected, as it should have been. In the meantime, we got great value on that particular project. The advice they gave us was very helpful, very useful, to successful completion of that project.

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

Mr Hampton: The auditor was very clear. On dozens of contracts you grossly overpaid, and in many cases you got private sector discipline that produced a product that was worthless, that was useless.

I want to go back to the Premier on this issue of hydro because, Premier, this is a strategic economic asset for the people of the province. What the auditor's report tells

us is that your so-called private sector discipline amounts to one rip-off of the public after another: overpayments, payments that were not—in effect, there was no request for proposals or there was no competition or people went out the door on Monday being paid \$40,000 a year and came back on Thursday as private sector consultants at twice the price.

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How does any of your experience in terms of wanting to move everything to the private sector help Ontario citizens, Ontario consumers, in terms of a strategic economic asset, their hydro system, Hydro One, which you now admit you want to sell?

Hon Mr Eves: Talking about privatizations and rip-offs, he was part of the Bob Rae government, whose plan to privatize Highway 407 was to ask for private sector bidders to build the highway. If they made hundreds of millions of dollars, they got to keep it, and if they lost hundreds of millions of dollars, Bob Rae was going to pay for it. Meanwhile, he was part of the cabinet who decided to fork out \$1.3 billion of taxpayers' money to build the highway so they could give it away, cover any losses that future prospective purchasers might have and allow them to keep all the profits. No wonder they don't like privatization. That's their idea of privatization: costing the taxpayers billions of dollars and giving away assets, and guaranteeing the losses of private sector companies. No wonder you have something against privatization. I agree with you that that is absolutely nuts.

Mr Hampton: Premier, you need to check the history books, because the person who gave away Highway 407 was none other than Ernie Eves, who sold it at a fire sale price, and the company that you sold it to waited a little over a year and then flipped it at three times the price. That's what you call a giveaway, Premier.

I want to take you back to Hydro, because you were the government that said that if you privatized our hydro system, which you intend to do with Hydro One, in effect the debt would go down. But, Premier, the auditor says that through your privatization scheme, while you've been manipulating this and doing that and trying to sell off this, Hydro's debt has gone up by \$700 million. In fact, in your own economic statement today you allude to the fact that Hydro's debt is going to go up even more because you're going to have to find some way to finance the cover-up, the rate caps which are designed to hide the high cost of privatized, deregulated electricity.

If you're forcing up the debt at Hydro by \$700 million already, and you admit in your own economic statement that you're going to force it up even more, how does this private sector discipline help the hard-pressed hydro consumers of Ontario? You're just loading more debt and more cost on to them. How does this private sector discipline help them?

Hon Mr Eves: A member of the New Democratic Party is probably the last person who should be standing in this House and talking about adding to debt. First of all, the Minister of Finance's statement today shows that the overall debt is down \$500 million. That's what it

shows. The reality is, as he knows, that OPG, in the rates they were charging and continue to charge to customers, have to set aside, and they have well over \$700 million set aside, to be paid out in rebates to consumers. That's what he wanted; that's what he's getting.

If he wants to go back to the Highway 407 example, he was one of the members who stood in this House and said we'd never get what your government put into it: \$1.3 billion. What we got was \$3.1 billion, plus another \$500 million to \$700 million in future improvements that they had to do. We got close to \$4 billion for an asset that he was going to give away. He was going to give away the \$1.3 billion, plus he was going to give away any future profits or future losses. We got \$4 billion for the taxpayers of Ontario to get the money back from the asset you wanted to give away, and we don't happen to believe that we should be in the toll highway business. You did.

GOVERNMENT CONSULTANTS

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): I have a question to the Chair of Management Board respecting Management Board directives and tendering. Minister, in the weeks leading up to Walkerton, the then-Minister of the Environment was Mr Dan Newman. Your government at the time brought in a consultant, Gord Haugh, on a contract to run Mr Newman's office. Mr Haugh was the same consultant who had been paid at an annualized rate of \$300,000 as Tony Clement's press secretary. He also ran your election tours in 1995 and 1999.

Yesterday we learned the price tag for Mr Haugh's two-month stay at the Ministry of the Environment. He was paid \$55,000 for two months' work. On an annualized basis, that's \$329,400. After yesterday's scathing report on the abuse of consulting contracts, do you believe your guidelines are serving the people of Ontario well?

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Culture): I will reiterate the fact that we have brought in new directives that clearly and definitively follow the recommendations of the auditor.

You were asking about consulting services. Now, as opposed to in your day—and we'll get into that in a second, in response to your next part—we've included such sections as fully documenting the process for determining, first of all, the availability of internal ministry or government resources prior to going to consulting services. We are also looking for tag-on reports at the end of contracts that set out clear contractual obligations and that also ensure, in the event we bring in consultants who bring specialized knowledge to the government, that there is a transfer of that knowledge to our employees so we can then retain and use our government employees first, prior to using consultants.

This is clearly in our directives, which we've implemented now. We're taking the instructions and the recommendations of the auditor to heart. He clearly had

good suggestions. Governments prior to us didn't do things that way either, so be careful where you're going.

Mr Duncan: Well, it gets a little worse. When Mr Haugh was making the equivalent of more than \$300,000 a year, he was also running up quite the expense account. In just six days, Haugh billed taxpayers more than \$6,400 in expenses, including \$2,500 for hotels, \$600 for phone calls and \$2,783 for meals, including six bottles of wine.

I have in my hand a memorandum dated April 13, which is called an "Exception for sole-sourcing in the minister's office." This alleviates the minister and the department from any kind of process you've established. He was engaged for a two-month period to provide the following: communications advice to the minister, personnel screening, staff selection, media training, preparation for the opening of the House, question period and other events.

The question is: how is it that a consultant with a document that clearly exempts any kind of public accountability, any kind of accountability to your department, your responsibility—how can this happen, and will you now release all the untendered contracts that your government has entered into across all the ministries? That's the only way we'll get to the truth of all these matters.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: Clearly we've taken further steps than the auditor was suggesting, but let's put some context to this. Sometimes when you read public accounts, it is interesting reading material. There are a number of public accounts from—let's see, the Ministry of Labour; Mr Sorbara was the minister then. Let me share with you some of these from the public accounts: ARA Consulting, \$158,000; Bay Consulting Group, \$32,000; Harry Waisglass Consultants Ltd, \$59,166; JB Marketing, \$75,000; McKim Advertising Ltd, \$113,000. This goes on and on, and these are only part of the ones that say "consultant" in here.

Clearly it was very important not only for us to bring in these rules and directives to comply with the recommendations the Provincial Auditor has given us, but we believe we have to go further than that. We've already gone to the point where we've got the implementation of the recommendations. We're going further now to a full consultation and review of the government rules to make them tougher and make sure they have the integrity that's required of government in the future.

ONTARIO INNOVATION TRUST

Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener Centre): I have a question for the Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation. It is my understanding that your hard-working parliamentary assistant from the great riding of Nipissing, AL McDonald, recently announced funding of \$3 million to the University of Waterloo. Maybe it's because I've been away much of the time in the last little while, but I didn't realize this announcement was being made. I was wondering if you could tell this House what the funding will accomplish. Also, Minister, where is the money coming from?

Hon Jim Flaherty (Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation): This is about the Ontario Innovation Trust and a major investment at the University of Waterloo. The \$3-million investment will support the establishment of the Institute for Quantum Computing at the University of Waterloo. This is an important initiative for the university and one the government proudly supports.

Interjection.

Hon Mr Flaherty: The investment will enable the institute to set up a theoretical and experimental program to study the implications of quantum mechanics for information processing, which I know is a matter of great interest to the member opposite from Hamilton.

The funding came from the Ontario Innovation Trust. Since its creation in 1999, the trust has committed investments of \$50.8 million in infrastructure support for 86 research projects just in the Kitchener-Waterloo area. Funding partners have added \$77.9 million, for a total of \$128.6 million invested in research infrastructure. These investments in the Waterloo region underscore our commitment to research that drives our knowledge-based economy. This is essential for the future prosperity of all Ontarians.

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Mr Wettlaufer: It's pretty evident that this government is committed to investing in science, technology and innovation. The success of the University of Waterloo is very important to the people of Kitchener and Waterloo. The university employs many people in the area and the positive economic spinoffs from its success are felt throughout the region, not just direct employment but indirect employment in many facets of the region.

Minister, I am very happy to hear the government is supporting such an important initiative with the university. It is my understanding that since its creation in 1999, the Ontario Innovation Trust has helped many other research institutions around the province. I wonder if you could please inform the House of what else has been done to support innovation in Ontario.

Hon Mr Flaherty: I thank the member for Kitchener Centre for the question.

Interjection.

Hon Mr Flaherty: Since its creation in 1999—I know the member will want to hear this—the Ontario Innovation Trust has committed a total of \$654.6 million in 808 projects at more than 30 institutions throughout Ontario. These are universities, colleges, hospitals and research institutes. Including the Canada Foundation for Innovation money, this is an investment of more than \$1.1 billion in research infrastructure in Ontario.

The member opposite is right when he mentions the Provincial Auditor's concern. As a result of that, the board, which is an independent board of the trust, hired a consultant to ensure that the best practices and accountability were implemented by the OIT, as well as a requirement that the OIT fund be audited annually by an independent third party.

This is a major investment in research infrastructure, which is absolutely essentially in a knowledge-based economy—

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

MINISTER'S COMMENTS

Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's): My question is to the Minister of Public Safety. The independence and the integrity of an officer of the Legislature, the Provincial Auditor, is a cornerstone, a hallmark, of our democracy and our system here in Ontario. Yesterday in the House you were quibbling with the numbers of the Auditor General. Outside the House apparently you said, and it is on tape, that the auditor's conclusions were misleading. This is a very serious allegation of a minister of the crown. I ask you to please clarify: are you impugning the integrity and the independence of the auditor general? If you are not, why are you questioning whether or not he misled the people of Ontario? Will you clarify this, Minister?

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Minister of Public Safety and Security): I indicated yesterday that the numbers indicated in the Provincial Auditor's report were not the numbers the ministry recovered by simply checking CPIC with respect to a response to the auditor's report. The auditor indicated, and he did it in his report, that he was using an estimate based on a visit to five probation and parole offices, and extrapolated, based on what he found in those five offices, that that was a situation that existed across the province. He used an estimate of 10,000 outstanding warrants; in reality, the number off of CPIC was 5,900.

He also suggested there were a significant number of serious offenders with outstanding warrants that were not being pursued. In fact, once again, reviewing that, the number was 178. When you look at 65,000 to 70,000 individuals that probation and parole have to monitor on a daily basis, that's a very modest amount. I think we have something to be proud of rather than to be concerned about.

Mr Bryant: The minister wants to quibble with the numbers from the Provincial Auditor, but I think most Ontarians find it extremely chilling that there are thousands, literally, of sex offenders out there in the province who are supposed to be supervised by this government and who are in fact not getting the treatment needed to protect Ontarians from sex offenders. I would have thought that the minister would not be defending that kind of result.

The minister says, "It's only 5,900 outstanding warrants. It's only 178 of them that are serious." I would have thought that no government would tolerate anything less than zero tolerance when it comes to cracking down on dangerous criminals who breach their probation and parole orders.

The bad guys out there must be saying, "What's the point of meeting our probation and parole orders, because

the government of Ontario isn't going to do anything about it?" I would have thought that the minister would not defend even one of those bad guys being out there violating those parole orders. You may think that's OK; I say, the people of Ontario do not.

I ask you, Minister: are you really going to defend this record?

Hon Mr Runciman: Talk about scare tactics: the member is engaging in that exercise today. The reality is, if he wants to talk about parole boards, he should talk to his friends in the federal Liberal government. I think we have a lot to be proud of on this side with respect to the parole board—the significant decrease in releases through the parole board versus what was the case with the Liberal government and NDP government.

We have given additional money to the ROPE squad to pursue people who have outstanding warrants against them. Many of the 5,900 people are for technical breaches. The serious offenders are being pursued very actively.

With respect to sex offenders, if they're given a conditional release or put on probation, our hands are tied with respect to the decisions of the courts. If they do not mandate treatment, we are not in a position to offer it. In any event, they have the right to refuse.

So again, this is something of a red herring being reinforced by the Liberals in terms of their concern for law and order in this province. Their record does not support the fact that they really care. When they were in government they had very loose parole rules as a government. They did not have the numbers of police officers on a per capita—

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

SKILLS TRAINING

Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka): My question is for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Minister, we all know that Ontario is the only place in Canada where the federal and provincial governments operate two separate training and employment systems. These are programs that help both unemployed and underemployed people receive training so they can make a greater contribution to the workforce. This is not an efficient use of taxpayer resources. It means confusion and duplication for people who need help entering the labour market in Ontario.

Some time ago, the federal government promised to sign a training agreement with Ontario to create a single, results-oriented system that would provide greater benefit to people who need training in our province. Minister, what is the status of negotiations on a labour market development agreement between Ontario and the federal government?

Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, minister responsible for women's issues): I'm happy to respond to this question. I think the people of Ontario should know that we

accepted the offer from the federal government in July of 2001. Despite this, the Minister of Human Resources Development Canada has told us that they do not intend to sign an LMMA for Ontario. Ontario is the only province or territory that has been denied an LMMA.

What does this mean? This means that people on employment insurance in Ontario do not have the kind of access to training programs that every other person who pays into the EI fund does across this great country. We need a training agreement in order to be competitive.

1500

Last night, members from the Liberal caucus and the NDP caucus attended the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters' reception; they went there and smiled and acted like they knew nothing. They do know nothing. Why are you waiting? Because you think you could be the government, to ask the federal government to get this job done? Whom do you represent in this province, anyway? Get up there and get it done.

Mr Miller: I'm pleased to support the efforts of our government to secure a training agreement with the federal government to deliver more and better services to Ontarians.

