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des débats
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 3 May 2006

Mercredi 3 mai 2006

Speaker
Honourable Michael A. Brown

Président
L'honorable Michael A. Brown

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 3 May 2006

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 3 mai 2006

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

ONTARIO PROVINCIAL POLICE

Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): Last Friday I had the honour of attending the OPP recruit graduation ceremony, class number 390, a class of 84 outstanding Ontario citizens. I watched as OPP Commissioner Gwen Boniface presented badges to 10 women and 74 men. These 84 constables come from very diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds and will be stationed in communities throughout our province. I want to mention that of the 84 graduating officers, 16 had previously been active members of the OPP auxiliary.

The significance of this graduation is reflected in the fact that Commissioner Boniface was accompanied by all of her provincial commanders as well as commissioned officers from right across the province.

On behalf of John Tory and the PC caucus, I want to extend best wishes to all the officers and their families. I want to thank them for considering a policing career and thank them for choosing the OPP.

I want to mention in my statement the OPP vision, which is Safe Communities, A Secure Ontario; the OPP mission, which is Policing Excellence Through Our People, Our Work and Our Relationships; and the OPP core values, "Accountability, Respectful Relationships, Fairness, Courage and Caring, Continuous Learning, and Diversity."

While I have the floor today, I have with me in attendance Mr. Joe Francoz from Orillia and his grandson Tyler Godel. They're over here, and I'd like everyone to welcome them.

WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY

Mr. Tony C. Wong (Markham): I rise today to recognize World Press Freedom Day, but before I do that, I want to welcome my former colleague, regional councillor Jack Heath, and my constituent Bernadette Manning from Markham.

More than 500 publishers and journalists were arrested and jailed in 2005 for simply doing their jobs. Dozens remain in prison today serving sentences as long as 20

years. Founded by the United Nations in 1993, World Press Freedom Day is a time to highlight their plight and to defend the freedom of the press.

The press plays an important role in keeping elected officials accountable and the public informed. They keep governments and public institutions from operating behind a veil of secrecy and allow the public to make intelligent decisions about how they are performing.

Community newspapers play a valuable role in keeping Ontarians aware of successful government initiatives, as well as missteps and scandals. In my riding, newspapers like the Markham Economist and Sun, as well as all of the York Region News Group papers, stand up for our community and work to keep me and other politicians accountable.

Everyone benefits from a free press allowed to do its job. We are lucky in Canada that governments do not seek to shut out reporters. Every journalist wrongly jailed deserves our attention and our solidarity. I ask all members of this House to join me in calling on the federal government to push for change in regimes that hinder the freedom of the press.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark-Carleton): Yesterday the Minister of Community and Social Services released a consultation paper regarding the government's plan for services for the developmentally disabled in our province. This paper does not address how the most severely disabled will have their day-to-day needs met once they are moved out of regional centres across our province. Much of the paper is based on the assumption that these individuals have an able advocate—a family member, a mother or father—who is willing and able to speak on their behalf.

The residents of Rideau Regional Centre and its sister facilities are mainly in their 50s and older. Their parents, if they are alive, are older seniors with their own health problems. This government expects these aging parents to take on the responsibility for accessing services for their severely disabled adult children. We are talking about individuals with multiple challenges, many compounded by behavioural problems. The services they require are not widely available in the community, and tracking down these services is more than a full-time job. The regional centres have the critical mass of patients to

attract the necessary service providers for these very vulnerable citizens off ours.

On Monday, I asked the minister if she would meet with the Rideau Regional Centre Association when she is at Rideau Regional on Friday. I ask her again: Meet with the parents who have not had the opportunity to meet with her to date.

ENERGY CONSERVATION

Mr. Khalil Ramal (London–Fanshawe): This past weekend I had the opportunity to attend an event in my riding that highlighted the great strides made by Purolator in energy conservation. In 2005, Purolator, along with others, identified energy savings by using newly introduced energy-efficient lighting at its London terminal. The result is an impressive 40% reduction in energy consumption and demand, which exceeds Ontario's conservation challenge. As a result, Purolator was recognized by London Hydro. I was there to see London Hydro present Purolator with a rebate cheque and to personally congratulate Purolator.

