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(Hansard)**

Tuesday 19 October 2004

Mardi 19 octobre 2004

Speaker
Honourable Alvin Curling

Président
L'honorable Alvin Curling

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 19 October 2004

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 19 octobre 2004

The House met at 1845.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ELECTRICITY
RESTRUCTURING ACT, 2004
LOI DE 2004 SUR LA RESTRUCTURATION
DU SECTEUR DE L'ÉLECTRICITÉ

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 18, 2004, on the motion for second reading of Bill 100, An Act to amend the Electricity Act, 1998 and the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998 and to make consequential amendments to other Acts / Projet de loi 100, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur l'électricité, la Loi de 1998 sur la Commission de l'énergie de l'Ontario et apportant des modifications corrélatives à d'autres lois.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Ted Arnott): When the House last met to discuss Bill 100, the member for Trinity-Spadina had the floor and had concluded his comments. So I'll now move to questions and comments with respect to the remarks that have been made by the member for Trinity-Spadina. I'm pleased to recognize the member for Mississauga East.

Mr Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East): The Dalton McGuinty government is taking us away from the mismanagement that we have seen over the many decades with the electricity sector, where we saw the previous government cap electricity at 4.3 cents, but in doing so, driving up our deficit by \$1 billion dollars. Those are things that we just can't do if we are to move forward in a responsible way and be open and transparent with the people of Ontario.

We don't want to play political games with our electricity. We know it's an essential service that everybody needs, especially at this time of year, as it gets a little colder here in our northern climate and those furnaces are coming on. So we're charting new ground here in this electricity sector in Ontario. We're moving forward in a very responsible manner, a manner that takes us away from, as I said, the mismanagement of this sector, in order to protect the best interests of all Ontarians.

Our plan includes a strong public leadership role, clear accountability and a coordinated planning approach to address the growing gap between electricity supply and demand in order to keep the lights on now and far into the future. We're putting Ontario back on a solid footing

by taking a balanced approach, one that addresses, yes, the critical need for new supply, increased conservation, consumers' desire for price stability, the importance of public leadership and the need for private investment.

I thank you for allowing me to speak on Bill 100.

Mr Jim Flaherty (Whitby-Ajax): In the couple of minutes—if I had 20 minutes, that would be very nice. I listened with interest to the member from Mississauga East. He talks about a very responsible manner, and mismanagement by the previous—what could be more irresponsible than the promise made by Dalton McGuinty to close every coal-fired plant in Ontario in the next couple years? What could be more irresponsible than that?

Some 25% of the baseload for electricity in the province of Ontario is provided by those plants. Modern technology available—we have Senator Kerry running for President of the United States, a Democrat, talking about clean coal. What is wrong with the Liberal government of Ontario that it won't even look at technological advances, that it won't take its head out of the sand and see the possibilities in the province of Ontario?

Instead, they want to endanger our economic growth, to say to the auto manufacturers and all the people who work in that industry, and the parts industry in Ontario, the steel industry at Algoma, in Sault Ste Marie, in Hamilton and Dofasco, "You will not have the power you need because—ideologically, not rationally—we, the Liberal government of Ontario, want to make sure that we keep at least one of our promises."

1850

I tell you, this is a promise they shouldn't keep, and I won't criticize them at all if they break this promise. Go ahead and break the promise. It's the right thing to do. We beseech you on this side of the House to break the promise for the workers of the province. The Minister of Labour is sitting there—my goodness—who is responsible for the workers of the province of Ontario. They want work, Minister. Don't close the coal-fired plants without a plan.

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): Of course, the member from Trinity-Spadina, Mr Marchese, spoke to this bill. Unfortunately, it was last night, and to those folks who weren't able to watch and listen to the speech—and I was proud to have my colleague speak to this bill—I invite them to call Mr Marchese's office here at Queen's Park. They can get a transcript of it or a videotape of the speech.

Look, it's well worth heeding, because Mr Marchese, the member from Trinity-Spadina, focused a great deal on the fundamental need to engage in aggressive, meaningful and sustained conservation programs. He made that very clear.

He also talked very clearly about the folly of privatization of electricity in this province, the fact that it's going to drive rates through the roof. Who's going to suffer? Seniors? Our folks? Our grandfolks? Young families? Who's going to suffer? Those minimum-wage workers who got nothing but a kick in the head from this government when it came time to increase the minimum wage? Who's going to suffer? The people on ODSP, who are insulted with the 3% increase in ODSP.

So I tell you, there's nobody in our caucus who has a better handle on hydroelectricity than the member from Trinity-Spadina, but for our leader, the member for Kenora-Rainy River. Howard Hampton, in approximately four minutes' time, is going to be speaking to this bill with his leadoff speech. He'll be on around 7 o'clock. Howard Hampton will be on with a one-hour address, analyzing the state of hydroelectricity in the province today, its past and its future.

Howard, of course, is the author of *Public Power: The Fight for Publicly Owned Electricity*. It's available at Chapters, Indigo and other bookstores. Howard Hampton will be here in four minutes' time, at 7 o'clock. I invite and encourage people to listen to what Howard Hampton has to say about hydro, this government's commitment to private hydro, and the NDP's demand for ongoing public ownership of Ontario hydro.

Mr Ted McMeekin (Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot): I'm pleased to comment after the illustrious performance of our friend from Trinity-Spadina, whose words are always welcome. I'm always proud to be in the same chamber with the honourable member, as he speaks so eloquently about his concerns.

He spoke in passing about his concern for conservation, and there's nothing more important to conserve than human lives. I find it shocking that some members of this House would refer to the commitment to shut down the coal-burning plants as being irresponsible. There's nothing irresponsible about saving the 1,900 lives that the Ontario Medical Association, an independent, arm's-length third party, claims are lost every single year as a result.

That's the direction we want to go in, and I know the member from Trinity-Spadina agrees with that. In fact, ironically, even the member who spoke about the irresponsible promise and his party were prepared to go that route too, except they were going to delay it another 15 years. That's a lot of lives. So I know the member from Trinity-Spadina understands that.

He spoke a lot about conservation, and I'm pleased to say that's one of the main pillars of our legislation. We're very concerned that we, in fact, are raising a generation of Ontarians who understand the importance of conservation, that a kilowatt saved is one that we don't have to spend money to invent.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Trinity-Spadina has two minutes to reply.

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): I'm going to race through my comments, because I've got so much to say. First, our leader, Howard Hampton from Kenora-Rainy River, is going to be speaking, I suspect, within one hour. So those of you interested in this political forum, stay tuned.

Mr Kormos: Or come back in 30 minutes.

Mr Marchese: Or come back, exactly, in approximately one hour.

Two other comments: One, the member for Mississauga East said, "We are charting new ground." New ground, I say? Two years ago McGuinty said, "We support the private sector getting into this game." In 2003 he said, "The private sector is dead. The market is dead." In 2004 he gets elected and he resuscitates the private market. He says, "The market is alive again." Charting new ground? I don't know. Check that one out.

Third, to complete my remarks around this whole issue: The government's commitment to renewable energy and conservation is minimal. Their commitment is 5% of Ontario's electricity from renewable energy by 2007 and 10% by 2010, and only 5% demand reduction through conservation by 2007 and 10% by 2010. It's minimal, and I'm not even sure they're going to get there with the kind of commitment they're making.

The Pembina Institute says the following. The cost of new generation to replace retiring capacity is \$32 billion between 2004 and 2020, compared to an \$18-billion cost to the equivalent in conservation energy.

The point is, we need a strong commitment in conservation and a commitment to renewable. This bill gives us so little. In fact, it gives us nothing by way of how we reduce cost. We can't rely on nuclear. Every nuclear reactor we try to replace costs \$1 billion and \$1 billion more. We need a commitment for conservation and renewables.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate on the hydro bill?

Mr John Wilkinson (Perth-Middlesex): Thank you, Mr Speaker. It's good to see you again. Before I begin, I would like to share with you that I'll be sharing my time with my colleague the member from Peterborough. The other thing I'd like to mention, particularly to all my government friends, is that I am fortunate that I have a very dear friend, my business partner, Jeff Keller, in the gallery over here. Jeff, I just want to let you know we're very pleased you're here visiting us today. Jeff is from Exeter, from the great riding of Huron-Bruce. His member is here providing support.

In the brief amount of time I have, I want to talk about Bill 100. I want to let you know I categorically disagree with the member from Whitby-Ajax, because yet again he has that pessimistic frame of mind. He is so well known across this great province as someone who's a pessimist. He looks at this and says, "Oh, you can't close the dirty coal-fired."

The reason I support Bill 100 is this is going to be wonderful for farm economics in this province. As you know, Perth-Middlesex—I like to say the most productive rural riding in the entire Dominion—some parts of it are suffering. The member for Peterborough knows this. There are parts that are suffering. The member from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex knows this as well.

With Bill 100, we could revolutionize farm economics in this province, and I'll tell you why. It's because I've been able to get out into my riding and I want to tell all of the members about WAMM Energy. There's a bunch of Mennonite farmers in my riding near Britton, Ontario. Mr Speaker, I know you know it well. WAMM stands for Weaver, Abner, Merle and Melvin. I was there with the member from Etobicoke Centre, who is the chair of the parliamentary assistant's conservation action team. We went out there to see that farm. They've been able to recondition a wind turbine. They've put it up on their farm; it's quite breezy there. I know Perth and Huron counties are particularly well suited for wind. They're creating clean energy.

Because of Bill 100, we are going to be able to have something called net metering. On a windy day, those farmers are going to be able to turn around and not draw upon the grid but actually use all the power they need from the wind and sell it back to the rest of us in Ontario in a clean fashion.

The possibilities for farm economics in this province are vast. There are people with old-style thinking, who somehow think we should be burning all these dirty coal fossil fuels, but I'm one who believes that with this challenge, with this opportunity that's been presented to us to really have to replace almost the entire power generation grid in the province of Ontario—we're talking about power generation, because I remember back in the old days, of course, Ontario Power Generation really just stood for "Ontario patronage generation." I remember that. The previous government had all of their friends over there. And what did we get left with? Billions in debt.

1900

What we have to do is fix that problem, because people don't want the lights to go out. If the farmers of Ontario, the agricultural community in this province, can be part of that solution, that would be a wonderful day. All of that, ladies and gentlemen, and my friends out across Ontario and all the farmers who are watching, is impossible without this bill. I want you to take note of every member of the opposition who stands up and votes against this bill, in support of dirty coal rather than having energy come from your farm.

We're on the verge of being able to have anaerobic digestion of nutrient, of manure. We could take the manure on the farms, something that we're well known for generating on the farm and here in this Legislature, and what we're going to be able to do is turn that into clean, pathogen-free water; dry, odourless nutrient; and methane, which is burned to create energy.

Could you imagine the day that your farms in your riding—the farms in Peterborough, the farms in Huron-Bruce, Lambton-Kent-Middlesex, and Perth-Middlesex—could become part of that solution, to change the economics of agriculture. I say to all the people who follow this debate, pay very, very close attention to how the NDP votes and how the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario votes on Bill 100, because they would vote for the dirty-coal lobby in this province over farmers any day. I can't believe it, but they're actually coming into this House—and they're proud of it; they're proud that they would rather vote for dirty coal than for farm economics, for a revolution.

I look forward to supporting this bill, and I yield my time to my good friend the member for Peterborough.

The Acting Speaker: I recognize the member for Peterborough to continue the debate.

Mr Jeff Leal (Peterborough): It's a pleasure for me to have an opportunity to say a few words about Bill 100 this evening. Mr Speaker, as you're aware, I had the opportunity to chair the standing committee on social policy and had the opportunity, along with you and other members—Mr Hampton was on the committee—to listen to what I would consider a very wide diversity of individuals who made presentations to our committee with regard to this bill.

I think there are a couple things that are clearly evident in Ontario today, with our experience of the last few years. We do need some additional capacity in terms of providing the power that farmers, small business people, large businesses and the ordinary individual householder need to carry on with our day-to-day activities. One of the things I think that government certainly has to do is provide a framework so that we can ensure a stable, reliable and efficient electricity supply to the citizens in this great province.

I come from Peterborough, and Peterborough is the home of the nuclear products division for GE Canada. Over the years, of course, they've been very involved in the nuclear side of the business in Peterborough. They build the fuelling machines and the fuel bundles that have been used in Darlington, Pickering and Bruce. Over the years, GE has also been involved on the export side with the federal government in developing and working on reactors in China, Romania and India. So we have a long history in the power generation department at GE Canada in Peterborough.

I'll get to the bill here. I think, when you look at it, all political parties in the last 20 years have been in power in Ontario—the Peterson government, the Rae government, the Harris-Eves government—and I think it's pretty evident that none of those three administrations really have come to grips with the power situation in Ontario. Indeed, they tinkered around the edges. Some would say there was a fair degree of political involvement in electricity in the province of Ontario.

I happen to think that Bill 100 sets us on a new course, an opportunity to provide that reliable supply that GE needs in Peterborough to manufacture, that Stelco needs,

and Chrysler in Brampton and Ford in Oakville, the kinds of things that having an electricity supply will do to drive our economy in the next few years.

When I look back, there's a bit of a sorry history. I remember when Maurice Strong was running Ontario Hydro for the NDP government. He expended a lot of money buying that rain forest in Costa Rica. During his term in office, I'm told, a lot of the nuclear expertise that was at Ontario Hydro at that time was let go, valuable people who probably would have been able to help us along the road.