Ontario is the economic engine of the country, as demonstrated by the finance minister's report today. It has the largest workforce and need for skilled workers. By supporting the workforce in Ontario, we are having a positive impact on the whole national economy. Some members of the federal government have claimed that two separate systems, federal and provincial, ensure a strong support for training in Ontario. I know that our government is increasing the resources it devotes to training programs, especially apprenticeship training for work in skilled trades. Minister, can you give us an update on the support that the federal government is providing to Ontario under the current system?

Hon Mrs Cunningham: It's really refreshing to have the member from Parry Sound-Muskoka care about people who have opportunities for training programs. It is so refreshing. None of you people care. You haven't done one thing to talk to your federal Liberal colleagues to get up there and talk to the Prime Minister. Not the minister; she has no authority. I will tell you right now. Listen to this: in 2001 HRDC had a budget of \$538 million for Ontario.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. It is getting too noisy in here. I don't want to have to get up again.

Hon Mrs Cunningham: The only reason they are screaming is that they think they'll be the government and then they'll do something. Give me a break. In 2000-01, Human Resources Development Canada had a budget of \$538 million in Ontario. They only spent \$380 million, which is a shortfall of \$150 million. Instead of this money going into apprenticeship training, it's going into kiosks. This is not a federal government, this is not a Liberal provincial government that gives a hoot about—

The Speaker: I'm afraid the minister's time is up.

CANCER TREATMENT

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have two questions to the Premier. On the same day that Roy Romanow was telling Canadians that there is no evidence that for-profit clinics provide cheaper or better care, your government extended the for-profit cancer treatment clinic at Sunnybrook for another six months. The decision was made behind closed doors at a meeting at Cancer Care Ontario. This is the second time you have renewed this contract, even though the Provincial Auditor has shown, first, that it costs \$500 more per patient for treatment than in the public system; second, the original contract was awarded without an open, competitive tender; and third, no effort has ever been made to see if this work could be done in the public system. Premier, it's time to cancel this for-profit contract and invest this money in the public cancer system. Will you do that?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): The Minister of Health will respond directly.

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I welcome the opportunity to respond. In fact, the contract has been extended so that we can do precisely as the honourable member suggests and have competitive bids for the provision of the service. It's a simple extension of the contract until the bid process can go out, pursuant to the Provincial Auditor's request. It is another example of us heeding the advice of the Provincial Auditor and moving ahead with Cancer Care Ontario, with having a bidding process that we can all be proud of.

Ms Martel: The current contract isn't due to expire till February. Isn't it strange that it was renewed on the same day that Roy Romanow released his report? But there's no justification for continuing to pay for this for-profit provider. The minister will know that the president of CCO himself has already publicly said that there is not a crisis in cancer treatment. So why is there a need to continue with this for-profit clinic? I think your government is responding to a very questionable political lobby. We know that the Premier's special adviser on health, Ms Kristina Filmer, was registered as a lobbyist for this for-profit cancer clinic before she rejoined his staff. We also know that the for-profit clinic has been handing cancer patients a letter, as they leave after their cancer treatment, urging them to lobby the government to keep the clinic and their treatment going. I think that is a very questionable tactic by a health care provider. There is no need and there is no justification to continue funding this for-profit cancer treatment. Will you do the right thing now, cancel this contract and use this money in the public cancer system?

Hon Mr Clement: The reason this is quite humorous is because there has been an extensive letter campaign from Maude Barlow and all the assorted persons who are part of various left-wing causes. But I'm glad the honourable member mentioned letters, because I'd like to read into the record some excerpts from certain letters

from patients, which is what we care about on this side of the House, rather than the ideology of the other side.

One patient says, "It's time to express my appreciation for the fine work done by you and your staff at Canadian Radiation Oncology Services. Your clinic provides a valuable and much-needed service. Cancer patients are spared a protracted wait for treatment and are able to access radiation therapy in a timely and efficient way."

I could go on: "I'm writing to thank the CROS clinic." "Many thanks for making this clinic a place for help, resources and reassurance." "Thanks for making my problem"—which was to be able to have tests done and offer suggestions. "I wanted to thank you," and, "How much we appreciated the caring and efficiency"—

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

SERVICES FOR ABUSED WOMEN

Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain): My question is for the minister responsible for women's issues. Today survivors of domestic violence, women and children from rural areas, join us. Many of these families here in the gallery above today are from Norfolk county. Women in rural areas face special barriers. They are a \$60 cab ride away from Ontario Works, which provides no transportation help and suspends payment if they miss one appointment. Other barriers include high rents, a result of no rent controls, and landlords unwilling to rent to women on welfare.

The provincial government used to assist women with these barriers by funding second-stage housing. You pulled that funding the minute you got into government in 1995. Second-stage housing gives families a year of affordable housing, security and much-needed on-site counselling, after being in emergency shelters.

Jennifer is here today. She voluntarily gave her children up to children's aid so that she can find affordable housing. Minister, will you do the right thing and reinstate funding for second-stage housing and give these rural women and their children a second chance to a secure life?

Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, minister responsible for women's issues): This is a question about affordable housing, so I'll give the question to the Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services.

Hon Brenda Elliott (Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services): I thank my colleague across the way. She presents a question that has a number of different facets to it, so it is very difficult for us to know how to answer that. She's talking about a number of things. I think the focus of her question is women who are fleeing domestic violence situations, and I think on all sides of the House, if we're talking about a situation where women have to flee their homes with their children in fear for their lives, then we all agree that we must do what we can to help those people.

Our commitment on this side of the House is unequivocal. We spend about \$160 million across a variety of ministries, trying to find ways to provide programs to help these individuals who are in desperate need in a desperate time in their lives. Whether it's through shelters, through counselling programs, through 24-hour help lines, we try very hard to provide the kinds of services that will help them when they need it at a critical time.

Mrs Bountrogianni: My supplementary is for the minister responsible for women's issues. My question is on second-stage housing. Let me tell you what these women told me today. "Many of us had to relocate in order to be safe." One of them said, "I live on a bowl of bran cereal every day so that I can feed my kids. It kills me to tell my children that there's nothing to eat when they're hungry." Jennifer said, "I had to give my kids up so that I'd know they could eat."

Imagine, in the year 2002, giving up your children so that they can eat. Most of us are parents here. The women ask in desperation, Minister, "What do people like us do? What will happen to us?"

1510

Don't insult them by referring the question. I want you to answer this question. You are the minister involved. Shelters are much needed, yes, but they are a short-term emergency respite. Last year the Provincial Auditor found that 1,000 women were turned away from one shelter alone. This is where second-stage housing kicks in. This is what you cut in 1995 totally, and I'm proud to say that under a Dalton McGuinty government we would reinstate second-stage housing.

The women from rural Ontario are here to ask you, Minister Cunningham, "Will you reinstate second-stage funding?" They're here to ask you, "What will happen to us?"

Hon Mrs Elliott: Because municipalities know better what kind of housing will work in their communities, the kind of second-stage housing my colleague across the way is referring to—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order, order. Stop the clock, please.

Interruption.

The Speaker: We've removed everybody from that side because I don't know who's a part of it. I would ask the co-operation from those who are remaining. I have allowed some people to stay. It's very difficult to know who is part of a group when we throw them out. I would ask for your co-operation if you do stay. Obviously, you know that you won't be able to shout out, and I hope the members who remain will adhere to the rules.

It is the minister's turn to respond.

Hon Mrs Elliott: I think this speaks to the concern that we all have in trying to find solutions to some of these very complex and troubling problems.

Second-stage housing is the responsibility of the municipalities. We've put in an additional \$4 million to try and assist with that. We have increased the number of

rent supplement units for abused women, and of course in each of our ridings those women who find themselves in an abusive situation have priority for the existing social housing.

On a different note, I guess, what are we doing to assist women who find themselves in the situation of welfare? When I travelled this summer I spoke to a number of women whose marriages have broken up or who have found themselves in difficult situations and are trying to make it on their own. I talked to them about how the welfare situation was helping them. What I can report to this House is that those women said to me that our changing the welfare system from just a cheque, a deadend of ongoing dependency, transforming that into an opportunity to learn new skills, to get a job, to find income, to stand on their own two feet, was the best thing that we could do for them. Our welfare transformations were working for them and, more important, for their families.

LEGAL SERVICES

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): My question today is for the Attorney General. Minister, you recently introduced legislation to regulate the use of contingency fee agreements. You and I both know that for many working families, affording a lawyer can be very, very difficult. The costs associated with starting a civil action can be very discouraging.

Access to justice is particularly crucial because the courts of the province play an important role in resolving disputes. What improvements would this legislation provide for access to justice and, in particular, to families with very modest incomes?

Hon David Young (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): I appreciate my colleague from Simcoe North raising this very important issue. Indeed, I think the greatest single challenge that we have in this problem in relation to the justice system is one of access. That's why the Ernie Eves government came forward and tabled a piece of legislation that includes regulation of contingency fee arrangements, and, what that will allow is for individuals to enter into contractual arrangements with lawyers to ensure that they don't have to pay anything until there is a resolution of the case that results in money coming to them.

We recently had the opportunity to read the decision that was rendered in September of this year by Justice O'Connor. Obviously, shortly after he rendered his decision, we began to study it, and in accordance with the direction from Justice O'Connor, we are now in a position to move into this area and to regulate this important field.

Justice O'Connor clearly said that contingency fees were legal. It's now our obligation as a government to ensure that proper regulation is in place.

Mr Dunlop: Minister, one of the key parts of the contingency fee system is the cap that will be set on payments. It's important that the system balance the

rights of the lawyers to be paid for their services with the interests of the clients. We must make sure that no one can be exploited in any unscrupulous conduct.

What steps will you take to make sure that the system we put in place is fair to our clients and also to protect the interests of the consumer?

Hon Mr Young: Certainly it's very important that the government become involved at this point in time, and we certainly don't want to have a situation where lawyers across this province can enter into situations where they receive multi-million-dollar sets of costs and the injured party, the individual who has experienced damages, is not in receipt of the money that they are entitled to.

I will say to you that most lawyers operate in a most professional fashion, but I think it is incumbent upon this government to ensure that we have a system in place, we have rules in place, to avoid any difficulties. There are a number of ways we can do that, and this legislation will allow us to proceed forward either by way of a straight flat cap that would apply to all damages and then the lawyer for the injured party would just get a portion of that, or alternatively we could have a sliding scale or we could have some wording ensuring a fair and reasonable outcome that the judiciary would ultimately interpret.

DAIRY INDUSTRY

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): My question is for the Premier. I have a copy of a letter written by former Agriculture Minister Coburn to Gord Coukell, chair of the Dairy Farmers of Ontario, dated December 5, 2001, a year ago tomorrow, during this government's foolish attempt to ram through a repeal of the Edible Oil Products Act. The letter reads, "I, the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, am willing to submit to you today that in order to ensure the proper safeguards are in place, it is my intention to amend Bill 87 at the earliest possible date to remove reference to the June 2003 repeal of the Edible Oil Products Act."

The letter is clear. The deadline must be amended out of that legislation, the former minister states, "at the earliest possible date." We sat through an entire spring session and now we're in the last days of the fall session, Premier, and nothing has been done. Your Minister of Agriculture has sat on this.

The question here is simple: when exactly do you intend to make good on the commitment to the Dairy Farmers of Ontario?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): The minister responsible for rural affairs can respond.

Hon Brian Coburn (Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): In response, the Minister of Agriculture and Food is certainly aware of this situation and is working with the stakeholders, the dairy farmers and the other stakeholders in this particular situation and is working toward a solution on it.

Mr Peters: Mr Speaker, my question was for the Premier, and certainly the minister of rural affairs has been hived off from agriculture so it troubles me to understand that.

Mr Premier, supply management has provided this province with the safest and most nutritious milk supply in the world and your government's foot-dragging is jeopardizing that. Without delay Ontario would become the black hole of North America for non-regulated blended products.

I have another letter, this one written by your current Minister of Agriculture just two weeks ago, regarding your government's commitment to supply management and I quote, "Nonetheless, it is important that supply management commodities continue to evolve in order to respond to the changing environment in which they operate." What is that, Premier? Do you have qualified support for supply management? What evolution is the ministry talking about? The Dairy Farmers of Ontario are here today, and I'm sure they'd love to hear your answer. Poultry, eggs and tobacco would be fascinated as well.

1520

What is your secret agenda for supply management? First you fail to honour your commitment to the Dairy Farmers of Ontario and now your support for supply management comes with a codicil. Premier, what is going on here?

Hon Mr Coburn: Certainly our government has an outstanding record in terms of consulting with our rural stakeholders, the Dairy Farmers of Ontario and other rural stakeholders. It's a very important part of our economy here in Ontario.

We are currently conducting extensive consultations. For example, on the Nutrient Management Act, we have had and are continuing consultation with the Dairy Farmers of Ontario with respect to the edible oils act and food safety. These are ongoing consultations, and the Ministry of Ag and Food is conducting those, and we'll work with them toward an appropriate solution.

ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCES

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): My question is for the Minister of Energy. Minister, can you please tell my constituents in Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale and other Ontarians what our government is doing to promote clean and green energy in Ontario?

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Energy, minister responsible for francophone affairs): We established an all-party committee of this House, the select committee on alternative fuel sources, chaired by my colleague the member for Northumberland, Doug Galt, where a good number of members from all parties came together to look at suggestions and recommendations on how our province could promote clean, green energy. Many thought these recommendations would gather dust. I can say that over the past month and a half this government has been working tremendously hard to

implement those initiatives. We appointed Ontario's first Commissioner of Alternative Energy, Steve Gilchrist. Steve will work very closely not just with the Minister of Energy but with the Minister of the Environment and his staff and the Premier's staff as well.

We're also bringing in a whole series of initiatives to promote solar power and wind power. I was very pleased to be in Bruce county with my colleague Helen Johns to open the first commercial wind farm in Ontario, which is good news. I was pleased to see my colleague Steve Gilchrist open another one.

Mr Gill: Thank you, Minister, for your response. Our government's action plan to lower and freeze the price of electricity and to create standardized billing is great news for Ontarians.

