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**Official Report  
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**Journal  
des débats  
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**Tuesday 20 May 2003**

**Mardi 20 mai 2003**

Speaker  
Honourable Gary Carr

Président  
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 20 May 2003

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 20 mai 2003

*The House met at 1330.*

*Prayers.*

HOLLY JONES

**Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I seek unanimous consent to allow this House to observe a moment of silence in honour of Holly Jones.

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

Would all members and our friends in the gallery please rise for a moment of silence.

*The House observed a moment's silence.*

**The Speaker:** I thank all members, and members in the gallery as well.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** I seek unanimous consent to conclude the current debate, in light of the fact that 63,500 schoolchildren are currently not in school, and I seek unanimous consent that the question be now put.

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

### CONTEMPT OF PARLIAMENT

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 15, 2003, on the amendment to the amendment to the motion by Mr Conway arising from the Speaker's ruling of May 8, 2003.

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** I spoke on this subject a couple of days before the two amendments were put to indicate that there is example after example out there across this province of communities that are being negatively hammered because of the attitude of contempt by this government to this Legislature and, in turn, to the people it serves across this province, and to indicate that not only are communities suffering, but individuals are suffering and so are small businesses and industries across the province.

At that point, I spoke at some length about the small town of Wawa, north of Sault Ste Marie—where I grew up—that is being affected very negatively by this government's single-minded effort to deregulate and privatize the delivery of hydro to the citizens of this province. I talked about the impact of that decision on the everyday lives of those citizens and their attempts to get in touch with and speak to the Minister of Energy or to any government official in an elected capacity about this and their failure to do so—the failure of the government to

respond, the arrogant attitude of the government in front of a community that's on the precipice of disappearing if something isn't done to set up a meeting and talk to them about these very real and important issues that affect them on a day-to-day basis. That's a crisis as big and as difficult and as challenging as any crisis that has faced the city of Toronto, for example, most recently the crisis of SARS, where the government walked in here and tabled a bill and within a matter of a day resources began to flow, people began to meet with people, issues were talked about and resolved, and money is being spent. The town of Wawa can't even get a meeting with the minister who is directly responsible for the regulation or oversight of the way we deliver electricity in this province.

In the short time I have here today, I want to share with you that it's not just me who is concerned about this. There are people across Algoma, across northern Ontario, and as they begin to hear about it across this province, more and more are becoming concerned about the impact this decision to regulate and privatize hydro is having on the town of Wawa and the area of Algoma served by Great Lakes Power.

I think it's important as well for people out there who may be listening today to understand whom the government is in cahoots with as it rains this damage on this small community. It's a company called Brascan Corp, which owns Great Lakes Power. Here's an article out of a newspaper of April 30, when Brascan released its first-quarter profit information. It says here, "Brascan Looks at Power Business as Biggest Opportunity for Growth: Firm Posts Q1 Profit of \$56 Million US."

A big chunk of that money was taken directly out of the pockets of the people of Wawa and those areas of Algoma served by Great Lakes Power.

It says here that Brascan "sees great growth potential in the power-generation business and is looking for more acquisitions in Canada and the United States.

"Brascan spent \$650 million Cdn on 16 hydroelectric plants last year and will continue to build that part of its business, which presents Brascan with its 'biggest opportunity.'"

I suggest that one of their biggest opportunities is out there as they eye the pocketbooks and bank accounts and pocket change of the people of Wawa.

"While the US utility industry is in turmoil, that may provide Brascan with a chance to get good assets at a good price....

"We think, longer-term, that this business is very high quality and will produce the types of returns and the type

of stability in cash flows that is a great business for us to be invested in'....

"Brascan is one of Canada's oldest conglomerates, with controlling stakes in such well-known companies as metals giant Noranda Inc, lumber producer Nexfor, real estate developer Brookfield Properties, Brascan Power and Brascan Financial, owner of the Royal Lepage real estate brokerage. It also owns Great Lakes Power Ltd."

In this article about the profits Brascan is making, there isn't one reference to the damage it's doing to the people, to the town of Wawa and to its customers all over the Algoma area.

People have to understand that Wawa is slowly but surely becoming the clearest, purest face of privatized, deregulated hydro in this province. It may be happening to Wawa today, but it could be in your backyard tomorrow. In Sault Ste Marie we had a contract with Great Lakes Power, which gave us a preferred rate for hydro, that has now been cancelled. There has been no new agreement on that rate, and so, come the end of this year we in Sault Ste Marie will be facing the same scenario that Wawa is facing. Our industries and businesses will be facing the same high costs. I suggest that towns, cities and communities across this province will be facing this very difficult challenge in the very near future if they're not already facing it.

It behooves all of us to sit up and take notice and pay attention to what's happening in Wawa, because Wawa is becoming known, as well, as the first community to stand up and resist the agenda of this government to deregulate and privatize hydro. They brought together a group of citizens, who said, "If this is what it's going to cost us for our power, if Brascan is going to get away with this and the government won't talk to us about some resolution or answer to this challenge or dilemma for our community, then we're just not going to pay. But we're not going to keep the money ourselves; we're going to pay what we owe in trust. We're working with the municipal council to pass a resolution to that end."

**1340**

They were about to do that up until last week, when Great Lakes Power, under the pressure of that possibility, blinked, backed down ever so slightly and decided to give a little bit of relief to the people of Wawa on their distribution costs, which will go nowhere near to reducing the very onerous and almost impossible charges that have been laid on this community since May 1 of last year.

The important thing here is that Wawa has become, very clearly, the symbol of resistance in this province to the deregulating and the privatizing of hydro. The rest of us should take heart from that. We should take courage from the fact that these folks have had the courage to stand up in the face of this giant and say no, and to take the small action that they could to indicate to this company and this government that it was serious about this issue, and that it was going to do something that would not look good on the government or the company, and create a fight that would become known from one end of this province to the other if it was allowed to continue on.

I have to say to you today that I am heartened that the people of Wawa have not been bought off by this small reduction in their bills, in their distribution costs by Great Lakes Power, and that they continue on in their attempt to meet with the Minister of Energy, to talk to him and his government about the impact of this agenda on them and their ability to make a living and actually to have an economy in that part of our province.

Let me just share with you a bit of an editorial that showed up in the Sault Star on Wednesday, April 9, which should make you, I think, sit up and take notice. It says, "Rectify Electricity Mess." It's calling on the government and it's calling on Great Lakes Power to rectify the electricity mess in Wawa and in the customer area of Great Lakes Power. It says:

"How ironic. Wawa has survived challenges as dramatic as the shutdown of the mining operation that was its reason for existence for so many years, but the community may be dealt a crippling blow by the outrageous local price of something it still produces in great abundance—electricity.

"Too many people across the province, including political leaders, have ignored or dismissed the tragedy that is eating away at the little town.

"That's a mistake. Even if people are so heartless as to ignore the plight of a fellow Ontarian, they should pay great heed to what is happening there. Wawa could be"—and I suggest is—"the canary in the mine shaft, an early warning of what awaits us all unless Queen's Park comes to its senses and reverses its devastating electricity restructuring strategy.

"In Wawa's case, we can't even blame privatization directly. For generations, the community was served well by Great Lakes Power. The little corporation was an incongruous privately owned island serving Algoma in the middle of a vast sea of Ontario Hydro serving the province as a whole.

"While the public utility struggled with mounting debt and generation problems, GLP quietly but valiantly hung on and prospered. Customers served directly, as in Wawa, and indirectly, as in Sault Ste Marie through the Public Utilities Commission, were pretty happy with the arrangement.

"When the province restructured Ontario Hydro and changed the rules governing electricity generation, distribution and pricing, GLP stayed on.

"If the same private company is still providing electricity to the same geographic area, how come the price of hydro for many consumers in the Wawa area has almost doubled?

"How come residents are worried they will be forced out of their homes by their electricity bills?

"How come businesses are closing or cutting back, putting people out of work?

"GLP says it is following the rules for billing customers, explaining that under provincial pricing formulas the distribution charges are high because of the 'rural' circumstance.

“But the townsite of Wawa, at least, is about as compact as any suburban neighbourhood. What Wawa has that most cities do not, however, is multiple hydro-electric generating stations within its municipal boundaries.

“Hydro generation is touted as one of the most benign methods of capturing energy, cleaner and less problematic than coal or oil or nuclear. If this town has such natural advantages and still can't afford the electricity produced in its own backyard, what hope is there for the rest of Ontario?

“If Great Lakes Power is following the rules, the rules are a bad joke.

“This is a bitter example of how badly Mike Harris's Conservative government has fumbled electricity reform,” and I suggest now Ernie Eves. “Why is it taking the Conservative government of Ernie Eves so long to recognize the problems and fix them?”

“Maybe Eves is waiting until he's closer to calling an election before cleaning up the mess. That”—alas—“may be too late for many people in the Wawa area whose lives are being turned upside down by an unfair and untenable energy policy.

“The ‘reform’ must be reformed now.”

Let me just share with you a bit of the historical context of the Wawa problem as well. On May 1, 2002, several radical regulatory changes affecting the Electricity Act, 1998, came into effect. As you may be aware, the majority of these changes, combined with other economic and changing weather patterns, resulted in a detrimental effect on users of electricity in Ontario. These detrimental changes have resulted in a large flood of media reports and letters from various public utilities, municipalities, special interest groups and residents from across the province. Perhaps the most salient examples of the problems created by the reregulation of electricity in Ontario can be best illustrated by the district of Algoma and the township of Michipicoten, exclusive of the city of Sault Ste Marie.

In December 2002, after extensive consideration of many examples of the detrimental trends experienced by the users of electrical power in Ontario, the Legislature considered and passed Bill 210, the Electricity Pricing, Conservation and Supply Act. Among other actions, and certainly most important to the people of Ontario, the act fixed the commodity rate of electricity at 4.3 cents per kilowatt hour. This fixed rate, which is in effect until 2006, ensured that all users in the province of Ontario would pay the same commodity rate for the electricity power they used.

While Bill 210 may have temporarily prevented any further escalation in the commodity rate for electrical power, it did not address those areas of the province, particularly the Algoma district, that experienced large increases in distribution charges. In some cases, the increase in the distribution charges alone has placed the affordability of electricity beyond the grasp of the average person. Customers of Great Lakes Power located in the township of Michipicoten, Dubreuilville, Laird,

Macdonald, Meredith and Aberdeen Additional and across the Algoma district have all recorded increases in hydro rates that approach 40%. While Bill 210 fixed the commodity rate at 4.3 cents per kilowatt hour, the average residential consumer in the subject area pays approximately 9.9 cents per kilowatt hour in distribution and other charges. Thus, the average total charge in the area is 14.2 cents kilowatt hour. In comparison, these same residential customers were paying in the area of 8.5 cents per kilowatt hour just prior to May 1, 2002. That's the increase they've experienced.

More concerning is the fact that Great Lakes Power has indicated that it will seek additional relief through increasing distribution rates—distribution and commodity—in three consecutive years once rate hearings resume. This, combined with a drastically declining economy, will severely disable the Algoma district and most certainly the township of Michipicoten—Wawa.

Significant layoffs have already been experienced in Dubreuilville and White River. These layoffs have begun to further cripple the economy in Wawa and the surrounding area. A solution must be found to this very devastating problem. Attempts have been made to discuss this matter with the Ministry of Energy on a number of occasions. Letters have been sent by the council of the township of Michipicoten, the residents of the township of Michipicoten and adjoining municipalities. Attempts have also been made by a group called POWER, People Opposing the Whitewashing of Electricity Rates, to contact the Ministry of Energy by letter, phone and through requests for meetings. There have also been attempts to meet the Premier, the Minister of Energy and the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. Lastly, the matter has been raised several times in the Legislature. All of these efforts have failed to even approach discussing a possible resolution to this matter.

### 1350

The issue of high power rates is a matter of government policy. Further to that, the township of Wawa would be remiss if it did not include related government policy issues in any discussion regarding power rates. To that end, this report does discuss how government policy matters in selected areas apply to the situation. In addition to dealing with the direct issue of electrical rates, this report also identifies several areas that could be considered as supplementary issues.

Bill 140, the Continued Protection for Property Taxpayers Act, amended the Assessment Amendment Act by exempting private power dams from the municipal property taxation base. Although some mitigating measures were provided to affected municipalities and school boards, detrimental effects were, and continue to be, experienced. The justification for the change included the consideration that the municipal property tax system was hindering the further development of hydroelectricity in the province of Ontario. So Wawa must pay for that, I guess.

On January 31, 2001, then-Premier Mike Harris announced the government's vision for the future of the

province of Ontario. The key component of the announcement was a 21-step action plan to move the province into the 21st century. The plan was to provide and highlight a path for the ongoing commitment of the government to the residents of Ontario for the promise of a better life. Consideration should have been given as to how the changes to the electrical market may or may not assist in accomplishing this goal, particularly as those changes relate to the Smart Growth program and now the introduction of supplementary proposals on tax incentive zones.

This government obviously does not understand the impact of the decisions that they've made where the deregulation and privatization of hydro is concerned. It's devastating towns like Wawa and all of those communities that are served by Great Lakes Power; it's killing their industry; it's killing their business; it's driving people out of their homes. Senior citizens who live on fixed incomes don't know where they're going to get the money for their electricity power bills. They're already strapped up there with the poor economy. We've had a difficult time over the last seven or eight years up in northern Ontario. This just adds pain to the already existing misery that was there.

We always looked at the fact that we had hydro in our backyard as an advantage. It has now become, for everybody concerned, and for this town in particular, a liability; something that this government, if it were serious about its platform for change for the province, would get together with the people of Wawa about and fix immediately.

**Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** It's interesting that we are here after quite a number of days, debating a motion by my colleague Sean Conway, the member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, the dean of the House, a member who has been here for 28 years. We are debating a very simple motion. The motion essentially says, I want to remind the members of the House, that we should present the budget of the province of Ontario to the Legislature first.

Mr Speaker, that is an incredibly simple motion. It follows of course upon your finding that there was a prima facie case of contempt of the government of Ontario by reading their budget at a warehouse in Brampton owned by Magna International.

It seems to us on this side of the Legislature, and frankly I think it should seem like this to all members of the Legislature, that this is a reasonable, simple and traditional remedy to the situation in which the government put all of us. We don't want to be here.

I think the first thing we should recognize is how we got into this situation. We got into this situation when the government decided and announced, I believe the day was March 12, that the Legislature, which had not sat since mid-December, would not come back on March 17. Unilaterally the Premier, as is his right, went to the Lieutenant Governor and asked that the Legislature be prorogued. What that means, of course, is that all legislation dies. Anything that was on the order paper is now gone

and, for all intents and purposes, a new session of the Legislature will begin, but not on the scheduled date of our calendar; it will begin when the Premier decides to call the Legislature back.

It was indicated that the Legislature would come back at the end of April, meaning that the Legislature would not meet for 128 days. In the meantime the Minister of Finance announced, almost simultaneously with the announcement that the House would be prorogued, that she would deliver this budget at a venue outside of this place.

We know the commotion that caused, and rightfully so. I just want to bring to the attention of legislators the words of the Speaker of the British House of Commons, Madam Speaker Boothroyd. She said, when asked about this situation, "That's a very strange way of doing things. There would be an uproar in the British Parliament. [The ... speech] could only be done through the House of Commons and there would be great demands of recall of Parliament [if it wasn't]."

She went on to say, "It is the questioning of that [budget] statement that is so central to our democracy. The elective representatives [of the people] get the right to question. I'm very adamant about the way Parliament works."

That is what the Speaker of the British House of Commons said about this. Further to that, probably the pre-eminent authority today on Canadian Parliament is the former Clerk of the Canadian House of Commons, Robert Marleau, who wrote to every member of this Legislature on March 15, it is a "gross affront to parliamentary democracy. Budgets are about levying taxes and spending the proceeds. Over the centuries, we, the people, have acquired rights from the crown to scrutinize government policies, especially spending policies, through well-established and time-honoured parliamentary process." That's what the former Clerk of the House of Commons said, somebody Speakers from across Canada are known to have conversations with when they wish to determine tradition and precedent.

Mr Speaker, your ruling 10 days ago or so, when you found the prima facie case of contempt, was one that all of us, if we gave it any thought at all, would recognize to be correct. What I found disturbing, though, about your ruling was the government's attitude. The government decided that they didn't have much of a case. They decided they could not convince Ontarians that they were not in contempt of the Legislature and were not in contempt of Parliament. So they chose to attack the Speaker of this Legislature on a personal level. On that very basis alone, attacking the personal integrity of Speaker Carr should be, for all members of this Legislature, enough to cause you, on your side of the House, to also support Mr Conway's motion.

**1400**

As we all know, Mr Carr is well-respected not only in this province and in this place but he is respected across this great country. I have attended meetings with Mr Carr with Speakers and presiding officers from across Canada,

and I can tell you that Mr Carr is held in the highest respect by other parliamentarians, by other Speakers and by Clerks of other assemblies. To attack Mr Carr because you cannot attack his logic is an affront to all of us. Mr Carr has worked diligently not only within Canada but throughout the entire Commonwealth Parliamentary Association to bring dignity to this House, to this Legislature. I think that attacking this person, the Speaker of our House, someone who is beyond attack, someone who is not even seeking re-election and who has no reason to do anything but maintain the highest of all authorities, is something the government itself should be ashamed of.

I look across and I see many of my friends on the government benches, and I say to you, can you really support a government which is clearly in contempt of this Legislature by all accounts other than some dog-and-pony paid lawyers whom you might put up to get your own particular opinion; that by any dispassionate, non-partisan consideration would understand this is an affront to Parliament—and the ridiculous, absolutely absurd arguments I have heard from some of my friends on the other side, which I'm sure they would have trouble believing themselves: that this was about a new way of doing business, about a new way of communicating, about a whole lot of wonderful 21st-century sorts of things and that the Parliament was just evolving.