They also cancelled the Conawapa project, which was going to be the Manitoba lifeline that was successfully negotiated by the Peterson government as a way to solve and enhance the long-term picture of providing electricity in Ontario.

Then we had the Harris-Eves administration, with that sort of deathbed repentance where they decided they were going to embark upon the Manitoba lifeline. Essentially, if the Peterson initiative had been allowed to go to fruition, we would have had the additional supply we need in Ontario today.

When I look at this bill, there are so many positive things about it. It's going to protect heritage assets in Ontario, which we are committed to doing, keeping Beck, the nuclear side, the Saunders dam down the St Lawrence, those key assets, along with the nuclear part of it, that will be our baseload for Ontario.

We plan to enhance it through green power. We've been overwhelmed with the response so far. People have come forward who want to provide additional megawatts in Ontario through green power. I know that in my part of Ontario there is a real opportunity for windmills. I know for a fact that the GE operation in Peterborough may be a prime candidate to be involved in windmill technology to provide more jobs to my good friends in the CAW in Peterborough. Just to quote the CAW, there is an interesting quote that I'd like to get on the record from Mr Nick De Carlo. I remember, as you do, Mr Speaker, Mr De Carlo very well because he made a presentation to us when we were in Orono. I quote:

"Bill 100 proposes some important improvements for the generation and supply of electricity in the province. It is significant and important that the new electricity legislation proposes to reintroduce planning"—I stress "planning"—"into the system. It is also important that the act gives a legislative mandate to promote conservation and the expansion of renewable energy. These are positive steps."

One of the things we have to great advantage in Peterborough is Bob Lake. Bob Lake is known throughout Ontario as Mr Energy. He spent a period of time with Ontario Hydro. He came to Peterborough to run the Peterborough Utilities Services, which is owned by the city of Peterborough. Bob has been at the forefront in areas like smart meters and conservation initiatives.

Let me talk about conservation initiatives for a moment. This is one of the foundation blocks of our legislation. One of the ways we can address the supply

problem is through conservation. If each of us does our little bit, we'll have lots of electricity for the province of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr Kormos: That was an illustration of the enthusiasm the government caucus has for this bill, that between the two of them they couldn't even fill up a 20-minute speaking spot, and that's after briefings coming out of their ears. That's after briefing notes. That's after audiotapes they could play to themselves in their cars on the way to and from Queen's Park. This is the enthusiasm of this government's backbench for this bill, that in the course of debate two members can't even fill up a 20-minute slot. I've got to confess that I'm shocked.

1910

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): Anemic at best.

Mr Kormos: God bless. Howard Hampton points out it's anemic at best in terms of the enthusiasm and commitment.

The fuel gauge is pretty close to empty in terms of what these government members have got to say about their own legislation. I know that they're not going back home praising it, because when they're back home, they're ducking and weaving and bobbing because folks are complaining to no end about things like electricity prices that are going through the roof and the fear of more. Folks are complaining to no end about things like auto insurance premiums. Never mind not being reduced by 10%, they continue to rise and rise and rise while people get lower and lower levels of coverage. Folks are complaining about a minimum wage that was increased by but a few pennies an hour after eight or nine years of nothing. Folks are complaining about their friends, sisters, brothers, fathers, mothers, who, on disability pensions, got themselves but a 3% increase in ODSP after—what?—eight years of zip, zero.

My goodness, there is a paucity of enthusiasm from the government benches for their own legislation—

The Acting Speaker: Thank you. Questions and comments?

Mrs Maria Van Bommel (Lambton-Kent-Middlesex): I just want to reiterate what the member from Perth-Middlesex has said about renewable energies and renewable—

Interjection.

Mrs Van Bommel: I think it's very exciting. I think it's a very great opportunity for rural Ontario and for agriculture itself. We are well behind the European nations in terms of dealing with renewable energies. We can do so much more, and we can take a lot of lessons from what they're doing.

I've actually had the opportunity to go and see methane production turned into power at a garbage dump. It's a good way to recycle and reuse something that we have to deal with anyway, and there's no reason why we can't be taking the opportunity and using this now.

One of the things the member for Perth-Middlesex spoke about was wind power and bio-digestion. All those types of things are very good for the rural economy and the agricultural economy. The only reason they haven't been taken up at this point was because of the problem of the cost. It cost more to produce than they could get into the market. It was also the issue of net metering. That opportunity wasn't presented to them at the time.

With these types of opportunities presented under Bill 100, we're going to see more uptake on these opportunities, and I think it's very important for us to deal with renewable energies. We need to start looking very carefully at how we come to our energies and how we use them.

Conservation is an issue. We have old and deteriorating lines in rural Ontario. We need to fix those. If we're going to have economic development in rural communities, we need a power source. Under Bill 100, we're going to start seeing our own communities contribute to that source, and I'm very happy about it. I can do nothing more than say that it's exciting. The member from Niagara, I believe—

Interjection: Niagara Centre.

Mrs Van Bommel: Niagara Centre. I want to let you know that I think it's wonderful.

Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton): It's interesting to listen to the members of the government talk about the price of electricity and electricity supply in this province when they ran on a platform of keeping the price of electricity at 4.3 cents per kilowatt—keeping the cap, as it was called. As soon as they got elected, they—

Interjections.

Mr Chudleigh: Yes, it was our idea, and we would have kept it, sir. When we talked to the people of Ontario, we kept our word. We told them one thing, and we did the same thing. We were the government that was known for keeping its promises. But the first thing you did was change your mind. First you changed your mind and went from 4.3 to 5.6 or 4.7. I mean, the people of Ontario don't know what they're paying now. It's a sliding scale. You misled the people of Ontario. You got elected under false premises. So listening to this debate—

The Acting Speaker: I have to caution the member for Halton not to suggest that anyone is misleading the House.

Mr Chudleigh: Did I say something—I withdraw it if I said something that crossed the line, Mr Speaker. I got a little excited about the way in which this government got themselves elected under promises that failed to materialize. Is that OK? OK. Thank you very much.

They talked about agriculture, and of course agriculture has a long and proud history in Ontario of finding a way to become more efficient on the farm. It was during the 1930s, 1930 to 1934, when the rural electrification program was put into place, when electric power was brought to all the farms in Ontario—most of the farms in Ontario; certainly all the farms in southern Ontario at that time. I'm pleased to say that my grandfather was Minister of Agriculture at that time and he

implemented that rural electrification program, which was also a bit of a make-work program during the most severe years of the Depression. I see I'm out of time. In my next two minutes I'll bring it up again.

Mr Hampton: I listened with interest as some of the Liberal members tried to pretend that Bill 100 is somehow going to provide extensive economic development opportunities for farmers, tried to pretend that farmers will somehow be able to establish a wind turbine on their property and sell electricity into the grid. It's passing strange, because I had a meeting just a few weeks ago with the Ontario wind energy association. This is the association that represents all those people, not corporations, but many of them small rural landowners, who are very critical of Bill 100. They say that in fact it doesn't provide any opportunities for small landowners.

Its whole alternative energy strategy, if you read the outlines of the government's request for proposals, is all aimed at the corporate providers. So someone who has large-scale capital, someone who can take on a heavy burden of risk, someone who can access tens of millions, if not hundreds of millions of dollars of financing, may have an opportunity for wind energy, wind turbines. But if you're a small farmer who has a limited income, and especially nowadays virtually no access to credit given the financial crisis that's already happening in rural Ontario, you're basically written out of the picture. So I caution the Liberal members: Before you go too far down this road, you'd better check the provisions of the bill again, because it's certainly not as you say, according to the Ontario wind energy association.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you very much. One of the Liberal members has two minutes to reply. There have been four questions and comments. One of the members who spoke to the bill has two minutes to reply. I recognize the member for Perth-Middlesex.

Mr Wilkinson: I want to thank the member for Peterborough for sharing time with me and also for the comments made by the members for Niagara Centre, Lambton-Kent-Middlesex, Halton and Kenora-Rainy River.

There are two things that I wanted to speak on. Again, I say to my colleague the member for Halton, are you going to support this bill or not? Are you going to vote for the farmers in your riding who want to be able to sell power into the grid using net meters? Are you going to be able to do that? Are you going to go for renewable energy or are you going to say we need to be burning coal? Because I know what the farmers are saying in my riding. What they're saying is that they want to be part of it.

I say to my colleagues from the NDP, who have that certain mixture of sanctimonious negativity, that there are some farms in this province that are doing well. There are many that are hurting; there are many that are doing well. But do you know how they create the solutions they have in rural Ontario? Through co-ops. The member for Kenora-Rainy River again shows, I think, a certain lack of understanding of what happens in the vibrant agri-

cultural community that we have in Ontario. We have a history of farmers coming together.

The member for Halton and his grandfather would understand, of course, that farmers band together and form co-operatives as they have done right across the history of this province, and that's how they come together. Those are the farmers in my riding and that's what they're talking about. I know they're talking about that in Huron-Bruce, Lambton-Kent-Middlesex and Peterborough. The farmers want to be part of the solution. They don't believe that we should be trying to find a way not to comply with Kyoto, trying to find a way where we're increasing nitrous oxides and sulphur dioxides. They want to help find renewable, clean sources of energy—wind and methane. These can revolutionize farm economics. Again, I say to the opposition, you have a choice: Are you going to vote for the farmers, are you going to vote for that possibility, or are you going to vote for the old technology, a way that we've dealt in this province that has left us in not a very good place?

1920

The Acting Speaker: Further debate on Bill 100.

Mr Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln): I'm pleased to rise and join the debate this evening on Bill 100. There are a number of points that I wanted to bring up, I guess, about the way this bill was entered into in the Legislature, the current situation that taxpayers, businesses and farmers find themselves in with respect to hydro supply and hydro pricing in the province of Ontario, and to give an additional perspective as to what the good people of Erie-Lincoln have said to me about their concerns on hydro supply and hydro pricing.

I appreciate the member for Perth-Middlesex's points in his presentation, but I think he presents a false choice. I don't think it's a choice between coal and the farmers suddenly filling up the gap. In fact, I get the opposite view. If the member can show me where the OFA supports the Liberal government's hydro policies, I'd enjoy his presentation.

I say to the member that I find that farmers, by and large, are highly critical of the hydro policy that has been brought forward. I was at a greenhouse just yesterday, Monday, down in—

Interjection.

Mr Hudak: Pardon me? Well, I won't respond to that suggestion.

It's a greenhouse for cut flowers, a significant industry in Ontario but particularly in Erie-Lincoln, in the western part of the riding more so—a major employer, a major source of investment in the area. They think the hydro policy is nuts, closing down Nanticoke. I wish my colleague from Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant were here. He could tell me exactly the likely tens of millions of dollars in lost salaries in the Nanticoke area, all the way down to Dunnville, down to Wainfleet, down to Port Colborne. Employees at Nanticoke face being kicked out of their jobs. They're not happy about this. The farmers talk about the impact that is going to have on the local

economy, first and foremost. They don't understand, if coal contributes 20% or 25% at peak, or even higher, to our energy supply, and if the replacement supply is not yet available, why it would make sense to close that down. The economic impact is a concern, but also the replacement supply is a concern.

If you look at the way the people responded in the Nanticoke area, it strongly suggested that this notion the Liberal government could close down the coal plants by 2007, I believe, is yet another promise waiting to be broken. I say to the member for Brant, I think it's on the endangered promises list, right up there near the top. Put it right up near the top on the endangered promises list.

If I recall, at a recent Liberal caucus session, I believe, or a Liberal Party session, that was one of the items reported for debate. I don't know exactly how it was phrased. It was something to the extent of, "How do we get out of our promise to close down coal by 2007?" The member from Halton probably remembers this. It was in the papers. The Minister of Energy was forced to come out and say, "No, no, no. Whatever we considered on our agenda for discussion"—

Mr McMeekin: It was a brief that was raised for discussion.

Mr Hudak: I think it was a briefing—

Mr McMeekin: It was a brief that was raised by one of the participants.

Mr Hudak: The way I heard it described, it was a briefing note for discussion.

I say to the member opposite, I've got to believe that this is one of the items you've discussed extensively in caucus with your party. Are you going to keep the 2007 closure promise?

Interjection.

Mr Hudak: I'm not going to hold my breath, but I believe sooner or later, as part of Dalton McGuinty's next broken promises rehabilitation tour, he'll say, "Boy, you know what? We broke 37 promises in the first year. We wanted to have a clean slate in the second year, a resolution in the new fiscal year that all the broken promises are behind us. But, darn it, I gotta keep breaking more." It's just in the blood. I think it's just in the blood. It's the nature of the beast, so to speak.

I think Dalton McGuinty is well-intentioned. I think he's a good family man. I think he tries to be a strong Premier. I just think that it's a segment of weak leadership when you make promises, cynically, that you had no intention of keeping and then, once in office, cynically break those promises one by one by one. It's an appeal to try to win as many votes as possible. Granted, it's difficult for governments to win consecutive majorities, let alone three consecutive majorities. They were well-placed just by the nature of that phenomenon in our political system, but nonetheless Dalton McGuinty, out of weak leadership, still put out a whole range of campaign promises that I think he had no intention of keeping.

Maybe they're going to keep this one. I've got to think—and Brant marked it down. It's at the top of the

endangered, Dalton McGuinty soon-to-be-broken promises list, this coal promise.