Can you please provide us insight into why every member of the opposition stood in their place yesterday and voted against giving speedy passage to the government's legislation, legislation which will bring financial relief to seniors, businesses and millions of people in Ontario?

Hon Mr Baird: I too shared the surprise that the member from Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale had when we saw all the Liberal opposition members try to delay passage of this bill. As the public will know, this House is adjourning for Christmas and for the holidays in a few short days, and some want to sit here while hydro customers are concerned about their families and their futures and debate and debate and debate. We want to provide relief to that farmer; we want to provide relief to that small business; we want to provide relief to the auto workers in St Catharines. That's why, on a bill every member of the official opposition says they support and want to pass, it's important that we have a vote and get on with providing some relief to the hard-working citizens and people of Ontario. They're supporting the action plan to lower hydro bills, and they want to see it brought into law.

HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): My question is to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. You know that the situation on our highways in northern Ontario is not getting any better. In fact, this last weekend 180 kilometres on Highway 11, from Smooth Rock to Hearst, were closed. Why? Because the private sector contractors couldn't put salt on the road. Minister, are you going to finally admit that your privatization scheme ain't worth the salt—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Minister.

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Northern Development and Mines): I think when we made a move to make government more efficient in that area we certainly improved the standards that had existed before. If the Minister of Transportation were here, he would indicate to the honourable member that very good standards are in place—in fact, some of the best in the world—with respect to snow removal and de-icing. In fact, this year

we're doing pilot projects in the honourable member's part of the province with even newer technology, which we hope will make our winter road conditions even safer for drivers in this province.

Mr Bisson: Minister, we're not feeling any better in northern Ontario, because every time you take your car out on Highway 11 or any of the provincial highways it's the same story: the road is closed by the OPP. Why? Because the private snowplows are either not clearing the snow off the roads or they're not dropping the salt on the highways.

I asked a question of the Chair of Management Board last year with regard to the question of the privatization of contracts for highway maintenance, and the response I got from the minister of the day was that if there wasn't a saving for the taxpayers, they wouldn't go ahead with the privatization of winter road maintenance. The auditor says you haven't saved money. Will you finally admit this is a question of you not doing better with less, but us getting less because you're giving the private sector more?

Hon Mr Wilson: Regardless of who's delivering the service, as the honourable member knows, standards are in place. They're world-class standards and we're very proud of them. In fact, we've spent over \$1.6 billion on improving highways in northern Ontario since this government came to office in 1995, an absolute record for any government in the history of this province. We don't need any lectures from the honourable member about improving highways, road conditions and safety in northern Ontario. In spite of an \$11.7-billion deficit in their last year, and several multi-billion-dollar deficits in the fiscal years prior to that when they were in government, they didn't do anything to improve northern Ontario highways.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I wish to express my dissatisfaction with the answer that was provided to my oral question. Under 37(a) of the standing orders, I have filed my dissatisfaction, for a late show.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I thank the member. The member will know he needs to file it with the table.

PETITIONS

JUSTICES OF THE PEACE

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): One of the great frustrations to the people of Marathon and the area is the fact that the Attorney General has not appointed a full-time justice of the peace to replace the ones that were let go more than eight years ago. I have a petition signed by 379 people in Marathon, one tenth of the population, related to this issue:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the town of Marathon does not have a justice of the peace to serve our community and Heron Bay;

"Whereas Marathon used to have two justices living here; however, they retired in 1995, and were never replaced;

"Whereas Marathon and Heron Bay residents are now forced to travel to Manitowadge or Thunder Bay to acquire the services of a justice of the peace. This is unacceptable and unfair;

"Therefore, we want the Ontario government to appoint a justice or several justices of the peace in Marathon."

I am grateful to Rose Marie Comeau for putting this together. I am very pleased to add my name to the petition and ask the Attorney General to move quickly in this regard.

CHILD CARE

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly from the Welland campus of Niagara College and also from E. Marks of Toronto. It reads as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

HYDRO RATES

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas the province of Ontario has experienced record levels of electrical consumption this summer, along with lower than expected generating capacity to meet the demand; and

"Whereas this has resulted in higher electrical bills for Ontario consumers; and

"Whereas short-term spikes in the cost of power are a particular hardship to persons on fixed incomes and a detriment to business in Ontario;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, request that the government of Ontario act immediately to develop a plan for protecting consumers against excessive short-term increases in the cost of electricity. We further request that the government of Ontario also review the impact of charges other than wholesale electrical rates, including the goods and services tax (GST) and the debt reduction charges appearing on electricity bills of Ontario consumers."

COMPETITIVE ELECTRICITY MARKET

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): I keep getting petitions about the ever-increasing hydro rates. I'll read this petition to you, Mr Speaker:

"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, 2002; and

"Whereas Ernie Eves has done a poor job in educating the public as to the ramifications of an open electricity 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 ... Eves government appointed the board of directors for 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."

Since I agree with this petition, I'm signing my name to it.

1530

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have petitions that read as follows:

"To the Ontario Legislature:

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

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

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

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

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

I agree with the petitioners, and I've affixed my signature to this.

CAT SCANNER

Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“We, the undersigned, request approval for installation of a CAT scanner at the Woodstock General Hospital. It is an essential piece of equipment for the practice of modern medicine. The arrangements to go to London for a CAT scan are unsatisfactory, cumbersome and cause unnecessary delay. It is standard equipment for a hospital of this size in North America. All counties in southwestern Ontario have at least one CAT scanner except Oxford county.”

It's signed by a great number of my constituents who live in Woodstock and the surrounding area, and I sign this petition along with them because I believe it's the right thing to do.

HYDRO RATES

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

“The following signatures are signatures of complaint in regard to the severe and drastic increases in the hydro bills of customers in St Catharines and the surrounding area. Such increases have been difficult for seniors, people on fixed incomes, disability pensions, and low and middle incomes. As well, it is not our responsibility to assume Ontario Hydro debt. We pay while big corporations get breaks.

“If such unrealistic increases continue to occur, average people will become increasingly irate, if they have not already, and find it difficult to maintain normal, happy homes, let alone people in restricted situations.

“As citizens of Ontario, this is our opportunity for our voices to be united and heard in opposition to these unrealistic increases.”

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

COMPETITIVE ELECTRICITY MARKET

Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): I have a petition that carries over 2,500 signatures of people dissatisfied about electricity deregulation, which brings it up to 9,037 signatures.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Harris-Eves government deregulated electricity on May 1, 2002, in the province of Ontario without it being in their election platform in either 1995 or 1999 and without the mandate of the people of Ontario; and

“Whereas the price of the commodity of electricity has reached outrageous levels, having risen at times over 100% since May 1, 2002, causing Ontarians great financial hardship; and

“Whereas Ontario Power Generation (owned by the Ontario government) has applied to the Ontario Energy Board for a 20% reduction in the promised rebate to Ontarians if the commodity price of electricity rose above 3.8 cents per kilowatt hour; and

“Whereas competition in the electricity market has been scared off by the uncertainty of the Harris-Eves government's attempts to sell off a portion of Hydro One, leaving electricity commodity prices high; and

“Whereas the Harris-Eves government authorized exorbitant salaries and bonuses in the amount of \$2.2 million per annum to be paid to the former president of Hydro One, and in excess of \$1.6 million per annum to the vice-president of Ontario Power Generation;

“Therefore be it resolved that we, the undersigned, demand that the Ernie Eves government take immediate action to ensure that Ontarians have fair prices for the necessary commodity of electricity in Ontario, and that the Conservative government and its leader, Ernie Eves, call a general election on the instability of the energy market so that Ontarians may have a voice on this issue.”

I also affix my signature.

Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex): I have received thousands upon thousands of signatures. I continue to read this petition in the Legislature.

“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 electricity 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 increase 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 governments appointed the board of directors for 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 many good persons from places across my riding such as Blenheim, Thamesville, Dresden, Chatham, Merlin and Highgate. I too have signed this important petition.

HYDRO RATES

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): I have petitions signed by people from Milton, Mountainview and Brampton, and it reads as follows:

“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, Ernie Eves, call a general election on the instability of the energy market so that Ontarians may have a voice on this issue.”

It has been signed. I totally agree with it and will sign it as well, and I’ll hand it over to our page, Evan, here.

1540

NATURAL GAS RATES

Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the Ontario Energy Board has consented to allow Union Gas to retroactively charge \$40 per month for a three-month period to recover additional system

operation costs that occurred during the winter of 2000-01, totalling approximately \$150 million; and

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

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

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

This is signed by hundreds of residents from areas such as Merlin, Cedar Springs, Chatham, Blenheim and Ridgetown. I too have signed this petition.

LONG-TERM CARE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I wholeheartedly agree with this petition and I have affixed my name to it.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon Tim Hudak (Minister of Consumer and Business Services): The motion reads that, pursuant to Standing Order 46 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 209, An Act respecting funerals, burials, cremations and related services and providing for the amendment of other statutes, when Bill 209 is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill, without further debate or amendment; at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading, which order may be called on that same day; and

That, when the order for third reading is called, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That the vote on second and third reading may, pursuant to standing order 28(h), be deferred; 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 Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): Mr Hudak has moved government notice of motion number 80. Minister?

Applause.

Hon Mr Hudak: Thank you, Mr Speaker, and I thank my colleagues for their adulation and their applause—

Interjection: Colleague.

Hon Mr Hudak: OK, colleague—on this motion.

I'm very pleased to speak on the motion with respect to Bill 209, also known as the Funeral, Burial and Cremation Services Act, 2002. I had the pleasure to speak on this bill on first and second readings. I will add some thoughts on the debate I've heard to date on this legislation and give an indication of why I, as the minister responsible for the bill and as an MPP, feel it's important to move forward expeditiously on Bill 209 to ensure that the next steps can be taken for consumer protection in this area and, finally, I would argue, to modernize legislation that is practically 100 years old. It was almost a century ago when this legislation was first written. At the latest stage—it has been on and off over decades—the latest discussions have been in the works for a number of years.

You could say with a grain of fact to it that some of the staff in the ministry who have worked on this bill are getting near retirement, they have been working on this bill for so long. I know there have been four ministers—I'm the fourth—in this government who have worked on Bill 209, in the run-up to the bill, the consultations, the

policy decisions, and now in its form, Bill 209. That's just this government. I know previous governments attempted to deal with this legislation. There were some changes in 1989 or 1990, but no substantial reform in this sector for 90 to 100 years, despite the fact that in reality cultural practices, preferences, the cultural face of Ontario have changed substantially from a century ago.

As well, there has been throughout that time a great deal of discussion, not only in government circles but among people who are interested, who have a business interest, a personal interest, or from the point of view of the consumer, a consumer protection interest in this industry. This consultation, in a more intensive form, has been happening over the last couple of years, culminating in the Bereavement Sector Advisory Committee, aka BSAC, report submitted to Minister Sterling not too long ago, the principles of which form the basis for Bill 209 that we have in the Legislature today.

I want to not only talk about the importance of the bill and the timeliness with moving forward to the next step, but to respond to some of the comments people have made with respect to Bill 209. I want to point out that this is not a partisan bill. It's not something where I was sitting in my office one day daydreaming of the bereavement sector and thought I should move forward with this type of legislation.

The work on this bill had started long before my time. The point I am making is that it was not a partisan bill or an election campaign item. I don't recall it being part of a campaign. It was something that was made by the industry themselves in consultation with the consumer sector. You want to make sure. The Stewart family, for example, want to be assured of Will's future, that Will will have options when he is making those plans. Will is a young fellow, but we all have to be realistic that the time comes for all of us, and we need to know that we have the consumer protections in place for our loved ones who live beyond us, or that we make the decisions ourselves ahead of time in some sort of planning.

We want to make sure that the consumer protections are in place, that decisions are made with as clear a head as possible, and also that the legislation is modernized so it can reflect the realities of today and the choices we all can make.

A bit of background: it began in the more concentrated form in 1998 when Minister Tsubouchi asked the Red Tape Commission to consult and come up with some policy options. That was done with members of funeral home businesses, small and large cemeteries, I have mentioned consumers, monument builders, casket makers, transfer agencies—those industries that are involved in the bereavement sector.

The Red Tape Commission made some recommendations that were used for further consultations. My predecessor Norm Sterling I think deserves a lot of credit for the developments that have taken place. In 2001, Mr Sterling was the minister who established the Bereavement Sector Advisory Committee, the BSAC committee that I mentioned a bit earlier, a group with representation

from all the participants in the sector and, importantly, with the consumer voice being there at the table to act on behalf on those who are going to be using the service at some time in their lives.

An important ingredient for success was the presence and the leadership of esteemed Justice George Adams. Justice Adams's expertise and skills helped to develop a consensus around that large table that had chairs assigned to the various individuals in the sector and to consumer groups to reach a consensus on a number of the principles. In fact, all 18 of the BSAC principles have been embraced in Bill 201.

1550

Interestingly, I want to point out to members of the House that of the 18 recommendations, fully 17, or 94%, deal with consumer protection. So we can say, I think very fairly, that this bill, pure and simple, deals with consumer protection issues in embracing those BSAC principles that have been recommended.

The fact of the matter is that while it's often something we don't think about, bereavement services are one of the biggest purchases that individuals will ever have to make in their lives. There are auto purchases and home purchases, but often for the average Ontario family, bereavement services are in the top five single items or services they purchase. In fact, the average funeral cost in Ontario today, according to our figures, is about \$5,700, so a substantial amount of funds are invested to see off a loved one.

I think there are differences here. While a funeral may not be as expensive as buying a car or a home, one important difference is the uniqueness of the situation, the vulnerability of the consumer at this very delicate time in their life. Even a normally cautious or skeptical consumer can become confused or rush to judgment when making decisions in a very emotional period of time.