Purolator has also made similar electrical retrofits at terminals in five other locations, producing a similar reduction in energy consumption and demand. All six facilities combined produced an energy savings that is equivalent to taking 45 cars off the road or planting 944 trees.

Purolator has shown that conservation can achieve cost savings. Fostering a culture of conservation is part of the McGuinty government's plan to keep the lights on for all Ontarians.

TAXATION

Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): I rise today to speak to the McGuinty government's tax-and-spend policies. Specifically, I refer to Bill 53, the City of Toronto Act, and my concerns with the Liberal government's mandate that involves increasing taxes any way they can. Right now their plan is to let the city of Toronto do it for them. No one disagrees with the City of Toronto Act, but instead of finding ways to deal with Toronto's fiscal problem, the McGuinty Liberals have decided that the answer is to force the city of Toronto to reach inside the pockets of Toronto taxpayers.

As well, we all know that yesterday the federal Conservative government announced its first budget, which included 28 tax cuts to help Ontario families, yet there was nothing being offered in the last provincial budget to help Ontario families.

One of the ways the Liberals are pushing forward is allowing Toronto to add taxes on drinks and entertainment. The Motion Picture Theatre Association of Ontario stated, "If the city of Toronto adopts an entertainment tax, our patrons will be obliged to pay an entertainment tax to the city in addition to the amusement tax that they already pay to the province. In addition to this entertain-

ment tax, Bill 53 also allows for levying taxes on parking, liquor, and tobacco sales."

This industry made it clear that they cannot withstand three levels of tax on each movie ticket. Jobs will be lost and communities will suffer.

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Another example is the housing industry. They're afraid that the city will impose land transfer taxes. The McGuinty Liberals are saying that the mayor won't increase this tax, but will they add this to the bill? No. So we have to assume that, given the opportunity, this certainly will become a reality.

This is just another example of the Liberal government tax-and-spend solutions. The only ones who will get hurt are the hard-working families in Ontario.

CANUSA GAMES

Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East): The CANUSA Games event is an international sporting competition held yearly between the cities of Flint, Michigan, and Hamilton, Ontario. It's one of the premier competitions of its kind. Many other cities have emulated the idea of twin-city games, but it all started in Hamilton. Our games have been going the longest and the strongest.

Next year, Hamilton will host the 50th anniversary of the CANUSA Games. Since 1957 and every year since, Hamilton and Flint have participated in a contest where amateur sporting excellence, friendly rivalry and great camaraderie go hand in hand. It's great to see and experience the international friendships among the young athletes, coaches and community volunteers on both sides of the border.

The CANUSA Games emphasize participation, fun and enjoyment above all, in addition to the benefits of physical activity, fitness and the pursuit of excellence. Hamilton volunteers, coaches and staff are working hard on planning the 2007 CANUSA Games, their 50th-year milestone.

Today I sent letters to the Premier, the Minister of Tourism, the Minister of Children and Youth Services and to all of our Hamilton area MPPs. We need to work together to ensure that the 50th annual CANUSA games receive the recognition and celebration they deserve. Let's be champions of teamwork and jointly bring Ontario's active support to this landmark occasion. Hosting such an auspicious event will require additional funding and resources. The spinoffs for Ontario are well worth it.

I look forward to meeting with my colleagues across the way later on this month. By working together as a Queen's Park team, I can see every ministry stepping up to the plate to deliver the best CANUSA Games ever in their proud 50-year history.

ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCES

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel (Lambton–Kent–Middlesex): Ever since the previous government refused to allow net metering and financial compensation for

renewable energy, small producers have been waiting for a signal from government that they are needed.

That signal came with our government's introduction of the standard offer program. On April 9, I took the opportunity to host 16 farmers in my kitchen for a meeting with the Honourable Donna Cansfield, the Minister of Energy. The farmers of Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, armed with their own research, were ready to tell the minister about projects they were planning or had already launched on their farms.