I think what farmers want—sure they want to contribute. The member from Kenora-Rainy River spoke out quite clearly about what I'm hearing in my own riding, that they would love to supply power to the grid. They would love to build the windmills to supply your co-gen facilities. They're having a heck of a time with the bureaucracy involved. I'm not seeing them pop up at the rate that I think the government would have you believe is happening. Mr Speaker, perhaps in your own riding of Wellington you're not seeing the supply that they claimed was going to be occurring in rural Ontario. The member from Kenora-Rainy River talked about the wind energy groups being skeptical; I don't blame them. I don't see a solution in Bill 100 to that situation.

So this bill was borne out of one of the earliest—now classic—broken promises of maintaining the 4.3 cents per kilowatt hour, I think until 2006. I don't want to remind the members about that broken promise, but it has attained a—there are so many broken promises, I think you need to put them in particular categories. This ranks among the classic broken promises. When people think about their top five broken promises by Dalton McGuinty, if they try to get it down to a brief list, as opposed to the extensive list—

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): The list is longer. It's over 231.

Mr Hudak: The list is quite long, as my colleague says. But I think if they had to put Dalton McGuinty's greatest hits of broken promises, the broken promise on hydro pricing would probably be among the top five. It combines higher hydro prices, higher taxes, a punishing health care levy that could work out to up to \$1,000 for a working family in the Niagara region, an increase in fees—I think there were 50 different fee or tax increases in the most recent budget. And do you know what? I'm not getting the calls. I don't believe that auto insurance has come down 20%, as was promised by the Dalton McGuinty government. I'd ask my colleagues who are listening intently to my speech—I don't hear that they've met that promise.

So is it harder to live in Ontario after a year of Dalton McGuinty? No doubt. No doubt about it. Yes. Blatantly, yes. There's a lot less money in your pocket than had existed about one year ago. Certainly, the increase in hydro prices is part of it.

It is hard to look back without a great deal of research and think of all the different positions that the Dalton McGuinty Liberals had on hydro restructuring, with respect to OPG, with respect to transmission, with respect to prices. So the fact that they changed their minds once they got in office, I think, is perfectly consistent with their behaviour in opposition of taking different views. So I guess I shouldn't have been surprised. I just figured you would keep that promise because it was such a prominent promise that impacts everybody in the province of Ontario.

I wonder what they'll do in Atikokan at the closure. I talked about Nanticoke, which impacts my riding of Erie-Lincoln. In Atikokan, the closure—a small municipality that has had some difficult times with its own manufacturing sector. I don't know what the replacement job strategy is going to be by this government with respect to Atikokan; I don't think there is one. Maybe Lakeview. I do wonder, of this 2007 promise, how they're actually going to say they kept it, because they always look for some way of at least nodding or winking in the direction of their campaign promise. Maybe they will say the closure of Lakeview meets their campaign promise, but I think that falls well short of the expectation of the general public.

1930

Mr Dave Levac (Brant): It's Bill 100, correct?

Mr Hudak: Yes.

One wonders, too, under Bill 100, with new supply, gas generation, if they do close the coal plants—I don't think they're really going to live up to that promise, but let's say they do, and it goes to gas-fired plants—what the impact on the price of gas will be. Let's assume that you replace the coal with gas-fired. The impact on home heating costs is going to be phenomenal.

Interjection: Astronomical.

Mr Hudak: Astronomical, some might say. So yet another hit in the pocketbook. I would mention auto insurance, taxes, fees, higher hydro rates and, in combination—they do go down this path—higher gas rates as well.

I think my colleague, the critic for energy, the member for Durham, has spoken about this and would know far more than I, in his capacity as critic and all-around smart fellow.

Interjections.

Mr Hudak: Both. It's ubiquitous that he is consummate in his knowledge. I think he's raised some important criticisms of the bill that I've read. I was here last night. He spoke very well about it.

I think the NDP makes this point. I wonder if all of the voters who marked a ballot for the L, for the Liberal candidate last time around, were aware that the plan was for private generation, including potentially private nuclear facilities, in Ontario.

Mr McMeekin: You can't do that.

Mr Hudak: Was it clear at election time that the Liberals, if they formed the government, would be encouraging private sector supply of power?

Interjections: No.

Mr Hudak: Some other witnesses here, who I know to be good and honourable members, say no. I will take their word for it, because I certainly do not believe that they clearly told taxpayers in the province, and voters, that they would be bringing in a private sector supply of power.

Mind you, that's a good thing. I think that's important. I don't think the government is the right entity to be bringing on the new supply. I think you have to open up to private sector investment. I think that's really the only

solution that exists. It's a legitimate policy, one that I support.

My point is, was that part of their campaign? Did the candidate who had the red colours, the red signs in Wellington, go around saying, "We're going to invite private sector power supply"? Because I suspect there was a bit of a wink, a bit of a nod, a bit of leg shown, saying no, it was all going to be public power.

One area I'm concerned about too is the third generator at Beck. They made an announcement recently—I know the member from Niagara Falls was there as part of it—to increase capacity in the tunnel at Beck 2. Great.

Mr O'Toole: It was our solution.

Mr Hudak: It was. The member from Durham said it was our solution. That's true. We had moved forward with that process. There was an RFP on the way. John Baird, the energy minister, who, by the way, had a very soft spot for farmers and understood the impact of price on farmers and helped them to protect their agricultural sector from price spikes, had made that announcement, that commitment.

But we need to look closely at the language, and according to the Brantford Expositor on May 30, 2003—so in the run-up to the 2003 election—then leader of the opposition and now Premier Dalton McGuinty said, "A third generator will be added to the Beck generating station in Niagara Falls"—not an additional tunnel, but a third generator, meaning Beck 3.

If it were true, great news: a tremendous source of jobs in its construction, major investment in the Niagara region, and a major investment in new supply and on-going employment in the peninsula, a solid project—one that Dalton McGuinty, the Brantford Expositor and I suspect other journals committed to. Then once in office, on December 1, 2003, in Hansard, the Energy Minister, Mr Duncan said, "We believe that Beck 3 poses a huge opportunity for increased supply," in response to a question. "I say to the member opposite, this will be among the first new energy supply in 13 long and painful years," and then he takes shots at the other governments. "I say to the member and to his community, thanks to your efforts and the efforts of your community, be assured"—this is the important part—"that Dalton McGuinty and this government are going to proceed with that grid," but I think he means with that project, Beck 3, in his sentence. Hansard, December 1, 2003.

It may have been on Brant's endangered promises list because, sure enough, just over six months later, June 25, 2004, Dwight Duncan climbed down from that promise. The minister, in the Niagara Falls Review, said, "The Beck 3 project is not economic at this time. The science and economics of the project simply don't make sense. Very simply, there isn't enough water."

If the water level changed significantly in these past six months, people along the Niagara River didn't notice that. I suspect that the level of water in the Niagara River or the Great Lakes did not change significantly in those six months, but what changed was their commitment to keeping that promise. Again, before the election, they

made a promise to support Beck 3 because they knew it would be a major generator of jobs and investment in the Niagara region to win seats. Once safely in office, the cynically made promise was cynically broken by the minister on June 25, 2004. They pulled the plug on Beck 3. Another blatant broken promise, this one made specifically to the people of the Niagara Peninsula.

I know members opposite will get up and defend the bill and defend the policy. As I said, some things, like private sector supply of power, are important to the province. It guarantees supply. I pointed out some weaknesses that exist in the bill.

But don't take my word for it. Let me read you some headlines. Where will I start? I'll start in the Niagara Peninsula, the Welland Tribune, August 10, 2004: "Higher Hydro Prices Predicted for Ontario," contrary to election commitments, contrary to what we hear about this bill. But if it is between Liberals opposite, who have a record of breaking 37 promises already and more to come, and good journalists at the Welland Tribune, I will pick the Tribune, which says, "Higher Hydro Prices Predicted for Ontario," August 10, 2004.

The Niagara Falls Review, same date: "Power Price Expected to Climb: Hike Predicted When Rate Cap Lifted." In fact, I think the minister has mused about further rate hikes. Now, I don't know if that counts as an additional broken promise or the same promise broken a couple of times. They keep increasing prices. But I think I'll err on the generous side and count it as a broken promise.

The London Free Press: "Higher hydro rates predicted."

Interjection: It's a great paper.

Mr Hudak: Positive comments about the London Free Press from across the floor, but their headline suggests their view is at odds with what you hear Liberal government members saying about this bill.

A National Post comment, Tom Adams: "Bright Lights, Black Hole: Ontario's Bid to Centralize Power Authority Will Fail." I think Tom Adams is very dogged in his criticisms of aspects of Bill 100 and, with respect, the Liberal endangered promise of closing down the coal plants by 2007.

The Cornwall Standard Freeholder: "Real Power Problems Lie Ahead For the Liberals." Just down the highway, "The Lights Could Go Out on the Province's Future": the Kingston Whig-Standard, August 16, 2004. The Sudbury Star, to go around the province, in a sector near and dear to my heart, from the time that I enjoyed tremendously as minister responsible for northern development and mines—

Ms Monique M. Smith (Nipissing): You're such a northern member.

Mr Hudak: To the North Shore of Lake Erie, it's true, but it was an honour to serve as the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. In fact, I think, those who have had that opportunity, it's one of the best ministries in government; a problem-solving ministry. A great sector to work for. A chance for me to see, quite frankly, parts

of the province, coming from Niagara, I may not have always had a chance to see to the same extent.

Ms Smith: God's country.

Mr Hudak: And I do enjoy going back. The member from North Bay refers to it as God's country.

The Sudbury Star: "Mining can't afford hydro hike: ... Committee seeks public input on plans to bring in private electricity suppliers."

I think you've heard it. It's another broken promise. Bill 100 has too many holes. My comments on this piece of legislation.

1940

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr Kormos: It's interesting. Here we have, from the official opposition, a member devoting his whole 20 minutes, as much time as the rules allow, to putting his position on the record. While it's not a position that, I tell you, I've had occasion to agree with—as a matter of fact, when he made reference to the Welland Tribune headlines saying, "Hydro Rates Sure to Rise," I wanted to make sure he identified that as being during the Tory years or subsequent to the last election, because I recall some of the similar Tribune headlines from those years when Mike Harris and Ernie Eves were hell-bent on privatizing hydroelectricity here in Ontario.

I also remember Dalton McGuinty—well, some days he was in favour of privatizing hydroelectricity, some days he wasn't. If the sun shone, he was in favour, if the sun didn't shine, he wasn't. Gosh, if there was a full moon, he did, and if there was a quarter moon, he didn't. Dalton McGuinty campaigned, telling people he wasn't going to privatize hydroelectricity, but sure as God made little apples, once he got elected, we saw the privatization agenda, pedal to the metal, get put into fourth gear or fifth gear and just zooming along as fast as can be.

That's why I'm exceptionally proud of the fact that Howard Hampton is going to be addressing this bill in around eight minutes' time. I guess it'll be around five to eight when he gets to use his one-hour leadoff. Howard, of course, is the author of *Public Power: The Fight for Publicly Owned Electricity* here in Ontario, a book that thousands and thousands have read across the province, and it's available in Coles, Indigo, World's Biggest Book Store, Chapters and so on. Howard is going to be speaking to the need for this government to reverse its commitment to privatization and the need for this government to adopt the NDP agenda, the NDP platform, the NDP direction of publicly owned, non-profit, regulated hydro.

Mr Kim Craiton (Niagara Falls): It's a pleasure to have an opportunity to speak a few words on this subject. It was extremely interesting listening to my good friend from Erie-Lincoln talking about my riding and one of the greatest announcements that we've made since being elected.

I remember sitting on city council before I got here, and for 13 years we questioned why there was no opportunity to take advantage of a natural resource that we had in our community to generate more electricity. I

remember when I sat on council, I think at least twice the previous government announced they were going ahead with this project, prior to an election and then after an election. Of course, for those 13 years I was on city council, we never saw anything happen with it.

I also wanted to share with the House that, quickly after I was elected, I personally toured Beck and talked to a lot of the front-line workers there to get a feeling from them in regard to what was the best approach the government might look at in terms of generating electricity quickly and at a reasonable cost. One of the things I learned from those people who work on the front lines—they were explaining to me there was an opportunity with the current generating station. By bringing more water in through an additional tunnel, the government of the day could in fact produce electricity much quicker and at a very reasonable cost. They emphasized to me over and over, "Make sure you take that message back." That is something I was really pleased we were able to do. The tunnel is going ahead at \$600 million. The figure I recall is about 6,000 person years. Vince Kerrio, who was a cabinet minister with the Liberal government of the day, is extremely excited that we are now fulfilling that promise we made to the people of Ontario and, most importantly, to the people of my riding of Niagara Falls.

Mr O'Toole: It's always a pleasure to follow the member from Erie-Lincoln. We served this afternoon on the estimates committee, where he is the critic for municipal affairs. He's doing a wonderful job of holding Mr Gerretsen accountable.

I was impressed, and that's why I came in here tonight, because like Mr Hudak, the member for Erie-Lincoln, I come from an agricultural riding. The member for Halton said earlier, if you think agriculture, you should always think the Conservative party is there for you. In terms of how this applies to me, I have greenhouse operations, livestock operations. Certainty in price and competitiveness are extremely important. I think I heard the minister say it's a mug's game and he can't protect consumers. Well, it's a fundamental policy of economics.