When you're purchasing a car or a home, you tend to take the time to shop around and check out the options—to kick the tires. Sadly, often when dealing with the bereavement sector, if planning has not been done ahead, you need to make the decision in a relatively short period of time when you're in a very difficult emotional state. That's why the consumer protection mandate is so important in this bill and is something we want to make sure is prominent in the communications down the road as this bill rolls out, if passed by the assembly. We believe it's vital for consumers to have very clear information on what their options are and what their protections are as well, and how to utilize the rights that are in the bill, if passed.

I'll give you a few examples. Under Bill 209, if passed, operators would have to maintain standardized price lists and make them available in accordance with the regulations in the bill. For example, under the possible regulations, licensed operators would be prohibited from charging more than the price on the price list. So consumers would have that list up front, and if they wanted to choose a budget route or a more

expensive route, or if they are making a pre-planning decision, they would have clearly laid out in front of them the options that are available in a standardized price format.

Regulations also could require a very easy-to-understand informational brochure. Having communication material on hand when making that decision is an important part of the consumer protection initiatives in this bill. To give you an example of what the brochure could contain, it would list consumers' rights and obligations, and the obligations of the funeral home, the cemetery etc.

An important idea as well is a toll-free number to contact the provincial regulator, so that consumers can call if they are not sure they are getting a square deal. If they are not sure they have been given full information, they could virtually have the provincial regulator there at the table with them to make sure they are being dealt with in a forthright manner.

I believe, from those I've met who work in this sector, that the vast majority are hard-working, legitimate operators who care about their clients and do a good job in their communities, whether it's in Ridgeway or Vineland or Manitoulin. At the same time, we do receive concerns from time to time about consumers who are not dealt with in a fair manner. That's why these types of consumer protections are important, especially at such a sensitive time in their lives.

Other important BSAC recommendations of the 17 of 18 on the consumer protection side are the 30-day cooling-off period, trusting requirements and compensation fund as well.

This bill, if passed, would provide a 30-day cooling-off period where consumers could cancel the contract if, for example, they changed their mind about a prepaid package, or what have you, before that is used. Such a cooling-off period is common in consumer protection legislation currently before the assembly. Bill 180 also envisions a cooling-off period, especially for high-pressure sales. So as part of a consumer protection package coming from the Ernie Eves government, those two pieces work hand in hand in terms of a cooling-off period if you feel you are a victim of high-pressure sales, to take sober second thought, to take a step back and say, "I've re-evaluated my decision. I've spoken with my friends; I've spoken with an adviser. I've changed my mind." This would give them 30 days in which to do so and to make sure they got the deal they intended, just like it would work in Bill 180, consumer protection, if advanced.

I'll give you another example. This bill, if passed, will provide protection for consumers in the event of a bankruptcy of a funeral home, cemetery, monument retailer etc—basically, any licensee under the act—because it would ensure that all the prepaid money would be held in trust. So if you made that investment, if you bought a prepaid package, for example, or a grave plot or what have you, and that business was no longer in business, went bankrupt, the compensation fund and trusting requirements would ensure that you would not be out of pocket on such a substantial investment.

A cross-industry compensation fund would also be established to help consumers who paid for services but who did not receive them. Currently, that exists in the funeral sector act, but as I've said before in this House, there are two separate pieces of legislation. It doesn't exist in the other sectors that form part of bereavement services. This legislation, if passed, would ensure that that type of compensation fund, that consumer protection initiative, would apply whether you're at a funeral home, a cemetery, or buying a casket, a monument etc.

Not to belabour the point, but I do think it important: all of these consumer protection regulations came out of that BSAC process—a credit to those in the industry who were part of that panel because they themselves are helping to raise the standards of the industry right across the board.

Consumer choice: there is an interesting article that many of us may have seen in the *Globe and Mail* last weekend, where journalist Jan Wong noted that the baby boomers are—this is her quote—“beginning to redecorate life's departure lounge.”

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Order. There's way too much noise back behind the chair here. Minister.

Hon Mr Hudak: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I appreciate that.

Anyway, I've spoken quite often about the importance of the consumer protection aspects and consumer choice part of that as well. That's why I think it important that this legislation should be passed by the assembly. I hope we do have that. We need to move on to the next phase of the bill, which is working in a similarly consultative process with those who work in the community, the faith-based churches and cemeteries and such, as well as consumers, seniors' groups etc, to make sure that in doing the regulations and building the industry for the future a similarly sensitive and consultative approach is used. That's been the success, finally, after many, many years to get the legislation in the House, and I look forward as minister, if this is passed, to the opportunity to continue that on the regulation side and help set up this industry acting as one whole, one voice, and to have consistent consumer protection and consistent codes of ethics and high standards right across the industry.

There have been some arguments I've heard in the assembly that I would like to address as well. There has been a discussion that somehow this legislation creates an uneven playing field between small, family-run operators and large corporations. It's important to set the record straight on this. Quite frankly, there is a very, very uneven playing field, as we speak today.

By way of example, funeral homes and visitation centres: funeral homes fall under their legislation; they have a code of ethics; they have standards; they have qualifications and licences; and, by their definition, are located on town property, pay taxes, pay the municipal taxes. You could have a creature called a visitation centre, pretty much the same thing as a funeral home save for the fact that there's no embalming done at this

particular place. But being on a cemetery property, they paid no property taxes; they weren't governed by any legislation—they're in a grey area—and I think levelling that playing field as well helps in that respect. This—and many other reasons I'd be pleased to comment on, if I have that opportunity down the road—is why I support this bill too, and I quite strongly support this motion and hope to see it get a positive result.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

1600

Mr Mario Sergio (York West): I'd like to continue the debate on Bill 209, the bill that was introduced a few days ago with respect to making supposedly improvements surrounding funeral homes and all the services that go with providing funerals—cemeteries and other places where funerals can be held and so forth.

I spoke last week, perhaps with a little bit more time on second reading than on closure, with respect to some of those things that I don't agree with in the content of the bill. I did say last week, however, that this is a good step. It improves some of the aspects that surround funeral services and those services that are necessary and needed at that particular time. I want to address to the minister the point that it is at that time the public must truly be protected and given assistance. Consumers should not spend time, because they don't have the time, deciding what is good and what is bad. I think we should be very straightforward. It is a time of deep sorrow and bereavement. Consumers should not be given the opportunity to be taken at the funeral home, at the casket place, in selecting a headstone or anywhere providing one of those services.

What does this bill do? It improves the existing situation when it comes to choosing a casket, going to a retail store, if you will, a cemetery or other places, as they have been called in the past, funeral centres—not a funeral home, and I'll come back to that in a couple of minutes—but a funeral centre which is allowed to sell caskets and other paraphernalia attached to burials.

What else does the bill do, as it is presented? It improves some of the standards and, yes, that is an improvement since it has been so many years that the standards have not been touched, and the ethics. That is important. I think it's very important that at a time of bereavement people don't have to deal with problems other than dealing with the situation at hand and dealing with making provisions for the person who has just passed away.

So what is the thing that really bothers me with this particular bill? It is the fact that we are opening the door not only to competition, because I think competition in many ways is good, but what we are doing—and I will touch briefly on the content of my bill that I introduced some two years ago. It is the fact that now unlicensed funeral homes can hold visitations and they can also sell caskets. It is not permitted at the present time.

The legislation, as it has been introduced, will allow cemeteries to both do funeral services and be a visiting centre. I see a problem with that. We will see the creation

of franchising funeral centres or funeral homes. Why do I say that? It is because if this legislation goes through the way it is proposed, the large corporations—and there are now some large corporations that control several funeral homes; maybe under different names but they are controlled by one entity. They also control a number of cemeteries.

When we say we want to offer the most protection to consumers, this is a very serious grey area. Now, if you shop around, and you don't have much time to shop around at that time, you're bound to get a number of cemeteries or funeral parlours that belong to the same entity and thus you will get the same answer every time. I'm asking you, Mr Speaker, what kind of protection is this for consumers out there? It is none.

One thing that we've been fighting in my community, for example, and that was the reason for bringing in my bill, is that funeral services were being conducted from an unlicensed place. This bill will now do exactly that, which means that they can prepare the body, whatever preparation that is, in a licensed funeral home, and this legislation will allow them to transfer the body to another location that is not licensed as a funeral home. That's where visitation can take place, and eventually that's where the funeral service will take place as well. This can be very damaging because a funeral centre, a funeral parlour, can locate in a commercial area next to a residential area, creating the traffic problems that the people in my community were against in the first place. We may not see it now, but this is exactly what is going to happen. I've asked the minister to look into this particular concern that I've had, and I hope he will.

By introducing this piece of legislation, and we hope, as the minister says, that we can support it and it will all go through, he also has to take into consideration that we don't want to approve a particular piece of legislation that may give the suspicion or the impression that it is being driven by large corporations. When I say "large corporations," I mean corporations of funeral homes, funeral centres or cemeteries, and there are some large corporations which own both. So if we want to do the right thing, we have to make sure that the bill does exactly what the minister says it's going to do. But the way it is, I can't see it.

We want it to be seen that we will create a very solid, clear, level playing field. But if the bill goes through the way it is, I'll tell you today that a lot of small businesses out there will have to close because they cannot afford to compete with the large corporations. Under the bill the way it is now, those large corporations or cemeteries or whatever will provide services from A to Z, squeezing out the little guy, not only the small individual funeral centre or funeral home, but also those small businesses that provide the sale of other goods such as caskets and headstones. We just don't want to give the idea that this is going to offer more protection. We have to make sure that if it becomes law, the bill indeed will deliver that needed protection. Again, the way this bill has been written, it will not offer that particular protection.

At a time of need, people don't have time to decide what headstone or casket or whatever they will have to choose. Is that a time when we need more pressure on family members to choose the kind of headstone or the type of casket: a light one, brown, dark, wood, steel or whatever other kind? It should be their choice, so we should not provide any more pressure at that time. We believe that by limiting the competition, this is exactly what is going to happen and, ultimately, not only is the service going to suffer, but the costs are going to go up as well.

We have seen, for example, some of the so-called no-frills stores or no-frills services. Do you know what? Some of these so-called no-frills stores or cemeteries and funeral services are more expensive—more expensive—than the small operators. Do you know why? Because those so-called no-frills services are owned, operated and managed by the large corporations.

1610

I don't have to tell you that this is a huge business. Let's face it: it's a huge business. It is being exploited, and that's why protection must come in. But unfortunately, while the minister has good intentions in introducing the bill with some changes that are necessary, it does not go far enough. It does not address all those concerns to give the public 100% peace of mind. You may say no bill will ever give consumers 100% peace of mind.

That minister said the other day that this bill, the way it has been presented now, has received unanimous consent from all sides. I have to tell you, Minister, that if you did indeed speak to a lot of the consumers and various groups that have a stake, like small businesses, they have not been consulted. There is no total consensus on this. There is a lot of apprehension out there. There are a lot of problems with the bill. The public knows it and those small operators know it as well, because if the bill goes through the way it is, they are going to be out of business because they cannot face the stiff competition of the large operators and, therefore, they will be squeezed out.

Getting to the end of my time here, let me say to the minister again, as you're pushing to bring this to a close—because we are being pushed by the government to limit our debate and send this through the House—please, maybe you should send it to public hearings and give those people out there a chance, an opportunity to dwell on the bill as it has been presented. Give those who have a concern the opportunity to come to Queen's Park or other places and voice their concerns, and then make those necessary changes so that we can present to the public, the consumer, a bill that will offer better standards and protections and is much more ethical.

Having said that, Mr Speaker, my time is up and I thank you again for allowing me those 15 minutes.

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): I want to say off the bat that there are now three things for certain in life: taxes, death—and we're talking about that here in terms of this bill—and that on Wednesday afternoon in this place there will be time allocation motions. It's the

modus operandi of this place. The member for Nickel Belt and I show up here to work on Wednesday afternoon, to do our duty, and sure as God made little green apples, we'll be debating another time allocation motion. We say, "It's Wednesday afternoon so it must be a time allocation motion," or "It's a time allocation motion so it must be Wednesday afternoon." That's how much of a pattern is developing here.

There is no process any more. There is no opportunity for input; there is no interest on the part of the government side in good ideas that we might bring forward. There's no interest in going out and around the province on hearings on any of this legislation. It's just, "Get it done," "We know what's good for you," ram it down your throat, "It's good medicine; you'll be better off in the end." Well, we know now, after seven or eight years of this Conservative government, that almost everything that they've done has turned out to be a lump of coal, to use the analogy as we move toward Christmas in the province at this point in time.

Let me share with you very briefly, before I get into the act and bill itself, what's happening here this afternoon. We've had groups come and lobby us, faith groups, groups representing family-owned mom-and-pop funeral services in communities across this province. We've had municipalities concerned about this bill come and talk to us. We've had the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, for goodness sakes, come and talk to us New Democrats about concerns they have re this bill. They asked us, if nothing else, to ensure that the government takes the time necessary to go out and have committee hearings and give us opportunity to have some input to put on the record some of our concerns, to make some suggestions, to bring forward with you some amendments that might improve this piece of public business so that it actually does what is laid out in the opening of the bill.

Alas, that's not going to happen. We're here this afternoon, much to our chagrin and, I'm sure, much to the disappointment of those groups that have come to speak to us, particularly the faith groups who took so much time and made so much effort to find convenient times for all of us to get together so that they could share with us the concern that they have over this bill.

Well, this afternoon is going to be the end of it. This afternoon, we're not really talking about the bill; we're talking about this time allocation motion, although we'll take the opportunity to in fact do that. But this afternoon, in the next couple of hours—it's now a quarter past 4—in the next hour and 45 minutes we will have dealt with a major change in the bereavement industry in this province, change that has taken a long, long time to be developed. Traditions that have built up over years and years will be changed in this place with the little bit of debate that we will have here this afternoon.

Let me just share with you the motion that was tabled by the Minister of Consumer and Business Services this afternoon on behalf of Mr Stockwell. I'll read it for you, and then I'll explain very clearly and simply exactly what it means.