They seem to forget that Parliament could have gone to Magna International if we had wanted to, but the people who would have decided this would have been this Parliament. It would not have been decided by a government; it would have been decided by motion in this place. That's how it would have happened. That's how we change. Parliament changes with the consent of its members; it does not change because of the whim of some government which is on a power trip, which is trying to convince Ontarians through advertising dollars, through huge expenditures of the public purse, through continual ads, through media event after media event, all being paid for by us, the taxpayer, to promote their own particular agenda. We should all find that offensive. Therefore, I think all members here have a duty to support Mr Conway's motion which finds this government to be in contempt and as a remedy suggests we do what we have always done, what all Parliaments have always done, and that is to read the budget here in the Legislature first. That is not a gigantic leap.

I call upon my friends across the floor, when it comes to making a decision on this very fundamental contempt motion, to do what they need to do: they need to support our traditions, they need to support our practice, they need to support the very essence of parliamentary democracy.

As the member for Algoma-Manitoulin, there are many things in Algoma-Manitoulin I want to talk about that, at the moment, are being kind of pushed off the page. We are not able to talk about health care. We are not able to talk about our continual effort to attract sufficient doctors to the various communities across the constituency of Algoma-Manitoulin to provide us with

service. We are continually asking the government to understand that we not only need the specialists in Sudbury, Sault Ste Marie and Thunder Bay and the access to those specialists in Thunder Bay, Sault Ste Marie and Sudbury so that our folks don't have to travel too far but also that we want to make sure that the northern Ontario travel grant is not an impediment for people in Algoma-Manitoulin attending a specialist because they are financially incapable of going.

We are convinced that the forest industry within my riding is coming under considerable pressure. I look over at the member for Timiskaming-Cochrane and some of the other northern members who share my concern that, with the rising Canadian dollar, many of our forest product companies—who have already suffered through softwood lumber duties and taxes, all unfair and unreasonable, but they are surviving under that regime—are very, very concerned that the amount of profit or margin that they may have going into the American markets will become an increasing concern and will cause increasing difficulties to deal with. Companies are already at the edge. Some of our lumber producers have had too many layoffs already, be they White River; we've lost shifts in Chapleau; 150 people in Dubreuilville are presently laid off; and there are significant concerns in the softwood lumber business throughout all of the constituency.

There are many challenges, and yet we have not heard anything from the government that would lead us to believe that the smaller communities of northern Ontario, and even the larger communities such as Sault Ste Marie, are going to be able to survive versus the rising Canadian dollar and the effect that has, combined with the softwood lumber duties, combined with energy prices that have been quite outrageous over the last period of time, and whether that will continue to happen. We need to have debates about those issues, but those debates are not happening.

The contempt motion is the most fundamental motion that we will face in this Legislature. It is the most fundamental thing we do because it's about the power of the Legislature. As representatives here in the Legislature, when you are in contempt of the Legislature you are in contempt of every one of our constituents. We have a government that can't seem to make the distinction between itself—the government—the Legislature and the Conservative Party. Over and over again we've seen those distinctions blurred. The Conservative government tends to spend public dollars as if they were Conservative Party dollars. It's very convenient. You don't have to raise the money; you don't have to do anything. You just spend, spend, spend my money and everyone else's money on your particular propaganda, to no particular effect, at least for the good for the people of Ontario.

That lack of distinction is, I think, at the heart of why we went to Magna corp. It was at the heart of a media event; it was at the heart of controlling the spin; it was at the heart of making sure that the government got its correct spin on the budget. They wanted to cut out any

kind of criticism. They wanted to make sure that anybody who might have questioned what was in the budget had no opportunity or platform to do that. They wanted to make sure that there could be no good analysis that came out. And in some ways they've succeeded. It's amazing. The firestorm over providing the budget out at Magna corp was such that nobody ever remembers what was in the budget. There's a reason for that, and it's quite simple: the absolutely outrageous nature of the presentation. What did McLuhan say? "The medium is the message." That's what it was. This is wrong. I think there were 85 or 90 editorials across the province during that time period that said, "You're in contempt. The government should not do this." Every day for 13 days, if I recall correctly, the Globe and Mail criticized the government for this, and they did it anyway.

1410

How many editorials across the province supported your position; supported the position that tradition did not mean anything; supported the position that you can do what you want, provided you get elected every four years, and you don't have to pay attention to anybody else in the meantime? How many supported that? The answer is simply none. The score was overwhelming. It was larger than the Blue Jays score last night in terms of a win.

I don't really have a lot to say, because I don't really know what to say, Mr Speaker. Your ruling speaks for itself. Your ruling clearly says, in a well-reasoned, intelligent way, that there is a prima facie case of contempt. There is no other place, no other Legislature in no other country, in no other province, in no other state—an Australian state, for example—no other jurisdiction that belongs to the Commonwealth that has ever attempted to read a budget outside their own Legislature or Parliament.

It is with great sadness that many of us are forced to stand in this Legislature trying to defend the rights of the people, rights we thought the people had earned hundreds upon hundreds of years ago in this country as we struggled for responsible government. It stretches back for centuries. It stretches back in this place—we're having a debate these days as we talk about what happened to the site of the first Ontario Parliament, where they want to build a car dealership. And I noticed on the news that they were commemorating the Rebellion of 1837.

I would like to think that the members of this Legislature, if they were in York in 1837, would have joined William Lyon Mackenzie in marching up Yonge Street. That is when we took the power from the Family Compact. That is what many historians would see as the beginning of responsible government in this province: when the people took control of their affairs from the governor. The budget represents that; supply represents that.

I would ask that when it comes time, the people who understand how absolutely important the resolution is, which Mr Conway has put before us, that it actually is the crux of our democracy, will stand and support Mr Conway.

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North):** I'm very pleased to be able to join this debate. Like so many of my colleagues, I want to have an opportunity to express how my constituents feel about this issue, this story and indeed the decision you made, Speaker, in terms of the fact that there is a prima facie case of evidence of contempt of the Legislature.

I think it's important to point out that unfortunately this government's contempt for the House did not begin with the Magna budget. As a new member in 1995, I certainly recall the excitement of being elected to the Legislature for the first time and looking forward to having the opportunity to represent my constituents and believing very much that there would be an opportunity to see democracy at work and be a part of that process. I recall that fairly early in my first term an economic statement was being delivered in the House, and it was actually a lock-up. When we came back into the House that afternoon—I think it was late in November 1995 or maybe early in December; I'm not quite sure of the date—we discovered that indeed the government had put forward a piece of legislation, which is now memorably known as Bill 26, an omnibus bill that was an astonishing piece of legislation that the government tried to sneak through, which basically turned on its head all kinds of legislation and had a huge impact on the operation of this province. It brought forward the Health Services Restructuring Commission and basically took away the government's responsibility and threw it on to the responsibility of the restructuring commission. There was education restructuring—the point is, it was an extremely offensive piece of legislation that really set the stage for what we are seeing even with this contempt motion that's before us today.

Were it not for my colleague Alvin Curling, who made a decision on his own that he would not rise and would not vote, he would not leave the House and would not follow through—if that had not happened and we had not sat in the House overnight, essentially, the government would not have bent on that issue as well. They would not have allowed any committee hearings. It was the beginning of a process that I think has continued to this day.

We've seen that particular bill; we've seen rule changes coming in place related to the limiting of debate. Certainly the fact that now we are offered the opportunity to speak, as I am right now, for 20 minutes, and 20 minutes alone, on this and any other legislation is another limitation to the process of democracy. We know that the government has a rather astounding record of invoking closure on all kinds of pieces of legislation in a fashion that has never been done before to try and end debate. That process has gone on since 1995.

We've seen our committee structure, which once I think was a truly extraordinary process—certainly when I speak to my colleagues like Sean Conway and some of the veterans in the House, they tell me of the times when indeed we brought legislation forward and the committee system went out to the province and really listened to the



people and there was actually a sense of camaraderie, may I say, between the three parties in terms of trying to really bring together legislation that would work—that committee system has virtually fallen apart.

I think what we're talking about is a government that has presided over a steady erosion of the democratic tradition of the Legislature, and I think, very sadly, they have done it deliberately. It has been an actual, deliberate decision made, which to me has shown the arrogance of this government.

The contempt that this government has shown for the Legislature has continued past this budget farce as well. We certainly have heard about the process by which this farcical budget in the Magna auto parts plant took place, but it has gone well past that. I don't just mean in the form of backbenchers making obscene gestures and then denying it—lying about it, in fact; most seriously, it took the form of a sustained attack on you, sir, a reprehensible attack on the Speaker, that was made not only by the same member who used those sneers and scowls in the place of reasoned arguments but also by senior cabinet ministers who have used their time in this debate to attack the Chair.

Contempt, in my opinion, is also what the government shows for this Legislature when we see speeches like those given by various ministers of the crown when, instead of talking about the issues at hand, they waste the time of this House with partisan nonsense that is particularly distressing coming from these senior ministers. Let me remind the House and the people who are following this debate what the resolution that we are debating today actually says: "That this House declares that it is the undisputed right of the Legislative Assembly, in Parliament assembled, to be the first recipient of the budget of Ontario."

Others before me in this debate have pointed out that this should not be a contentious issue, and I know there are members on the government side of the House who do agree that it's not a contentious one or a difficult one for the government to support: the budget should be presented in the Legislature first. Yet the government members have been standing up over the last five or six days speaking out against it, using specious arguments, saying there was a budget lock-up, using other quite bizarre arguments that make no sense, people like the Minister of Labour even suggesting that although Mr Conway's motion was kind of a motherhood statement that nobody could actually disagree with, he was thinking about voting against it anyway.

There's a pretty interesting notion. A motion comes forward stating that the Legislative Assembly, in Parliament assembled, be the first recipient of the budget of Ontario—again, not very contentious—and although some members of the government, hopefully probably most members on the government side, agree with the sentiment, agree with the tradition—we'd like to think so—they say they're going to vote against it anyway. Why? Have you no principles? Do you care at all about the institution of Parliament? Or are government mem-

bers so terrified of the thought that supporting this motion means effectively admitting that you were wrong not to have presented the budget in this House, that each and every one of you is willing to compromise your own principles, your own integrity, simply to avoid admitting wrongdoing?

1420

*Interjection.*

**Mr Gravelle:** I'm glad that the members are listening.

I must say I've been very interested, Speaker, to see the way some of the members on the other side of the House, on the government benches, have reacted to this debate, both in the House and outside of it. It's fascinating to note. I saw the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, and the Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation, I believe, join my colleagues from this side of the House in applauding my colleague from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, Mr Conway, when he first asked the Speaker to make a ruling on contempt two and a half weeks ago. I didn't see their applause particularly as evidence of their lack of confidence in the government, to tell you the truth, or even as displeasure with the budget process; I saw it, I hope, as evidence of their respect for the institution of Parliament and its practitioners. They were applauding a colleague on the other side of the House, my colleague Mr Conway, who made an eloquent, learned and passionate argument about something he cared deeply about—nobody questions that—and they admired that. I don't think there's any shame in that. It was good to see them acknowledge that.

Similarly, I found it interesting to see my colleagues from London West and Ottawa West-Nepean suggest that they agreed with your ruling, Speaker, when you found a case of prima facie evidence of contempt. Now, does that mean that these two members have given up on their government? I suspect not. I admire them for saying those words. I would suggest what it said was that they have enough confidence, and perhaps some integrity, to understand that admitting a mistake, admitting this particular mistake, in fact may strengthen their own credibility.

It's easy enough, perhaps, to say, "We should put the politics aside and look at the issue at hand." I certainly understand that I am very much a member of the opposition who is asking government members to vote for a motion that their own leader, the Premier, has said he will not support. Yet I ask them to think of their constituents and to think about how they felt when they were first elected to this extraordinary institution, the Parliament.

When you go back to talk to the people of your riding and your community, I think it would be appreciated if you said, "I absolutely believe that the budget should be presented first in the Legislature." I suspect you'd get a pretty large level of agreement with that. To me that's a succinct, simple, straightforward thing to be able to say to the people you represent. You don't have to start bobbing and weaving. You don't have to explain that regardless of its apparent innocence, this motion was not

in fact some sort of trap. Mr Conway fashioned the motion very, very carefully in order to allow as many members of the government side, in fact all members of the government side, all three parties, to simply carry on.

It would have been great to have said, “Yes, Speaker. Indeed your ruling makes sense. My constituents agree that the budget should be presented in the Legislature,” and that they are proud to have supported this motion.

Speaker, it is worth remembering why we’re here debating this issue right now. It came about as a result of something that few of us in this House, or indeed this province, had really expected or contemplated before: a government deciding to push back the scheduled spring session, prorogue the House and present the budget outside of the Legislature.

One of the interesting defences we’ve heard during the debate was, of course, “We couldn’t present the budget because the House wasn’t in session.” That certainly has been one of the more embarrassing defences, in that the Premier decided indeed that he didn’t want to sit in the House. He clearly wanted to avoid question period or wasn’t prepared to come forward and had other plans altogether.

We certainly know about the order in council that was signed for \$36 billion in spending that was done very much behind closed doors, which I don’t think would have been found out if not for, again my colleague from Renfrew, Mr Conway, being made aware of that extraordinary apportionment.

The government made a really clear decision that they wanted to maintain some form of commitment to the previous promise that they were going to present the budget before the end of the fiscal year. So somebody in the bowels of Mr Eves’s office said, “Here’s how we’ll do it. We’ll present this budget outside the House. It’ll be just fine.”

As I look back on it now, it is astonishing to think that that really could happen, that that advice would be taken, let alone hearing the statement from the Premier that indeed the \$36 billion that was done as an order in council—as a special warrant, I guess is the term—was on the advice of the public servants, which to me just reeked of a peculiar form of arrogance, or of trying to avoid responsibility for a decision they made. They made all these decisions, recognizing that there was a price to pay for it.

I suppose there are members over there who will say that we’re dwelling on this way too much, but I think it’s incredibly important—and, Speaker, obviously you did as well, and your ruling was one that you obviously researched very carefully.

Ultimately, what it comes back to for me are my constituents. When this happened, my constituents reacted with a form of disbelief. It was quite remarkable, the number of people who called my office. People often say that the public isn’t engrossed in the minutiae of government and Parliament, but I think they have a great respect and regard for it. In fact, I will tell you that some of my constituents were rather angry at me because I wasn’t, in

their opinion, speaking up strongly enough at the time. I must admit that I spoke about it, I did a press release, I spoke to the media, but they didn’t all hear me, I guess. They were calling and saying, “Look, this is huge. This is a major issue.” This is one of those issues that I think people reacted to in almost a visceral way. Whether or not they felt they understood all the principles and intricacies of Parliament, and some of them acknowledged that they didn’t, they instinctively felt that this was wrong.

When one lines it up with all the other actions this government has taken over the last eight years to basically denigrate Parliament, to treat Parliament as kind of an annoyance—in fact, it’s always fascinating to remember that the former Speaker and present government House leader issued a ruling of contempt against this government—I can’t recall the year exactly—related to a piece of legislation that the government was acting as if it had passed. They were putting out notices of the legislation being done, long before that actually took place. That was another ruling of contempt that, indeed, I think was an appropriate ruling.

My constituents, I think, were even angrier. They were very angry about it and wanted me to speak up because they saw it, as I think I see it, as just another attack on Parliament from a government that has seemed to go out of its way, in my opinion, to show the worst aspects of politics: the politics of division, of wedge issues, of politics that turn people against each other, which encourages cynicism about government in the worst way.

The record of this government, in my opinion, is a very sad one in many ways, but perhaps one of the worst is the way in which it has alienated so many of the people it is supposed to represent. I do my very best, as I think most members do, to represent all of my constituents, which can be a challenge. But this government, as a policy, doesn’t seem to want to do that at all.

People call my office constantly. They come and see me, talk to me, stop me on the street and tell me that they get the impression that this government honestly does not care about people with disabilities. They tell me that. They tell me it doesn’t care about students, single mothers or people receiving social assistance. I could go on forever, as a former critic of Community and Social Services, about some of the decisions you’ve made related to social assistance. It shouldn’t surprise you that my constituents might say that.

**Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener Centre):** Mike, that’s below you.

**Mr Gravelle:** All I’m telling you is what people come in and tell me. I appreciate, I say to my colleague from Kitchener, that you may strongly disagree with that, but there is no denying that there’s a level of cynicism, suspicion and bitterness that is felt by many who feel that their government has abandoned them. It just is out there, and I think you know that. That doesn’t mean you’re like that, but that is the way that this government has acted.

Taking the budget outside of the House, in an attempt to sidestep the scrutiny that the parliamentary system

provides, is just another message to many people that the government does not care to listen to the people of Ontario or their representatives, and I don't think you can deny that.

Some of my colleagues have raised the issue of government advertising. I agree that it is closely tied into this debate. It is also an issue of contempt, in my opinion, for the institution of Parliament. The government is of the opinion that the only way to communicate with the people of Ontario is to buy their way into the homes of Ontarians. I think that is sad. I think that's very sad. It's an admission that the government is obsessive about controlling their own message. It's one thing to send out information about West Nile virus, SARS and other health-related issues—I think that's very important—but it's another to run self-congratulatory ads or messages about all the money that you say you've spent, or are apparently spending, on education or health care.

I think people have become so desensitized to those ads that we sometimes forget just how offensive they can be, because at heart they end up being cynical and, I think, quite destructive. I say "cynical" because they are basically defensive. They are a product of a government that does not want to admit that the status quo is less than perfect, and they're destructive because they take away funding that could be used by the programs and systems they are ostensibly promoting.

1430

I honestly believe that most people would rather be pleasantly surprised, perhaps, by the quality of health care they receive when they have to go to the hospital or the improvement in the state of their children's education environment, if that's the case, than be constantly assaulted with feel-good messages about all the wonderful things the government is apparently doing. They don't believe this any more. I mean, the reaction that you get is extraordinary. I'm sure you're getting it on your side of the House as well. Every dollar that we spend telling people how great things are is one less dollar we spend actually improving things.

That's one of the reasons why Dalton McGuinty will stop that partisan advertising—absolutely stop it—and will make sure there's a real arbiter in terms of how that decision is made. In fact, there are so many democratic reforms that I am excited about that Dalton McGuinty will be bringing forward to truly bring democracy back to this Legislature, and it's something that we all anticipate.