I've looked at the substance of their conservation plan in some detail. They cancelled the Energy Star program. Constituents of mine and yours were buying energy-efficient appliances. We gave you a rebate on your sales tax. Not only that, we had a 10-year property tax holiday on wind development. This was to encourage and incent alternative energy supply. The first thing they did, as Mr Hudak pointed out, was to cancel those incentives and encouragements and introduce Bill 4. This was done soon after they were sworn into cabinet. They increased the price by about 20%.

It's my understanding that if you look forward, there are only two consistent and reliable outcomes here: You're going to have less reliability and higher prices. As in all things, it can be traced back to their election promises. They will not deliver any more without your paying more. And I doubt if they'll deliver more; they'll just tax you more.

The Acting Speaker: We have time for one last question and comment.

Mr Hampton: I listened with interest to my colleague the former Minister of Northern Development and Mines. I'm sure he learned a lot when he was the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. I'm sure he got to see part of the geography of Ontario that he didn't know existed until that time. I listened very carefully to what he said about what is going to happen to hydro prices. I think people across Ontario need to recognize this. Wherever you go, it doesn't matter—North America, Europe, Australia—the cost of private, profit-driven electricity in any jurisdiction is at least 20% more expensive than publicly owned, not-for-profit electricity. Why? As soon as you introduce profit, a private company will want at least a 15% profit. That gets added to your hydro bill. In addition, it costs hundreds of millions of dollars, if not billions of dollars, to build new generating stations and new transmission lines. Private companies will borrow that money from financial institutions. Financial institutions will want at least a 2% higher interest rate when lending to a private, profit-driven company as opposed to lending to a publicly owned utility which has the government taxpayer standing behind it. That 2% on the interest bill gets added to your hydro bill. And when you're talking about borrowing hundreds of millions of dollars, paying that amount of money back over 10 or 15 years comes out to hundreds of millions of extra dollars added to your hydro bill. And then there are the corporate salaries. Make no mistake about it, Liberals have chosen private, profit-driven power, and that's going to increase the price by at least 20%, short- and long-term.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Erie-Lincoln has two minutes to reply.

Mr Hudak: Thank you to my colleagues from Welland-Thorold and Niagara Falls—it's a bit of the Niagara show tonight—Durham and Kenora-Rainy River.

I've got to tell you that while I sometimes will disagree with my colleagues to my left, Howard Hampton and Peter Kormos, they have been consistent with public power all the way. My God, they drilled it into my head during the campaign, and I got it at doors—public auto insurance and public power. They've been consistent.

I'll give Dalton McGuinty credit: He's been consistent in his inconsistency. I don't know if that's inconsistently consistent or vice versa, but he's been for private power, he's been against private power, whatever. It reminds me of a little skit I saw. We should ask Dalton. Do you know what? He'd say he was consistent, because when he was before a private power audience, he was in favour of private power, and the next night, when he was in front of a public power audience, by goodness, he was in favour of public power only. So he was consistent in trying to appeal to his audience but certainly has taken up a number of different positions. Once in office, all bets are off: 4.3 cents per kilowatt hour thrown out the window of the Premier's limousine once he got hold of those keys.

1950

I suspect, similarly, their promise to close down all the coal plants by 2007 will be out the window. I appreciate the remarks from my colleague from Niagara Falls, but Dalton McGuinty promised more. The tunnel is great. I'm glad to have it. We started that process. We got the RFP out there. They wrapped a red ribbon around it and announced it. But Dalton McGuinty said, clearly, a third generator will be added at the Beck generating station in Niagara Falls. Beck 3, the big project, big investment, big jobs; a big campaign commitment to win votes in Niagara and one big broken promise once Dalton McGuinty had the Premier's chair.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Hampton: I will be using the one-hour leadoff because I have a lot to say on this bill.

Let me begin by saying what I think Liberal members appreciate already. New Democrats will not be supporting Bill 100. In fact, New Democrats could not be more strong and more vociferous in our criticism of this bill. And I want to use this hour to lay out why we are so critical of this bill.

This bill continues the great pretender tradition that the Premier set when he was in opposition. One day he was in favour of private power and the next day, speaking somewhere else, he was in favour of public power. This bill tries to convince the people of Ontario that we're going to continue to have a regulated hydro-electricity system, it tries to pretend that we're going to continue to have public power, when, in fact, what is involved here is privatization through the back door.

I was very critical of the Conservatives when Mike Harris and then, later, Ernie Eves set out to privatize and deregulate our hydroelectricity system. But I will give the Conservatives credit for one thing: At least they were open and up front about what they were trying to do. They said they believed in privatization and deregulation. They said it openly, and they even boasted about it.

Mr McGuinty and the Liberals want to pretend to people across Ontario that they're going to continue public power, but in fact this is an agenda of privatization through the back door. It is privatization by stealth, privatization by deception, but the result is the same. Industry's hydroelectricity bills are going to increase substantially, and it's not just Howard Hampton and the NDP who are saying that. Small business's electricity bills are going to increase substantially. Homeowner electricity bills are going to increase substantially. School electricity bills, hospital electricity bills, community centre electricity bills, hockey rink electricity bills and apartment dweller electricity bills are going to increase substantially. Let me say again why that's going to happen. It doesn't matter where you are in the world—in North America, in Europe, in Australia—if you sit down and compare and contrast the operations of privately owned, profit-driven electricity systems versus publicly owned, not-for-profit electricity systems, the private profit-driven systems on average cost 20% more, no matter where you are.

I explained a little earlier why that is. Profit-driven companies will want at least a 15% profit; they'll take more if they can get it. Add 15% to your hydro bill. If you're going to go out and borrow \$2 billion to build a new electricity generating station, private companies will have to pay a higher interest rate to financial institutions. Why? Because the financial institution says, "Well, you could go bankrupt. You could run into financial trouble, so you're a higher risk. Because you're a higher risk, we're going to charge you a higher interest rate." Borrowing \$2 billion and repaying that \$2 billion over 25 years—the interest charges alone will add hundreds of millions of dollars to the province's electricity bills.

There's another reason, though, why private power will be more expensive. I think, historically, people will remember that when the Conservative government, when Mike Harris said he was going to privatize Hydro One, which runs the transmission system and the distribution system in some parts of the province, right away the head of Hydro One, Eleanor Clitheroe, who had been making a salary of about \$450,000 running the publicly owned utility, as soon as the announcement was made that it was going to be privatized, Ms. Clitheroe immediately wanted and got a \$2-million salary, and wanted a \$1-million-a-year pension, a \$6-million severance allowance, a \$330,000-a-year limousine allowance, a \$174,000-a-year car allowance, plus an unlimited expense allowance.

And she wasn't alone. Every other senior and middle executive at Hydro One wanted the same things. Virtually overnight the salaries and benefits and bonuses and pensions and expense accounts of the senior and middle executives of Hydro One blossomed, as if they had won the lottery. And do you know what? That got added to people's hydro bill, and that's exactly what's going to happen again.

Private companies are not in the business of providing electricity because they want you or me to have good service. They are in the business to make as much money as they can, and that includes all of the executives and managers in the corporation. And that all gets added to the hydro bill. That's why, no matter where you are in the world, as soon as a government starts to move toward more private, profit-driven electricity, at least 20% will get added to the hydro bill.

There are other things the Liberals are doing which are further going to increase the hydro bill, and I want to talk about that. But I just say to folks, Mr McGuinty and the Liberals are practising the same agenda as the Conservatives: privatization of our electricity system. Whereas the Conservatives were up front and open about it, Liberals are going to practise privatization by stealth, privatization by the back door.

I said that it is not just me who says that there are going to be huge price increases. I want to cite the brief of the Association of Major Power Consumers of Ontario, because the association came before the Bill 100 committee and presented a detailed brief. In fact, they actually brought the representatives of three companies. They brought someone who spoke for Bowater pulp and

paper. They brought someone who spoke for Gerdau Ameristeel. Gerdau Ameristeel owns steel plants in Cambridge and in Whitby. Bowater has a pulp and paper mill/sawmill complex in Thunder Bay. And then they brought Falconbridge. Falconbridge is a major mining company in Ontario, especially in Timmins and Sudbury, but at different times has been active virtually across northern Ontario.

And this is what they said. They said, following their analysis of the McGuinty electricity plan, that we would see a further 30% increase in the price for industrial users, but likely as much as a 53% increase in the industrial price of electricity. They also admitted in their brief that during the time that the Conservatives set about to privatize our hydro system between 1999 and 2003, there had already been a 30% increase in the industrial price of electricity.

They were very blunt, Falconbridge, Bowater and Gerdau Ameristeel. They said, "Look, these industries which provide literally hundreds of thousands of good, secure jobs in this province"—in most communities, these are the best jobs. They're the jobs that carry job security, the jobs that carry a good, steady wage, that carry good pension benefits, that carry a good benefit package. They said that electricity prices that escalate as much as they are projecting will mean that many of their operations will shut down or some of their operations will curtail production and start moving production outside the province. In fact, Bowater, speaking for the pulp and paper industry, said this is already happening and, indeed, it is.

2000

A couple of years ago, after the 30% increase in the price of power under the former Conservative government, Abitibi-Consolidated shut down a paper machine in Kenora in my riding. One hundred and fifty five good-paying jobs, like that, gone. Just a year ago, Weyerhaeuser shut down a paper machine in the community of Dryden and also shut down their sawmill. Three hundred jobs. The best-paying, most stable jobs in the community, gone. Just after Bowater presented to the committee, they announced that they were shutting down one of their pulping processes in their forest products complex in Thunder Bay. Fifty jobs gone, like that.

Cascade papers: Five hundred and fifty jobs in Thunder Bay. Cascade came in and met with the minister. They met with the Minister of Energy. Not so much interested in meeting with the minister of trade and technology, not so much interested in meeting with the Minister of Northern Development and Mines, they went right to the Minister of Energy and they said, "If there are further escalations in the price of electricity, very likely we will be closing down our paper mill in Thunder Bay." Five hundred and fifty jobs.

Falconbridge made the point that they are an industrial company and they're an international company. They have mines in Central America, South America, in Asia and they have operations in Europe. They have the capacity to move not just production, but things like re-

fining and smelting elsewhere in the world. They made the point that if the McGuinty government continues on the road that they're on in terms of their electricity policies, Falconbridge will begin shutting down or curtailing some of their operations in Ontario and moving them outside of Ontario.

Gerda Ameristeel pointed out they have a steel plant in Selkirk, just north of Winnipeg—Manitoba has the lowest electricity rates in North America—but they also pointed out that they have mills in the southern United States, central United States and northeastern United States. They projected the price of electricity under Mr McGuinty's scheme and said, "Look, you would essentially make the two steel mills, one in Cambridge and one in Whitby, the highest-cost producers in the Gerda Ameristeel chain in North America." They said they would take this as a signal to start moving production out of Ontario and into other jurisdictions. That means moving jobs and economic activity out of Ontario and into other jurisdictions.

This is very important for Ontario. I say to people across the province, the reason the electricity debate touches so many of us is because it has a very strong economic and industrial aspect. Yes, it has an important environmental aspect, and I want to talk about the environmental aspect in a minute, but there's a very strong industrial, economic aspect to the price of electricity. In fact, you could make the argument that the reason Ontario became an industrial powerhouse through the 1940s, the 1950s, the 1960s and into the 1970s is because Ontario had a guaranteed supply, a reliable supply and an affordable supply of electricity to power the pulp and paper industry, the mining industry, the steel industry, the auto assembly industry—you name it.

In fact, there are many historians who point to the incredible industrial production that happened in Ontario during the second war when Ontario, in many ways, became the major industrial supplier for Britain, whether it be airplanes or tanks or trucks or ships. Much of that happened because we had a public power system that provided electricity at an affordable rate, on a reliable and sustainable basis.

So we really are talking about one of the economic fundamentals of the province. I just say to people, when groups like the Association of Major Power Consumers in Ontario come forward and say that your electricity plan, the McGuinty electricity plan, spells real trouble for these industries, spells real financial and economic difficulty for these industries, and jobs and economic activity are at risk, government should listen. They were very blunt. They said 140,000 good-paying industrial jobs are put at risk because of this government's proposal as contained in Bill 100, your electricity strategy.

I think the government should listen, but obviously they're not going to listen. At least the people of Ontario should know that the major power consumers of the province are saying this. I urge people, if you want to get a copy of the major power consumers' brief, give me a call here at the Legislature or contact us by e-mail; you

can do that through your public library. I'd be happy to send you a copy of the brief. Everyone should have a copy of it, particularly if you live in one of the major industrial centres of Ontario, especially if you live in northern Ontario, because the industries of northern Ontario, whether pulp and paper, sawmilling, mining, smelting, refining or steelmaking—virtually all of the important industries in northern Ontario—are very electricity-intensive. They have to have that affordable, reliable supply of electricity, otherwise they just can't stay in business.

I also want to talk about the environmental aspect of this. The minister has put out a lot of press releases. In fact, what we're seeing more than a year into the McGuinty government is that they've yet to do anything on the electricity front. They've yet to produce any new supply. They've yet to say, "Here is the strategy going forward." What they've really done over the last year is simply issue press release after press release after press release. That's all.

The minister has put out a lot of spin about his concern for the environment. I was struck when a German environmentalist was here. He's also a Member of Parliament in Germany. He was here just a few short weeks ago speaking to a forum. To put it mildly, he was embarrassed by how little attention is being paid, first of all, to renewable energy and, secondly, he was embarrassed by the so-called conservation plan. Frankly, there isn't a conservation plan.