In Lambton county, Christine and Jack Greydanus are ready to use cogeneration to produce carbon dioxide and heat for their greenhouses, and power for their local community.

Simon and Rick Willemse have been researching and charting wind speeds so that they can build a wind turbine and produce an entirely different type of crop on their farm.

The Baresich brothers and their neighbours want to develop an energy co-operative among farmers in their region of Middlesex.

Lou Jansen is manufacturing the agricultural heat exchangers that he designed. Two exchangers were installed in our own chicken barn last year, and the resulting conservation of both propane and electricity are very evident in our monthly bills.

The farmers also talked about using bio-digesters to harness the methane that is currently lost in their livestock operations.

If Lambton–Kent–Middlesex is any indication, farmers in Ontario are ready for this important shift in energy policy and more than willing to be part of the solution that will keep the lights on in Ontario.

ENERGY POLICY

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The member for Mississauga—excuse me—Scarborough Centre.

Mr. Brad Duguid (Scarborough Centre): The other part of town, Mr. Speaker.

Ontario families want to know that the lights will go on when they hit the switch. They want to know that they're getting value for their money without putting their children into debt. That is what the McGuinty energy plan is all about.

I am certain that every member in this House can agree on these four principles:

- (1) We must make sure we have the infrastructure in place to support Ontario's long-term energy needs.
- (2) We need to maximize our existing transmission and generation assets.
- (3) We need to build new generation capacity.
- (4) We must simultaneously create a culture of energy conservation.

These are the pillars of the McGuinty energy plan.

The plan is working. In just two years we set the wheels in motion to generate over 11,000 megawatts of new capacity, more than any other jurisdiction in all of

North America. This plan will leave our children a legacy of reliable, clean, affordable power, unlike the previous Conservative government. The Harris-Tory party failed to invest in energy, leaving our supply to crumble. We remember the result: blackouts, uncertainty and irresponsible prices that left Ontario families \$1 billion in debt.

The McGuinty government gets it. We know that Ontario families cannot afford to go down that road again, and we refuse to take them there. No matter how hard John Tory tries to drag us back to those bad old days, we're moving forward successfully into the future.

ANNIVERSARY OF POLISH CONSTITUTION

Mr. Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): In the history of mankind, a very momentous occasion took place in 1791, the writing and establishment of the Polish constitution, which for the first time in Europe separated the executive from the judiciary and gave more power to the people.

I know that little did the writers understand at the time what awaited the Polish nation. They experienced war; they experienced destruction; they experienced oppression. What did the Polish nation really want in 1791? Generation after generation was subjected to oppression. Today, as we raise the Polish flag out in front of this building, we know for certain that there is a free nation, a nation that has its destiny in its own hands. It can indeed structure its own future. So we all celebrate the constitution of 1791 today, and some of us also celebrate what Polish-Canadians have done in Ontario to maintain our economy and to exhibit the kind of work habits that all of us appreciate.

I'm delighted to introduce to you today in the gallery those people who have passed on the torch of freedom from one generation to the next, the Polish veterans, and also members of the Canadian Polish Congress and members of the Polish Scouting Association.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES ACT, 2006

LOI DE 2006 SUR LA LOCATION À USAGE D'HABITATION

Mr. Gerretsen moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 109, An Act to revise the law governing residential tenancies / Projet de loi 109, Loi révisant le droit régissant la location à usage d'habitation.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Does the minister wish to make a statement?

Hon. John Gerretsen (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I'll wait until ministerial statements.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT
AWARENESS WEEK ACT, 2006
LOI DE 2006 SUR LA SEMAINE
DE LA SENSIBILISATION
AU HARCÈLEMENT SEXUEL

Mr. Hoy moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 110, An Act to proclaim Sexual Harassment Awareness Week / Projet de loi 110, Loi proclamant la Semaine de la sensibilisation au harcèlement sexuel.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Does the member wish to make a short statement?