"That, pursuant to standing order 46 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 209, An Act respecting funerals, burials, cremations and related services and providing for the amendment of other statutes, when Bill 209 is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill, without further debate or amendment; at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading, which order may be called on that same day"—so we can have second and third reading on this bill on the same day—"and

"That, when the order for third reading is called, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

"That the vote on second and third reading may, pursuant to standing order 28(h), be deferred; and

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

What are they saying there? What they're saying there very simply is, after today, at the end of today, when we vote on this time allocation motion, the next time that the government calls the bill forward, the next time the government decides it wants to put this Bill 209 on the table for debate in this place, we will go immediately to a vote.

Once we have finished that vote on second reading, we will move then, immediately, without any debate, any amendment, any opportunity for amendment, without any committee hearings whatsoever, not even downstairs for 20 minutes like we had for the budget bill the other day, or the red tape omnibus bill; not even the 20 minutes that we got for that will we get in committee so that we can bring forward amendments. That's not going to happen, never mind go out and across the province and speak to small and medium-sized and large communities—because they all have different perspectives, and the industry in those communities all have different perspectives on this bill. We're not going to do that. There will be absolutely no committee hearings, zero, none in this instance, as is the pattern of this government these days, it seems, as they rush headlong to the end of this session because they don't want any more question periods than they can get away with.

We know that we're going into an election come early spring of next year. We say, let's have it now. If that's where you're going, let's do it now, and let's drop all this legislation so that we can get a government back in here, led by Howard Hampton, that will in fact have respect for the processes that have built up over a long period of time in this place that reflect the democracy that we all are committed to and that have served us for so long.

But no, this bill will come back for second reading; we'll vote on it; there will be no committee; we'll go straight to third reading; we'll vote on it. There will be no committee. It will go straight to third reading. We'll vote on it and then it will become an act of this Parliament and

the rule of the day where bereavement services are concerned. That's what we're about here this afternoon. That's what's happening. We're ramming this through.

1620

This is an important bill. We heard the minister this afternoon say that we shouldn't have any real concern about this bill, that it was built around a consensus they arrived at in consultation with the industry out there and with the communities and other folks who will be affected by it. We're here to say this afternoon that this legislation is based on a discussion and consultation conducted by Justice Adams, which produced a document outlining the current course of action. While the government calls it a consensus, having heard from so many of the affected parties over the last few months, we say this afternoon that it certainly was not a consensus at all.

Many of the groups were unhappy with the results, but there are so many competing interests in this sector that it would be very difficult to produce a balance. However, that doesn't mean that, once legislation is tabled and we get a look at what it is the government is proposing after having had this consultation under Justice Adams and having heard from people, we shouldn't give them a chance to come back and speak to the bill and how it might affect them and how we might improve on what it is that's being put forward. That's not going to happen.

Many of these groups are very unhappy. For example, the monument and casket retailers are unhappy. Small, independent funeral directors are unhappy. Municipalities are unhappy. Some of the faith groups are unhappy. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business is unhappy.

The government is definitely telling a story when they describe the current situation as a consensus. It is, rather, a situation in which they needed to move forward and have chosen to charge ahead despite the criticism and not take the time necessary to hear everybody out so that we might, at the end of the day, have something that reflects full consultation and at least some attempt at some moderation and some interest in what others are saying this bill is all about.

The impetus for making these changes came primarily from the cemeteries and crematoria in the province. The faith groups and the family-run funeral service organizations would have been just as happy to have stayed the old way, to have what's in place now continue in place, to work around that and work with everybody involved to improve on that. This bill is an attempt to strike a balance, but we suggest it's a precarious balance, among the various constituents involved in the issue. However, when you start messing around with something that has been under stable regulation for so long there are bound to be difficulties.

There need to be considerable committee hearings, but alas, it isn't going to happen. The member for Nickel Belt and myself were here last week making that point over and over again in our responses to speeches by various members in the Legislature here, and in our

speeches themselves, that we needed to have considerable and travelling consultations on this bill to find out if the legislation accomplishes what they agreed to in the consultations as the drafting happened.

We said they just couldn't ram this through and then cross their fingers and close their eyes and hope it works. We've seen them do that before and we're all wearing the result. The government has avoided those bumps, those challenges by leaving the real problems to the regulations, which causes us real concern because regulations are done by the government with no input, no requirement that they consult or talk with anybody, and with no opportunity for the opposition in particular to have any say. There are so many details left to the regulations that most groups involved in the process are reserving judgment about the effect of it.

Given this government's propensity for pandering to big business, it wouldn't surprise us if the regulations were heavily favoured or tilted in favour of corporate shops. That brings me to another point I want to put on the record here this afternoon. That's the potential for corporate takeover of the whole bereavement industry. We've seen it in health care, we've seen an attempt to do it in education and we've see the fiasco that hydro has become in this province. Now we see the government, cajoled, encouraged and lobbied by their corporate friends on Bay Street, taking another very important, sensitive and critical area of public life and saying to them, "What can we do to help you become involved and take over," so they can apply this notion of private sector discipline in the area of bereavement services.

Well, we know what that was all about when we heard our leader speak of it this afternoon in the context of the auditor's report that came down this week. We now know very clearly what private sector discipline is going to do to the public life of this province, and it's my belief that that's where we're now heading in the bereavement industry. We're going to turn it over more and more, or at least provide the opportunity or open the gates for the corporate sector—I'm talking about the big corporate sector here—to come in and take over this area.

I have to tell you that in conversations I've had, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, the faith groups and the smaller family-owned industries in this area are very concerned. Those who make caskets or who do markers on graves are very concerned, because they don't know, if the big corporate sector takes over and it becomes one or two or three major interests, whether they will have a niche or any opportunity at all to do what they've done well for a long period.

I know myself, from having stickhandled legislation through this House to regulate franchising in this province—by the way, there was a nice big piece in the latest edition of the Ontario Business Report that the ministry puts out, with the smiling face of Mr Flaherty, Mr Right Wing himself, on the second page talking about this wonderful legislation they now have in place in Ontario regulating franchising, without any effort to

indicate that if it hadn't been for me and our caucus, that wouldn't be the case. There would be no regulation. The big corporate interests, where franchising is concerned, would have their way with so many small, dedicated, hard-working and committed individuals and families across this province. The damage that was doing continues, because what they put in place was so minimal as to almost be hurtful in some instances where franchising is concerned. Now they're out there promoting it as something they did, that they initiated and put in place, when in fact it was the last thing they wanted to do and only did it when we had a chance to sit down, talk to them and work with them. As a matter of fact, I give credit to the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations at the time, Mr Runciman, for working cooperatively with me to put that piece of legislation in place. It's an example of what can be done creatively. Mind you, as I said, it wasn't enough, but at least it was an opening of the door, a foot in the door, to put that in place and begin thinking about regulating an industry.

If the government was equally forthcoming and interested in our input and what we have to say about these things, we might be able to put in place a piece of legislation to move forward the delivery of bereavement services in this province—yes, to do what is in this bill that we think is supportable, but on the other hand to deal with some of the issues that have been raised by interested parties that we can't support. But at the end of the day, what will it matter? They have the majority and they'll ram this through.

It was interesting: this weekend, I went home to Sault Ste Marie and I went to mass on Sunday morning and heard the priest say to the congregation from the pulpit that the bishops are sending out a warning that they should tell the funeral service they go to when somebody in the family passes away that they want to have a church service at the church they attend regularly, week after week, because I guess there's now a fear, with this new legislation and with the very aggressive nature of some of the big corporate entities in the funeral business across the province, that even the churches will be pushed out. As you know, when you go into some of the larger funeral homes now, there's everything. They're selling caskets, they're selling packages. They have the wake service and now, usually attached, not very far away, is a chapel. If you talk to the funeral director, he can get for you any number of ministers or spiritual leaders who will come in and actually lead a service right there in the funeral home. You don't have to go anywhere to be connected to your church community at this very important time in life, when spirituality is such a central part of what's going on, to celebrate and to mourn with your community the passing away of a loved one.

1630

The bishops are concerned, and so they should be, that with this new legislation and with the new attitude that's out there toward corporate control of everything, in fact even funeral services now will be taken more and more out of the hands of church communities and turned over

to corporate interests. That should concern everybody. It certainly concerns me. It perked me up on Sunday morning, when I heard the priest in the pulpit saying these things to our congregation, warning our congregation about this without being overtly political. It's funny that, when I spoke to him at the back of the church after and asked him if he was concerned about the corporate takeover, that wasn't a discussion he wanted to engage in, but certainly that's the interpretation I brought to the whole thing.

I put it on the floor here this afternoon that out there across Ontario now there is a knowledge of this piece of business that's before us. There is some very real, important and significant concern that needs to be addressed. Alas, we have before us a time allocation motion that's not going to allow us the opportunity to put on the record any more than we already have. It will not give us the opportunity to go out across the province and hear from, for example, the bishops, perhaps my pastor, and others who might want to raise some very real concern about this and challenge the government to slow down, to take a deep breath, to take a sober second look at this and then maybe come back at it again and see where we can perhaps go from there.

You see, the corporate world, the corporate sector, the big business interests in Ontario and Canada and the multinationals don't need our help. They don't need our help. What we should be doing here in this place is making sure that as the corporate sector do their thing—and they have many valuable things that they do. But government has a responsibility to make sure that corporate interest does not work its way into the common interest that we all have in our province, in our jurisdiction, in a way that begins to take away opportunity, freedom, protection and rights that we are so proud of here in this province and in this country, rights and traditions and ways of doing things, freedoms we've long fought for and that people have gone to war over. We need to make sure even today, as we stand in our place in Legislatures such as this one, that we're protecting these with every inch of our being, with every ounce of intelligence that we have.

It is with heavy heart that I recognize there is no more that I can do on behalf of those people who have come before me, particularly the small family-owned funeral businesses in my community, and small and medium-sized communities across this province in particular. There's nothing more I can do on behalf of the faith communities that sat down with me in my office and shared with me some of their very real concerns and anxieties where this bill is concerned. There's nothing I can do any more in this place to reflect the very real concern that my pastor this Sunday shared with his congregation, where the corporate creep that's going on in this business is now perhaps ready to take over the very important work and responsibility that churches and church groups and church communities have always exercised in community after community across this province.

I turn the time that we have left in our caucus over in a few minutes to the member for Nickel Belt, who wants to put some thoughts on the record on this important piece of public business.

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): Here we are, once again dealing with a time allocation motion or, as my colleague Mr Caplan described it, the guillotine notice, cutting off debate. I think it's safe to say that we on this side of the House and the citizens of Ontario should have grave concerns over the frequency that closure—the shutting down of debate—is being put forth in this Legislature.

As legislators, we are elected to ensure that we undertake a complete debate. But you know, this government is bound and determined to cremate the relevance of this Legislature. I think the epitaph of this government is going to read, “1995 to 2002, 207 bills passed, 87 time-allocated.” In 40% of the legislation that has come before this House, the debate has been shut down. You buried the opportunity again for public hearings on this bill.

It's most interesting when one goes back to review Hansard. My colleague Mr Crozier from Essex predicted that we would see closure with this legislation. He predicted it. But we thought, “Wow, maybe we're not going to experience that,” because that very night, on November 25, we heard Minister Norm Sterling stand up in this Legislature—and one just needs to refer to page 3227 of Hansard—and say, “Let's pass this bill on second reading, put it out to committee and we will have public hearings.”

Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East): Norm said that?

Mr Peters: Norm said that.

Mr Caplan: What happened?

Mr Peters: They introduced notice of motion number 80, and debate has been buried, it has been cremated, and I think it's a sad day for democracy in this province. This government continues to do this.

I think the citizens at home expect that when they send us to this Legislature every one of us would have an opportunity to fully debate a bill. It's incumbent on the government members to put forward their views and ideas and it's incumbent on Her Majesty's loyal opposition to point out those areas where bills could be improved, where bills that are flawed could be made better. One of the ways we can do that is, first, by having a thorough debate in this Legislature and, second, by allowing a piece of legislation to go out for public hearings after second reading. I read that the Minister of Transportation thought public hearings would be good for this bill, but obviously not. This government is just bound and determined to stifle debate.

We've heard the faults of this government. We heard yesterday the Provincial Auditor, Mr Peters, rip them apart for their mismanagement. We heard today my colleague Mr Gerry Phillips talk about the mismanagement of this government and the façade that they put forth. But I think, because debate is being stifled, the

public doesn't always get all the information. It's incumbent on us and it's our opportunity as Her Majesty's loyal opposition to use the debate to ensure that the public is fully informed. I think the most damaging of initiatives, and there are many damaging initiatives, is that this government has added \$21 billion to the debt of this province.

Mr Caplan: That doesn't include hydro.

Mr Peters: It doesn't include hydro, not at all. That's been—what?—\$500 million or \$700 million alone in the past year that has been added to hydro. What a terrible legacy to leave for future generations. What a terrible legacy to leave for the pages who are here in the House. What has happened is disgusting.

1640

It is a shame with this legislation. We heard the minister talk of the consultations that took place in advance, but there wasn't unanimity coming out of the consultations, and that's often the case. The goal then is that out of the consultations, legislation is drafted and presented to us to be debated in the Legislature. Then it's incumbent on us to take that legislation out for public hearings. But that hasn't happened.

There are a lot of areas of concern in this bill, not only to myself but I would hope to all members of this Legislature, and I would hope to the public as well. There are a lot of positive things in this legislation. I can't stand here and say this a piece of legislation that should be sent to the crematorium, because it's not fully faulty. There are some areas, though, that need improvement and clarification. Hence, public hearings would have helped make this a better piece of legislation.

Some of the areas I'm concerned about are telemarketing and solicitation. We've got people in this province right now who read the obituaries on a daily basis, and while a family is right in the grieving process, they're receiving letters about monuments, in particular, and about other areas, things they should be looking at. Families shouldn't be harassed at that time.

Also, around the countryside you're seeing more and more signs being erected around cemeteries: “Call ABC Memorials.” The government talks about what they're going to do to protect the consumer, but what they don't address with this legislation, and unfortunately with a lot of pieces of legislation that come before this Legislature, is the whole question of enforcement. You can draft the legislation and the regulations, but is the government going to be there to enforce the legislation?