Let me give you an idea of why he was embarrassed. The government has put out a request for proposal for only 300 megawatts of renewable electricity, 300 megawatts of so-called new green power. In effect, the installed capacity here in Ontario right now is roughly about 30,000 megawatts. So if everything was up and running and everything was operating, we'd be capable of producing about 30,000 megawatts. Ten per cent of 30,000 is 3,000 and 10% of 3,000 is 300. So what's this government's commitment to so-called green renewable electricity? It's 1%, that's it. They're boasting about 1%. That's what they're boasting about.

Some of the Liberals want to talk about Conawapa. I just urge you to go back and read the Hansard. Do you know who the most vociferous critic of Conawapa was, who said that the province should get out of Conawapa right away because it was too expensive? Do you know who that was? It was the Liberal energy critic. And do you know who that was? Dalton McGuinty. In fact, in this House he said, "It doesn't matter what it costs. Get out of Conawapa. It's too expensive. We don't need the power."

Interjection: And your government listened to him.

Mr Hampton: I would say this: Bob Rae made a mistake. He listened to Dalton McGuinty; he did. He listened to Dalton McGuinty and that was a big mistake.

Interjections.

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Mr Hampton: I think I've incited a little bit of activity on the Liberal bench there.

Here is the interesting thing. The German parliamentarian who knows a lot about wind energy was here and he was embarrassed. But it's not just him who's embarrassed. I met with the executive director of the Ontario Sustainable Energy Association, a gentleman from California who just moved here to Ontario because he had a lot of experience with wind turbines in California. And this is what he said: "I've looked at the Bill 100 provisions. I've looked at the requests for proposals for so-called green energy that the government's put out already, and do you know what? This doesn't provide any opportunity for farmers out there in rural Ontario who maybe want to have one wind turbine on their property." First of all, the amount of money you have to have to even be considered, the access to capital that you have to have to even be considered, the scope and size that you have to have to even be considered is beyond literally 99% of the farmers in Ontario. He said that this is aimed overwhelmingly at the corporate producers. So if you're TransAlta or ATCO and you've got access to hundreds of millions of dollars in capital and you can afford to take on this level of risk for 10 or 15 or 20 years, then you can bid. But for small farmers, for small landowners in rural Ontario, this is not an opportunity. If anything, it's a frustration. That's how people are feeling out there right now.

As well, I want to talk about the government's so-called strategy for conservation. We've heard this government give long-winded speeches about their so-called smart meters. But the interesting thing is that they ignore the experience with the so-called smart meters that happened in other jurisdictions. What I want to refer to is, of course, the experience of California. After California went down the privatization and deregulation road that Conservatives and Liberals are so in love with, Enron took advantage of people there, manipulated the market and drove up the price of electricity not by 10 or 15 times, but in some cases, by 40 times—increases in the price of electricity.

After the crisis in California, California was looking for all kinds of measures to reduce consumption. So they got into the so-called smart meter game. The governor of California actually did a report on the so-called smart meters in retrospect. What they were hoping was that smart meters would give them a 500-megawatt reduction in electricity use, that it would shift enough load so that they could shift 500 megawatts of load from the peak usage, which happens during the daytime, to the off-peak, which happens in the evening.

That's what they were hoping—500 megawatts. After a lot of expense installing the meters, you know what they found? They were only able to reduce peak demand by 31 megawatts through the use of load-shifting and smart meters. There's a reason for that, and the people at home should understand. Much of your electricity use in your home involves appliances that are on all the time. Your refrigerator is on all time and you can't—well I wouldn't advise you to—shut off your refrigerator for six or seven hours at a time. I certainly wouldn't advise you

to do it and then try to eat the food, because you would be a real target for food poisoning in that case. Similarly, if you have a freezer—and many people in Ontario do have freezers now. It's one way of taking advantage of meat prices and other food prices when they don't cost too much and then putting it in your freezer. But a freezer has to be on all the time, so you can't simply shut the freezer off during the daytime and then run it at night when electricity prices might be a little lower.

Similarly, if you have an electric hot water heater, it actually costs more if you turn the hot water heater on and then turn it off and turn it on and turn it off, because you're heating it and then you're heating it again and then you're heating it again, rather than maintaining it at a constant temperature.

If people think about it for a minute, much of our electricity use in our homes involves appliances that are on all the time. So saying, "Oh well, we're going to shift load," obviously doesn't apply to a lot of appliances. But equally, much of our activity is in the daytime. As I said to someone, human beings are not raccoons; we don't conduct most of our activities at night. Some we conduct at night, but most we conduct during the daytime. You're not going to get your kids up and send them to school at 1 am. Similarly, you're not going to get up at 2 am and cook breakfast.

Much of our use of electricity is either dictated by appliances that are on all the time or dictated by our activities as human beings, by people who tend to get up in the morning, who tend to cook breakfast in the morning, who then go to work, who work all day, who come home in the evening, who cook supper in the evening and then do a whole round of other household chores. The idea that you can somehow shift load in the household to some great extent just doesn't bear up under scrutiny. That's what they found in California. It just doesn't work.

But that has been the sum total so far of the McGuinty government's strategy for electricity conservation. I listened carefully as some of the Conservative members spoke. The Conservatives did, in fact, put in place incentives for people to go out and buy energy-efficient appliances. It is true that, after they went down their own privatization-deregulation road and hydro bills went through the roof and people were angry and small business was angry and companies were laying off workers and paper mills were shutting down or shutting down some of their paper machines, the former Conservative government said, "Oops, we've got to do something here." They did implement an incentive strategy for people to go out and buy electricity-efficient appliances.

The Liberals have now rescinded that. They've done away with that. That's actually a step backward, because if we really are serious about reducing electricity use, those are the things that need to happen. If people have a refrigerator in their home that was built before 1994, then there's a 99% chance it's a very inefficient refrigerator; it's very inefficient in its use of electricity. Chances are it

uses four times as much as electricity as a refrigerator built after 1994.

In 1994, the then NDP government required all refrigerators going forward to be energy efficient, and if you couldn't manufacture an energy-efficient one, then don't manufacture. You would think that if the government was interested in really conserving electricity, they would have added to the incentives that were there, they would have gone to people and said, "Look, we're prepared to provide you with a low-interest loan, so even if you're a low- or modest-income family and you're struggling, we're going to give you a low-interest loan so you can buy that new refrigerator. Because it will use less electricity, your hydro bill will actually come down and then, by paying, say, \$10 or \$15 a month over a three- or four-year period, you could pay off the loan. Then anything else that you save on the electricity bill goes in your pocket."

That would be a real incentive plan for efficiency and conservation. Have we seen that? No. The only incentive that was there for people to purchase electricity-efficient appliances has been removed, done away with.

There are other options that could be employed as well. For example, if you look at the relative efficiency of an electric stove versus a natural gas stove, providing some incentive money for people to trade in their electric stove and get a natural gas stove would make wonderful sense, both from the perspective of saving on electricity and from the perspective of using the most efficient fuel in that context. And natural gas is the most efficient fuel for cooking. If anyone wants to try the experiment, take an electric stove, turn it on, take a natural gas stove, turn on a burner, and put cold water from the tap on both and see which one boils first. A natural gas stove will boil water much, much more quickly because the efficiency of the use of the energy is much higher with a natural gas stove. Is the government doing anything on that front? No; no incentive there either.

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So what we have seen so far in terms of wind energy is—and I use the words of the German critic who was here—it's embarrassing, it's shallow, it's hollow, it's superficial. What's happening on the energy efficiency and conservation front in terms of household appliances or in terms of retrofit strategy for homes? Nothing. The government talks only about smart meters, smart meters which were dismally unsuccessful in California in terms of their results. I said that this has real implications for Ontario's industry. It has obviously real implications for Ontario's environment. Whether you produce your electricity through nuclear fuel, whether you produce it through natural gas fuel, or whether you produce it through falling water, or whether you go down the energy efficiency road, it has huge implications for Ontario's environment.

Here again, very reputable organizations have sat down and examined the strategy. My colleague from Trinity-Spadina talked about this a bit last night, but I want to talk about the Pembina Institute. The Pembina

Institute is actually an organization in Alberta, in Calgary, where, as you know, there are lots of energy debates. The Pembina Institute, in their study, looked very carefully at what was happening. They released a report earlier this summer which pointed out that the cost of building new generation, in other words, if the McGuinty Liberals decide, "Oh, we're going to build lots of natural gas plants and refurbish the plants and build new nuclear plants," the cost of meeting Ontario's electricity needs that way between 2004 and 2020 will be \$32 billion.

They said if we pursued an energy efficiency strategy—and I outlined an energy efficiency strategy for homes and apartments; you could also outline one for small businesses, for community hospitals, for schools, for community centres and then for major industries, because there's an energy efficiency strategy for virtually all of these sectors of the economy—if we emphasized an energy efficiency and conservation strategy instead, the cost between 2004 and 2020 would only be \$18 billion and the result for the environment would be much better.

But have we seen an energy efficiency strategy and energy conservation strategy? No. We've seen lots of spin, but this government has actually backed away from some of the energy efficiency incentives that the Conservative government was forced to put in place. That, I say, is going to be to the detriment of all of us. It would be less costly to pursue an energy efficiency strategy. It would be more cost-effective to produce an energy efficiency strategy. It would be more efficient, by definition, to pursue an energy efficiency strategy. It would be better for the environment. Yet we do not see an energy efficiency strategy that has any weight to it, any substance to it. We have seen lots of paper, lots of public relations spin, but still no energy efficiency strategy.

There's obviously another very real aspect of electricity cost and provision for the people of Ontario, and it's a very painful aspect for people who are struggling on low and modest incomes. One of the things we saw when the former Conservative government deregulated the price of electricity in the spring of 2002 was that hydro bills more than doubled that summer and going into the fall. All kinds of people—seniors living on fixed incomes, folks who were trying to get by on a pension, people who had to rely on Ontario Works benefits or Ontario disability support benefits—were having their electricity shut off, disconnected, because the rate increase happened so quickly and was so substantial they couldn't pay the bill.

That's already starting to happen again. Last spring, the Liberal government, despite their promises during the election campaign, increased electricity rates substantially. In fact, we now know that that electricity rate increase took an extra \$20 million out of the pockets of the lowest-income Ontarians—\$20 million they didn't have. The government responded with a press release that said, "Oh, the government's going to provide energy

assistance of \$2 million.” Well, \$2 million pales in comparison to \$20 million.

The government has a further price increase for electricity coming in about another six months’ time. Roughly another \$225 million will be added to the hydro bill, so that’s going to put low-income and modest-income families in this province in an even more difficult spot. I think one of the things the government has the do, which isn’t in Bill 100—in fact, you can’t find it anywhere—is have a strategy for helping people who have low and modest incomes deal with electricity prices that are obviously going to increase significantly.

We’re not talking here about something that people can do without. If I can make the comparison, in a privatized market, if Ford, General Motors, Chrysler, Honda and Toyota increased the price of cars by 50% tomorrow, as consumers, we’d have choices. We could say, “Well, I’m going to keep my old car and fix it up,” or we could say, “I’m going to buy a second-hand car,” or we could say, “We’re going to carpool,” or, if you have the option, take public transit, or some of us could simply say, “I’m going to walk, but I’ll be damned if I’m going pay 50% more for this car.” You’d have a choice.

With electricity, you don’t have a choice. This is an essential service. One of the realities for us is that this is a service that we need every day, and we all need it. You can’t walk away and turn off your refrigerator. You can’t walk away and turn off the freezer. You can’t just walk away and operate your small business and not utilize electricity. You can’t do that, yet the government doesn’t have an answer, doesn’t have a response for low- and modest-income people in this province who are facing much, much higher electricity bills.

We can’t support legislation that would literally leave the poorest Ontarians, those Ontarians who are trying to live on fixed incomes, at the mercy of a market, a market which has already shown that the participants in the market are more interested in how much money they can make and much less interested in what happens to real people in terms of whether the lights come on, or whether they have enough electricity to power their refrigerator, or whether they can keep themselves warm on the coldest days of winter.

One of the other interesting things that happened during the Bill 100 hearings is we actually got to hear from some people who had done some work studying this. I want people to know about an economist from Britain. His name is Steve Thomas. He’s a professor at the University of Greenwich. Mr Thomas is one of those people who pay particular attention to this whole issue of electricity supply and how electricity is provided.

So he actually sat down and studied the government’s bill and their public relations announcements and their requests for proposals from A to Z. He did a detailed study. Not only that, but he’s been to Brazil to study the failure of electricity privatization there. He’s done a number of studies on the failure of electricity privatization in Britain. He went to Australia and New Zealand. New Zealand has had a horrendous experience with electricity

privatization, with major cities having to do without power for three, four or five months, with irregular supplies of electricity. He’s looked at where electricity privatization has been tried in some of the European countries.

2030

His report really makes interesting reading, and I just want to read part of it, because everybody in Ontario ought to know this. After all, he’s talking about our electricity system, our essential service. One of the points he makes is, “Experience elsewhere, especially Europe, suggests new capacity will be primarily gas-fired.”

We’ve seen nothing from the Minister of Energy or nothing from his minions. I asked his high-powered officials the other day, when they appeared before the committee, if they had any answers, and I was surprised by the silence. In fact, you know what? I said, “You’ve put out this request for proposals for gas-fired stations. By now, you must have received some proposals from some of the companies that are interested in private profit-driven natural gas supply of electricity. You must have received some proposals from them, and they must have delineated for you what they’re expecting, what the expected price per kilowatt hour would be.”