Mr. Pat Hoy (Chatham–Kent Essex): This act to proclaim Sexual Harassment Awareness Week is in memory of Theresa Vince, who was brutally murdered in Chatham by her workplace supervisor. The first week of June has been chosen as Sexual Harassment Awareness Week because June 2 marks the anniversary of Theresa Vince's death.

The majority of women will experience sexual harassment at some point in their working lives. The objective of proclaiming Sexual Harassment Awareness Week is to raise and increase public awareness, to foster change in societal attitudes and behaviour surrounding sexual harassment, and to prevent another tragedy from occurring.

MOTIONS

CONSIDERATION OF PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS

Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to move a motion without notice regarding Making the Grade.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Mr. Bradley has asked for consent to move a motion without notice on Making the Grade. Is it agreed? Agreed.

Hon. Mr. Bradley: I move that Bill 93, An Act to amend the Education Act, replace Bill 94, An Act to amend the Education Act with respect to community involvement activity hours and board support, in the motion respecting the May 10 sitting of the House passed yesterday.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: To the motion that the House leader has just asked us to pass, which we did to accommodate him, I would ask for unanimous consent that we in fact give equal time to the bill he has just removed, which also was part of that program. The students who developed that bill worked very hard, so I think it's only fair that we commit at least an hour of debate to that bill.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Oak Ridges has asked for unanimous consent to include a certain bill. Is it the pleasure of the House the motion carry? I heard a no.

Hon. Mr. Bradley: As you will realize, the previous arrangement was that there be one bill from each of the parties. I'm sure the member for Oak Ridges is aware of that and is being mischievous this afternoon. I shouldn't say that, because I'm ascribing motives to you. Sorry about that; I withdraw that.

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader): I move that pursuant to standing order 9(c)(i), the House shall meet from 6:45 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on Wednesday, May 3, 2006, for the purpose of considering government business.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Mr. Bradley has moved government notice of motion number 123. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1353 to 1358.

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

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Kular, Kuldip	Qaadri, Shafiq
Arthurs, Wayne	Kwinter, Monte	Ramal, Khalil
Barrett, Toby	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Rinaldi, Lou
Bentley, Christopher	Levac, Dave	Runciman, Robert W.
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	MacLeod, Lisa	Ruprecht, Tony
Bradley, James J.	Marsales, Judy	Sandals, Liz
Cansfield, Donna H.	Martiniuk, Gerry	Scott, Laurie
Caplan, David	Matthews, Deborah	Sergio, Mario
Chambers, Mary Anne V.	Mauro, Bill	Smitherman, George
Chudleigh, Ted	McMeekin, Ted	Sorbara, Gregory S.
Delaney, Bob	McNeely, Phil	Sterling, Norman W.
Duguid, Brad	Miller, Norm	Takhar, Harinder S.
Dunlop, Garfield	Milloy, John	Tory, John
Elliott, Christine	Mitchell, Carol	Van Bommel, Maria
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	O'Toole, John	Watson, Jim
Fonseca, Peter	Oraziotti, David	Wilkinson, John
Gerretsen, John	Ouellette, Jerry J.	Wong, Tony C.
Hardeman, Ernie	Parsons, Ernie	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Hoy, Pat	Peters, Steve	Yakabuski, John
Jeffrey, Linda	Phillips, Gerry	
Klees, Frank	Pupatello, Sandra	

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed, please stand one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Bisson, Gilles	Marchese, Rosario	Tabuns, Peter
Horwath, Andrea	Martel, Shelley	
Kormos, Peter	Prue, Michael	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 61; the nays are 7.

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

EDUCATION WEEK

SEMAINE DE L'ÉDUCATION

Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Education, minister responsible for women's issues): I rise in the House today to recognize the optimism and confidence that's building in the publicly funded education system. Teachers, parents, school boards and the McGuinty government are partnering to make students a priority.

During Education Week, schools across the province have good reasons to celebrate. The era of peace and stability is starting to reveal real dividends for our leaders of tomorrow. Every student is being given the Ontario education advantage through new programs, resources and staff, supported by a \$2-billion funding increase since we came to office—\$2 billion.