Mr Caplan: It could have been done at committee.

Mr Peters: Exactly. That is something we could have worked on in committee, improving the legislation. That wasn't done. I think cemeteries themselves—this is a point I raised in the debate and I'm going to come back to it, under section 47 of this legislation. Section 47 talks about speculation, that one should not be going out and buying a funeral plot or a number of plots and then at some point down the road selling them at a profit. But this legislation in many ways contradicts itself, because you have thousands of cemetery plots across this

province that have been purchased by families that to this day remain unused.

I sat on the St Thomas Cemetery board for 13 years. We have thousands of vacant plots in that cemetery. What this legislation is going to do is it is going to say to somebody who bought 10 plots 50 years ago at maybe \$10 apiece that, wow, we can go into the cemetery and redeem these plots at market value. That's a huge burden on many of the faith-based and non-profit cemeteries in this province. Many of these cemeteries, like the St Thomas Cemetery, struggle on an annual basis to make ends meet. I have some real concern that this is going to be an additional financial burden to cemeteries.

There are many references through this legislation to fees. Again, fees may not be an issue for some of the larger cemeteries, but for small rural cemeteries, fees are already an issue. I had the Fingal cemetery contact my office expressing their concern over the fees that they are already being charged, but this government again is going to download fees to the local cemeteries.

I want to go to another aspect of this legislation that, again, had we gone to committee, I think we could have helped improve. One of my biggest beefs, and it has always troubled me, is the vandalism of cemeteries. That could be vandalism from the standpoint of knocking over monuments; it could be vandalism from the standpoint of defacing monuments with spray paint. It happens over and over again; it's an annual occurrence across this province.

Many of these monuments, once they're vandalized—if you look at an old white marble monument, when a white marble monument is split in half, you're not going to replace it—are next to impossible to put back the way they were. If a large granite monument is knocked over in a cemetery, the cemetery assumes the responsibility. If they don't catch the perpetrators, the cemetery assumes the responsibility for having to put a monument back in place.

I know we undertook an effort to start to restore monuments at the St Thomas cemetery, and I can tell you that you're looking at \$500 to \$1,000 apiece to restore monuments, again additional costs to the cemetery.

If we had gone to committee with this bill, we could have looked at sections 102 and 103, which talk about the prohibition of interfering with a cemetery. We could have put the boots to the goofs who are out there vandalizing cemeteries. We could have put some teeth in this legislation that would have helped a judge, when we catch these idiots, to really do something. We could have included in this legislation some hefty fines so that we would be working to discourage these individuals from undertaking vandalism or defacing monuments. But we're not going to have that opportunity, because the government again shuts down debate. Debate is shut down. Again and again we see this, that debate has been shut down in this province, and it's really, really sad.

There are other aspects of this bill that I think we need to be concerned with. Maybe this is not an issue all across the province, but it's an issue that is out there. I

have to chuckle at the minister and the ministry, who talked about the rise of unregulated visitation centres across this province. Why weren't you out there enforcing it? Why weren't you out there saying that we're not going to allow visitation centres? Why weren't you going to be out there enforcing to make sure those things didn't happen? Is it because you drastically cut back the number of staff in the cemeteries branch, that there's really nobody within the cemeteries branch other than the registrar and some clerical staff?

We don't have the people on the ground enforcing the Cemeteries Act like we used to have. I can recall my days on the cemetery board, where we had an individual in London that we could call if we had an issue dealing with the cemetery. That doesn't exist any more. So how are you going to put legislation in place, in many ways toothless legislation, but not have the enforcement mechanism in place? We haven't heard that addressed by the minister to date.

I'm very concerned about this legislation and this move toward one-stop shopping, where a cemetery is going to be in the business of providing all the burial services, selling the cemetery plot, selling the casket, selling the memorial, probably selling the flowers too. You are seriously jeopardizing those individuals who've invested substantial money in providing funeral services in this province. You're jeopardizing that, and you're heading down the road to creating monopolies. This legislation could have been better, and it would have been best had we gone to public hearings and not shut down the debate.

1650

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I'm not going to say it's a pleasure for me to participate in the debate.

Mr Marcel Beaubien (Lambton-Kent-Middlesex): It's always a pleasure to hear you, Shelley.

Ms Martel: It's becoming routine to participate in a time allocation debate on a Wednesday afternoon. My colleague Mr Martin is quite right—I say this to Mr Beaubien, who is here—that there are three things you can count on now: death, taxes and a Wednesday afternoon time allocation motion. We are going to speak about two today.

Mr Beaubien: In which order?

Ms Martel: Let me deal with the time allocation first. The sad fact of the matter is that, with a little bit of committee, we could probably clear up all of the outstanding issues. I say to the government, you have some concerns from stakeholders. I'm going to read them into the record during the course of the time that I have. But I think the government and those stakeholders who have concerns right now aren't very far apart. I bet you in an afternoon we could have those folks in, we could have some public hearings and the government could move the amendments so that those folks would be onside. I think it would be that easy. So I don't understand why the government isn't just prepared to go that extra step and get it done and be able to stand before the House recesses sometime next week—because I think we are due to

recess sometime next week—and be able to say we responded successfully, positively to the outstanding concerns that were still out there in those communities that have a very direct interest in this.

I think the government would want to do that. I mean, why wouldn't you? If the government proceeds in the way that it intends, in the way that's outlined in the time allocation motion, what is clear is that there aren't going to be any public hearings, there isn't going to be any time for that kind of interaction with the stakeholder groups, there isn't going to be any time for amendments and there isn't going to be any time to fix some of what I think are very small and minor problems that the government could easily address.

I know that often there are bills that come through here and we are diametrically opposed to them—most of the bills that come from this side, this Conservative government, we as New Democrats are very much opposed to. What's interesting is that I think you have a bill where, in truth, there has been a fair bit of work done, there have been stakeholder groups that have been part of a consultation process, and we have a bill that we could probably clearly agree with and so could the public if the government would just do that one additional thing. I don't think it would cost the government much. I think there would be agreement to have some very short hearings, bringing in the groups that have contacted not only us but the government with their concerns and with their proposed changes. The government could move the amendments to clear up the situation. They could have a bill that at the end of the day would have wide stakeholder support. I think what they are going to end up with is a bill where there will be lingering, ongoing concerns that are legitimate concerns that have been raised with the government. The government will then be accused of having ignored the concerns that came in from the stakeholders, which I'm going to read.

Hon Mr Hudak: Which concerns?

Ms Martel: I'm glad the member asked, "Which concerns?" I have three letters here. I'm going to read the concerns into the record. I'm assuming the minister has heard about these concerns, because a number of the folks actually say they met with the minister and reiterated these concerns with him, but just in case he hasn't, and for the public record, I'm going to read those into the record. Then hopefully someone from the government side is going to be able to tell me why it is that we're moving a time allocation motion today so that we can't deal with the legitimate concerns that have been raised.

The first concern is coming from the Ontario Provincial Synod, the Anglican Church of Canada. The representative who contacted us is Rev Harry Huskins, whom I know quite well, whom my colleague from Sault Ste Marie knows quite well, whom the minister would know, because, as he says in his letter, there were a number of members of faith communities who "met with the minister and his senior policy advisors" on November 20, a Wednesday morning, "before he introduced the bill later that day...."

"We told the minister that we supported the intention in the bill of furthering consumer protection, but have concerns about the board of a new authority making decisions that would have inadvertent consequences for religious communities."

Here are the consequences: "the imposition of new charges, fees or levies for our small congregations, mosques, synagogues and parishes; the imposition of new administrative burdens or personnel qualification requirements on the volunteers who are now doing the paperwork in these small places; and any provision which would lead to new property taxation."

The letter goes on:

"On the question of costs, whether they be new taxation or as a result of the need for a self-financing authority to raise revenue, we fear"—that's the faith communities—"that the result will be that many of our small operations which barely make their budget from year to year will feel themselves forced to use the abandonment provision and transfer their cemeteries to the local municipality."

Hon Mr Hudak: No.

Ms Martel: I hear the minister saying no. I think I heard him say no. I don't know why he's saying no and it won't happen. Harry Huskins, I've got to tell you, is not a partisan individual by any stretch of the imagination. He's not. This wasn't just his point of view being put forward. The letter makes it clear that this was the perspective put forward to the minister in a meeting involving a number of faith communities. So it's not just him.

Let me go on:

"Over the years local volunteers have and continue to put hundreds of thousands of volunteer hours and dollars into these small cemeteries. Abandonment would mean that this work would now have to be done by paid municipal employees along with the administrative work required. We do not believe that any marginal increase in tax revenues could offset these costs nor that the good of the local community would be furthered by this."

I think he's right.

"The minister"—he can tell us if this is true or not—"seemed receptive to the idea that the use of an exemption threshold would prevent these problems. It is a mechanism that works successfully in similar contexts. We are suggesting that any cemetery having less than 100 burials a year be exempted from any new charges or administrative burdens such as the licensing and examination of the volunteers who are now doing this work well."

The letter says the minister seemed to be receptive.

"It is my impression, from the meeting, that the exemption threshold has been accepted as a sensible solution to the problem, but that there will be pressure from other sectors to set this substantially lower. We feel that a lower threshold would defeat the whole purpose of using this mechanism."

The second point:

"On the question of governance, it is my impression that the minister understood the need for some ongoing

form of consultation with the faith communities on matters the authority would be dealing with. We would prefer that the sectorization of the board we have suggested be put into place. I think the minister would prefer to use a faith communities advisory committee with at least the chair of the committee sitting on the board.”

I thought those were two reasonable suggestions. They gather that you were amenable to that too, but I don't think the changes have come forward. The problem is, with your time allocation motion, there's no opportunity for these sensible solutions to come forward. There isn't, right? So why don't you do the easy, quick and sensible thing? Have some committee, have some amendments, put the amendments and resolve these concerns. I don't think these are outrageous requests. They are far from being outrageous requests, and they represent the requests not just of one particular faith but of the many faith communities that met with the minister on November 20.

I say to the minister, do yourself a favour; make these people happy. It's going to be easy to make them happy—reasonable requests. Have some committee time, bring in some amendments, get it done.

1700

Let me deal with the next group. This is a group of people, the next one—Mr Martin, you'll agree with this—that are big supporters of the government. You would think they would want to do something to respond to their concerns. This is a letter we have from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. Minister, they're more likely to be your friends than mine. They wrote you a letter September 20:

“Dear Minister Hudak:”

They say in the first paragraph that they “appreciated the opportunity to participate over the last 19 months in the Bereavement Sector Advisory Committee....”

“As you will know, CFIB has advocated consistently in support of a framework that will enhance fair competition in the industry, including the choice of independent service providers and open, honest communications from all players. This is the best method of ensuring protection for consumers when they are coping with the loss of a loved one and are at their most vulnerable.”

This is the key: “We have reviewed the draft legislation, with the benefit of attending MCBS's final technical briefing on August 30, 2002. Our reading of the legislation is that there are areas where it does not respect the agreement of principles put forth by the” committee “to your predecessor on November 23, 2001. As a consequence, we are worried that the future viability of independent operations in the bereavement sector will be threatened, ultimately putting consumers at risk.” This is their letter to you.

Hon Mr Hudak: How come you're reading that one? The other one was better.

Ms Martel: I'm not done yet.

“CFIB is concerned about the following deficiencies in the final product.” Five points; stay with me.

“1. Lack of ‘level playing field’ on taxes—while private sector funeral homes, monument builders, transfer operators, and retailers are subject to the full range of taxes levied by governments, municipal cemeterians engaging in these businesses are not.”

Minister, don't leave. You want to hear what your friends at CFIB are telling you. Come on.

“The proposed ‘payment in lieu’ of property taxes ... is to be returned dollar for dollar to the municipal cemeteries, ostensibly for ‘care and maintenance’—this without any accounting for the disposition of the money.

“2. Restrictive practices—cemeteries may continue to use bylaws and other practices akin to tied selling to shut out competition (eg, cemetery bylaw conferring exclusive right to install foundations, restriction of information available to monument builders concerning recent burials etc) and other techniques (eg, so-called ‘free’ courtesy markers tied to the subsequent purchase of a monument) in order to grab business.

“3. Municipalities using their local government power to serve their own commercial interests—municipal ‘land-use planning’ powers permit cemetery expansion (including expropriation), approval of crematoria, approval of funeral homes etc. This a clear conflict when the local government can arrange things to serve their commercial interests in competitive businesses.

“4. Operators of existing ‘visitation centres’ on cemetery property and existing crematoria are being rewarded through a ‘grandfathering’ arrangement....”

This is what they say. This is their letter of September 20, 2002—look here—from Melanie Currie, policy analyst, Canadian Federation of Independent Business.

Hon Mr Hudak: Melanie is wrong.

Ms Martel: Melanie has it wrong. Melanie, I hope you're watching. The minister says you have it wrong. I hope this will generate another letter to you, Minister.

“4.So-called visitation centres operating as unregulated funeral sites confer an ongoing benefit to those who chose to break the rules. Crematoria will also be granted a continued five-year reprieve from taxes, a clear advantage over any new business proposed.”

“5. Consumer protection through information. It is imperative that consumers be made aware of their rights and interment options regardless of the point of entry.

“We hope and trust that these matters are addressed in the legislation, regulations, and policy.”

Those are their concerns. Minister, look. Get it to committee. Your friends—because really, they're more your friends than mine. It's true. Your friends are going to come in and you can address their concerns. Why don't you want to do that? It would be so easy; it would be so simple. It would be done. Right? You could say to them, “We listened to your concerns; we agree the principles have been agreed to.”

Mr Beaubien: How many more have you got?

Ms Martel: One more. I've got one more. Do it for your friends, if no one else.