The minister didn’t have an answer. You’d swear the deputy minister was the cat that swallowed the canary. He didn’t have anything to say. The assistant deputy minister had nothing to say. The branch director had nothing to say. You’d swear that I’d asked some difficult mathematical question and that they were all bewildered.

I know what the natural gas companies are saying and I know what the proponents of natural-gas-fired generation are saying. They want 10 cents a kilowatt hour wholesale. Then you add on the transmission charges, the distribution charges, the debt retirement charges, and some of the other fly-by-night operators who want a profit here, a commission there or a fee there, and you’re looking at retail electricity prices of at least 12 cents or 13 cents a kilowatt hour—three times what the rate is now.

But what struck me was that a year into the McGuinty government, I asked that simple question, and the minister didn’t want to answer it, the deputy minister either didn’t want to answer it or couldn’t answer it, the assistant deputy minister didn’t want to answer it or couldn’t answer it, and the branch director didn’t want to answer it or couldn’t answer it.

I think the people of Ontario have a right to expect more. You’re talking about the essential underpinning of Ontario’s economy, you’re talking about something which has huge environmental implications for the province, you’re talking about people’s basic survival in terms of whether the electricity is going to be on when it’s 30 below in northern and central Ontario, and the minister, the deputy minister, the assistant deputy minister and the branch director couldn’t or wouldn’t answer the question. These are some of the questions that the government is going to have to answer very quickly.

Let me tell you one of the other problems with Bill 100. The government has advertised this as them politically withdrawing from the electricity sector. Well, I challenge anyone. Read the sections, section by section by section. Right now, the price is set by the minister. Is that what you call withdrawing, getting political hands off the issue?

When the Ontario Power Authority—the so-called power authority that they want to create—go about their business, they'll have to have their business plan approved by the minister. When the so-called conservation office wants to do something, they'll have to have their plan approved by the minister. There's going to be as much political interference with this as we saw with the previous Conservative government.

In fact, we saw the appointment of the new directors to the board of Ontario Power Generation last week. One would think that when you're dealing with, again, an essential service that is so important to Ontario's economy, so important to Ontario's environment and so important to the individual well-being of Ontarians, that there'd be some public discussion, some public vetting of who is going to be the director of Ontario Power Generation—none. The worst excesses of the Conservative government were repeated by the McGuinty government.

Who did they go out and appoint? Well, they didn't learn anything from the Conservatives' experience with so-called American nuclear experts. Two of the people they're appointing are Americans who claim to have some experience in the nuclear industry. My God, if you want to look at the fiasco of Pickering, look at how all the American consultants made off with tens of millions of dollars and left behind a disaster. But what are the McGuinty Liberals doing? They're going to go and appoint two so-called nuclear experts from the United States.

Who are the other directors being appointed? Did we see anyone who might be a recognizable consumer representative? No. Did we see anyone, say, from the pulp and paper industry or the mining industry or the steel industry who might be able to say at the table, "Look, this is going to have this kind of effect on these industries"? No. Who did we see appointed? If you go down the list, it's overwhelmingly people who have a vested interest in the privatization of our electricity system. The very same kind of characters the Conservative government appointed to the board of Ontario Power Generation and the Liberals used to criticize, the Liberals are now busy appointing. My God, I look at who Mike Harris used to appoint and I look at who Dalton McGuinty is appointing and I think the only difference is that the fellows who are there now make their \$5,000 and \$6,000 political contributions to the Liberals, while the people who were there before made their \$5,000- and \$6,000-a-year political contributions to the Conservatives. That's the only thing that's changed.

I just want to talk about that for a minute. I remember when Dalton McGuinty used to stand just about here, just about in this place, and he used to rail against the

Conservatives going out there and holding fundraiser after fundraiser with companies and corporations that wanted to have government business. I can remember Dalton McGuinty railing against the Conservatives accepting huge corporate donations from companies that clearly had a vested interest in the privatization of Ontario's electricity system. I thought, my God, Mr McGuinty must really be opposed to this. But what do I read this summer and this fall in the papers and what do I see on the television screen? Dalton McGuinty, Premier of Ontario, and Dwight Duncan holding these massive fundraisers—massive fundraisers—where, guess who's invited? Guess who's invited to come and put their \$5,000 or \$6,000, whatever the legal limit allows, in fact, beyond the legal limit in some cases, because it's not just the head corporation, but the subsidiary of the subsidiary of the subsidiary and the subsidiary of the subsidiary of the subsidiary? They all come and put down the money. And who are these companies? They're companies that clearly hope to profit from the backdoor privatization of Ontario's electricity system.

I think to myself, how disappointed people must be across Ontario, how disappointed that Mr McGuinty would stand over here and criticize the Conservatives and refer to them as being for sale, being available to be bought, being open to the highest bidder and condemning all of that, and now he's doing the exact same things with the exact same corporations. When the Premier and the minister were challenged, do you know what their response was? Their response was, "Well, that's the way it's done." When the Conservatives are government, they can be bought. Now when Mr McGuinty is the government, the same companies can come and make their financial contributions to the Liberal Party. Who knows? They may be major beneficiaries of hydro privatization. They may be the next Eleanor Clitheroes—\$2 million in salary, \$1 million a year in pension, \$6-million severance allowance, \$330,000 in limousine expenses, \$174,000 in car expenses.

2040

Interjection: The yacht.

Mr Hampton: Oh, and the Liberal member over there says I forgot the yacht. How could I forget the yacht? The same people who were hoping to cash in on the privatization of this essential service under the Conservatives are now making their financial contributions to Mr McGuinty and his government, hoping to repeat the same cashing in.

You know, Speaker, a word that is somewhat similar to the Hippocratic oath comes to mind, but if I said that word, you'd say I was out of order. It's not the Hippocratic oath, but it's very close in terms of how the word sounds. That's the only way to describe this phenomenon that we see.

I just want to take the brief time to outline what I believe should be the real agenda.

The Acting Speaker: I'd request the member for Kenora-Rainy River to withdraw his statement. He

knows exactly what I'm talking about. You can't say indirectly what you can't say directly.

Mr Hampton: I withdraw my comments about the Hippocratic oath.

So I want to spend the last—

Mr Kormos: You didn't have any intention to imply hypocrisy?

Mr Hampton: No, I didn't have any intention of implying hypocrisy.

Mr Kormos: On the part of the Liberal government.

Mr Hampton: On the part of the Liberal government. But I withdraw it.

Anyway, I want to spend the last nine and a half minutes setting out what I think that we should be doing. We need only look to our west and our east. Hydro Québec is not going to privatize, and you know what? Both the Liberals and Conservatives refer to the debt associated with Ontario's electricity system and say, "Oh, we've got this debt. Therefore, we have to privatize it."

Do you know what? If you take the population of Ontario and the population of Quebec, Hydro-Québec has a significantly higher per capita debt than does Ontario's electricity system. I don't hear anybody saying that Hydro-Québec is broke. I don't hear anybody saying it's bankrupt, that the people of Quebec should sell it off to the Enrons and the Brascans of the world.

Quebec has a clear strategy. They recognize that their hydroelectricity system is a fundamental economic advantage for that province. They recognize that whether it's the steel industry, the aluminum industry, the aircraft assembly industry, the pulp and paper industry, the plastics industry or the chemical industry, keeping their electricity system in public hands and ensuring that they have some control over it is a fundamental economic advantage for the province.

If you look at the size of debt that Manitoba Hydro carries and then you look at the population of Manitoba, Manitoba's hydroelectricity system has a far higher per capita debt than does Ontario's electricity system. You know, if the Conservatives or the Liberals dared to stand up in the Manitoba Legislature—I'm not sure there are any Liberals in the Manitoba Legislature.

Interjection: Two.

Mr Hampton: Oh, two. I'm sorry. Yes, and they're guaranteed to have at least two differing opinions on any issue. But if Conservatives or Liberals dared to stand up and suggest that Manitoba Hydro be privatized because it was carrying too high a debt load, I could assure you that whoever that political spokesperson was, they wouldn't be around after the next election.

British Columbia, sort of the protege government for Dalton McGuinty: The Gordon Campbell government of British Columbia was elected, and they said they were going to privatize BC Hydro. Well, let me tell you, they beat a retreat from that position that was faster than the sun going down over the Rocky Mountains, because industry in British Columbia said, "You're crazy. You're nuts. You're giving away one of our fundamental economic advantages vis-à-vis our trading partners in the

US Midwest and the US Pacific coast." That is exactly what's going on here in Ontario.

But there's an even more dangerous aspect to this. As it stands now, as long as your electricity system is run as a publicly owned, not-for-profit system, you are exempt from the NAFTA provisions. But when you privatize and deregulate your system, and you start moving down that road of privatization, what does NAFTA say? NAFTA says that you then turn electricity into a tradable commodity and you are then caught by the NAFTA provisions. And what do the NAFTA provisions say? The NAFTA provisions say that, for example, once you start trading electricity back and forth in a private market with the United States, you can't withdraw from that market. It also says that once you do that, even though the electricity may be produced within the boundaries of Ontario, Ontario doesn't own it any more. If someone in Chicago is prepared to pay more for electricity that is produced at Niagara Falls, Pickering or on the Mattagami River, then that's where the electricity goes. It goes to whoever is prepared to pay the most.

I encourage people at home—you can probably get this information from the Web, off the Internet—to look at what electricity prices are in New York City, Chicago and Detroit. On an average basis, they are significantly higher than they have been here in Ontario. And so the question you have to ask yourself is—and the Liberals want to ignore this question and avoid it all together—why do we want to put ourselves in a position where we'd have to bid against consumers in New York just to keep our own electricity? What is the logic in that? Why would we want to put ourselves in a position where we'd have to bid against electricity consumers in Chicago, where the average price is significantly higher, just to keep our own electricity? Why would we want to give up control over what we all agree is an essential service? We all need it. We need it every day. Why? What on earth would possess us to give up control over what has been one of the fundamental economic advantages for Ontario's industries? What would ever possess us to give up control over something which has such a huge environmental impact on the province? Liberals don't want to answer that question. As usual, they want to pretend that it's not a question. They just hope that it never, ever makes it onto the public radar screen. It is making onto public radar screen.

Just last week, a list of people who probably know more about electricity supply, sustainability, options and prices than anybody in the Liberal caucus will ever know, ran an add in the Toronto Globe and Mail. These are some of the things they pointed out. I think it dares repeating, because it is so important for Ontario's economy. They ran the ad in the Toronto Globe and Mail, and it was an open letter to Dalton McGuinty. They said that Mr McGuinty, before the election, during the election, promised that electricity would remain public in Ontario. When asked a specific question on Focus Ontario in November, 2002, about where new generation would come from, you said it will come from Ontario public

generation, it will be publicly owned, not-for-profit, just as it's been in the past. They said that's what you promised before and during the election.

Now, they said, Bill 100 follows "the same old failed and discredited electricity program" as the Conservatives. And they warn that your plan "will increase consumer electricity rates dramatically and force electricity-reliant industries to move production out of Ontario, taking good jobs with them." They said, "Don't Pull the Plug on Ontario's Future."

2050

That is what is at stake here, and that's the debate that Mr McGuinty and Mr Duncan and so many of the Liberals wish to avoid. But this debate can't be avoided. The economic future of the province demands it, the environmental future of the province demands it and the social and economic well-being of families in this province, especially modest- and low-income families, demands it.

For the few brief moments I have left, I just want people to clearly understand: You don't see Quebec, you don't see Saskatchewan, you don't see Manitoba and you don't see British Columbia in a hurry to privatize their electricity systems. They recognize it is a fundamental underpinning of the economy and of society, of fundamental importance for the environment, and they intend to keep public control, democratic control. They also recognize the cost advantages of public not-for-profit electricity and so they are going to maintain public not-for-profit electricity. New Democrats say that is what we should be doing here in Ontario, not Liberal privatization through the back door.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr Tim Peterson (Mississauga South): It's a great pleasure this evening to reply to Mr Hampton's remarks. There is no question that he has a basis of facts when he says that hydro is one of the linchpins of the Canadian economy. It is one of the key things that has driven our economic development and one of the key things that maintains the international sustainability of our industries in Ontario.

Of course, his answers and his solutions are somewhat simplistic when he says it has to be all in public hands. One of the great things about the nuclear base of power we have in Canada and in Ontario is that it's a home-grown technology—actually, Atomic Energy of Canada is located in Mississauga South—and throughout that industry, we employ over 26,000 people in Ontario and Canada. It is a technology unique to Canada, which is competitive worldwide, and it has its base in Ontario.

What we have found through the refurbishing of these nuclear plants is that the lifetimes can be extended and there are abilities for us to get gains in production and extend the lifetimes of them. Even with what they call the all-included costs of decommissioning these plants, we still have a competitive advantage that has been referred to in the neighbourhood of 50% compared to the bordering states in the United States.

With this great base of publicly owned power and our nuclear base, we have a unique international competitive advantage, and that will be able to sustain Ontario as we look not for just one solution, but for solutions in the private marketplace as well and look for these new technologies and a way of reducing the stressed airshed that we have so dramatically, which we are helping remedy with the closing of these coal plants.

The Acting Speaker: Further questions and comments?

Mr Chudleigh: Thank you, Mr Speaker—

Interjection.

Mr Chudleigh: Excuse me?

Hon James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism and Recreation): You remember the NDP, don't you?