Appropriately, the theme chosen for Education Week this year is Making Every Student Count.

Durant la semaine de l'éducation, les écoles de partout dans la province ont de bonnes raisons de fêter. Cette ère de paix et de stabilité commence à porter ses fruits chez nos dirigeants de demain.

Depuis notre arrivée au pouvoir, chaque élève profite de l'avantage éducatif de l'Ontario grâce aux 2 \$ milliards que nous avons injectés dans de nouveaux programmes, de nouvelles ressources et du nouveau personnel.

C'est donc avec à-propos que la semaine de l'éducation a été placée sous le thème « Faire en sorte que chaque élève compte. »

In elementary schools we're reducing the number of students in our primary classes, providing teachers with training and resources and making the school environment safer and healthier.

Student achievement is on the rise. An average of 62% of Ontario's grade 6 students are meeting the provincial standard in reading, writing and math. That's a significant increase from the average of 54% when our government first assumed office in 2002-03. Congratulations to our students. Thanks to the hard work of educators and students across Ontario, our goal to see 75% of students achieving at the provincial standard by 2008 is within our reach.

These young students will continue to succeed as they make the transition to high school. Right now in Ontario an exciting transformation of the high school system is already under way. Through our \$1.3-billion student success strategy, students are being given greater respect and more learning choices. Students are also being more engaged in the classroom and supported in working towards all destinations after graduation.

I want to take just a couple of minutes today during Education Week to update the members of the House on the wonderful progress we've made to help every student succeed in high school. Our student success strategy is

making it possible for students to customize their education and continue learning to age 18 or graduation. Our government believes so strongly in this strategy that we've also set an ambitious goal to increase the graduation rate to 85% by the year 2010.

That is great news. This is a big leap. Just 68% of students were graduating when we came to office. I don't think we realized that that was the rate of graduation. We've already seen some improvement, with 71% graduating in 2004-05. It's a pledge to cut the dropout rate by half over the next five years.

The student success strategy will help us get there through important initiatives, including expanded co-operative education. We know that 25% more students took co-operative education last year alone compared to 2003-04. We've also heard from students, teachers and employers that they want more high-quality choices that link learning with the workplace, and that are relevant and beneficial to everyone. That's why we announced this year that students can apply up to two co-op credits earned after September 2005 toward the 18 compulsory credits needed for graduation.

During my first month as Minister of Education, I've been energized by the inspiring stories I've heard about the positive impact of workplace learning. In Windsor, in my hometown, I visited the Children's Safety Village of Windsor and Essex county, which partnered with Windsor Fire and Rescue Services to create workplace placements. This exciting co-op allows students to shadow firefighters in all aspects of their career, including training sessions, real-life emergency response and public education.

I also heard about grade 11 co-op students in Sudbury. They're learning valuable construction skills while working with a local contractor to build a small bungalow. In Niagara, a co-op student is gaining practical hands-on knowledge at a local dairy. And finally, at Queen's University in Kingston, a grade 12 co-op student is working as a research assistant in the cytogenetics and DNA research lab. The budding scientist is helping with clinical research lab work.

These are real students and real employers who are reaping the rewards of our expanded co-op education program.

We've also put other key components of our student success strategy in place over the last couple of years. More than 200 technological education courses were added and 500 current programs were upgraded, including robotics and community technology, through a \$45-million investment. There are now student success leaders in all 72 school boards and 1,300 new high school teachers, including 800 dedicated to student success programs in Ontario's schools. We funded 131 lighthouse pilot projects during the past two years through a \$36-million investment.

These projects are helping students stay in school, accumulate needed credits, take programs linked to colleges and encourage those who have left school to return.

Within the next year, Ontario's high school students can expect to start benefiting from several additional student success strategy initiatives. Specialist high-skills majors will begin to be phased into the regular high school diploma for students who want to excel in areas such as arts, business, information technology, construction and manufacturing. Yes, we are putting the arts back into education. New dual-credit programs will be offered so students can earn several credits toward their diploma through college, apprenticeship and university courses.