Now, Minister, here's the last one. This was an Alert that was sent out November 21, 2002, from the Associ-

ation of Municipalities of Ontario. Here we go. This was an advisory to all their members:

“On November 23, 2001, Bereavement Sector Advisory committee ... submitted its report to the Minister of Consumer and Business Services. The report offered a number of recommendations aimed at meeting the minister’s objectives, claiming it had broad consensus from committee members. However”—this is the key point, Minister—“municipal representatives on the committee have indicated that a broad consensus does not exist and a number of recommendations have the potential to negatively impact municipalities.”

This is not what I’m saying. This is a copy of Alert, dated November 21, 2002, sent from the Association of Municipalities of Ontario to all its members.

It says, again, that “municipal representatives on the committee have indicated that a broad consensus does not exist and a number of recommendations have the potential to negatively impact municipalities.”

What are they? Let me read them into the record: “For instance, the recommendations to establish municipalities as the social safety net for cemeteries; failure to guarantee municipalities the necessary financial tools to meet the financial liabilities of abandoned cemeteries; creates an uneven playing field in favour of the other industry participants; forces municipalities to tax themselves and redirect the funds to a bereavement fund instead of municipal revenues; create tax incentives for the creation of additional cemeteries, which will increase the potential number of abandoned cemeteries; and create market conditions that are unfavourable to consumers.”

“AMO met with the ministry in late October and expressed municipal concerns with some of the proposed directions. Ministry staff”—

Hon Mr Hudak: They met me too.

Ms Martel: They don’t say that yet. Oh, here it is: “After meeting with the minister....” I’m getting there.

“Ministry staff indicated that it would be unlikely that all municipal concerns would be addressed and that municipalities should remain part of the process to protect the proposed changes or risk keeping the ‘status quo’ in place.” That’s a bit of a gun to your head, that little sentiment there, I thought. “Discussions with municipal cemetery operators revealed that keeping ‘status quo’ was more favourable to municipalities than implementing the proposed changes in the BSAC report.” I repeat, “Discussions with municipal cemetery operators revealed that keeping ‘status quo’ was more favourable.”

“After meeting with the minister and by letter of November 12, 2002, to the Minister of Consumer and Business Services, AMO reiterated municipal opposition on the matter of allowing a single regulatory body among other matters. AMO also requested to continue working with the province to address issues of taxation of crematoriums, visitation centres, funeral homes and the establishment of mandatory care and maintenance funds for cemeteries, scattering grounds and columbariums.”

At the bottom, under the title “Action,” “Second reading is expected next week.” Bear in mind this was

sent out November 21. “AMO will be requesting changes to Bill 209 based on the issues that have been advanced to the ministry on previous occasions.” I repeat, “AMO will be requesting changes to Bill 209 based on the issues that have” already been announced.

AMO, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business and the faith communities aren’t going to see any changes, because the government today brings a time allocation motion that effectively shuts down debate, shuts down committee hearings and shuts down the potential for amendments that would resolve many of those concerns.

I don’t understand why the government is doing that. Clearly, there’s been a lot of work done. Clearly, with a little bit more work, I think that the government can resolve these problems, that there can be some agreement and that the government could come forward and say, “We have unanimity. We have a consensus. We have our stakeholders who are pleased to be supportive of this bill.”

As I conclude, I say to the minister, there you go. There are some of the concerns. They’re now on the public record. As this bill goes through without any changes, those are things you’ll have to deal with.

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): Although I’m glad to be speaking, I’m also saddened to stand up again and speak to another motion by this government to shut down debate. It’s another closure motion, which basically means that the people of Ontario, who have had little opportunity, with no public hearings, no changes to this bill—they’re closing down debate. This government has closed off more debate by closure motions and by what they call time allocation than any government in the history of this province. With almost every bill, there is no allowance for public hearings or any kind of input. They just ram this through like they’ve rammed everything else through.

1710

We know now why they like these closure motions. Because they don’t want the public to know what they’re doing. They don’t want to hear from ordinary people who may be concerned about the high cost of dying in this province. In the city of Toronto, never mind owning a home or renting a home—the cost of finding a place for your loved one is exorbitant. You basically are captive to these big funeral operators—not so much the funeral operators; I should say the owners of these cemeteries that are charging anywhere from \$7,000 to \$25,000 for a plot. I don’t know how many seniors can really make a choice or how many families can make a choice at that time, when you need all the support you can get and you have to come up with this money, not only for the plot but also for the funeral service.

So it is a very expensive thing that you have to face. You have no choice. It’s a captive audience. I really wonder, if they happen to live in the city of Toronto where there is limited real estate for cemetery use, where poor people can go, where they can be buried. I see no protection in this legislation for those who don’t have the

money to be buried in Mount Pleasant, who can't afford that kind of money. Where do they go? What protections are there to get some kind of decent burial at an affordable price? That's not in the bill. I don't see it.

I would think that for a consumer minister there would be something in here that would allow for a reasonably priced burial that wasn't escalating like the price of real estate is in Toronto. I'm not sure if it's the same in other parts, I guess in rural Ontario there may be more affordable spaces, but if your family is in a city like Toronto you want to be, hopefully, buried there so that they could visit and pay their respects. That is almost becoming a pipe dream in cities like Toronto. You can't even be buried in the town you worked in, the place where you raised your family. You can't even afford, as I said, to have this last bit of respect for your loved one.

It is really getting totally out of control. That's why I thought in this bill there is an opportunity as we're updating the funeral act. I can see there was something the minister had to do, but the big gap I see in it is the fact that there is very little protection. I really don't know what to tell people. Where do they go? If you live in Toronto, you can't afford to get a decent place to be buried. It's strange enough that you have to have a mortgage on your house for your whole life; then you have to get a mortgage on your children when you die. That's what people are being subjected to. This seems to be something the government doesn't want to provide for or look after. I don't really know that there is something in this bill that would at least say to people, "We're going to look into that and see if we can get some affordable places to be buried." I know it's something we don't like to talk about, but that's certainly one of the striking things that I saw in terms of this Bill 209.

I would hope that one of these days we'll come to grips with that. Seniors all over this province are very worried about what is happening. They're getting caught back on their pensions, their nursing home fees have gone up 15%, they're having a hard time paying hydro bills, and then they have this looming black cloud, wondering whether they can afford to be buried in the community where they lived. So there are many, many pressures on seniors.

I noticed in the Provincial Auditor's report, which was a damning condemnation of this government, nursing homes. There was a lady on CBC Radio this morning, a former nurse, who said that her mother was given only one bath a week and that there was no nursing care; it was a nursing attendant. The Provincial Auditor said that the place they inspected had no licences. Can you imagine? If you have a restaurant, or an ordinary store and you're selling shoes, you have to have a licence. You've got nursing homes all over this province without licences. So seniors at every turn are the forgotten ones in Ontario. This is an independent person who at least came to bat for seniors and nursing homes, Erik Peters, the Provincial Auditor, who this government is trying to slam and condemn because he had the guts and the integrity to tell the truth about this government that spent \$676

million. Imagine how many seniors you could help to live out their last years with respect with the \$676 million they gave to high-priced consultants who got blank-cheque contracts. For those people there's money. To help seniors who are looking for an affordable place to die or an affordable place to live in a nursing home or seniors' housing, there's never any money. For consultants, \$2,600 a day—how much is that a year? Millions.

You're paying these consultants a million dollars. To do what? Who on God's earth should get \$2,600 a day? And they even get it without tendered contracts. It's just given; it's a gift. That's the type of thing that makes seniors very upset when they're crying for a little bit of care in a nursing home, asking for an extra bath a week and saying, "Why do you have to increase my nursing home costs by 15%? You tell me you have no money for nursing homes, yet you've got money for consultants"—\$676 million given out by this government. That is incredible. It is an abuse like we've never seen.

In the history of this province there has never been a government that spent 676 million taxpayers' dollars on blank-cheque contracts for their consultant friends. I cannot understand why a government that claims to be looking after people is really looking after their high-priced friends when it comes down to it, according to the Provincial Auditor. That's who they're looking after. No wonder people are angry and frustrated and cynical about government. If they pick up the auditor's report and then look at this bill before us that's about to be closed down for debate, they'll know why you want to close down debate all the time. They don't want you to know out there in Ontario that they are spending 676 million of your dollars for these high-priced consultants, who are doing what with that money?

The government will not give us their names. They won't release the untendered contracts. They're trying to hide that from you, because they don't want you to know how they spent your \$676 million on their friends' contracts so they can spin or advise—who knows what they do for all that money? What does a person do to deserve \$2,600 a day? That is the question the ministers and Premier Eves can't answer. They try to defend this as something about doing business—"Oh yeah, we fired people." Well, they fire them, and then they bring them back as consultants and pay them twice as much.

No wonder there's no money to help seniors live in dignity in the last years of their lives so they don't have to go begging and don't have to go into debt. Instead, what they get from this government is, "Seniors have to tighten their belts. Seniors have to walk three miles to get oil on sale, or something." But their consultant friends get limos and expense accounts plus \$2,600 a day. Could you imagine what a senior could do on \$2,600 a month? But this government doesn't care about hard-working seniors who have paid taxes, sacrificed, saved, built this province with their sweat, bare hands and toil. They get no consideration.

That's why, when you see this bill before us that talks about respecting funerals, burials and cremations, as I

said, there's no consideration of the fact that a lot of seniors get to the point at the end of their life where they're worried about who's going to pay for a place to be decently buried, who's going to pay for a proper funeral. All these things worry them sick. That's the kind of real gut things that go on in this province. But the only gut this government is worried about is feeding their fat friends who are getting \$676 million in untendered contracts for consulting. If that isn't a disgraceful thing for this government to do, or any government to do—we've never, ever seen a justification for that. Every day in this House they are going to try to justify these fat contracts for their fat friends. They are going to say they deserve \$2,600 a day. What kind of advice is worth \$2,600 a day, especially in light of the fact that they've got a civil servant they just fired who was doing the same work for an amount of maybe \$20 an hour or \$10 an hour? No; they've got to bring in a consultant who gets paid \$2,600 a day.

1720

This is not the opposition saying it; this is the Provincial Auditor. It's probably the most damning Provincial Auditor's report in recent history. It slammed this government, department after department, where there's systemic abuse of taxpayers' dollars: systemic abuse, not just one ministry. Ministry after ministry is basically giving out contracts. It's like writing a cheque to anyone who asks for it to do this consulting work. It is an incredible abuse, especially when, as I said, we've got seniors who are wondering if they are going to have enough money at the end of the month to be able to pay for their food, to pay the hydro bill, never mind—they don't even buy clothes any more.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): On a point of order, Mr Speaker, I seek unanimous consent for the following:

That consideration of government notice of motion number 80 be suspended; and

That the House will resolve into committee of the whole House for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 198, notwithstanding the order of the House dated November 21, 2002; and

That the Chair of the committee of the whole House shall immediately put every question necessary to dispose of the clause-by-clause stage of the bill without debate or amendment, except that each party may speak for five minutes on part XXV. All questions shall be decided by voice vote, with no recorded divisions pursuant to standing order 29; and

That, when the committee of the whole House reports Bill 198 back to the House, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report of the committee of the whole House without debate or amendment, and at such time all of the terms and conditions of the order of the House dated November 21, 2002, shall apply and the order for second reading of Bill 198 may be called today; and

That, at the conclusion of this process, the House shall resume consideration of government notice of motion

number 80, and the time then remaining to 5:50 pm shall be used proportionately.

The Acting Speaker: Mr Stockwell has asked for unanimous consent. Agreed? Agreed.

House in committee of the whole.

KEEPING THE PROMISE
FOR A STRONG ECONOMY ACT
(BUDGET MEASURES), 2002

LOI DE 2002 SUR LE RESPECT
DE L'ENGAGEMENT D'ASSURER
UNE ÉCONOMIE SAINTE
(MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

Consideration of Bill 198, An Act to implement Budget measures and other initiatives of the Government / Projet de loi 198, Loi mettant en oeuvre certaines mesures budgétaires et d'autres initiatives du gouvernement.

The First Deputy Chair (Mr Michael A. Brown): I am now required to put all the questions related to this bill.

Shall parts I through XXIV carry? All in favour will say "aye." All opposed will say "nay." In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Parts I through XXIV are carried.

On part XXV, we've agreed to five minutes of debate from each of the three parties.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): What we are doing is amending a government budget bill, and what we're doing is what Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberal Party have been calling for for the last month: repealing the pension sections of this budget bill to treat working people in this province fairly.

George Smitherman has led the charge on this. He brought people from all over Ontario. On three occasions, George Smitherman asked this government to do what we're doing tonight, and they refused; they absolutely refused. This is a government caving in on its own budget bill. This is a whole part of the bill, part XXV. There are 12 sections of the budget bill. What the government is saying is that it doesn't even have confidence in its own ability to deliver a budget that's fair to working people in this province.

George Smitherman said this a month ago, and I will repeat it. He asked this House to go into committee of the whole on three occasions—three occasions—to remove these sections of the bill. What did the government say? They said no.

The Minister of Finance stood in her place in response to my colleague George Smitherman and told him that he was all wet. What are we doing now? Precisely what he said we should do.

The leader of the opposition, Dalton McGuinty, stood in this House two short weeks ago and demanded this of the Premier, demanded this of the Minister of Finance. Did they do it then? No. No, they didn't. But now they heed the warning.

There must be an election coming. They must have been getting more e-mails and letters than we were, from all over the province—from London, from Peterborough, from their own ridings—because you cannot attack pensioners and working people the way this government attempted to. It was unfair, wrong. George Smitherman and Dalton McGuinty pointed that out to you, and now you are withdrawing it.

Do you know what else is sad about this whole process? They time-allocated this bill on November 21. What does that mean? It means they stopped debate, they wouldn't allow committee hearings, they wouldn't allow third reading debate: the normal parliamentary processes that would have allowed the Legislature to deal with this appropriately and might have prevented the government from having some of the egg they have on their face tonight.

This is a flip-flop of almost unprecedented proportion. They are backing off from a fundamental part of their own budget. What an irony: the very day the Minister of Finance is giving an economic update, which updates us on her projections in the budget, we are faced with withdrawing the major portion of the government's budget bill—non-confidence in itself.