Mr Chudleigh: Yes, I remember them. They were the reason I ran for politics, actually. They created an economic environment in this province that was driving me out of business, so I felt—

Interjection.

Mr Chudleigh: Like Gilles Pouliot used to say, shoot over there.

Anyway, it was an interesting dissertation that the leader of the third party gave because he's got a lot of good facts and he's right in many aspects. The province does run on its electrical power, as it has since very early in our development in the last century. His phobia about having it publicly owned is neither here nor there. It's not something that's terribly important to me. What is important is that the government of the day get on with the job of creating more electricity, and certainly renewable energy can be part of that mix. But renewable energy, even if it proceeds as quickly as its most optimistic supporters suggest it should, will only make up the extra electricity that we will need from year to year. What we need are some massive electrical projects to produce power that will protect our power in Ontario for years and years to come, and that is either massive hydro-electric projects—the one in Manitoba, for instance, is one that will provide considerable energy, although there will be huge losses in the transmission from Manitoba. It could involve nuclear power. I think that's an alternative that has to be looked at. It could also involve the production of clean coal. If we close those coal-fired generators, we're going to be importing the extra power from the US, which is going to be coal-fired power anyway, and we're going to get about 50% of that pollution across our border.

So I think the government of the day should simply get on with the job.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): I think it's rather interesting to listen to both Liberals and Tories on this particular issue of public versus private. Because they say, "Oh, Mr Hampton, you have an ideology when it comes to electricity," and that somehow or other, them advocating private power or mixed private power and privatization by the back door is not an ideology and it's sane. I'm just saying it's rather strange to listen to Tories and Liberals talk about Mr Hampton and the New Demo-

crats being ideologically driven when it comes to energy policy. What do you call what you guys are doing?

To the other point that I listened to, members are clearly saying, "Oh, we need to do this because we need to recognize that hydro"—and I agree with the member from Mississauga, Mr Peterson, who says it's part of what makes Ontario work and allows this province to operate and to prosper. I agree. The problem is, however, that when you compare hydro prices, public versus private, there's a huge difference.

Take a look at the province of Quebec. We have now, for example, in Timmins, Minmetals, the largest operator of steel companies in the world. It's based out of China. Yes, the communists are coming to Canada and they're going to buy Falconbridge up in Timmins and Sudbury. One of the things we're worried about is that there are some rumours going around that basically, if they were able to, they'd love to transfer production over to Quebec. Why? Energy costs are a heck of a lot cheaper. And guess what? It's a public system. You can produce electricity and sell electricity in a public system in Quebec for less than what we now have to pay since the Tories started mucking around with the public system we had some time ago.

I want to ask, was the old Ontario Hydro the best it could have been? Of course not. There were changes that needed to be done. Some of those were started by the former leader of the NDP and other changes needed to be done. But the point is, what's important is that we stay within a public system because, at the end of the day, it is an infrastructure issue that's important to the economy of Ontario.

Mrs Carol Mitchell (Huron-Bruce): I'm very pleased to rise in the House today to pass my comments on with regard to Bill 100. One of the comments made was that this will not be an opportunity for the small farmers. I must share with the House the opportunity that I had this summer of travelling throughout much of Ontario, working on renewable energy for the Minister of Agriculture. Part of the scope of the project that I looked at was identifying the opportunities and challenges for biomass, anaerobic digestion, wind, solar, ethanol and biodiesel.

I can tell you that first-hand I saw the opportunities that are available with the farming community, in either anaerobic digestion, solar or wind, that are there for our farming community. I can also add that our farming community—small, medium or large farms—certainly is willing and looks forward to the ability to move forward on renewable energy.

But I would also like to say too that, as many of you know, I'm from the riding of Huron-Bruce and we are the home of Bruce Power. This is a company that has done, in my mind, a terrific job of producing power that will support the base, and I see it as moving forward with the supply mix. The nuclears do supply our base need. This is a company that has always and will continue to be providing safe, clean energy, and has certainly been a wonderful asset to our riding.

I would like to add that Bill 100 will move forward the energy that is required to meet the needs of the people of Ontario through conservation and increasing the production that will meet the capacity requirements for the people of Ontario.

2100

The Acting Speaker: The member for Kenora-Rainy River has two minutes to reply.

Mr Hampton: I want to thank all the members for their comments. Let me just say in reply, some said, "Oh, Hampton has an ideology." You know what? I do. Health care should remain in public hands. It should be not-for-profit, because it is an essential service and because anywhere they've messed around with privatization of health care, it ends up costing a lot more, and a whole lot of people don't get access.

Similarly with electricity. One of the things that Professor Thomas points out in his examination of the Liberal scheme is that they're going down a road which has not had much success. It hasn't been successful in New Zealand. It was a disaster in Brazil. It hasn't worked very well in Great Britain. It's creating problems on the European continent and in other jurisdictions that have flirted with privatization. It didn't work well in Montana and isn't working well in Alberta. Alberta has all the natural advantages: natural gas, coal, oil and fast-flowing rivers out of the Rocky Mountains. Yet, as a result of privatization and deregulation, Alberta has the highest electricity prices in North America.

Yes, I have an ideology. If we're interested in doing the best for Ontario's industry, keep electricity in public hands and ensure it operates on a not-for-profit basis. If we're interested in doing the best for our people, who want to turn on the lights and want to live in a sustainable future in terms of our homes and our apartments in our communities, keep electricity in public hands and provide it on a not-for-profit basis. If we want to do the best to look after the environment and ensure that we're moving to clean alternatives, that we're moving toward an effective strategy of electricity efficiency and conservation, keep electricity in public hands. That's the best way to do it.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr McMeekin: I'll be sharing my time with the member from Nipissing.

This is a big issue. It's a huge issue. It's one where we need to learn from our past as we plan for our future. That's what the public hearings on Bill 100 were all about.

I'm pleased to say at the outset that the minister gets it. As importantly, the government gets it. We're moving forward in a responsible way after more than a decade of cumulative mismanagement in the electricity sector. We know we've got a lot of work to do to reassert around the issues of adequacy, reliability and safety, but I suppose it's a bit like eating an elephant: If you're going to eat an elephant, you've got to eat it one bite at a time.

This legislation is foundational to the work that the government wants to do. It's interesting that the process

we follow—I was engaged as a member of the social policy committee, with the capable leadership of the chairman, who is from the riding of Peterborough, and we heard some 146 different briefs. You were on that committee as well, Mr Speaker. By and large, I was really pleased, and I'm pleased to report here this evening that not only does the minister and the government understand the challenges we're facing, but the people who came out and made representation to us did as well.

In fact, I was rating their presentations as they made them. I had "N" for non-intervention, "I" for intervention, because I happen to believe that you're either one way or the other in terms of political philosophy. Some 85% of those, by my count, my calculation, reflected on Bill 100 and stated that they basically felt positive, to a large extent, about the direction we're going in. So it makes a difference when you get out on the road, when you ask the people who have to wear a situation rather than the people who've made the shoe what they think.

There's been a lot of talk about privatization. I want, for the record, to indicate very clearly that it's not the government's proposal to sell any assets. In fact, we define all the existing assets as heritage assets and they will be maintained in the public trust.

I also want to say it's passing strange that the member of the third party would reference needing only to look to the east and to the west. If his party, when they were in power, had not cancelled the contract we had negotiated with the government of Manitoba, we wouldn't be in half the mess we're in now. The previous government had tried to diversify the supply by becoming less reliant on the international grid and more reliant—it's like a portfolio; you want to diversify your assets—on publicly supplied power from our sister provinces of Manitoba and Quebec. He's walked out, I notice. I guess it was getting a little hot for him. The simple truth of the matter was that they wanted—

The Acting Speaker: The member knows full well not to make reference to the absence of another member.

Mr McMeekin: Yes, you're right. I apologize. I should not have referenced that.

The other issue I want to briefly mention is the whole issue of conservation and supply and the 4.3-cent cap. As history will record, it did nothing for conservation and next to nothing on the supply side.

The reference to Mr Thomas is interesting. I was there when Mr Thomas made his presentation and I asked him some questions. I said, "Who did you speak to?"

"I only spoke to the professional engineers." They were the only folks he spoke to.

I said, "Do you realize that Ontario Hydro has got a \$38-billion stranded debt?"

"No, I didn't realize that."

I said, "Well, did you realize that I'm an MPP for a government that said we were going to try to control premiums and tax increases, and we had to move on the health premium and all hell broke loose?"

He said, "No, I didn't know that."

So I said to him, "Do you know that there's nobody lining up outside my constituency office saying, 'Please, Ted, please, Mr MPP, go out and borrow \$10 billion more and just add it on to my provincial tax bill?'" I don't have constituents coming out and saying that to me, and with good cause.

We saw what happened when \$1.6 billion was raised for Ontario's number one priority, the health care sector. So we'll get through this.

Mr Bisson: You raised my taxes.

Mr McMeekin: You would raise everybody's taxes non-stop. You know why there are only eight of you back there? It's because the people of Ontario know all too well your record of economic mismanagement. We'll get through this. We'll get through it by being open, listening to the people of Ontario, learning from them and moving in the direction they've asked us to move in, and that's this responsible hybrid model that will focus on creating a culture of conservation and an adequate supply so that all the people of Ontario—residential consumers and businesses consumers—can benefit from a strong electricity sector.

The Acting Speaker: Continuing the debate, the member for Nipissing.

Ms Smith: I rise today in support of Bill 100 and reiterate at this point in the debate what the Ontario Electricity Restructuring Act is really all about.

This act will address the critical need for new supply, and increased conservation and will ensure price stability for consumers across the province. If this legislation is passed, it will reorganize the institutional structure to ensure efficient and effective management of our electricity sector. It will ensure sufficient electricity supply. It will encourage electricity conservation and renewable energy, and will facilitate electricity demand management.

This legislation will establish the Ontario Power Authority, an authority that will assess the adequacy and reliability of our electricity resources, something that doesn't happen presently in our province, and how shocking that is to realize. It will also forecast future demand, another function that I think is terribly important for the future supply of electricity in our province. We are also establishing a conservation bureau, and that's something I'd like to speak about for a couple of minutes because it's very important to me and to the voters of Nipissing.

When I was going door-to-door last fall, I spoke to a number of voters who were very concerned about the stranded debt of Ontario Hydro, the mess that we found ourselves in in the electricity field and the need for some reform, reform that the previous government just didn't have the stomach to deal with. So we have taken that on.

2110

We think it's important, as part of the whole reform of the electricity system, to look at conservation. The member for Etobicoke Centre is working very hard on conservation issues in the electricity field. She hosted this

past Saturday an electricity forum in her riding where 200 to 250 of her residents participated in a session where they were provided with information about different alternatives and different ways of conserving energy in their homes. This is a really important initiative, and I am going to undertake a similar initiative hopefully in January in my riding so that the people of Nipissing can benefit from the knowledge that's out there about how to conserve energy in their homes and in their small businesses. Conservation is so important in ensuring that our supply is there in the future.

You also heard this evening from the member for Huron-Bruce, Carol Mitchell, who has looked into alternative sources. You heard as well from the leader of the third party, who talked about the fact that this bill does not encourage the development of new sources of energy. I would just note for this Legislature that the Canadian Wind Energy Association, in its presentation on Bill 100, stated:

"The Canadian Wind Energy Association supports the general outline of Bill 100 and where it's headed with the development of the Ontario Power Authority, minister's directives and the ability to have two separate suppliers of power: one green and another one being the standard supply. These are all critical things to the development of wind energy, and they have simply not been available to the government in the past."

The previous government simply did not look at alternate sources. They were much too interested in continuing the growth of our \$38-billion debt at Ontario Hydro.

I would also like to just highlight some of statements made by the Positive Power Co-Operative's Jennifer Heneberry, in her presentation to the social policy committee on Bill 100. She stated:

"We were very pleased to see a number of the changes being proposed as part of Bill 100. We feel some of the proposed amendments are going to make it much easier for us, as a community co-operative developing wind power projects, to participate in the electricity market; things like references to non-discriminatory access to the transmission and distribution system, the promotion of cleaner and renewable energy sources and addressing the need for goals around renewable energy production. These are all things we were really happy to see in Bill 100."

A number of proponents in the renewable energy sector were very supportive of Bill 100. I would note that the leader of the third party also stated that we weren't listening. In fact, our government, through its Bill 100 hearings, heard 293 written and oral presentations. We have consulted widely on Bill 100. We have heard from 293 separate proponents on this subject. I think that our accountability with respect to this piece of legislation is incredible.

Bill 100 includes a strong public leadership role. We have clear accountability and a coordinated planning approach to address the growing gap between electricity supply and demand in order to keep the lights on now

and for our children. That is clearly important to each and every one of us in the Liberal caucus, in this government and, I think, to each and every Ontarian. I'm very proud to be supporting Bill 100.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr Kormos: Those are rapid-fire submissions on the part of Liberal backbenchers here in the dark of the night, 9:15 in the evening, the press gallery absent, folks at home lured by prime time television and the ease of the remote control to change channels. I'm just incredibly amazed at the lack of enthusiasm that these Liberal backbenchers have for this legislation. One would think that enthusiastic supporters of this legislation would want to exhaust every minute of the mere 20 minutes allotted to them.

I listened to Tim Hudak, with whom I disagree, I've got to tell you, but who was concerned enough about the impact of this legislation that he utilized every minute of the debate time, the very limited debate time, available to him.