I just think it's very sad that this government does not basically understand or even seem to care about what it is doing. Ultimately, I think it's very sad that we're having this debate in the first place. The Speaker quoted Erskine May on the issue of contempt, noting that, by definition, "any act or omission which obstructs or impedes either House of Parliament in the performance of its functions, or which obstructs or impedes any member or officer of such House in the discharge of his duty, or which has a tendency, directly or indirectly, to produce such results may be treated as a contempt even though there is no precedent of the offence. It is therefore impossible to list

every act which might be considered to amount to a contempt...." That's really the issue here: that the government, in all its twisting and turning to avoid the Legislature, was in contempt of it.

I think this is fascinating, because the reality is that what put this government in the position it is in is its real and long-standing contempt for the Legislature, and there is example upon example. If we had a government that recognized the importance of full debate, complete with questioning from the opposition, they never would have pushed back the spring session of the Legislature or taken the budget outside of the House. They wanted to avoid that. They would never have put on an expensive, invitation-only infomercial in Brampton, and they wouldn't be in this mess. In fact, in opposing this motion they are continuing to show contempt, in my opinion. They believe that they are above the law, the traditions and the rules of Parliament.

I believe that my colleague from Thunder Bay-Atikokan spoke very wisely, as she usually does, when she reminded this House earlier in this debate that we are the inheritors of over 700 years of democratic tradition, and it behooves us to respect that. The reason we are having this debate is because this government does not respect our democratic traditions. Instead, they seem to see them as some sort of impediment. It's time, I say to my colleagues on the other side of the House, to rethink this rather belligerent ideology, accord to the institution of Parliament the respect that it deserves, and support this very important, very straightforward and very acceptable motion from my colleague from Renfrew, Mr Conway. Because, frankly, it's simply the right thing to do.

**Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** As I begin today, I think it's worth reminding people who are watching how we got to where we are today. We are dealing with a government that earlier, in March, decided it was going to throw years and years of parliamentary tradition to the wind because it was more interested in a public relations stunt with respect to the budget than it was in ensuring that we were going to hold the budget in this place, that the assembly was going to be recalled, as it should have been, and that all members would have been in their place, dealing with the government as it brought forward its budget.

I don't know who was involved in that decision, what brain trust was involved in deciding that they were going to throw away all those years of tradition, but the brain trust made a huge mistake, because immediately after the announcement by the Treasurer and the Premier that the Legislature was in fact not going to be recalled and the government instead would hold its dog-and-pony show up at Magna, a major contributor to this party, there was a very immediate negative reaction, not just with respect to Toronto media but, frankly, right across the province.

I know the Sudbury Star in our community, which is notorious for not supporting any position of New Democratic Party, was actually very opposed to the decision the government had made. There were other, what I term to be right-wing media outlets, usually traditional sup-

porters of this government, who said the same. In fact, the response across the province from editorial writers and from those on the news was overwhelmingly against the government decision: it was a slap in the face to democracy, a slap in the face to other MPPs not of the government side and, frankly, a slap in the face to the public, who had every right to expect that after at least three months of not being in session, the government was at least going to recall the assembly so we could sit and have the budget. This was especially true because the House was supposed to be recalled just after the March break, and the Premier decided that wouldn't be done. And not only would that not be done, but a time-honoured tradition of having the budget in this place would also be swept under the carpet so the government could have its public relations stunt out at Magna, I guess in the hope they could control the media coverage of that event.

When the House was finally recalled, and that was a month after the dog-and-pony show at Magna corp, people will recall there were cases put to you, Speaker, that this was a case of contempt. You, in your wisdom, came back to this Legislature in a very important decision and said essentially—and I'm quoting from the last page of your ruling, page 11—that “I am finding that a prima facie case of contempt has been established. I want to reiterate that while I have found sufficient evidence to make such a finding, it is now up to the House to decide what to do.”

That is the process the House is involved in. We are dealing with the Speaker's ruling of contempt and what we should do as a remedy to deal with that finding. For those who haven't been watching this debate for all of last week, Mr Speaker, I should just point out that we are dealing with amendments to the motion whereby the House would deal with your finding of contempt. Of course the motion that was moved by Mr Conway said that this House declares that it is the undoubted “right of the Legislative Assembly, in Parliament assembled, to be the first recipient of the budget of Ontario.” That would end, forever and a day, the government's PR practice that it implemented, in this case, of deciding to just hold in disdain years of tradition, hold in disdain the rest of us and the public as well and have their budget off-site.

That motion has now been dealt with with two other amendments, the first by my colleague Mr Bisson, which says, “and not to present the budget in this way”—that is, here in the assembly first—“constitutes a clear contempt of the House.” I think that very clearly falls in line with the ruling you made that a prima facie case of contempt had been found.

The motion has been further amended by my colleague Mr Kormos, and it says very clearly, “and its members,” meaning that if the budget was not presented here, it would be a clear case of contempt to both the House and the members of the House, being all of us who are duly elected by the people of Ontario. We are in the rotation dealing with the main motion and the two amendments, and what the government should now do or might do.

The last time I spoke to this, I talked briefly about some of the comments that had been made, particularly by the government members, as they tried, oh so very hard, to say it really wasn't contempt, that the budget has been done off-site like this before, that it didn't matter if it had been held at Magna anyway because it had been clearly the intention of the Premier to bring the House back and for the budget to be tabled here.

I made some comments with respect to some of those observations the last time I spoke. I just want to add to them this time particularly because I had an opportunity to listen to Mr Turnbull last week. Mr Turnbull was trying very desperately to make a point that this wasn't so out of the ordinary, that budgets had been presented outside this place before, that it was quite commonplace, that he didn't understand what the to-do was all about, that there really wasn't a problem, that somehow this was not a common practice, that this is what we did every second budget in this place.

What's interesting is that if you go back to the government's own press release, which was issued on March 12, it is clear that it was not a common practice to hold the budget outside the assembly, that it's not done every second year, and that the government itself recognized that this would be a major break with tradition in having the budget off-site.

**1440**

Here's what Madame Ecker had to say: “The Eves government will change the way budgets are presented in Ontario.” I repeat, “The Eves government will change the way budgets are presented in Ontario,” said Madame Ecker very proudly in her press release. Not only that, the Minister of Finance “underscored the point when she acknowledged that, while past finance ministers have gone outside the chamber to present budgets due to a parliamentary filibuster or leak”—and I'm quoting Ms Ecker in this—“What is ... important is that this, the actual initial communication of this to the public will occur outside the Legislature.”

It was because she was really proud of that fact. She acknowledged that in the past we might have had to have a budget outside this place because of a leak—that happened particularly at the federal level—or because of a filibuster occurring in this place, which is what happened when the NDP was reading petitions and Robert Nixon had to table the budget outside of this place, but she made it very clear that this was the first time that the government was actually going to purposefully, consciously make every effort to communicate the budget outside of this place—not because of a leak, not because of a filibuster; because that was the first route that they wanted to take to deliver it to the public—and that it was a communications message, a communications event first and foremost. Most importantly, I repeat, she said that while past finance ministers had gone outside the chamber to present the budget due to a parliamentary filibuster or a leak, “What is ... important is that this”—these are her words—“the actual initial communication of this to the public will occur outside the Legislature. That has

occurred in some circumstances before,” but “not in this kind of circumstance.”

So the government was very clear in what it was doing. The government knew exactly that this had nothing to do with a leak or a stall in the parliamentary process. No, the government wasn't even going to call the House back, so that wasn't even an option. The government wanted to use this as a communications tool, as a public relations stunt, and that's what the government was going to do. The government didn't care that people were outraged by this. The government didn't care that many of its right-wing editorial friends wanted nothing to do with this and were condemning the government daily, not just in Toronto but right across the province. The government didn't care. They got their back up to the wall and said, “We know better. Who cares? We're the government.” In a display of arrogance that has been continual with this government, they just decided to forge ahead, torpedoes be damned. “Who cares? Who cares about the tradition? Who cares what the lawyer the Speaker retained has had to say? Who cares what the editorials are saying? Who cares about the people coming into our offices?”—because of course they did. I heard some of the Conservative members say last week, “Oh, we didn't hear from anybody about this.” Well, they cornered some other Conservative members outside of a caucus meeting in mid-March, and there were a lot more of those spilling their guts about how many people were complaining, particularly their own Conservative supporters who were complaining, about the break in tradition.

There's no doubt in my mind at all that those members across there got complaints, but they didn't care. They'd made a decision. They're the government. “We're going to do what we want to do, and that's the way it's going to be.”

It would have been so easy for the government to stand and say—because they had the time to do it; the announcement about going to Magna for the dog-and-pony show was well in advance of the actual charade itself—“We made a mistake. There's been a really visceral, negative reaction. We're going to back off.” But no, they got their back to the wall, more adamant and insistent than ever, then breaking with tradition and away they went with the dog-and-pony show. Now the government is reaping the consequences of the dog-and-pony show, of the media communications event, because now we're dealing with contempt and the House is dealing with the remedy for your finding of contempt.

Speaker, given what you have said, given what has happened here in the province, the motion and the amendments themselves should be accepted, because we should be able to be guaranteed that never again is a government going to consciously, purposefully decide to circumvent the House, contravene years and years of parliamentary tradition and hold a budget off-site merely because they're trying to control the media spin. That's why everybody should be voting favourably with respect to this motion.

We shouldn't be surprised by the contempt shown by this government on this issue, because, frankly, it's quite in keeping with the contempt that this government has displayed to the public on a number of other issues. There are two that I want to deal with directly.

The first has to do with the contempt, the disdain that this government shows to Ontario families who have autistic children. I've been dealing with this issue for some time now in an effort to get the government to understand that autism should be recognized, the IBI treatment for the same should be recognized as a medically necessary service, and the government should pay the cost for this very expensive treatment through OHIP. When the government does not do that, many, many Ontario families who have autistic children know that although there is a treatment that could probably help their child, they will never be able to get it because of long waiting lists and because of the discrimination that this government practises against autistic children over age six, when the government cuts off that treatment merely because those children turn age six.

Last fall we brought a number of families to this Legislature, you will recall, particularly who had children who were age six or were going to be turning six shortly, who were receiving IBI treatments, whose families had noticed an incredible change in their situation: that they were for the first time starting to focus, were being toilet-trained, were finally able to feed themselves, were not banging their head against the walls continuously. Because of this treatment, they were noticing a marked change in their condition, to the point where they were convinced that if the treatment could only continue they would be fully functioning members of society, would be able to live independently and not end up in an institution. We brought many families here—Leo and Sheri Walsh of Welland, for example, who were having to sell their home in order to pay for IBI treatment for their son. Can you imagine in 2002—because we did this last fall—an Ontario family having to sell their home in order to get medically necessary treatment for their child? That is shameful.

Because we brought so many families and we made it a public issue, on November 18 the minister made a big announcement that the government was going to double funding for IBI treatment by the year 2006-07 and go from \$39 million to \$80 million at that time. What was interesting about the announcement—because I was there—was that the government didn't lay out any timeline for their funding, didn't announce there was going to be new funding last fiscal year to help get some kids off the waiting list, and didn't even put out a timeline about how much and over how many years they were going to spend that money. What the government also did not do was remove its discrimination against autistic children who were turning the age of six, who now get cut off from treatment. That was November 18 that the government announced this funding. The government re-announced the funding in the budget.

Did you know that I checked last week and none of the agencies that provide IBI treatment in the province

have received a penny of the money that the government announced November 18 to deal with autistic children? The government made an announcement and hasn't flowed the money. That is disgusting, it is shameful, it is clear evidence of the contempt that this government and these ministers in the House today show for autistic children and their families. Not a penny has been allocated to those providers to deal with those children, despite an announcement made last November.

You know what else we discovered, because the ministry has given some of the providers an additional inclination of how much money they're going to receive? Across all of northern Ontario we're going to get enough money to get two kids off the waiting list. Two children across northern Ontario are going to get treatment this year because of the money the minister announced in November and still hasn't flowed. That's shameful too.

We now have the scenario in the province where we have parents who are in court, right here in this city; parents of autistic children who have had to go to court to try and get what is rightfully due to their children, spending thousands of dollars to try to get what they are entitled to. We have 100 families before the Ontario Human Rights Commission on a complaint of discrimination. We have the Ombudsman, who is doing a special investigation looking at the waiting list for IBI treatment. We have a government that shows disdain for these kids and their family by not recognizing IBI as medically necessary and not funding it through OHIP. That is shameful. That is contemptuous. It is unacceptable that in this day and age these kids can't get treatment that is available and can't get treatment that will dramatically change their way of life so they can be fully functioning members of this province. It is unacceptable.

**1450**

I want to deal with one other issue, and that has to do with our regional hospital. We are a community that had an order by the Health Services Restructuring Commission that said that three of our hospitals had to amalgamate into one. From the very beginning the construction costs of that amalgamated hospital were grossly underestimated, and that was the same in most communities. The cost for equipment alone was estimated at \$9 million; it's closer to \$80 million.

For the last at least one year there has been no construction at the Sudbury Regional Hospital because the costs have increased and this government refuses to fund that increased cost. We have a hospital that is not complete, that has been directed to be amalgamated as a result of a commission put in place by this government, and we cannot get phase 2 construction underway to complete our hospital.

Our community has risen to the cause, because our community, in fundraising in the last three years, has raised over \$23.7 million, which is about \$5 million higher than the local share that we were told we had to raise. The city of Sudbury itself, through tax revenue, is going to contribute another \$26.7 million for the hospital and the cancer centre that's attached there as well.

The community has done its share, has met its obligation, has met its responsibility. Do you know the party that continues to show contempt for our community? That's this government. This government holds our community in disdain, in contempt, and for over a year now has not uttered a single word about when it is going to put its money on the table so we can get our hospital finished.

Finally, last week the chamber of commerce in Sudbury, which usually doesn't support the NDP and usually says nothing contrary with respect to what this government is doing, had to come out and say very publicly, "It puts a black cloud over the community." Debbi Nicholson, who is the president and CEO of the Sudbury chamber of commerce, said, "From an economic point of view, it doesn't look good on a community. We've attracted new doctors here, new businesses to the community. They came with the understanding that the hospital was moving forward.

"Now there are a whole lot of questions ... about" the hospital. "It's a critical component in our community and the uncertainty does not bode well."

As well, the chair of the economic development corporation said, "Until we have some assurances that it's a go-forward situation, that the money is committed to finish" this project, "this community is going to be continually struggling. All we are saying is, for God's sake, get on with it." They are exactly right.

We have a medical school that's coming to our community and we have a hospital that's not complete, so where are those new doctors actually going to do their training? Can you imagine how difficult it is to try and recruit physicians to come to be part of building a new medical school when they don't know if the hospital is going to be finished so that their students can practise there? That's ridiculous. But what is hardest of all to accept is that our community has risen to the occasion. We have raised much more money than we were ever asked to do. We've done our bit. It's time for this government to stop showing contempt to Sudbury and area. Stop showing disdain for our community and put your money on the table to finish our hospital now. This is an important project in our community. We need quality care, and it's time that this government put its money on the table to finish our hospital.

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would ask for unanimous consent for me to wear my "Adopt It" Bill 16. This is a sticker to promote my adoption disclosure reform bill.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is there unanimous consent? I'm afraid I heard some noes.

Further debate?

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West):** I gather from that that the government and the official opposition are no longer putting up any speakers, so we will continue to struggle along as best we can, nine of us, keeping this debate going.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Christopherson:** I don't know. We're going to get a couple of more hours anyway. We'll certainly ex-

haust our speakers' list, for the simple reason that when you take an issue like this as seriously as all of us in the opposition benches have said we do, we're taking the position you've got an obligation to carry this thing through to its completion, because if we let go of it, if we don't make it a priority, then I have to say I'm concerned that we're playing into the very kind of scenario that let the government feel they could get away with this in the first place.

The last time I had a chance to speak to this, I pointed out that I think a lot of us on the opposition benches and a lot of people in Ontario have to wake up to the realization that we have to take some of the blame for the government not so much taking the action they did and ultimately having the Speaker find a prima facie case of contempt, but we need to be very clear that it's about the fact that you thought you could get away with it. That's what's really scary for me, as someone who is not seeking re-election. I'm not going to be back here in the next Parliament, so I don't have political hay to make out of this particular issue. But I have to tell you, I'm worried about the fact that your people in the backroom, the cabinet, and the Premier felt that the people of Ontario were either so gullible or so disinterested as to lead you to believe you could do this and get away with it.

Let's step back and ask ourselves, how did we get to a position like that? Well, the fact of the matter is that anybody who has watched this place consistently over the last eight years will know that the rule changes which have happened here have not just been a matter of inside baseball, which is often the way the public views debates around the rules, and that's totally understandable. But there are enough people who do know the significance of the rule changes, and there are enough people who ought to know the significance of the fact that major pieces of legislation are introduced here in the House and then we have either very little or no committee hearings on them.

So you limit the ability of the opposition to take the floor, because our time has been restricted so tightly, you deny us every single possibility there is to slow the House down if we believe something is important enough to do that, and then you refuse to take the legislation from the floor of this place to a committee process and give them the mandate to go out into the public and ask the people what they might think about their own laws. Because at the end of the day, this isn't your place any more than it was ours when we were in power or the official opposition's when they were in power. All of us are there temporarily—and whether “temporarily” is one term or 42 years, it's temporary; at some point, you leave those seats and the cabinet room. So what you're doing is taking away the public's right to democracy.

To come full circle, that's why I have taken and continue to take the position that all of us have some responsibility, and that includes people who are here today in the galleries. Wouldn't it be nice if there were more people here outraged over the fact that the Speaker, a member of your own party, felt it necessary, in the defence of the democracy this place is supposed to

represent, to find a prima facie case of contempt against his own friends?