This means we should have an election sooner rather than later. There is no leadership. There is no direction. There is no understanding of the issues that working people in this province live with day in and day out. It was Dalton McGuinty and George Smitherman who led the charge on this, because they recognize the importance of this to working people.

So we supported this process, coming into committee of the whole tonight, to allow the government to essentially undo, remove, take out the major portion of its own budget bill. The government is acknowledging and paying witness to the fact that they don't even have confidence in their own ability to deliver a budget. On the very day of their economic statement, they withdraw the major section of the bill.

This is a victory for working people. This is a victory for people who stood up for their pension rights so that no large employer could go in and take out the surpluses unilaterally.

Make no mistake: this is a huge defeat for Ernie Eves and the rest of the crew on the Titanic, because this government is withdrawing a key component of its budget bill. It is rudderless, it is leaderless, and there is an alternative. There is an alternative that has put forward progressive, forward policies on education. It's Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberal Party. There is an alternative that will give fair and good government to this province, that will balance all of our interests, and that's Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberal Party.

It's time for an election when a government withdraws its own bill. Let's go to the people. I am confident they will choose Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberals in the next provincial election.

1730

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): I've got five minutes to run through a litany of government

errors in judgment here. But before I get into the government errors in judgment, I want to take people back to events that actually happened 20 years ago.

People in the labour movement will know about this. People in the labour movement will know when Conrad Black purchased Dominion stores, not because he knew how to run a supermarket chain—the guy didn't even know how to run a fruit stand. He wasn't interested in running Dominion stores; he wanted to get his hands on Dominion stores and shut the operation down, because he realized there was a pension surplus. He literally bought the store chain to get at the pension surplus. He literally bought the store chain because he recognized he could pick up an awful lot of money by shutting down the pension plan, winding it down and taking the surplus.

As a result of Mr Conrad Black's nefarious activity, there were a number of court decisions in the 1980s pointing out that pension funds should not be open to raiding by employers; that employers shouldn't simply be able to close down the operation and then take the pension surplus that might result. Legislation was actually introduced and regulations were passed to that effect.

There has been a body of judicial decisions over the last 20 years that points more and more in the direction that workers, the people who have contributed to the pension plan, should have greater control over the pension plan and certainly should have greater control should there be a windup of the pension plan and a surplus result, or if there should be a surplus from time to time. After all, it's their money. It's their deferred wages.

But along comes the Conservative government this fall, and in this legislation not only would they have permitted the Conrad Black scenario again—where another nefarious employer could come in, take over an operation, shut it down and make off with the pension surplus—they actually wanted to take the law back even further than that. They wanted to give employers the capacity to look at a pension fund and, if there was an apparent surplus from time to time, reach in and take the apparent surplus, no matter what it might do to the pension fund in the longer term.

Let's call this what it would have been, or what the government tried to do: it would be pension robbery. It would be literally taking money away from those hard-working people who have contributed to their own pension and their retirement fund. It would be stealing money from people who are retired and who also have an interest in a surplus that might result in the pension fund.

This government was asked time and time again to sever this from the legislation, to sever these amendments and get rid of them. Their first excuse was that they couldn't sever. Well, what are we doing here today? We're severing it; something the government initially said they couldn't do.

I want to pay particular tribute here to those working men and women who have forced this government to back off, forced this government to do what it said it couldn't do. In particular, I want to pay tribute to Gilles Bisson, the member for Timmins-James Bay, who on

November 5, along with my colleague Peter Kormos, raised this issue. I want to pay particular attention to the president of the Ontario Federation of Labour, Wayne Samuelson, who on November 8 came here to the Legislature and held a press conference with my colleague to let the whole world know what kind of pension theft was taking place. I want to pay tribute to a couple of the Liberals who got on the bandwagon a couple of weeks later, after we made it an issue; Liberals who got on the bandwagon two weeks late, after they had discovered that someone had made it an issue.

This is a victory for the labour community, this is a victory for the trade union community, a victory for the OFL, a victory for those hard-working women and men across this province who let this government know that they would not put up with it. As a result, we see the government backing down, we see the government forced to do the right thing.

Interjections.

The First Deputy Chair: Order. Further debate.

Mr Marcel Beaubien (Lambton-Kent-Middlesex): It's a pleasure for me to rise and make a few comments with regard to Bill 198, An Act to implement Budget measures and other initiatives of the Government.

I must point out that there seems to be an awful lot of confusion on the other side of the House. First of all, the Liberals get up and take credit for the government removing the thing. Then I hear that the NDP are the ones who should be commended for eliminating part XXV. If I were to observe from this side, I probably would have to side with the NDP, because I think they were the first ones to bring this issue to the House. I think the Liberals were asleep at the wheel.

One thing I would like to point out is that when the bill was introduced—this bill has quite a few sections, I must admit; there are many issues that we deal with, but—

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): Flip-flop.

Mr Beaubien: —we're always accused of flip-flopping.

The First Deputy Chair: The member for Hamilton East.

Mr Beaubien: Who is calling the kettle black here? I think they should look in the mirror on the other side of the House.

We did consult with people prior to introducing the bill. People had some concerns once the bill was introduced, and we listened to the people. Consequently, we're reacting. If you want to call this a flip-flop, go right ahead. I think this is responsible government that we are showing today. We're not afraid to face you people at any time, anywhere.

With regard to the bill, let's look at some of the other issues we are dealing with. We're dealing with tax incentive zones. You people on the other side of the House today were asking questions about the economic activity in Ontario. We're trying to do something in order to encourage economic development in some areas that are somewhat economically challenged. I'm sure the

member for Sault Ste Marie would support this type of motion. I know the member for Kingston and the Islands has a lot of difficulty supporting anything because all the good ideas come from that particular corner of the House.

With regard to the leader of the third party, he mentioned consultation. At least we have the guts to react when we listen to our constituents. I would ask you, when you introduced the social contract a few years ago, did you really listen to the people of Ontario? I don't think so. Maybe one or two individuals on that side, but there were not too many people.

So with this in mind, there is no doubt that we talked about not proclaiming part XXV of the bill, and consequently, if we're not going to proclaim it, I don't see anything wrong with taking it out of the bill. If you on the other side of the House consider that a major flip-flop, I don't think the electorate of the province will consider that a major flip-flop, because it is not. It is a concern they expressed to us—not only to me. I've had the opportunity to meet with labour leaders, with individual corporations in my riding, and some people had some concerns. There's no doubt that when there is concern, as a responsible government you should respond to the concerns of the people out there.

1740

The First Deputy Chair: Order. Shall part XXV of the bill carry? All in favour will say "aye." All opposed will say "nay." In my opinion, the nays have it. The motion is declared lost.

Shall parts XXVI through XXX of the bill carry? All in favour will say "aye." All opposed will say "nay." In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Shall schedule A of the bill carry? All in favour will say "aye." All opposed will say "nay." In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Shall schedule B of the bill carry? All in favour will say "aye." All opposed will say "nay." In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Shall the title carry? All in favour will say "aye." All opposed will say "nay." In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Shall the bill, as amended, carry? All in favour will say "aye." All opposed will say "nay." In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Shall I report the bill to the House? All in favour will say "aye." All opposed will say "nay." In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): Mr Chair, I move that we rise and report.

The First Deputy Chair: Shall the motion carry? All in favour will say "aye." All opposed will say "nay." In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Mr Speaker, The committee of the whole begs to report one bill with certain amendments and asks leave to sit again.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): Shall the report be received and adopted? All in favour will say

“aye.” All opposed will say “nay.” In my opinion the ayes have it.

TIME ALLOCATION

(continued)

The Acting Speaker: According to the unanimous consent that we had agreed to, we will now divide the time—

Hon Mr Stockwell: Mr Speaker, I think I can get consent that whatever time is remaining will be used first by the third party, then whatever is left will be used by us and at 5:50 the normal vote proceedings take place.

The Acting Speaker: Agreed? Agreed.

The member for Timmins-James Bay.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I have a whole three minutes. I want to say that now that I have an opportunity to speak I want to talk about pension—no, I want to talk about funeral legislation.

I first of all want to bemoan the fact that yet again we find ourselves in a situation—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Order. I need to be able to hear the member for Timmins-James Bay, and I really need your assistance so that we can conduct the remaining part of this afternoon with some degree of civility. The member for Timmins-James Bay.

Mr Bisson: I'll try that again. I was just saying that I yet again want to bemoan the fact that we have another time allocation in the House. Everything the government does, there's hardly a bill—I think there's not a bill in the House that has come before us that hasn't been time-allocated. At committee, we have the same thing. We have a process that we go through. For example, my good friend Marilyn Churley and I sat on two different committees today by way of time allocation. Here we are trying to deal with important bills, one on water privatization, mine having to do with consumer protection and a second bill on water privatization, and the government says, “We're going to do this by time allocation.” So when my good friend Marilyn Churley tries to put forward some decent amendments to strengthen the bill, what have we got? We have a government that doesn't even give them the chance—not even a chance—to introduce the amendments. Why? Because the government time-allocates the bill. When I was in committee this morning trying to introduce amendments in regard to what was happening with consumer protection, we were again constrained by a time allocation motion. I've got to say—

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): It's a joke.

Mr Bisson: —not only is it a joke, it's really a disservice to the public. We're supposed to come to this House as honourable members from the government and opposition sides and try to strengthen legislation and to make proper decisions for the constituents we represent. But here's a government that by way of decree, of time

allocation motion, says, “You're going to have basically three days of second reading of a bill. On the fourth day of the bill, we're going to have a time allocation debate,” as we're having today, and if the government is really good, they'll time-allocate a little bit of committee time. They'll certainly time-allocate the time at clause-by-clause to be able to amend the bill.

I say there's no opportunity to deal with the committee when it comes to these bills. For example, on this particular bill having to do with funeral directors, there's no committee time. I have in my hand here about five letters from different organizations, everything from my good friends at the Federation of Independent Business to people from the Ontario Provincial Synod and other people: the chambers of commerce of the communities of, I think this is—it's not Timmins. I thought it was one of mine; I grabbed somebody else's. The opportunity is not there for those progressive organizations like the Federation of Independent Business to present their amendments to the House. So friends of ours didn't get a chance to speak, and I want to, for once, defend the independent business federation and say, “You didn't get a chance because this government time-allocated yet another bill.”

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Energy, minister responsible for francophone affairs): I think an important part of the debate is actually making a decision. That's why I'm pleased that this motion for time allocation will allow us to move forward to an important part of the political process, which is actually to vote and to make a decision and to find out where people stand. I know having to come to a decision and take a stand is frightening to many members of the opposition. It's not hard for the New Democrats, because they know where they stand. When we vote on things, it's interesting to know where the Liberals stand. They may have changed their mind; I don't know.

Interjection.

Hon Mr Baird: Particularly the member from Hamilton will have to decide where he stands.

I think there are a whole lot of people around Ontario who are supporting this legislation. I know John Cole from my constituency, who operates a funeral services establishment, has written to Minister Hudak. Let me read the letter, if I could. Oh, this is actually from Laurie Cole, who is the president of Cole Funeral Services.

“As the president of a family-owned funeral home, I am writing to thank and congratulate you on the introduction of Bill 209....

“As you know the industry has been seeking changes to existing legislation for some time now and speaking for my own company [we support] your efforts entirely....

“In closing, I am looking forward to implementing these new changes, thus enabling us to offer the families we serve more choices for funeral, burial and cremation services.”

It's signed by Laurie Cole, the president of Cole Funeral Services.

John Cole, whom I mentioned, who is an outstanding business person in Ottawa and someone who has made a tremendous contribution to our community with Pinecrest Remembrance Services, writes to Minister Hudak that he is also in support of this legislation.

There are still others from eastern Ontario, such as Brent Irvine of Irvine Funeral Home and Chapel in Brockville, Ontario. That's good news, and he certainly supports this important piece of legislation.

There are very many more: from the Simple Alternative Funeral Centres in Toronto, Ontario. There's Eileen Fitzpatrick, the president of Canadian Memorial Services, and they are supporting this important legislation.

This motion allows us to move from debate into decision mode. That's something that's welcomed not just by Minister Hudak but by Jon Clancy, who has been working very hard on this piece of legislation, who wants some information; and Paula Day, who has been working very hard today at the House to ensure—

Hon Tim Hudak (Minister of Consumer and Business Services): And big Al MacDermid.

Hon Mr Baird: Big Al MacDermid, the minister from Niagara says.

So I look forward to finding out where people stand on this issue. Let's get on with the debate. Let's pass this bill at second reading and move on to other important initiatives for the people of Ontario, like the hydro bill, which we hope to call this evening, where we can cap hydro prices for consumers in Ontario.

The Acting Speaker: That completes the time allocated for debate.

Mr Hudak has moved government notice of motion number 80. 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 1750 to 1800.

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

Ayes

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

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

Nays

Agostino, Dominic	Curling, Alvin	Martel, Shelley
Bartolucci, Rick	Di Cocco, Caroline	Martin, Tony
Bisson, Gilles	Dombrowsky, Leona	McMeekin, Ted
Bountrogianni, Marie	Duncan, Dwight	Patten, Richard
Boyer, Claudette	Gerretsen, John	Peters, Steve
Bradley, James J.	Gravelle, Michael	Phillips, Gerry
Bryant, Michael	Hoy, Pat	Prue, Michael
Caplan, David	Kennedy, Gerard	Ramsay, David
Christopherson, David	Kormos, Peter	Ruprecht, Tony
Churley, Marilyn	Kwinter, Monte	Smitherman, George
Colle, Mike	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sorbara, Greg
Cordiano, Joseph	Levac, David	
Crozier, Bruce	Marchese, Rosario	

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 50; the nays are 37.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

It being past 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 6:45 of the clock.

The House adjourned at 1803.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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

Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Gary Carr

Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers

Deputy Clerk / sous-greffière: Deborah Deller

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

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

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

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

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

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

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