I listened to Howard Hampton, with whom I agree entirely, but who is committed enough to the future of this province, its industry, its economy and the welfare of Ontarians, ordinary Ontarians—not the rich folk who contribute \$5,000 a pop at Liberal fundraisers so they can get intimate access so they can have pillow talk with the Minister of Energy and the Premier about the privatization of energy, but real Ontarians.

Howard Hampton made sure he utilized, exhausted every minute of the 60 minutes that was available to him for his leadoff. So I am amazed that Liberal backbenchers find themselves in rapid fire. They consider a two-minute question and comment utilization to be their contribution to the debate. That's remarkable, rather lacklustre. I'd say the gas tank is at empty when it comes to the Liberal caucus.

Mr Hudak: I'm pleased to follow my colleague from Niagara Centre, who makes an excellent point, that now twice consecutively, members opposite didn't take the time. I appreciate some entered into debate at least, but the full time allowed was left on the clock, which I wonder shows the degree—you know what? It might be degree of commitment, but it's got to be awfully hard for the Liberal members to keep track of what's a promise and what's no longer a promise, what is on the books and what has been broken. It's got to be the confusion about what you still want to keep and what's been tossed out the window. They don't want to trip up by making a promise that's already been broken. That's probably why the remarks tonight are so short.

Two weeks ago, we had the Minister of Health strutting out of cabinet talking about how he was going to ban sushi in the province of Ontario.

Mr Kormos: Sushi?

Mr Hudak: Sushi was the top priority, followed by the Minister of Education beating his chest, saying that he was going to hunt down every Gummy Bear stalking the hallways of Ontario's schools as a top priority, and

the Attorney General, who thinks the top crime issue in the province of Ontario is banning certain breeds of dogs.

These do not reflect the priorities that I'm hearing from the people in health care. From constituents in Niagara, it's not the priority. We should be hearing about quality in the classrooms. It's certainly not the top crime issue that I'm hearing about from working families in the Niagara Peninsula, in Dunnville.

You see, the problem is they had a plan, but once Dalton McGuinty got keys to the Premier's limo, he tossed that plan out the window. When a government has no plan, when they toss out their plan, they end up in places that you didn't expect them to be or you don't want them to be.

Mrs Donna H. Cansfield (Etobicoke Centre): I'm sorry. I do find it interesting that someone who was complaining that we have nothing to say just spoke for two minutes on nothing to do with the electricity bill. But go figure.

What I'd like to say is that there is no question that this is not going to appeal to the opposition, because it is a different policy direction, and it's about time. For a long time in this province, we haven't had a strategic plan dealing with the supply. Yes, I can see you're upset, because you had a perfectly good opportunity with the renewable task force, but you did nothing about it. So I understand why you are distressed when we are planning to do something about it and move forward.

I know that it's uncomfortable to hear, but even the Canadian Auto Workers say that this is an important improvement for the province in the supply of electricity. It is significant and important that new electricity legislation poses to reintroduce planning into the system. It's also important that the act gives a legislative mandate to promote conservation in the expansion of renewable energy.

We heard this time and time again and, I think, again to reiterate, the interest is there. When we put out a request for interest for 2,500 megawatts, what did we get? We got 60,000 megawatts of interest, because people are now saying it's time to reinvest in Ontario. It's stable, it has a plan, it has a policy, it's moving forward, it's consistent, and that hasn't been around for a long period of time. So I really do appreciate and understand why you're distressed. I might be too if I were in the same position, but the fact of the matter is we do have a plan and we are moving forward. That's the important part to leave for the people of Ontario. We are going to have to pay for the price of electricity we use, but we're going to do it in a fashion and manner that's strategic.

2120

Hon Mr Bradley: I noticed that in their speeches someone mentioned somewhere along the way the speech of the leader of the New Democratic Party, who if you listen to him will sometimes sound as though he knows what he's talking about. But some of us who have read all the books on the New Democratic Party understand, as our last speakers did, that in fact there's a little bit of history there. There were these non-utility generating

projects, all of which were private, in Ontario. They came into effect—I wouldn't blame my friend from Niagara Centre. By that time he had had a conflict with one of the previous Premiers and was not part of the cabinet, so he was probably against these.

These non-utility generating projects were all private. This was under a New Democratic Party government. I find that hard to believe, especially when I hear the speech of the leader.

When the New Democratic Party was in power, I thought perhaps—I knew they wouldn't nationalize Inco. Even though my good friend Floyd Laughren said at one time that they should nationalize Inco, I didn't think that would really happen. He was a very pragmatic individual and a good friend of mine, so I understood that. But I didn't see the government of Bob Rae, the New Democratic Party, nationalizing power production in Ontario, because there was some private power. Not only was he allowing new, non-utility generating stations, but he was also in fact not closing down that private power which exists on the grid at the present time.

I well recall his opposition to the nuclear generating stations. I can't think of any nuclear generating station that was shut down under the NDP, but I do remember that after five years of NDP government there was a \$50-billion debt that had accumulated in addition to the debt already in Ontario.

The Acting Speaker: One of the Liberal speakers has two minutes to reply.

Mr McMeekin: I want to make it clear that if our clear, articulate, level-headed, comprehensive plan for the energy sector sounded like we were lacking in any enthusiasm, then I want the people of Ontario to understand that we're very enthusiastic about finally being a responsible government, moving forward in partnership with the people of Ontario. We understand that government isn't just about being lean and mean; it's about being responsibly keen and green.

Having spent five or six days with the members of the social policy committee listening to all the representations, it was those who came with a particular interest and bias toward alternative energy who seemed to be the most enthusiastic about some of the opportunities our government was providing, an opportunity to build on the twin strengths of a developing culture of conservation and a real commitment to enhanced energy supply.

As we rethink these issues and move forward, it would be helpful for us to acknowledge that the very best consumer protection we can put in place in Ontario is an aggressive combination of conservation and new supply. It's our intent to do that and to use everything positive in Ontario, from time to time filling up our tank with the creative entrepreneurial ideas of the people of Ontario, who after all are our greatest strength, making sure that we reinvest in this valuable sector, because we believe we have finally got it right.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mrs Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener-Waterloo): I'm pleased to join the debate on Bill 100. I want to begin by

congratulating my colleague the member from Durham, who is our critic for energy and participated in the hearings on this particular issue. I think he has done an outstanding job in listening to the opinions that had been voiced at the committee and in representing our caucus.

But I guess what we have before us now is a proposal by this government to completely reorganize the supply of electricity in the province of Ontario, obviously recognizing that there is a need to do so, and our government recognized this. Some of the actions that were undertaken by our government are reflected and were undertaken originally by our energy ministers Mr Wilson and Mr Baird. This proposal moves forward, and the government has certainly established some very laudable goals. I know that they're anxious to ensure that conservation initiatives are adopted. They are looking to adopt new and renewable sources of energy, and these are all laudable goals.

However, I guess the question that we need to ask ourselves is, does the government have a plan, and are they going to be able to do so at the end of the day? One of the concerns that the public has, and certainly industry and business have, is the increasing cost of electricity, a cost that has been increasing on an ongoing basis this past year. Certainly there are people throughout the province who are very concerned that this winter, as the price continues to escalate, it's going to mean that it's going to become more and more difficult to set aside money to pay for food and other living expenses.

I know I hear from seniors on fixed incomes. I hear from students. I hear from small business people. We hear from industry, and we hear from homeowners and from tenants. People are very concerned about the increasing costs of electricity, and that's something that we're going to have to monitor extremely carefully, because I know myself, as a former Minister of Labour, that we have to make sure that the environment in Ontario continues to remain competitive. If we continue to see these escalating energy costs, certainly it is going to put a

damper on those who are looking to expand businesses in the province.

This increase in the cost of electricity is also going to have an impact on our hospitals, which are already facing a shortfall. It's going to have an impact on our colleges and our universities, again, which are hard-pressed for dollars. It's going to have an impact on our schools, which are indicating there is a need for additional dollars to meet the needs of their students.

So certainly one of the areas where the government is going to have to ensure that things go as planned is to make sure that the price of electricity does not rise to a point where it's going to continue to have a negative impact not only on individuals in the province, but also on businesses. It's going to make it harder and harder to be competitive in the global environment. I think that's important.

I think the government's plan to close the coal plants, although laudable, is a goal that they're simply not going to be able to achieve. It was something that I had looked at when I was the Minister of the Environment and certainly wanted to do, but, again, it will be totally impossible to bring into this province that amount of generating capacity, the 25%. I think that we're going to see another broken promise on the part of this government, because at this point in time, the only coal plant that looks like it's going to be closing on time, as planned, will be Lakeview, which I actually announced for closure when I was the Minister of the Environment. Right now, there is no schedule to close any of those other plants, and I think this government is going to be very hard-pressed. In fact, I think it's going to be totally impossible to replace that capacity.

The Acting Speaker: I thank the member from Kitchener-Waterloo for her comments. It being 9:30 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 in the afternoon.

The House adjourned at 2130.

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Oshawa	Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Stormont-Dundas- Charlottenburgh	Brownell, Jim (L)
Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Patten, Richard (L)	Sudbury	Bartolucci, Hon / L'hon Rick (L) Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	McGuinty, Hon / L'hon Dalton (L) Premier and President of the Executive Council, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif, ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales	Thornhill	Racco, Mario G. (L)
Ottawa West-Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest-Nepean	Watson, Hon / L'hon Jim (L) Minister of Consumer and Business Services / ministre des Services aux consommateurs et aux entreprises	Thunder Bay-Atikokan	Mauro, Bill (L)
Ottawa-Orléans	McNeely, Phil (L)	Thunder Bay-Superior North / Thunder Bay-Superior- Nord	Gravelle, Michael (L)
Ottawa-Vanier	Meilleur, Hon / L'hon Madeleine (L) Minister of Culture, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre de la Culture, ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones	Timiskaming-Cochrane	Ramsay, Hon / L'hon David (L) Minister of Natural Resources / ministre des Richesses naturelles
Oxford	Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Timmins-James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	Bisson, Gilles (ND)
Parkdale-High Park	Kennedy, Hon / L'hon Gerard (L) Minister of Education / ministre de l'Éducation	Toronto Centre-Rosedale / Toronto-Centre-Rosedale	Smitherman, Hon / L'hon George (L) Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Parry Sound-Muskoka	Miller, Norm (PC)	Toronto-Danforth	Churley, Marilyn (ND)
Perth-Middlesex	Wilkinson, John (L)	Trinity-Spadina	Marchese, Rosario (ND)
Peterborough	Leal, Jeff (L)	Vaughan-King-Aurora	Sorbara, Hon / L'hon Greg (L) Minister of Finance / ministre des Finances
Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge	Arthurs, Wayne (L)	Waterloo-Wellington	Arnott, Ted (PC) First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Prince Edward-Hastings	Parsons, Ernie (L)	Whitby-Ajax	Flaherty, Jim (PC)
Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke	Yakubski, John (PC)	Willowdale	Zimmer, David (L)
Sarnia-Lambton	Di Cocco, Caroline (L)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Pupatello, Hon / L'hon Sandra (L) Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Sault Ste Marie	Oraziotti, David (L)	Windsor-St Clair	Duncan, Hon / L'hon Dwight (L) Minister of Energy, Chair of Cabinet, Government House Leader / ministre de l'Énergie, président du Conseil des ministres, leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Duguid, Brad (L)	York Centre / York-Centre	Kwinter, Hon / L'hon Monte (L) Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Scarborough East / Scarborough-Est	Chambers, Hon / L'hon Mary Anne V. (L) Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités	York North / York-Nord	Munro, Julia (PC)
Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	Berardinetti, Lorenzo (L)	York South-Weston / York-Sud-Weston	Cordiano, Hon / L'hon Joseph (L) Minister of Economic Development and Trade / ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Scarborough-Agincourt	Phillips, Hon / L'hon Gerry (L) Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement	York West / York-Ouest	Sergio, Mario (L)
Scarborough-Rouge River	Curling, Hon / L'hon Alvin (L) Speaker / Président		
Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Dunlop, Garfield (PC)		
Simcoe-Grey	Wilson, Jim (PC)		
St Catharines	Bradley, Hon / L'hon James J. (L) Minister of Tourism and Recreation / ministre du Tourisme et des Loisirs		
St Paul's	Bryant, Hon / L'hon Michael (L) Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones, ministre responsable du Renouveau démocratique		

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

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

CONTENTS

Tuesday 19 October 2004

SECOND READINGS

Electricity Restructuring Act, 2004,

Bill 100, Mr Duncan

Mr Fonseca.....	3523
Mr Flaherty	3523
Mr Kormos...3523, 3526, 3531, 3543	
Mr McMeekin	3524, 3541, 3544
Mr Marchese	3524
Mr Wilkinson	3524, 3527
Mr Leal.....	3525
Mrs Van Bommel.....	3526
Mr Chudleigh	3527, 3540
Mr Hampton.....	3527, 3532, 3541
Mr Hudak	3528, 3532, 3543
Mr Craitor	3531
Mr O'Toole	3531
Mr Peterson.....	3540
Mr Bisson.....	3540
Mrs Mitchell.....	3541
Ms Smith	3542
Mrs Cansfield.....	3544
Mr Bradley	3544
Mrs Witmer	3544
Debate deemed adjourned	3545

TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Mardi 19 octobre 2004

DEUXIÈME LECTURE

Loi de 2004 sur la restructuration du secteur de l'électricité,

projet de loi 100, M. Duncan

Débat présumé ajourné.....	3545
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