I have to say that's not an easy thing to do. There have been a lot of people who have commented on the growing respect, the continuing respect, that they have for Speaker Carr in making such a difficult ruling. Think about it from just an ordinary Ontarian's everyday-walk-of-life point of view. The fact of the matter is that when the honourable Speaker leaves the chair, removes the robes and puts his civvies back on, these are his friends. He has served with these people for 13 years, the same as I have with my caucus colleagues. It cannot be easy to walk past the frosty attitude that I'm sure some government members show toward the Speaker because in their hearts they believe he has turned on them. That has to be difficult.

**1500**

I would hope that people well beyond the opposition benches would be willing to stand up and go on the record and acknowledge that Speaker Carr went above and beyond the call of duty that most of us face when we're elected to this place, when he found himself in that chair as a result of a majority vote of this House, and he, in his own heart, felt there was so much at stake that yes, he was prepared to, in some ways, put himself into a position of being excommunicated by his own. Again, I can imagine there are people in the party and supporters across the province who are angry. But the anger should not for a moment be directed to Speaker Carr. What he did was speak up for what the traditions are and the significance of this place. I want to remind my friends across the way that the only difference between us and being barbarians is the fact that we have this kind of debate back and forth of ideas and words, and strategic moves, tactics and things of that nature that don't involve violence. But how far are we away—and I realize I'm talking in an extreme now; fair enough, but I want to make the point—how far are we away from the day when this place is just not here? Gone. You've privatized it, turned it into condominiums and that's the end of it.

**Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton):** Can we do that?

**Mr Christopherson:** I see one of the backbenchers laughing. I won't mention his name—I know he means it tongue in cheek. But there he goes; he said, “Can we do that?” It's funny, but for us over here there's an element of, “Boy, oh boy, they would if they could get away with it.” If they thought it would get them a vote, they'd do it. It'd be in the platform. But when you're at the point, and this is what I believe Speaker Carr is pointing to and it's certainly what we're saying here, where you made the decision that this place is so irrelevant to you—by the way, I think every Ontarian should find that alone insulting—because when you find this place insignificant and irrelevant, you find Ontarians insignificant and irrelevant because this is their House. This is the people's House.

We are at the point where you decided that it was OK to take the presentation of the budget—you know, there is an argument, and Speaker, you've been around here

like me for a long time now and have seen a lot of budgets and throne speeches. There's an argument that 90% of politics or the decisions in this place are about the budget, because in most cases, where you spend money is where you can effect change. The very essence of government authority, government power and government control lies in where a majority government decides to place the emphasis of priorities in a budget. That is why, for centuries in the parliamentary process, with a couple of exceptions that you've tried to hang your hat on—and nobody's trying to let you get away with that, I might add—but with just a couple of exceptions, for centuries Parliaments, the House of the people, have been where budgets have been presented. You decided that your partisan interests were more important than the people of Ontario, more important than the tradition of this place, more important than the legacy of those MPPs, Tory and others, who came before you and occupied those very seats, that all of that was to be set aside and thrown away—Conservatives, mind you. Aren't you supposed to be the ones who don't want to change anything? You like everything the way it is. And why not? In most cases you're winning under the current rules, so why wouldn't you like things the way they are, you and your supporters? You're the ones that normally stand on the notion of tradition. Heaven forbid the smallest amount of change should happen. I can remember where some people were on an issue that involved a piece of apparel around the RCMP. That whole argument, in large part, was, "Wait a minute. Tradition." That's your history. That's what most people thought you were: Conservative. It means, "Keep things the way they are. Preserve it. Keep it."

Yet you're the ones who took a step that I can assure you nobody in the NDP caucus and, I suspect, the Liberal caucus would ever dream of taking: throwing away hundreds of years of tradition, accountability, minority rights—and I remind government members that there are real people who died over history fighting to give us these rights. You're the party, the party of conserving everything, that took the precious and respected traditions of this place, threw them out the window and said, "Sorry. It's more important for us to look good as the Progressive Conservative Party rather than the government of the people of Ontario."

That's why we're not going to back away from this debate—nor should we, because, I argue, that's how we got into this situation: by too many of us standing aside and letting you get away with what you've done.

We saw this coming. Again, I'm going to come back to this argument, to this historical fact, because it's real. A few months after you were elected, you brought in the omnibus bill, the bully bill, just before Christmas, and it took Alvin Curling to refuse to vote, which caused a parliamentary bind, if you will, because the House couldn't move forward if he refused to vote—I forget for how many hours. It was certainly overnight. It certainly required some imagination and creativity. Let me tell you, given what he went through as a human being, it

took an awful lot of commitment to what's important to do what Alvin Curling did. He will be long acknowledged and respected by me for what he did and, I think, many others. Why did he do that? Why did he take such an extreme position? Anybody who knows Alvin Curling will know he's not exactly a fire-breathing radical. That's not Alvin Curling; that's just not who he is. Yet a person with the respect, a veteran MPP, was prepared to put his physical discomfort on the line, and I remember vividly that night and those times. That was not physically an easy thing to go through. He put his political career and reputation on the line, because you don't know where things like that are going to end up, or what's going to be said about you at the end of the day.

It's not like he had to go out and make a name for himself. He'd already been a cabinet minister. He was already very well known. So it wasn't about opportunism. This was a man, a member of this Parliament, who felt so strongly about what you were doing that he was prepared to put himself through what he did to try to drive home the point: that you can't ram that bill through without giving us public hearings, because that's what you were attempting to do: a couple weeks before Christmas, a massive bill, a bill that led to umpteen hospital closures across this province, that took all kinds of legislation from the floor of this place of debate into the secrecy of the cabinet room.

It took a commitment to democracy to the point where New Democrats were prepared to join with Liberals to support Alvin Curling.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Christopherson:** Well, we did. I remember, when he refused, we already had it set. My friend Dominic Agostino from Hamilton East, a Liberal and myself, as soon as he said, "No, I'm not going to vote," we bolted over there, and anybody who remembers the front page of the Toronto Sun saw the two of us standing there side by side like this, blocking the Sergeant at Arms from getting to the member, because it was the only way to carry out the strategy. We don't do that very lightly.

**Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre):** That is contempt.

**Mr Christopherson:** I hear from the former cabinet minister that that is contempt. Well, that, my friend, is a laugh.

*Interjection.*

1510

**Mr Christopherson:** No. No. Even you shouldn't stoop that low. That's what you want to talk about, bodily functions? Go away. I have a feeling that will be taken care of soon enough, but go away.

I've got to tell you that the fact of the matter is that man's a hero. You haven't done one tenth of what Alvin Curling has already done, if you stayed here another 200 years. You should be so lucky to have people speak about you the way that we all talk about him. He stood up for democracy. You, my friend, supported Bill 26, the bully bill. You supported, I suspect, going to Frank Stronach's property to announce the budget of the people in his



backyard. Let me tell you something: it's not a coincidence that Speaker Carr, one of your own members, felt that an attitude like yours deserves to be debated, put forward and held accountable in front of the people of Ontario, because that's who you insulted.

I remind you that this isn't one of your favourite little warm and fuzzy bills that we're debating. We are debating contempt of Parliament, and let's not forget that it's not the first one. You had another one, and—boy oh boy, if history serves me—it seems to me that was a Tory too, who stood up and said—these are not his exact words, but his actions said, “As much as I like my friends and want to please my friends, this is wrong.” It's also interesting that that very Speaker is now the government House leader. But the fact remains that this isn't some plot by the opposition to make such a wonderful government look bad. You did that yourselves. You did that by showing the contempt that you did for this place and for the people of Ontario.

I invite anybody to think about what the dynamics of this House would be like right now if it were Bob Rae and the NDP sitting there, and Mike Harris, Chris Stockwell and the Tory caucus sitting here, which is the way the House looked in 1995. I can just imagine the theatrics that would put us to shame. I have to admit that they would be Oscar performances.

**Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader):** Not a chance.

**Mr Christopherson:** There's the man himself. There we go. The Oscar winner himself is here.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** Stockwell's eyeballs would be this big.

**Mr Christopherson:** They would be. I said the last time I spoke that you'd still be peeling him off the ceiling, and you would be, because there is no defence of this. There really isn't. At the end of the day, you're going to regret it. It's yet one more stain on your record.

I have to tell you that I personally find it very offensive to sit here for eight years—and again, I'm not running for re-election—and watch the relevancy of this place, of committees, of public hearings, of the voice of the ordinary Ontarian, of the rights of the opposition members—slowly drained away, chipped away. It's heartbreaking. I think it is oh, so correct that this House is bringing this point to the people of Ontario by debating it day after day after day. What would be your next step if we didn't draw the line now? We didn't draw the line before, when you changed the rules; we didn't draw the line when you stopped taking public business out into the public; we didn't draw the line when you took away a lot of the other rights and privileges that opposition members had. We didn't draw the line then, and this is what you did.

I fear what their next step would be if we don't collectively, as Ontarians and parliamentarians, say, “Make no doubt about it, this is the line in the sand. You are not going to do this to the people of Ontario any longer.”

**Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls):** It's a pleasure for me to rise to join this debate. It's always fun to follow

my colleague from Hamilton across the way. As a person, I know that when he leaves this Legislature, over the coming few years, if the people of my riding do me the honour of sending me back here another four years, on a personal note, I'll miss the member from Hamilton. I won't miss his very loud speeches, which I've been listening to for eight years now. They require you to listen, that's for sure, because you can't cover your ears and do your reading and drown him out; you've got to hear everything he has to say. So I'll miss him as a person. I wish him well in his future endeavours. I believe he's running for mayor of Hamilton. I haven't talked to him yet about how that's going, but I know he will be leaving for that.

**Ms Martel:** Send him a cheque.

**Mr Maves:** “Send him a cheque”—the NDP asking for money off the bat here, for campaign donations. But I'm sure the member opposite is doing fine in that regard, and I wish him well.

Speaker, it always helps to kind of revisit where we are and how we got here. I may note that I believe we're into our third week of debating this motion by Mr Conway. We have not been allowed, because we're debating this motion, to start debate on the throne speech yet. We still need to do that.

When the Legislature came back, we had a throne speech, which was very well received throughout the province, much to the chagrin of the members opposite. The throne speech was very well received. I can understand why they want to tie up the Legislature for weeks on end, because what we have to do as soon as we conclude this debate is revert to discussing the throne speech. Because that was so popular, I know the members opposite don't want the people of the province of Ontario to hear more about it. Immediately upon winding up this motion, we will be speaking about the throne speech for at least another week, and that was full of good news, an excellent description by the current Premier of his view of where we are moving into the future.

After that, of course, is the whole debate surrounding the budget, and we need to begin to debate the budget bill in the Legislature. It's another good-news budget by this government in so many different ways.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Maves:** The members opposite again don't like the budget. They know the content of the budget was excellent. They don't want to debate that. They are fearful of debating the content of the budget. We want to get to those things.

I see the Liberal opposition has no longer put up speakers on this motion. I think they feel that three weeks is enough debate on this motion. They want to get on with the people's business and debate the throne speech and the budget. But the NDP continue to want to drag out this debate, to not let the people hear about the throne speech, to not let the people hear about the budget.

It's been said many times over the past three weeks that we have been debating this motion—I've heard

many members over here on our side of the House talk about how we got to this stage. We got to this stage, really, because the Premier of the province was caught between two commitments he had. He wanted to have a throne speech. There were many people in the public in Ontario and at the same newspapers that criticized him, eventually—but many of those people said, “What’s the Premier’s vision? We have a new Premier now who came along. Halfway through his mandate, what’s his vision?”

When he became the Premier of the province and we came back into legislative session, there were a lot of bills on the order paper that came forward when he was not the Premier. We dealt with those. Then he did want to put his stamp on it and let the people know about his vision. You traditionally do that in the House through a throne speech. So he adjourned the Legislature and we prorogued so he could have a throne speech. He set that for April 30.

At the same time, having been a finance minister for many years, Premier Eves knew the importance of having a budget come out before a fiscal year-end, which is March 31. So he got caught between the two dilemmas and he had to make the decision of having the budget and delivering the budget first of all in the House. He tabled the budget before the Minister of Finance decided to do her first budget speech outside the Legislature. So he was caught between two commitments, and the solution he came up with was to allow the first budget speech to be done outside the Legislature.

#### 1520

While it obviously wasn’t the most traditional, Speaker, you yourself talked in your ruling about the other times in Ontario’s history when a budget speech has been done outside the Legislature. The Ontario Liberals did it in 1988, I believe, when they went down to the press room and delivered their speech there. The NDP did not sit for the last 18 months they were in office. They tabled their budget, the social contract—I believe you called it a mini-budget in your ruling or alluded that it was very much like a budget. They didn’t come into the legislature to do that.

It’s interesting, when the members from the NDP get up and speak in the House, that they complain about this break with tradition, but they themselves did the very same thing, as you alluded to, Speaker, in your decision on the prima facie case. It seemed to be OK for them then, and they now seem to forget having done that. But you were right to allude to that.

The federal Liberals have done the same thing. They didn’t pass a budget in the federal Parliament for nearly two years, I believe, and all their finance bills were done outside the Legislature. So it has certainly happened before.

As you said in your ruling, circumstances were different in each and every one of the cases I have mentioned. In your ruling—I recall listening very intently that day—it seemed to me you couldn’t find anything out of order and you couldn’t rule on convention or constitutional problems. It very much seemed like the Table had assist-

ed in determining that there was nothing out of order with the budget process. I’m paraphrasing you, but you decided it was time to perhaps set a precedent—and precedents get set now and then—in your words, because you had received so many phone calls and had heard from people who didn’t like the process, you were going to decide on a prima facie case of contempt; however, only the House can decide on that, and that’s why we’re here debating Mr Conway’s motion.

So really it came down to a break with tradition. As my colleagues have said, there are a variety of examples of breaks with tradition that haven’t even been talked about. I know my friend Mr Chudleigh and the member from Hamilton talked about Mr Curling and when the House was held up. It was really quite contemptuous, in my view, to have the members of the opposition on that occasion basically stop by force the Sergeant at Arms from doing his duty. I think most people, when looking back at that, would find that a very contemptuous act. During that time and during that filibuster, a lot of other things happened in the Legislature that were out of order, contemptuous and definitely breaks with tradition.

I’ve seen people lose their temper in this Legislature over the past eight years. I’ve been in the Legislature when people twice crossed the aisle to fight, to physically fight with members on this side of the aisle. That was never spoken about in the media. Everyone kind of lay low about that. They said tempers flared and that’s too bad and people were taken out of the room. It’s interesting to me that the members opposite can bypass that and overlook that and the media always overlook that. In fact, I remember one time when one of our members raised that issue and was actually berated by the press for making it up. But I was in the Legislature and saw it happen. So there are a lot of breaks with tradition. There are a lot of things that people would find contemptuous that just aren’t talked about by members opposite.

It appears the Liberal opposition now have stopped putting up speakers. We look forward to finally voting on this motion and getting on with the business of the people of Ontario. What will that be? As I said, we will return to debating the throne speech, an excellent throne speech, delivered here almost three weeks ago now. We look forward to debating that. We also look forward after that to debating the budget, because again we delivered an excellent budget in the House. We are delivering our fifth consecutive balanced budget. Incredibly enough it’s the first time since 1908 that any government has delivered five consecutive balanced budgets. That’s a remarkable accomplishment. In the past four years, and this would be the fifth year, we have actually paid down the debt by \$5 billion. I get a kick out of the members opposite, the Liberal members especially, when they talk about the eight years we’ve been in office, and their union friends who make up the working family coalition.

**Mr Bisson:** They’ve got union friends?

**Mr Maves:** Oh, they do have union friends; you’re right.

They make up this group called the working family coalition, who ran some ads. The working family coali-

tion TV ads really parrot everything the Liberals have been talking about in the Legislature; for instance, the debt issue, that over the life of this government we've increased the debt by some \$20 billion.

This goes back to the fact that when we took office in 1995, we were facing an \$11.5-billion deficit left to us by the NDP. They had run four consecutive deficits over \$10 billion, and we were facing a fifth. We reduced expenditures right away and reduced the first-year deficit to about \$8 billion. The next years we went to six and four and so on. If you add that up, you get to about \$18 billion or \$20 billion. Depending on how much you want to assign to the NDP for that first year, 1995-96, you get, over that time, a cumulative amount of debt, that's true.

But the really bizarre thing is that the Liberals have the audacity to stand up and complain about that, because they complained about every single expenditure reduction we did as we moved toward balancing the budget, and they continue to complain. They hung from the rafters and screamed at any expenditure reduction we made from that 1995 budget, it didn't matter what it was, even though for five years they had also complained about the NDP's runaway budgets and deficits. When we started making expenditure reductions, the Liberals complained that every one of them was bad.

So over four years, rather than five, which is what we campaigned on, we balanced the budget. If you accumulate some of those deficits, you get to \$18 to \$20 billion, as I said, depending on how much you want to apportion to us and how much you want to apportion to the NDP in their last year in office.

So it's really funny, really ironic to hear the Liberals and their union friends trying to now say, "They managed poorly. They shouldn't have raised that much debt over the years." When we were balancing that budget, they did nothing but scream and complain and say we shouldn't have cut any of that spending. That's something we look forward to debating when we get to the budget and can talk about this government's five balanced budgets in a row.

At the same time, we've been reducing taxes. Everyone in this Legislature now knows all the income taxes we've reduced for people, the property taxes we've reduced, the small business tax, the employer health tax. We've now reduced workers' compensation premiums by about 26%. Every time we made a tax cut in Ontario, our revenues actually went up. Why? Because in 1995 when we got elected with our agenda, the businesses around Ontario and around the world said, "Finally someone is speaking some common sense. Finally we can start trusting that a government won't punish initiative and won't punish entrepreneurship." They started to reinvest in Ontario and create jobs. We've had well over 1.1 million new jobs created since 1995, and because there are 1.1 million more people working and paying taxes in Ontario, revenues have gone up every year. What did we do with that? Well, we balanced the budget.

We've also added \$10 billion to the health budget. When we took office, the expenditure on health care was

about \$17.4. Today it's well over \$27 billion and on its way higher. It's a budget that's very difficult to hold in check. So as we reduced taxes, our revenues went up, the economy grew, revenues went up, we paid down the deficit in four years instead of five, and we dramatically increased funding in health care. Hospitals have seen a huge increase, especially since 1997.

Increases in CCACs, community care access centres, were up dramatically. For several years in Niagara, between 1995 and 2002, it was up about 125%. We froze it for a year when we had a problem with the CCACs. We had some auditors go out and tell us we had serious problems with the way they were being administered. So we dealt with that, we fixed them and again we've started to put some more funding in the CCACs. But it's important that taxpayers know that these huge increases in funding we gave to the CCACs were being handled properly and that they went into services, not administration and waste.

### 1530

So we really need to get back to debating that. We need to get back to discussing, for instance, all the dollars we have put into colleges and universities. We've made record announcements and record investments in colleges and universities. We've allowed for nearly 130,000 new spaces in colleges and universities. Down in Niagara, Brock University has been a huge beneficiary of that with their major expansion. Niagara College built a whole new campus in my riding in Niagara-on-the-Lake. My former colleague Tom Froese was very instrumental in ensuring that investment happened. At Niagara College they are currently doing a viticulture and tourism addition to their campus in Niagara-on-the-Lake, to educate people for the booming tourism business that's in Niagara Falls and Niagara-on-the-Lake. So that's something we want to get back and talk about, and of course the increases that went along with that.

With the double cohort now moving into colleges and universities, with this huge expansion of space on all the campuses of colleges and universities throughout Ontario, they also required more funds for more professors and instructors, and that has been there, especially to the satisfaction of the colleges and universities sector.

It's always a bit of a tussle. Everyone obviously wants a little bit more, and even when you give them more, they say thanks for a little while and then want a little bit more again, but that's the regular to and fro of government. We need to get off this debate and on to that budget debate so we can discuss that.

There have been dramatic increases in funding in special education over the past few years. The Rozanski report came in and reviewed our funding formula, which the members opposite panned for years—they were right in lockstep with their union friends; they panned it for years—but Rozanski came back after meeting with all of the unions and school boards across the province and said resoundingly that the funding formula was good, that removing the right to tax from school boards was the right thing to do. The members opposite opposed that.

They wanted to give back to school boards the right to raise your property taxes. We said, "No more," to that and Rozanski said, resoundingly, that was correct, that moving to a per-student funding formula was the right way to go.

He also said that we should add some funding now to education. I think he said the number was \$1.8 billion over the next three years. Premier Eves has committed to actually raising it by about \$2 billion over the next three years. So we should engage in that debate. We sent out Mr Rozanski, he did his work, he did his consultations all around the province and came back with some instructions. We said we would adopt his report, and we've done that. That's reflected in the budget and in the throne speech, and we need to get back to speaking about that so the people of Ontario will hear about that.

So there are a lot of things we need to do. We need to wind up the debate on this. We need to have the vote on this, get past this and move on to the throne speech and the budget. I know many of our ministers have bills they want to introduce and get debated in this Legislature.

**Mr AL McDonald (Nipissing):** Get on with running the province.

**Mr Maves:** That's right. My colleague from North Bay says, "Get on with running the province," and continuing the fantastic growth it has experienced over the past eight years, an unparalleled growth that no jurisdiction, no G7 nation can match.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Maves:** It's funny, over the past few years when the economy is going well here, much to the chagrin of members of the NDP, they get up and complain, "It's only because of the Americans." Well, the American economy has been struggling for pretty much three years now, but our economy has not hit the skids. We've done extremely well. We've had an economy that has done better than anyone else in the G7 nations. Clearly our economy was resilient to any problems in the United States, and that's largely because of the actions of this government.

I want to thank you, and I look forward to continuing the debate on the throne speech and the budget in the future.

**Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York):** I had not expected to be standing up so fast. As I was the third or fourth speaker for the NDP, I didn't think they were going to get to me today. I don't know why my friends on both sides of the House have decided that that this debate is over and decided they don't want to speak to it. Because really, quite importantly, what has happened here in this Legislature needs to be debated long and debated hard.

What you have ruled, Mr Speaker, and the motions, the amendment, and the amendment to the amendment before us are absolutely important to the cause of democracy; they are absolutely important to the people of this province. They will be talked about and debated, I'm sure, for years and years after the vote is held on what we are going to do and whether or not the government is in contempt of this House.

I cannot remember a more important debate in this Legislature in all the years, save and except perhaps the amalgamation debates going back into 1996 and those horrible years.

I cannot remember a more important debate, and one that has captured the imagination of the people out there more than this one has. In the last couple of weeks I have been out knocking on doors, as I do every summer, not in anticipation of an election—because I am one of those who don't believe you have the nerve to call it—but because I think it's important to go out there and talk to the people about what concerns they have, right on their doorsteps, to find out what is important to them.

What we're finding is important to them would not surprise you at all. What is important to them is a lot of local circumstances. They're concerned about local issues. They're concerned about the environment in the Beach. They're concerned about what's happening in their schools: the fact that the schools are losing teachers and vice-principals and custodians. They are worried about the island airport. They are worried about a lot of things.

But you know, the number one issue at the door is the contempt of this Legislature. It is the number one issue as I go door to door in Beaches-East York. People cannot understand why this government has been in contempt of this Legislature. They cannot understand why a place like Magna corporation is now the seat of government, is now the place where decisions are made and public announcements are made. They cannot understand how their hard-earned tax dollars are being spent so foolishly. They cannot understand why a government, which people have said—they always thought Conservatives were people who looked to our past with some pride, who looked to our democracy with some pride, but they obviously see in this government that that is no longer the case.

Mr Speaker, the issue before us today started with your statement from this House. We've being going—I believe this is day six; I heard three weeks from the previous speaker. Yes, I guess if you count Thursday as one week, and then you count the following four days as the second week and you count today as the third week, Tory math will say that it's three weeks long. But in fact this is the sixth day of debate. They have not been full days. They have been six days, no evening sessions, and all members have not yet had an opportunity to speak.

I would suggest, Mr Speaker, that what you said bears repeating after these six days, and there are a few paragraphs I would like to read from your own statement which I think clearly and succinctly sets out the task before all of us. Mr Speaker, you stood up in this House and you said, "As I've already indicated, there have been occasions in the past when a Minister of Finance or a Treasurer has neither personally presented the budget in the House nor read the budget speech in the House. In the case at hand, however, the government indicates that the events of March 27 were motivated by a desire—in the words of a March 12 press release issued by the Ministry of Finance—'to have a direct conversation with the people of Ontario.'

“To the extent that they imply that parliamentary institutions and processes in Ontario tend to interfere with the government’s message to the public, such statements tend to reflect adversely on those institutions and processes. If the government has a problem with those institutions and processes, or if it wants to improve them, why did it not ask the House sometime during the last session to reflect on the problem and to consider appropriate changes? Traditional ways to do just that would be to introduce a bill, table a notice of motion, enter into discussions at the level of the House leaders or ask the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly to study and report on the problem. Given the public’s reaction to the government’s decision to stage a budget presentation outside the House, I think Ontarians are rather fond of their traditional parliamentary institutions and parliamentary processes, and they want greater deference to be shown toward the traditional parliamentary forum in which public policies are proposed, debated and voted on.

**1540**

“When the government or any member claims that a budget presentation is needed outside the House well before it happens inside the House in order to communicate directly with the people or because of a perceived flaw in the parliamentary institution, there is a danger that the representative role of each and every member of this House is undermined, that respect for the institution is diminished, and that Parliament is rendered irrelevant. Parliamentary democracy is not vindicated by the government conducting a generally one-sided public relations event on the budget well in advance of members having an opportunity to hold the government to account for the budget in this chamber.

“I can well appreciate that parliamentary proceedings can be animated and often emotional, and they can be cumbersome. It may not be the most efficient of political systems, but it is a process that reflects the reality that members, like the people of Ontario, may not be of one mind on matters of public policy. A mature parliamentary democracy is not a docile, esoteric or one-way communications vehicle; it is a dynamic, interactive and representative institution that allows the government of the day to propose and defend its policies—financial and otherwise. It also allows the opposition to scrutinize and hold the government to account for those policies. It is an open, working and relevant system of scrutiny and accountability. If any members of this House have a problem with the concept of parliamentary democracy, then they have some serious explaining to do.”

**Mr Garry J. Guzzo (Ottawa West-Nepean):** They changed Speakers.

**Mr Prue:** The Speakers have been changed but the tradition continues. I am sure that a Deputy Speaker would have come to the same ruling had he been so charged.

The last few lines of what Speaker Carr had to say are very telling and very important. “If any members of this

House” have a difficulty, then they need to really search their souls.

I have heard almost every speaker from the government side trying to defend the indefensible, to talk about why those traditions were gone around, to say that they were followed in some arcane way. We all sat here wondering what precisely they were talking about. Instead of standing up for democracy, you have stood up for your party. Instead of standing up for the rights of the people and for the representatives of the people in this House, you have stood up only for yourselves.

I would suggest that you start knocking on a few doors out there, you start going into your respective ridings and go door to door to door, and ask the people out there whether they thought holding a budget at Magna International was a good idea. While you’re at it, ask them if they thought going around in a go-kart was a good idea for your party too. They might be a little illuminated on that one as well.

It should not be a surprise. This party has shown contempt not only for this House and the reason for the debate here for these past six days, but they have shown contempt for a great many things in their eight years as government—years of the Mike Harris regime and the year-plus of Mr Ernie Eves—not much has changed. Although we were all hoping for a kinder, gentler conservatism, that is certainly not what we’re seeing here today. What we are seeing is contempt upon contempt upon contempt: contempt of this House; contempt of the traditions of this country, our people, our heritage, our British democracy; contempt of the history of this land, where there has been an uninterrupted debate on budget items—save and except, and I will admit, in unusual circumstances—for 136 years. They have not looked at the history at all. They have not looked at the tradition of parliamentary democracy and budget debates throughout the English-speaking world, in all of those countries of the Commonwealth where no one has ever, ever taken a budget outside of the Legislature, has never taken it out to car parts factories, and has never insulted the people of their lands in quite the same way that the Ontario government has done.

This should really come as no surprise. We have seen contemptuous actions by this government over the last eight years. The only one, as I said earlier, that I could find as contemptuous as this one was the whole debate around amalgamation. We can remember when the people of Toronto—of the six municipalities, as they then were—went to a referendum. We can remember when the populations of those six cities voted 75% no to amalgamation and had Minister Leach stand up in the House and say he was going to ignore the will of everyone who was speaking, everyone who had voiced a vote, everyone who had tried to preserve their democracies and had tried to preserve their way of dealing with city officials. We remember the contempt with which your government dealt with that—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Prue:** —as you are contemptuous of it today. The honourable minister is contemptuous of it to this very

day. They are contemptuous whenever people decide something that they, in their infinite wisdom, think they know better.

I will tell you, the people in Toronto knew better. We see today the mess of a city that you have created, a city which is in decline, a city where potholes aren't fixed, a city with garbage on the streets, a city with multiple problems, with the inability to raise taxes. You will see a city in disastrous decline, where people can no longer interface with their politicians and where everything seems to be going wrong.

You have shown your contempt as well for the people of Ontario throughout, first of all by marginalizing the poor, those who were on welfare, those who were on ODSP, those who were on fixed incomes and, mostly, you have shown the utmost contempt for those poor individuals, the poorest of the poor, those who live on our streets.

If anyone wants to see what contempt this government has shown to the people on our streets, one need only go out to the Eaton Centre, go out the back door and you will find the little Church of the holy Trinity. I would invite members opposite to go there to that little church and see precisely the contempt in which you hold the poor and precisely what your actions have resulted in since 1995. I would invite you to go there and look to the monument that is there, a little makeshift monument that gets added to weekly, of those poor unfortunate souls who die on our streets. You will see that it goes back into the 1980s. You will see that people unfortunately died on our streets in very small numbers in the 1980s and early 1990s—one or two a year. Now you will go out there—

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I seek unanimous consent to conclude the current debate in light of the fact that 63,500 schoolchildren are currently not in school and the question now be put by unanimous consent.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown):** The government House leader has asked for unanimous consent to—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** I heard a no.

**Mr Prue:** As I was stating before I was so rudely interrupted—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order. The member for Beaches-East York has the floor.

**Mr Prue:** As I said, I invite the Tory members especially to go out and look at that little church and you will see the disaster your policies have had on the poorest of the poor. You will see how people who live on our streets no longer have the required medical care, the food or the housing in order to survive. You will see that in 1995, after years of having one or two die on the streets—which is lamentable, I have to tell you; it's one or two too much—you will see that it jumped to 15 in 1995, jumped to 50 in 1996 and has been above 50 people, one a week dying on the streets of Toronto every year of your government. If you want to know the contempt—

**Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, minister responsible for women's issues):** You're bragging about it. Shame on you.

**Mr Prue:** If you want to know the contempt, Madam Minister, then that is contemptible. That is the same kind of contempt you are showing to the House which you have already shown to the poor.

If they want to see more contempt, then you need only go to the cities of Ottawa, Toronto and Hamilton where in a contemptuous action you got rid of the democratically elected school boards because they would not follow your bidding. They were willing to stand up and fight for the students. They were willing to take you on and do what was necessary in order to protect the students and make sure there were adequate teachers, adequate textbooks and computers and adequate janitors and secretaries. They were willing to take you on and they paid a political price because today they are literally powerless while your three supervisors call all the shots and make the cuts that are having a devastating effect on the people of those three cities.

If the members opposite would have the nerve to go out on to the streets—and I invite those government members from Toronto—I don't think there are any in Hamilton or Ottawa; oh, yes, Mr Baird in Ottawa—to go out and actually knock on doors and hear what people are saying about that. They are very upset, because they believe their school boards have been held in contempt. They believe that the people they elected do not have the authority to do what they need to do under local circumstances.

**1550**

If that were not enough, we also see the contempt with which this government deals with the cities of Ontario. I had an opportunity to read their election document that was released in the car parts factory. I was rather intrigued at the contempt that they continue to show cities. They offer and waggle out there the opportunity of a two-cent gas tax that will help the cities do something with transit and transportation, but they immediately say that that's not going to be possible unless everything that the government needs to do in all of the 480 or so municipalities in Ontario is done by binding referendum. We have seen the disaster that has caused in places like California and the cities in that state; we have seen the disasters it has caused all over the northeast United States. We know that no government, whether it be a junior level of government such as a municipality or a township or even another province, could ever expect to be held to such rules. Even traditional supporters of your party like Mayor McCallion are saying that this is wrong-headed, unworkable and sheer and utter contempt of elected democracies in this province. I would suggest you are showing the cities the same contempt that you are showing this House.

You have been contemptuous of tenants when they have come to you crying about how fast their rents are going up, clearly outpacing any way they have of paying those rents, clearly outpacing inflation and causing many

of them to become homeless. You are contemptuous when your hand-picked, appointed officials in the rent review tribunal summarily dismiss their appeals and they find themselves out on the streets to join the ever-increasing numbers of homeless. You are contemptuous of what they say and what they want. And when you start talking about what you are going to do should the people of this province give you another mandate, you surely leave them out.

You have been contemptuous of hydro ratepayers. You continue to talk about selling off Hydro, and I suppose that's where the \$2 billion from sales of other assets in your much-vaunted budget comes from. I suppose that's where it is, because you won't say, but we all know that's what you expect to get when you sell Hydro after the next election and after you've fooled the people yet again. But I think the people are far too smart for that.

You have been contemptuous of our nurses, calling them little more than Hula Hoop makers and saying that when their day is done, it is done. But you are finding out today, much to your chagrin, that their day is here, that we need them more than ever and that what you once held in contempt has come back to haunt you.

You have been contemptuous of our environment and have held those who speak on behalf of the environment in some amazing contempt. You have fired some of our best scientists, whom we need to look out for West Nile virus, whom we would need in case there are other Walkertons and whom we definitely would have needed and did need during the time of the SARS crisis.

You have been totally contemptuous of so many people. It should not come as a surprise to us that you are today again contemptuous of this House. For six days you have had an opportunity to stand up and say, "I am wrong." Had you said that on day one, had you said, "We are wrong and we won't do it again," had you said, "We understand from our constituents that this was not a good move," that somebody thought it might be cute but it ended up being too cute by half, then I'm sure this debate would not have lasted six days. We could have dealt with the throne speech; we could have dealt with the budget. But I will tell you, this debate is as important as or more important than those things, because this is about the future and the direction of democracy in this province. It is a direction that we should all strive to uphold and not try to bury under the rug, as has been done by the members opposite during this debate.

**Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Energy, Minister responsible for francophone affairs):** I'm pleased to rise to speak to the amendment to the amendment to the motion brought forward by my colleague the member for Niagara Centre.

I am concerned, though, and I would be remiss if I didn't mention this at the outset of my remarks, that in the city of Toronto, there are 63,500 schoolchildren who are currently not in school. We have repeatedly tried to introduce legislation in this House today. The government House leader, Mr Stockwell, the member for Etobicoke Centre, asked for unanimous consent to wrap up

this debate. We could wrap up the debate on the amendment to the amendment to the motion—

**Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair):** You're not supposed to filibuster yourself.

**Hon Mr Baird:** Well, just hear me out here. If we—  
*Interjection.*

**Hon Mr Baird:** You don't need to learn. You know everything.

Who is keeping these 63,500 schoolchildren—we would need unanimous consent to go to introduction of bills, we'd have to conclude this debate, and the NDP won't give it. People out there want to know if they're empowered. Well, they are empowered. They can call Marilyn Churley. If people want to get the 63,500—call Marilyn Churley at 416-325-3250. They should call Marilyn Churley, because your kids could be back in school tomorrow if you just call Marilyn Churley at 416-325-3250.

**The Acting Speaker:** I would just like to remind the minister that we're speaking to the motion by the member from Niagara Centre.

**Hon Mr Baird:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. We're talking about contempt. We're talking about—

**Mr Duncan:** Where's the bill, John?

**Hon Mr Baird:** Oh, the member opposite asked where the bill is.

**Mr Martin:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I was just wondering if the Minister of Energy would take a minute and call the people of Wawa; they're looking for you.

**The Acting Speaker:** That of course is not a point of order. The Minister of Energy.

**Hon Mr Baird:** It's funny; I get calls on this issue all the time from another member who's working for a resolution, not trying to make grandstanding out of it.

I read with great interest a press release saying that we were going to be debating Wawa today, and I came here to debate it. But these members opposite won't allow a debate on Wawa.

We would like to introduce this legislation. We have to conclude this debate on not just the amendment to the amendment to the motion, but the amendment to the motion and the motion; we're prepared to do that, but the opposition are thwarting that.

**Mr Duncan:** Where's the bill?

**Hon Mr Baird:** Let's go to introduction of bills.

What do we say to the 63,500 schoolchildren who are currently not in school? We can say, "Call Marilyn Churley at 416-325-3250."

**The Acting Speaker:** Minister, we're not going to go there. This is on the motion by the member from Niagara Centre.

**Hon Mr Baird:** The amendment says, "and its members." I know that all members of the House care about democracy and about playing a role in Parliament and that Parliament has the authority to do a lot of things. So, with respect to Mr Kormos's motion, he thinks we should not have a clear contempt of this House or its members.

People in Toronto have a member—and I know that on other issues, she has gotten the NDP to cave, and

we're hoping she'll do that this time because we very much want to see this debate end and to have introduction of bills and to debate. But that requires unanimous consent; nothing can happen on this today without unanimous consent. I believe that if there was a willingness by members on all sides of the House, members who are mentioned in Mr Kormos's amendment to the amendment to the motion—if all of us would agree, we could end this debate on the three questions before us: the amendment to the amendment, the amendment and the motion. We could end that, we could ask for unanimous consent to go to routine proceedings and have introduction of bills, and we could place the bill in this House and begin debating it almost immediately. But instead, we're debating the amendment to the amendment to the motion.

So I think taxpayers have to ask themselves what the priority is. Is it the amendment to the amendment to the motion and the other procedural issues before the House or is it the 63,500 schoolchildren? I think it's quite evident what it would be.

We are talking about this legislation. I think that if we were honest with each other, we could admit that all of us, each one of the 103 of us, could do a better job and contribute more to the effective operation of democracy and of this Parliament. I would say to you, Mr Speaker, and to those watching at home that they should beware of people who throw stones. We should look at their record.

**1600**

Well, I remember the last year the New Democrats were in power in Ontario. Other than the unemployment and poverty across the province, I remember that the Legislature itself only sat for 15 days—out of 365 days, only 15 days. There was no question period for the other 350 days, no introduction of bills, no debate. These advocates of contempt, where were they at that time? They were sitting around the cabinet table.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** Not Peter.

**Hon Mr Baird:** Not Peter; I concede that. Where were they when the Legislature wasn't sitting for 350 days in the course of a year? They were nowhere. So this dial-up indignation is somewhat shallow.

I've listened with great interest to the speeches by the members of the official opposition. They say they believe in the House. We see that the Leader of the Opposition shows up for only one day a week. There are seven days in a week and he only shows up for one day. I think that's regrettable.

**Mr Duncan:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I don't think it's appropriate for a member to be commenting on the attendance of another member in the House.

**The Acting Speaker:** That is a point of order. Minister?

**Hon Mr Baird:** I withdraw.

**Mr Bisson:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Which Liberal member does not want us to talk about who hasn't showed up in the last little while? Just to be clear.

**The Acting Speaker:** That's not a point of order.

**Hon Mr Baird:** I'll say that I've been impressed with the way Dalton McGuinty travels this province when the

House is sitting. I have been impressed that six days out of seven, he is around the province listening to people. I won't mention where he has not been, Mr Speaker, because that would be unparliamentary.

I did notice that Dalton McGuinty, my friend from Ottawa, talks about strengthening democracy, talks about contempt. Do you know who the real contempt is for? There is the contempt by the Leader of the Opposition, by Dalton McGuinty, for the residents of Scarborough Centre, of Ottawa-Vanier, of Markham and of Brampton Centre where, like in a third-world dictatorship, the vote was cancelled at the nomination meetings. Good people who had come forward to run for office, to put their name on the ballot and put their future in the hands of the people—the nomination meeting was called and then it was cancelled.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** There was a nomination meeting; there was only one vote.

**Hon Mr Baird:** Yes. There was a nomination meeting but there was only one vote, the government House leader says. With the stroke of a pen, democracy ended in four ridings in this province. In Ottawa-Vanier, not only do they have a great member who sits in this House, a hard-working member, but they also had an individual who went to Harvard and Oxford and is well-regarded around town. His dream was to sit in this House. He came to a difficult decision, after weighing the costs to his career, to his personal life and to his family, and said, "I want to represent my community in the Legislative Assembly." He signed up for the nomination, registered as a candidate and went out and solicited the support of hundreds, potentially even thousands, of people so he could be a member of this House, much like Mr Kormos's amendment. A year into this exercise, the nomination meeting was cancelled. No vote.

**Mr Maves:** By whom?

**Hon Mr Baird:** By Dalton McGuinty. No vote. What type of places do they cancel elections and impose a candidate?

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** Robert Mugabe.

**Hon Mr Baird:** Robert Mugabe, one member says. Other members will think of other countries and jurisdictions.

I'll say this with great respect to every member of this House: we may like each other or we may dislike each other, we may agree or disagree on values, principles and policies, but no one was appointed to this House. We all had to come in through the front door. We all had to seek election in our home constituencies and our parties to get here. But that won't be the case in the next Parliament, because I believe there will be one or two people who didn't have to get nominated, who got in through the back door. That's a shame, that we're going to have candidates and that people won't have a choice. That is unfortunate. It does cause a lot of concern.

I was pleased to see the documents put forward to try to strengthen democracy in Ontario by Ernie Eves in his The Road Ahead document. The leader of the official opposition, Dalton McGuinty, wants more free votes. I say let's start in Ottawa-Vanier and have a free vote in



Ottawa-Vanier. When we're done that, let's go to Brampton Centre and let's have a free vote in Brampton Centre. When we're done that, let's go to Markham. Dalton, free the Liberal associations in these three ridings. Allow there to be a vote.

I'm very interested. The hard-working member for Scarborough Centre, Ms Mushinski, is here today. I'm confused because when Dalton ended democracy in Scarborough Centre there was a gentleman by the name of Costas Manios who had sought election in the past and was able to have a good, spirited debate in which the member for Scarborough Centre ended up as the victor. There are interesting things going around in Scarborough Centre. The member for Scarborough Centre showed me something she got in her mailbox that says "Vote Costas Manios," authorized by the Scarborough Centre Liberal association. You have the Liberal association presenting one Liberal candidate and you have Dalton McGuinty appointing another. It is going to be terribly confusing to people. So I say to Dalton McGuinty, if you want to have free votes, what better place to start than on election day? Let's see him do that.

I have this brochure here, "Costas Manios, Scarborough Centre"—a nice picture of the gentleman—with a Liberal logo on it. It says, "Authorized by the Scarborough Centre Provincial Liberal Association." If people want to see contempt shown to democracy, they should contact Mr Manios. He can be reached at 416-431-9998. Tell him to keep on fighting Dalton McGuinty, affectionately known as Dalton the Dictator in at least four constituencies in Ontario. But it is unusual that, for a man who talks about a democratic deficit in Ontario, his first act in implementing that agenda is to cancel votes in four ridings. I say to the members opposite, beware. He's got one left. There is one bullet left in the gun and any of you could be next. Any of those members on the other side could be next.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** Dalton roulette.

**Hon Mr Baird:** That's dangerous. Dalton could have to appoint himself. It was a very close race in Ottawa South in the last election. It was supposed to be a Liberal town and the Conservative Party actually picked up two seats.

But the Liberals don't just have to appoint candidates; what they can also do is wave the gun around to scare people off.

**Mr Maves:** They do that.

**Hon Mr Baird:** "They do that," the member for Niagara Falls says.

Lee Farnworth, a woman in Nepean, wanted to seek election. Then the backroom boys came in and tried to intimidate her and push her aside and bring in another candidate. To give this woman credit, she's had the guts and the determination and she's not going to back down when Dalton McGuinty waves the appointment gun around. She's standing for nomination. Democracy? It's 4:10 and I have not checked to see whether Dalton has intervened and cancelled the vote, whether there will be a free vote. It could have happened this afternoon. I don't know if it did. We'll all have to wait and see.

**Interjection:** They kicked the guy out in Erie-Lincoln.

**Hon Mr Baird:** In Erie-Lincoln, they kicked the guy out there too. It's unbelievable.

Talking about Parliament and strengthening the institution and the contempt amendment to the motion, I did notice that Ernie Eves put out a platform where he said he disagrees with proportional representation. What the Liberals want to do is get rid of riding MPPs and just say that the party bigwigs will choose what order you are on the list. There will be no more ridings; we'll have what's called proportional representation. The backroom boys and the party machine really love this system because they don't have any democracy. They can just put people on the list, and if you do anything the leader doesn't like—remember when Alex Cullen was here? He disagreed with Dalton on one issue and they sent a hit squad to take him out in the nomination. Then when he voted against Dalton once—just once—out on his petard. He even ended up with the New Democrats. I notice he took a membership in the Liberal association to support Lee Farnworth. The member seems surprised. The former member, Mr Cullen, took out a membership in the Liberal Party. So New Democratic support is plunging in Ottawa West-Nepean, by Dalton the dictator.

1610

We noticed that they want to get rid of MPPs having ridings and just let the party brass decide. It's more efficient that way. Dalton and his backroom boys can make a list, and they'll know who's naughty and who's nice. If you disagree with Dalton, he'll put you as number 103. Rick Bartolucci would be high on that list, though, because he's a good soldier, a good lieutenant for Dalton McGuinty.

*Interjection.*

**Hon Mr Baird:** I wouldn't even have made it on the list, I say to the member for Sudbury, if we had had that system in Ontario when I first ran.

**Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I believe I heard the minister say that one of our members was a dictator. I wonder if he could take that back, because it's unparliamentary.

**The Acting Speaker:** I would ask the minister if he would withdraw that remark.

**Hon Mr Baird:** I withdraw, Speaker.

Fundamentally antidemocratic: what do you call people who cancel free elections?

**Mr Maves:** Dalton McGuinty.

**Hon Mr Baird:** Dalton McGuintys. That's what you call them. I'm not saying any member of this House is a dictator, Mr Speaker, but people who cancel free elections—

*Interjections.*

**Hon Mr Baird:** And I withdrew it. People who cancel free elections are dictators. I'm not pointing the finger at anyone, Mr Speaker. I'm not going to do that.

There are a lot of important things—instead of debating the amendment to the amendment to the motion, I wish members had given consent when the government

House leader rose to try to put an end to all three of these proceedings, not just one, and then we could go to introduction of bills. But that hasn't happened and that's indeed regrettable, because I am tremendously concerned, as I know Ernie Eves is tremendously concerned, about the 63,500 students—and I'd ask people to think about that: 63,500 students weren't in school today. While we were sitting here debating the amendment to the amendment to the motion, 63,500 kids weren't being instructed. They weren't being instructed in math, in science. They weren't being instructed in literature. They weren't being instructed in spelling, in history. I'm concerned about that.

The government has come forward with a bill that they want to introduce in this House, and the opposition won't let them. I think that's unfortunate. As Howard Hampton walks this crowd over the cliff—they're all behind him; I'll give them that. They're all lined up right behind him to go over the cliff, even Marilyn Churley. I don't understand why Marilyn Churley won't allow introduction of bills and won't allow debate to get these kids back in the classroom.

I talked to a friend of mine who knows a teacher, and for this teacher, it's her first year—

*Interjection.*

**Hon Mr Baird:** In the Toronto Catholic board, yes. Of the 73 school boards in Ontario, in that one board that's out.

This individual got involved in education to teach, and she wants to be back in the classroom. She's disappointed that her board has locked her out. She heard at 12 o'clock that there was a little bit of good news coming down the pipe to help get her back in the classroom and to help allow her to teach her children in her classroom. But alas, Marilyn Churley has said, "No. You'll have to stay out." That's very regrettable.

I noticed when we debated other issues, like garbage, where we gave unanimous consent to get the garbage collectors back to work, these members opposite quickly melted. Surely our children are more important than the garbage in this city. Surely our children demand and need to be back in the classroom. The members of the third party, including Marilyn Churley, should back down. Rosario Marchese should back down. Michael Prue should back down.

If people want to effect that change, you have the power. Get on the phones. Call these individuals. Tell them you want them to fix it. Michael Prue: 325-1303. Rosario Marchese: 325-9092. Marilyn Churley: 325-3250. If people want to see these children back in the classroom, I beg of you, pick up the phone and call them. It has worked in the past, and I know it'll work again.

I want to congratulate my House leader, the member for Etobicoke Centre, who was working all day and all weekend on this initiative to get these kids back in class. If we prevail, we will continue the fight.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate? The member for Perth-Middlesex.

**Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex):** Excuse me for a minute.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** I find the proceedings today interesting. I've just watched two Conservative members get up and take 40 minutes of the debate, and complain that opposition members are debating. This has to be the first time that a government has filibustered itself.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I seek unanimous consent to conclude the current debate in light of the fact that 63,500 schoolchildren are currently not in school, and that the question now be put.

**Interjections:** No.

**The Acting Speaker:** I heard a no.

**Mr Hampton:** As I was saying, this has to be the first time in history that a government has filibustered itself, that a government puts up speakers to protract the debate, and then complains that somebody is extending the debate.

There's another unbelievable aspect to this.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** You don't even know the rules, Howie.

**Mr Hampton:** This is the government House leader, who has never, ever been the least bit embarrassed about using time allocation or imposing closure on the Legislature. This is a government that routinely has used time allocation to limit debate and has routinely used closure.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I seek unanimous consent—

**The Acting Speaker:** Please be seated.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** Why? It's a different point of order. I seek unanimous consent that the question now be put.

**Hon Mr Baird:** End the debate.

**The Acting Speaker:** He's asked for unanimous consent. No.

**Mr Hampton:** If the leader of the government in the House wants to bring a closure motion, he knows he can bring that. He has never been embarrassed about bringing a closure motion before. He has never been embarrassed about, in effect, shortening the time for debate before.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** How many fairies—

**The Acting Speaker:** If I have to warn the government House leader again—I'm sorry, I apologize to the member for Kenora-Rainy River.

**Mr Hampton:** We have government member after government member standing up and extending the debate, and then we have the government House leader complaining that his own members are extending the debate. I challenge the government House leader to look at the number of Conservatives who have spoken to this debate. I'm sure it numbers over 30. There are only nine New Democrats who have spoken to the debate. Who's extending the debate, when 30 Conservatives have gotten up, ad nauseam, when we've just heard two Conservatives here? One more attempted to get up, but somehow I guess he couldn't figure out what he was supposed to say.

**Ms Churley:** The House leader made him sit down.

**Mr Hampton:** Don't complain to the people of Ontario about extending the debate, when it's your own members who are extending the debate.

**Mr Johnson:** Point of order: I just wanted to allow the leader of the third party to correct himself. Because I gave the floor to allow him to speak, I don't think that he should cast aspersions on—

**The Acting Speaker:** Oh, you yielded the floor. The leader of the third party.

**Mr Hampton:** I want to raise some serious issues in this whole contempt motion, and it's interesting that the Minister of Energy just spoke, because since the House has come back, I have been raising whenever I can the issue of how this government is treating the citizens of Wawa. Let me give you an example of what in fact is happening. There are no less than six hydro generating stations in close proximity to Wawa. A number of them are within the municipal boundaries of the municipality there. It costs about a half a cent a kilowatt hour to generate electricity at these power dams, but under this government's disastrous scheme of hydro privatization and deregulation, the people of Wawa, the hydro consumers of Wawa, are paying not a half a cent a kilowatt hour for their electricity; they are paying the equivalent of 22 times that cost of production of a half a cent a kilowatt hour.

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This government believes that is fair and equitable. Let me say, that shows the contempt of this government for the people of Wawa. It shows the contempt of this government for the businesses of Wawa. It shows the contempt of this government for all of those hard-working people who are only seeking fairness and justice from a system of hydro privatization and deregulation that is completely denying that.

I want to shed some light on some of the other things that are happening in the environs of Wawa. You see, the private company that owns the generating stations, the transmission lines, the distribution lines, is none other than Brascan. I want the good people of Wawa—in fact, I want everybody in Ontario—to know the cozy, intimate relationship between the Ernie Eves government and the Conservatives and Brascan Corp.

**Hon Mr Baird:** Mr Speaker, on a point of order: I would ask you to rule. We have two orders. We have order number 1, which is the amendment to the amendment to the motion brought forward by the member for Niagara Centre, and we have order number 2, which the member opposite is debating, the wrong order. I wonder if you could say whether he is debating the issue in front of the House. I'm happy to debate order number 2 if you want to—

**The Acting Speaker:** As you know, we are debating the motion by the member for Niagara Centre relating to the contempt motion by Mr Conway. That is the order we're debating, and I'm sure the leader of the third party will directly relate his comments to the motion by his colleague the member for Niagara Centre.

**Mr Hampton:** I think the Minister of Energy is trying to waste time here and extend debate. I want to get down to the issue of contempt.

Let me show you just how contemptuous this government has been. You see, that company in Wawa that is literally robbing people blind by charging them 22 times more—

**Hon Mr Baird:** Mr Speaker, on a point of order: I seek unanimous consent to put the question on the two amendments and the main motion and then to move to orders of the day so we can debate this important issue to the people of Wawa.

**The Acting Speaker:** Mr Baird has asked for unanimous consent. I'm afraid I heard a no. The leader of the third party.

**Mr Hampton:** I want to refer to the contempt that this government has shown for the people of Wawa. As I was saying, Brascan owns the generating stations, the transmission lines, the distribution lines. Brascan charges the people of Wawa more than 22 times what it costs to produce the electricity and the people of Wawa are probably wondering—

**Hon Mr Baird:** Mr Speaker, on a point of order: I rose two points of order ago to request that the honourable member be called to order for not speaking to the question before the House and he's continually doing the opposite.

**The Acting Speaker:** I am certain that the leader of the third party will relate his comments directly to the motion in front of us. I was thinking he was getting there.

**Mr Hampton:** I am illustrating the kind of contempt this government has shown for the Legislature and for the people of Ontario, and I'm speaking by way of illustration for the people of Wawa.

I want people to understand the very intimate relationship between Ernie Eves and the Conservative government and the Brascan Corp that is ripping people off in Wawa. What it amounts to is this: not only does Brascan own those generating stations but, thanks to the generosity of the Conservative government to their corporate friends, they were able to pick up four more generating stations on the Mississagi River for a very cheap price. People might wonder, how do you get the government of Ontario to sell you four hydro dams and four generating stations for about one tenth the cost of building those generating stations. Here's how it's done—this shows further contempt. During the Conservative leadership race, which was held a year ago in January, February and March, you contribute \$140,000 to Ernie Eves's leadership campaign, which is what Brascan did. Imagine: one corporation and its affiliates contributed \$140,000 just to Mr Eves's leadership campaign in January, February and March. At the end of March, after Mr Eves becomes leader of the Conservative Party and Premier, you get the generating stations for about one tenth of what it would cost to build the generating stations. Then, in May, when the government deregulates the price of electricity, you get to drive the price of electricity through the roof and in three months—July, August and September—you make an \$8.8-million

profit, selling the power from those hydro dams. That shows contempt: contempt for the people of Wawa and contempt for the people of Ontario.

But get this: Brascan wants to make even more money. If you review the fact sheet they put out boasting about their \$8.8-million profit from those four hydro dams, they disclose that what they want to do next is export electricity into the Chicago-Milwaukee corridor in the United States and make even more money. This truly shows contempt: contempt for the hard-working people of Wawa, who are being forced to pay 22 times the cost of producing the electricity, and contempt for all the other consumers in the province.

What is equally unbelievable about this is that because these hydro dams, many of them located within the municipal jurisdiction of Wawa, are so close to the town site, there's actually no transmission cost. This isn't a case of having to transmit electricity 200 or 300 kilometres to market. There is no transmission cost, because the community is right next to the power dams. There's no huge cost of distribution. The distribution lines were built many years ago. The distribution lines—again, a very compact community.

But when you add it all up, under this government's disastrous policy of hydro privatization and deregulation, the people of Wawa are being forced to pay 22 times—22 times—what it costs to generate electricity at hydro dams within their own municipality. That's the result of hydro privatization and deregulation, and that is the kind of contempt this government is showing for those people and for many other hydro consumers in the province.

That contempt was taken further by this government's decision to attempt to escape public scrutiny, to escape the scrutiny of the British parliamentary process, when they decided to take the budget and not present it here in the Legislature but present it in a car parts factory. That is the kind of contempt that has been shown, and that is why people are so angry.

I say to the government House leader again, and I say to the Minister of Energy, if the government wants to end this debate, the government could call closure today. Everyone knows how the process works here. The government has the majority. The government determines what gets debated each day. We wanted to debate Wawa today. We wanted to debate our opposition resolution on Wawa. That's what was scheduled. The government said no, they would continue with the contempt motion. The government has the majority; the government can decide this question right now. But the government chooses to play games and show further contempt for the people of Ontario.

The government wants to come in here today and say to some of the parents whose children attend separate schools here in Toronto—the government wants to pretend they're going to solve the problem. If the government wanted to present their legislation, they could call closure on the debate right now, because they have the majority and they could decide the question here and now. This government, once again, is playing games with people and showing the utmost of contempt.

Imagine: the Minister of Energy, the government House leader, complaining that the debate is going on and yet it's their own government members who have been standing up and extending the debate. Who has spoken most to these motions? If you do the tally, government members have done more to extend the debate on this than anyone else in the Legislature. Once again, a government showing contempt, believing it can pull the wool over people's eyes, believing it can somehow simply issue a press release or a spin line, and once again take advantage of and show contempt for people. I have news for you: people are on to your games. People are on to your games about hydroelectricity and the fact that a billion and a half dollars have been spent now in this province through the back door to subsidize the private hydro generation companies that you have brought into the province. People pay what's on their bill and then they pay a further billion and a half dollars a year off the hydro bill to pay for this very expensive privatized hydroelectricity. People are on to that game.

People are on to your games around education. You are the government that has done more to create conflict in the schools, in the classroom. You go out and you deliberately attack teachers—the very people whom we depend upon to deliver in the education system.

I ask people across Ontario, do you really think we could improve the health care system if the government went out every day and attacked the nurses and the doctors? Obviously not. Do you really think we could improve policing if the government went out every day and attacked police officers? Obviously not. Do you really think we could improve the practice of dentistry if the government went out every day and attacked the dentists? Obviously not. But it has been a routine government strategy to go out every day and attack teachers, and pretend in doing so that they're going to improve our schools and the education that our children receive—again, showing contempt for the people of Ontario, playing silly spin games with the people of Ontario.

Why don't you come here to the Legislature, admit that your whole strategy of taking the budget, trying to avoid parliamentary scrutiny, scrutiny by the Legislature, and presenting it in a car parts factory—why don't you admit that that showed contempt for the parliamentary process, for the people of Ontario? Why don't you admit you were wrong? You did something wrong. Then we can get back to the business that we all want to be here for.

We can be debating how badly you've treated the people of Wawa in terms of escalating their hydro prices to the point where they're now paying 22 times the cost of production. We can come here and talk about all the schools you're closing across Ontario this year. We can talk about all the schools that don't have adequate textbooks. We can talk about how many schools across this province are being forced to cut programs, whether it be full-time librarians, physical education teachers, music teachers or art teachers; or how many schools in this province don't have a full-time principal.

You have the majority in this Legislature. If you wanted to today, you could come in and call for closure. You could set what happens in terms of the debate. So stop playing games with the people of Ontario. Stop showing contempt for the people of Ontario. Stop complaining about someone extending debate when it's your own members who—whether in their own speaking time, or who get up routinely, as the Minister of Energy does, and interrupt people—in fact extend the debate.

If you have an agenda, if you have legislation you want to present, table it. Table it so that we can see it, so that the press can see it, so that it is clear on its face. But don't come in here and blame other people for extending the debate when it has been your members who have spoken most often and have spoken at the greatest length to the motion that is before us. Don't complain about that when you as the government can at any time exercise your majority. You decide what gets debated in this Legislature every day. You call the orders; you make those decisions. Don't pretend otherwise for the people of Ontario. Stop showing contempt for the Legislature; stop showing contempt for the people of Ontario; stop playing games.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** It's curious to hear the previous member speak. Two very clear things have come to mind after hearing the speech from the leader of the third party.

First, he has no idea how the rules work in this House, which is—

**Hon Mr Baird:** The House didn't sit when they were in government. How would he know?

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** That's probably true. The House didn't sit when he was in government so he probably wouldn't need to know the rules.

Here's a little briefing, a little primer on the rules. Unless you give us consent—that means the entire House agrees—to put the motion and revert back to orders of the day, we can't introduce a bill. That's the rule. Why don't one of you backbenchers over there sally up to the bench where these black-robed sorts are—they're called clerks—and ask them the question? They'll give you the answer. The answer is—

*Interjections.*

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** —I certainly didn't demean my black-robed friends. They will give you the answer, "That's extremely correct." Unless you get consent, we can't introduce the back-to-work legislation for those 63,500 students.

The second thing that struck me when Mr Hampton spoke is he's begging me to move closure. Talk about the tables being reversed.

**Hon Mr Baird:** Couldn't he move it?

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** He could move closure. The Liberals can move closure. Any member of this House can move closure. You've got the spectacle of the leader of the third party saying, "I beg you to move closure."

What are we being accused of? Mr Conway put the motion with respect to contempt and we, as honourable members, made the decision that this is a very important motion. We think that if you want to speak to it you should be allowed to speak to it. That's parliamentary

tradition and parliamentary democracy. How many speakers have we had? Seventy-six speakers to the motion before the House today. And the shame of it all is, Lyn McLeod, you don't even know the rules. I need consent.

*Interjections.*

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** No. That's wrong. They know the rules. Take the time and ask them. They'll tell you the rules, Lyn. They're not but three feet from you. You just have to lean over and whisper and you'd know the rules. They're paid to tell you. If you went over and said, "Gee, did they need consent to put the motion and then revert back to introduction of bills?" they'd say, "Oh yeah, they need that." Lean forward three feet.

Now, here's the question—

*Interjection.*

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** Not if the debate stops. And this is another part of the rules you should know. Lean forward and ask them this: if this debate ends, what happens? We vote on that amendment. Then we start again on the second amendment and then they can move another amendment and they can do it all again, Lyn. They can all do it again.

They've moved a couple of amendments already. They've spoken two, three, four times already. They won't give us consent to adjourn the debate; they won't give us consent to put the question; they won't give us consent to file the bill; and they won't give us consent to debate the bill.

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Why all of a sudden do you think, just because they're there, they're not co-operating? Of course they're not. They don't want the bill. They don't want the back-to-work legislation. They don't want to see the bill. They don't want to hear about the bill. They want those kids out of school. That's their plan.

If you want to twist the rules around so that somehow we have the power to do something we don't, that's fine, but you're complicit with this gang of nine.

*Interjections.*

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** Don't tie yourselves to that gang of nine, Lyn. It's that gang of nine that's keeping 63,500 kids out of school. Sever the tie.

Seventy-six speakers, 25 hours. This has been debated fully. We cannot be accused of not following parliamentary tradition. We cannot be accused of closing down debate. What we're accused of today by Howard Hampton, the party that keeps putting amendments, prolonging the debate is—he's begging me to move closure.

**Interjection:** Do it.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** You move closure, if it's so important. Why don't you give us consent to revert back to bills? You won't.

*Interjections.*

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** You won't.

I say to the members opposite, I seek—I'll do it slowly. I seek unanimous consent—

*Interjections.*

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** Hold on, hold on. Let's explain this to the viewers out there. What I need is consent to

allow the debate for 63,500 schoolchildren who are not in school. I have to get consent from everyone in this House. Everybody has to say, "Yes, it's important that those 63,500 kids go back to school. Yes, we've debated this, 76 speakers for 25 hours. Yes, we should get back to orders of the day, and yes, we should introduce a bill to get these kids back to school." That's what happening, folks.

I want you to be very clear: I seek unanimous consent to conclude the current debate in light of the fact that 63,500 schoolchildren are currently not in school and that the question now be put so that we may introduce a bill to bring that issue to a close in this House.

**Ms Churley:** What bill? We haven't seen a bill.

**Hon Mr Baird:** Let's introduce it. It'll be printed. It'll be on the Internet.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** That's what I seek consent for.

**The Acting Speaker:** Order.

**Ms Churley:** Show us the bill.

**The Acting Speaker:** Mr Stockwell has asked for—  
**Mr Prue:** No.

**The Acting Speaker:** I heard a no. Minister.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** Folks, that's what I'm up against.

**Hon Mr Baird:** Michael Prue said no.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** Marilyn Churley said no, 325-3250; Rosario Marchese said no, 325-9092; Michael Prue said no, 325-1303. All you parents out there—

**The Acting Speaker:** Minister, you probably want to be discussing the amendments before the Legislature.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** I'm doing my best.

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** All you parents out there who have children who aren't in school today should phone those three numbers, because this House works under orders and procedures and the orders and procedures make it impossible for the government to introduce a bill—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** The Minister of Energy is not being very helpful—and the member for Toronto-Danforth. The Minister of the Environment has the floor.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** Thank you. We can't do that unless we get unanimous consent. It's humorous to Churley. I know why: because she doesn't give a damn about the 63,500 kids who aren't in school today.

**The Acting Speaker:** Minister, do you want to withdraw?

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** I withdraw "damn" and replace it with "dam."

**The Acting Speaker:** We would also understand that using the proper name of a member is out of order.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** If I called Marilyn Churley "Marilyn Churley," I meant to call her Toronto-Danforth, and I apologize.

Call the member for Toronto-Danforth. Call them at their offices, because unless they say yes to that consent motion, we can't introduce the bill; we can't begin debate; we can't begin the process of getting 63,500 children—

**Ms Churley:** You should be ashamed of yourself.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** You, my friend, should be ashamed.

**The Acting Speaker:** Let me remind the minister that all comments should be made through the Speaker.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** And we're not supposed to heckle, right?

**The Acting Speaker:** That is also correct.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** Thank you.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker:** We're also not supposed to bait the bears.

**Hon Mr Baird:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The member for Toronto-Danforth said you're not allowed to come in here and speak untruths. I think the member is an honourable member. I know she'll want to admit that and withdraw.

**The Acting Speaker:** I did not hear that, but if the member said something she wishes to withdraw, she may.

**Hon Mr Baird:** On a point of order, Speaker: I said that if she was an honourable member, she'd want to withdraw, but I guess I'm not correct.

**The Acting Speaker:** This is getting a little bit silly in here. Let us just return to the normal rules of debate. Let us be talking about the motion by the member for Niagara Centre to the main motion by Mr Conway.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** I understand there has been a wide latitude in this debate for the 76 speakers and 24 hours. I always knew the member for Toronto-Danforth to be an honourable member. I know what she said and she knows what she said. She refused to withdraw and I think that's unfortunate for the decorum of this House and contemptible by a member in this House.

I also want to say to those parents in Toronto's separate school board that it will happen; it will happen because we will close debate on this today. It's unfortunate. I thought we could act as parliamentarians and deal with this in a very diplomatic way. I asked all the House leaders during the process. I'm loath to move contempt. I'm loath to move closure.

**Ms Churley:** Loath to move contempt?

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** I'm loath to move closure. Try and calm yourself.

**The Acting Speaker:** Through the Speaker, please.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** Through the Speaker, try and calm yourself.

I was loath to put the question. I didn't want to put the question. I thought that it was an important landmark decision by the Speaker and that everyone should be given an opportunity to speak to it. It's a shame.

*Interjection.*

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** I'm telling you, that's what the policy position was, and I think we did: 76 speakers, 24 hours of debate. Obviously, there is a process in here that means we can't get consent to do business of the House. We're obviously not going to have closure to this debate because the rules allow—

*Interjection.*

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** Listen, John, the rules allow for an infinite number of amendments to be put once they're

disposed of. So once we dispose of the amendment that's on the floor today, they'll simply put another one in its place, and all nine will speak again.

It's shameful that they're acting this way. You're talking about contempt? You're talking about tradition? You're talking about fairness of parliamentarians and honourable members? That's how they treat this. They have no parliamentary tradition. For instance, a member just said something unparliamentary—everybody heard her—and she won't even take it back. Talk about contempt. They want to sell this off as some kind of package because they want us to move closure. They want us to put the question, so they'll dial up their synthetic indignation and claim, "Oh, the world's falling apart. It's a terrible thing because they only allowed 76 speakers, 24 hours of debate and we wanted to keep going." God forbid, they're doing this because they don't want 63,500 kids to get back to school. Shame on whom? Shame on you. Shame on you and your party for all those parents who are being put under unnecessary aggravation, an unnecessary burden that's very difficult for those with young children. They are at home and you're standing here playing parliamentary games; that's what you've reduced it to.

Look, let's be clear: the Liberals are no better. They were playing parliamentary games, and now they figured, "Oh my gosh, we're going to get 20 calls," so they capitulated. Well, OK, they capitulated, but they were no better with respect to this debate either. There isn't an ounce of integrity on that side of the House when it comes to parliamentary tradition and rules; there's not an ounce of integrity. It's all politics.

*Laughter.*

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** I appreciate that you find that humorous. You have your House leader filing silly, ridiculous amendments that make no sense whatsoever, that provide no insight and no knowledge to the motion. One of his amendments said, "and its members." That was his amendment. Well, why do you file an amendment that says, "and its members"? Because you want to prolong the debate, keep it going and keep 63,500 kids out of school. Shame on you. Shame on all of you. You want to play this thing, so play it. You got the chance.

**Hon Mr Baird:** They're laughing.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** They are; they're laughing. That's how bad it is.

**Ms Churley:** You keep filibustering.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** There's Churley chirping away again. Are you going to call me another name you won't withdraw?

So here we have the contemptuous actions of the opposition in order to simply make a point that they don't want the kids to go back to school.

**Ms Churley:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I just want to point out to the member speaking that I don't chirp, I roar.

**The Acting Speaker:** Interesting, but not a point of order.

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**Hon Mr Stockwell:** You must have been on the high school debating team. You roar? Chirp?

**Ms Churley:** I consider that a sexist comment, so watch your mouth.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** That's not roaring, Marilyn; that's conduct unbecoming an honourable member, and I don't think you should say those things. You bring the respect of this House down by making those allegations against another honourable member.

We've had 76 speakers and 25 hours of debate. We've had numerous speakers who went two and three times. We've spent all day seeking unanimous consent to see if we could put the question so we could introduce a bill by consent. We weren't given it. We've reached a stage now where the NDP is playing such political games with children's lives.

You know what makes me so upset? When you think back to when they were in office—the exact same crowd, minus Prue—you'd think they didn't do this. You wouldn't think they actually ordered teachers back to work. Well, when they were in office and they had the levers of power, they did—three times. Every one of them did it. On the way to Damascus, they found their moral compass and ethics, because they want to block this government from saving the school year of 63,500 kids. So it astounds me how you can sit in your place and block and filibuster and make terrible changes so that we can't get a bill passed that you yourselves passed.

**Ms Churley:** You are filibustering yourself.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** Marilyn, what's the point in going through the rules again with you, for God's sake. OK, say we put the question and we get the closure motion; we'd still need consent to go back to introduce the bills, and he says he won't do it. So, gosh, get it through your head: it doesn't matter what we do. We need consent and he won't give it.

**Ms Churley:** You haven't shown us the bill, Chris.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** You know why? It's not tabled, Marilyn. This is in the standing orders: you must table a bill. We table it and then you read it. That's how it works.

**Ms Churley:** Oh, so that's the way it works.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** This is news to you? You didn't know that's how we introduce bills? What do you think they do when they stand up and say, "First reading of the bill"? What do you think is going on? Seriously.

**Mr Gerretsen:** Don't make fun of the Clerks.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** No, the Clerks are darn good. I didn't say "damn," I said they're darn good. But what did you think was going on?

*Interjection.*

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** Marilyn, I remember showing you a bill once that you promised you wouldn't show anybody, and you walked right out and showed it to CP. So God forbid, why should I want to show you anything?

**Ms Churley:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would ask that the member from Etobicoke stop personally attacking my integrity. What he just said is not true.

**The Acting Speaker:** We all know we should not attack members personally, however—Minister.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** We're not allowed to attack members personally in here? Boy, question period is going to be an interesting time, I'll tell you, from here on in.

Finally, considering there have been 76 speakers, 25 hours of debate, I ask that the question now be put.

**The Acting Speaker:** 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 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1655 to 1725.*

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

#### Ayes

Agostino, Dominic	Eves, Ernie	Molinari, Tina R.
Arnott, Ted	Flaherty, Jim	Munro, Julia
Baird, John R.	Galt, Doug	Murdoch, Bill
Barrett, Toby	Gerretsen, John	Mushinski, Marilyn
Bartolucci, Rick	Gill, Raminder	Newman, Dan
Beaubien, Marcel	Gravelle, Michael	O'Toole, John
Bountrogianni, Marie	Guzzo, Garry J.	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Boyer, Claudette	Hardeman, Ernie	Parsons, Ernie
Bradley, James J.	Hoy, Pat	Patten, Richard
Bryant, Michael	Hudak, Tim	Peters, Steve
Caplan, David	Jackson, Cameron	Phillips, Gerry
Chudleigh, Ted	Johns, Helen	Ramsay, David
Clark, Brad	Johnson, Bert	Runciman, Robert W.
Cleary, John C.	Kells, Morley	Sampson, Rob
Clement, Tony	Kennedy, Gerard	Smitherman, George
Coburn, Brian	Klees, Frank	Spina, Joseph
Colle, Mike	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sterling, Norman W.
Conway, Sean G.	Levac, David	Stewart, R. Gary
Cordiano, Joseph	Marland, Margaret	Stockwell, Chris
Crozier, Bruce	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tascaona, Joseph N.
Cunningham, Dianne	Maves, Bart	Tsubouchi, David H.
DeFaria, Carl	Mazzilli, Frank	Turnbull, David
Dombrowsky, Leona	McDonald, AL	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Duncan, Dwight	McGuinty, Dalton	Wilson, Jim
Dunlop, Garfield	McLeod, Lyn	Witmer, Elizabeth
Ecker, Janet	McMeekin, Ted	Wood, Bob
Elliott, Brenda	Miller, Norm	Young, David

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

#### Nays

Bisson, Gilles	Kormos, Peter	Martin, Tony
Christopherson, David	Marchese, Rosario	Prue, Michael
Churley, Marilyn	Martel, Shelley	

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 81; the nays are 8.

**The Acting Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

Mr Conway has moved that this House declares that it is the undoubted right of the Legislative Assembly, in Parliament assembled, to be the first recipient of the budget of Ontario.

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

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1728 to 1730.*

**The Acting Speaker:** Order. I have received a letter from the chief whip of the third party requesting that the vote on this motion be deferred until routine proceedings tomorrow.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I seek unanimous consent of this House to revert to introduction of bills for the sole purpose of introducing back-to-work legislation for the teachers in the Toronto separate school system.

**The Acting Speaker:** Mr Stockwell has asked for unanimous consent to introduce a bill on the Catholic school board in Toronto. Agreed? I heard a no.

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'm sorry, I'm trying to seek another consent motion. I seek unanimous consent to introduce the bill now to order the teachers back to work, rather than revert to introduction of bills.

**The Acting Speaker:** Do we have unanimous consent to introduce the bill now? No, we do not.

## OPPOSITION DAY

### ELECTRICITY DEREGULATION

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown):** We are at opposition day number 2.

The member for Niagara Centre on a point of order.

**Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** Speaker, it's obvious that it's now past 4 of the clock; indeed, it's 5:32. I seek your help and your assistance in helping members of the House determine how best to conduct the remainder of the day's proceedings, and that is as to what constitutes a sessional day.

Standing order 41(a) says, "There shall be six sessional days allotted to the debate on the motion for an address in reply to the speech from the throne..." and standing order 42(a), "... five sessional days to be known as opposition days," yet nowhere in the standing orders is there provision for defining a sessional day when it's as compressed and artificially brief as this one is.

**The Acting Speaker:** I appreciate your interjection; however, under the standing orders, there is no definition. All that's required is that the opposition day be called at 4 o'clock or after. I understand your point. We're in opposition day number 2, moved by the leader of the third party.

**Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Energy, Minister responsible for francophone affairs):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I wonder if you could advise the House whether the mover of the motion, whom you just identified as Mr Hampton—does the fact that he's not present constitute an obstacle to proceeding this afternoon?

**The Acting Speaker:** You are correct. We need consent for someone to move the motion on Mr Hampton's behalf. Do I have—



**Mr Kormos:** On a point of order, Speaker: You indicated in your introduction to this that Mr Hampton moved the resolution. I put to you that the Speaker, then, has in fact, de facto, indicated that Mr Hampton has moved the resolution, and to challenge it at this point is moot. You are functus, sir.

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you. As you would know, we are in opposition day number 2. The time will be divided equally among the three parties. The leader of the third party.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** The motion:

“Be it resolved that in the opinion of this House the government must act immediately to eliminate the severe hardship it has caused to customers of Great Lakes Power in Wawa and elsewhere as a direct result of electricity deregulation.

“The government must deliver immediate assistance to compensate the affected customers in full for the extra transmission and distribution costs they have paid as a result of deregulation. This must nullify the order that the affected customers pay based on cost of service and ensure that from now on they pay the same regulated rate as they paid prior to deregulation.

“The government must also implement the NDP plan for public power and bring an end to electricity deregulation and privatization which is costing hundreds if not thousands of jobs in electricity-dependent sectors across Northern Ontario.

“This House supports the NDP plan which includes ending privatization and closing the wholesale electricity market while regulating the rate for the electricity commodity on the basis of power-at-cost and pursuing an aggressive program of energy conservation and renewable power development.

Allow me, very briefly, to reiterate what I was able to say here earlier today. The result of this government's policy of electricity deregulation and privatization for the people of Wawa is that they're paying, on their hydro bills, an amount that is equivalent to more than 22 times the cost of actually producing the hydroelectricity. Wawa has, within its municipal boundaries, a number of power dams that generate electricity. We are told that the cost of generating electricity at these power dams is in the neighbourhood of half a cent a kilowatt hour. Certainly it doesn't cost a lot of money to then transmit this hydro a distance of three or four or five kilometres to the people of Wawa. Yet, if you take the generating charge, the transmission charge and the distribution charge on people's hydro bills, people are being charged an exorbitant amount for electricity that is very inexpensive to produce as a result of the phenomenon of falling water.

What we're calling for here today is that the Conservative government of Ontario recognize that its policy of hydro privatization and deregulation has been nothing less than a disaster, a fiasco—certainly a fiasco for the people of Wawa and the people of the Wawa environs.

Let me give an example of the kind of situation that is happening. Earl Dereski is a small landlord who is being

threatened with disconnection by the private power company Brascan and its affiliate Great Lakes Power because he and his wife owe the company a hydro bill of \$10,000. The reason they owe a hydro bill of \$10,000 is that their monthly hydro bill has more than doubled as a result of hydro privatization and deregulation.

This situation has effectively now shut down one shift at Dubreuil Forest Products, which is located near Wawa, once again because the forest products company cannot afford to pay the substantially increased hydro bill. There are only two food stores in the community, one of which is about to shut down—it cannot afford to pay its hydro bill—and a number of other businesses in the community have expressed real concern about their capacity to continue, once again because they cannot afford to pay their hydro bills. In other words, as a result of this government's wrong-headed scheme of hydro privatization and deregulation, the community of Wawa is facing severe economic decline.

I want to point out that what we see in Wawa is perhaps the purest form of hydro deregulation and privatization in the province. It is one of those communities where a private company, Brascan, a major contributor to the Conservative Party and a major contributor to Ernie Eves's leadership campaign, literally owns the generation, the transmission and the distribution. This is significant for people across Ontario, because what you see happening in Wawa represents what electricity privatization and deregulation looks like when it is fully implemented.

**1740**

When private, profit-driven corporations have full control of hydroelectric generation, transmission and distribution, this is what happens. Hydro bills rise substantially. The price of hydroelectricity becomes a very expensive item for people—in fact, an item which is simply not affordable for many businesses, industries and residential consumers in the community.

So we call upon the government to at last recognize what a disaster, what a fiasco, hydro privatization and deregulation has been for the people of Wawa; secondly, to recognize that it is negatively affecting a lot of other communities. Relent, give it up, and recognize that hydro privatization and deregulation has been a disaster.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Further debate?

**Hon Mr Baird:** I welcome the opportunity to discuss what is a very important issue for people in Wawa and the surrounding areas. It is an important one. I regret that we weren't able to start to debate this issue earlier today, when we could have had a more fulsome exchange of ideas.

I would want to suggest to the leader of the third party that I think what's required here is a constructive approach to try to deal with a legitimate challenge facing small business people.

*Interjection.*

**Hon Mr Baird:** One of the members for a neighbouring riding, who has never even called me on this

issue, not like the member who represents that community, likes to bark. Maybe if he'd listen, he might learn something. He's not really here for a debate.

*Interjection.*

**Hon Mr Baird:** The member opposite is an interesting individual. He comes in here and he's determined—

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** Member, come to order.

**Hon Mr Baird:** He's not even in his seat. It's unfortunate that he doesn't take the time to inform himself of these views. He actually might be able to learn something. I think that's regrettable that he isn't.

I have appreciated the involvement of one of the members of the official opposition, who has I think tried to be far more constructive than has the third party. I think that's what's required to solve problems.

I do take great offence at the comments made by the leader of the third party, with respect to him trying to suggest any impropriety with respect to the public disclosure of campaign contributions. I think it's beneath him. I think it's, frankly, beneath the political party he represents. It's nothing new with that member, and that's unfortunate.

He likes to leave the impression that Great Lakes Power was somehow recently privatized. In fact, it's been operating for many years as a privatized local distribution company. It continues to be.

**Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie):** Regulated, John. Regulated.

**Hon Mr Baird:** Transmission and distribution are still fully regulated, I say to the member opposite. It's unfortunate that if the New Democratic Party felt so strongly about this, they didn't take action when they were in government. I think that's one of the realities. Certainly the member for Sault Ste Marie—they tried to block his bill and wouldn't let his bill pass. I think it probably speaks to his effectiveness as a member in this place. I did want to put that on the record.

Great Lakes Power has announced its commitment to residential customers, to reduce it by 20%. I would label that a good start. I think more has to be done. I am disappointed, as I know the member for Algoma-Manitoulin will be, that we don't have more time, because the NDP filibustered and tried to stop this debate from taking place today. I came prepared to debate it as early as three o'clock and have a fulsome exchange of ideas.

On a very serious note, I say to the member opposite that if he wanted a legitimate, serious debate on the issue, the resolution that he proposed, saying that it would not only deal with the legitimate challenges that small businesses and working families have in this community—would not have been political, partisan and put support for the NDP platform in his resolution. I think that's unfortunate. I think it shows that he and his party are more committed to playing politics on what is a very serious and legitimate issue.

We had a very productive meeting with the member in question. He came in and met with officials in my office

and the ministry. We are looking at a number of options with respect to some further remedial action that can be taken in addition to the 20%. I think that, certainly as the resolution contemplates, those solutions are required sooner rather than later. I would like to have supported the resolution had it not adopted the New Democratic Party's platform, which is on the extreme of feeling in this House. But we will continue to work with this local distribution company, not just on the legitimate distribution and transmission rates but on the other associated rates.

The member opposite says that electricity can be produced for half a cent a kilowatt hour. I don't think there's anywhere in the world where electricity can be produced for half a cent a kilowatt hour. I think that is—

**Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** Disneyland.

**Hon Mr Baird:** Disneyland or Wonderland, the member for Ottawa Centre interjects. Maybe in his utopian world we could produce non-emission power for as little as half a cent. I would be concerned if we started to adopt a differentiated rate like the member opposite says, because if there is a generating station near the community, it should get a cheaper rate. If we adopted that policy in all government services, what would that do to postage rates? What would that do to a range of services like health care and education?

I would say that Ernie Eves and this government are committed to working with the residents of this community in short order to come forward with such additional measures that might prove to assist them. I look forward to working with the member for Algoma on this issue.

**Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** Unfortunately we don't have very much time to debate this resolution, and I'm certainly pleased on behalf of my constituents that it is before the Legislature, however briefly.

Clearly, the 11,000 or so customers of Great Lakes Power in the district of Algoma have been subjected by this government to electricity rates that, in some cases, have doubled the cost to consumers. That is a huge hardship in the constituency. We have worked very hard with individuals across the Great Lakes Power area, and I want to thank my staff—Tom Farquhar, Anne Marie Guimond and Eva Tomalin—who have dealt with literally hundreds of complaints and problems with Great Lakes Power. They've done a terrific job in trying to find solutions to the problem.

I want to talk a little bit, though, about how bad the problem has been and how difficult it has been to resolve. I want to talk about what I and people like Doug Woods and Chris Wray and Dave Jennings and Earl and Shelly Dereski and Mark Leschishin and Nick from North of 17—all of those folks have been working with us to try to find solutions, to try to put the toothpaste back in the tube, so to speak. We didn't create the mess, but somehow or other we have to fix the mess.

Members like my friend from Thunder Bay-Superior North would share this view, that we've had a great deal of difficulty in the Ontario Hydro area also. The 4.3 cent

cap that my friend the energy critic, Mike Bryant, called for all of last fall has helped in the Hydro One area. But in the area of Great Lakes Power, the distribution and transmission costs have been incredible. Mr Speaker, you would know that the people in Wawa are probably paying more for transmission and distribution charges than you're paying per kilowatt hour in total. That is how expensive it is in this area.

We have worked very hard to see that that could be resolved. I want to talk about my constituents in Dubreuilville, who had to get formed a distribution company so that they would qualify for the 4.3 cent cap on energy rates. Those constituents, before and still, receive their electricity from the forest company. That meant there was no local distribution company, which meant they didn't qualify for the 4.3 cent cap.

People like Leo Raymond, the mayor, and Monique Ouellet, who is the clerk-treasurer of the township, have worked very hard with our office and with people in the minister's office and the ministry to see that the people in Dubreuilville have their energy costs capped at 4.3 cents.

As you know, Mr Speaker, I've worked with people from Laird township, Bruce Mines, St Joseph Island and Hawk Junction to get rural rate assistance for the good folks in the Great Lakes Power area. For some reason, they did not qualify for rural rate assistance. I have my bill, Bill 7, which we have been trying to get passed by unanimous consent in this Legislature for some time, and I would appreciate the support of all members in seeing that that happens in the near future.

We are heartened by the fact that Great Lakes Power has made some adjustments to their distribution and transmission costs to bring them more in line with Hydro, but I would say to the minister: we cannot rely on the goodwill of private companies. We need to have regulations that force Great Lakes Power to charge rates that are competitive with the rest of the province. We don't have that. We cannot rely on their goodwill. We have to have the proper regulations.

When we talk about this situation, people should know that Great Lakes Power has provided electricity in this area for decades, indeed generations. This is private power. This is not public power. What is needed is strong regulation to ensure that the people in this private power area receive the kind of electricity rates and service they received before the ill-fated reregulation/deregulation efforts of this government.

We need to work closely with these 11,500 customers to find a solution that will work for those folks.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson):** The time for debate has ended.

Mr Hampton has moved opposition day motion number 2. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

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

*The division bells rang from 1751 to 1802.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Richard Patten):** All those in favour, please rise in your seats one at a time.

#### Ayes

Bisson, Gilles	Hampton, Howard	Martel, Shelley
Christopherson, David	Kormos, Peter	Martin, Tony
Churley, Marilyn	Marchese, Rosario	Prue, Michael

**The Acting Speaker:** All those opposed, please rise in your seats one at a time.

#### Nays

Arnott, Ted	Elliott, Brenda	Munro, Julia
Baird, John R.	Flaherty, Jim	Murdoch, Bill
Barrett, Toby	Galt, Doug	Mushinski, Marilyn
Bartolucci, Rick	Gerretsen, John	Newman, Dan
Beaubien, Marcel	Gill, Raminder	O'Toole, John
Boyer, Claudette	Gravelle, Michael	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Bradley, James J.	Guzzo, Garry J.	Parsons, Ernie
Brown, Michael A.	Hardeman, Ernie	Runciman, Robert W.
Bryant, Michael	Hudak, Tim	Sampson, Rob
Chudleigh, Ted	Jackson, Cameron	Smitherman, George
Clark, Brad	Johns, Helen	Spina, Joseph
Cleary, John C.	Johnson, Bert	Sterling, Norman W.
Clement, Tony	Kells, Morley	Stewart, R. Gary
Coburn, Brian	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Stockwell, Chris
Conway, Sean G.	Levac, David	Tascona, Joseph N.
Cordiano, Joseph	Marland, Margaret	Tsubouchi, David H.
Crozier, Bruce	Martiniuk, Gerry	Turnbull, David
Cunningham, Dianne	Maves, Bart	Wettlaufer, Wayne
DeFaria, Carl	Mazzilli, Frank	Wilson, Jim
Di Cocco, Caroline	McDonald, AL	Witmer, Elizabeth
Dombrowsky, Leona	McLeod, Lyn	Wood, Bob
Duncan, Dwight	McMeekin, Ted	Young, David
Dunlop, Garfield	Miller, Norm	
Ecker, Janet	Molinari, Tina R.	

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are nine; the nays are 70.

**The Acting Speaker:** I declare the motion lost.

It now being after six of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock tomorrow.

*The House adjourned at 1805.*

## ERRATUM

No.	Page	Column	Line(s)	Should read:
9	364	1	42	through the NOHFC funding—in Kearney, in Britt, in

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