There is also proposed legislation that, if passed in its present form, would keep students learning to age 18 or graduation.

The McGuinty government is confident that the student success strategy will work. We understand there's more at stake than ever before for students to get a high school education that is high quality and meaningful, and prepares them for a variety of post-secondary destinations. By maintaining high standards and transforming our high schools, we're helping more students reach their full potential, because they can customize their education to match their individual goals and interests.

So we are not going to waver in our target of graduating 85% of our students by the year 2010. Imagine the entire population of the city of Waterloo wearing caps and gowns. That's about 90,000 people, the same number of additional students we want graduating by the year 2010.

En maintenant des normes élevées et en transformant nos écoles secondaires, nous aidons plus d'élèves à réaliser leur plein potentiel, car ils peuvent personnaliser leur éducation en fonction de leurs objectifs et intérêts particuliers.

Ainsi, nous ne dérogerons pas à notre but de voir 85 % des élèves obtenir leur diplôme d'ici 2010.

Ce serait comme si toute la population de Waterloo était habillée en tenue de cérémonie de remise des diplômes. Ça fait 90 000 personnes, soit le nombre supplémentaire d'élèves qui recevront un diplôme d'ici 2010.

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With a clear strategy and a bold graduation target, it's an exciting time to be in the education field. I feel fortunate to be the new Minister of Education when the Ontario government is totally committed to listening and engaging everyone in education. I can promise my colleagues today that I will continue to work in partnership with the education sector to build on this positive momentum.

I want to thank the parents, teachers, students, principals, employers and all other educators who put extra effort and time into giving us feedback and implementing these new, exciting programs. Working together, we're making education exciting for all students by providing them with the learning choices they need to succeed, and we are building a well-educated, highly skilled workforce that will become Ontario's economic edge in the 21st century. Ontario will prosper tomorrow because we're investing in the education of our youth today.

LANDLORD AND TENANT LEGISLATION

Hon. John Gerretsen (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): Today it is my pleasure to introduce the proposed Residential Tenancies Act, 2006. This proposed legislation is another tool we will use to build stronger communities across this province. The proposed legislation represents the results of our comprehensive consultation with the groups that would be most affected by the proposed legislation; that is, both landlords and tenants.

Speaker, I would like to introduce, in the audience today, Mr. Dan McIntyre of the Federation of Metro Tenants' Associations. His input and extremely hard work contributed greatly to the reforms in this bill. He's sitting right up there.

We have consulted with housing experts to ensure that we took into account the current and future health of our residential housing market. All Ontarians need a safe, secure and affordable place to live, and that is why we are introducing proposed legislation that we believe is balanced and fair. The proposed reforms would give tenants, who are often our most vulnerable, more protection while keeping our residential housing market strong.

Let me provide you with some of the features of this most important proposed legislation.

For tenants, the proposed legislation would result in better-maintained buildings, a fairer annual rent increase guideline and a new above-guideline rent increase system for utilities and capital expenditures.

One of our biggest proposed changes to the rental housing system is the elimination of the unfair default eviction process. The Ontario Ombudsman wrote in his 2003-04 annual report that "the default eviction process has resulted in large numbers of individuals being evicted without mediation or a hearing on the merits ... such evictions may have disproportionate and oppressive consequences for vulnerable tenants: seniors, single parents with small children, individuals with disabilities and those for whom English is a second language."

Under our proposed legislation, all eviction applications would automatically go to a hearing or mediation. Adjudicators would have to consider the tenant's circumstances and, in the case of evictions for rent arrears, all relevant outstanding tenant-landlord matters.

As for better-maintained buildings, the proposed legislation would give tenants the ability to stop all rent increases until serious outstanding work orders or maintenance problems were resolved.

To ensure fairer rents, the annual rent increase guideline would be based on a real cost indicator: the consumer price index. Annual rent increases would be more closely aligned with increases in the cost of living. Another proposed change is to create a new system for granting above-guideline increases that would be based on real and necessary investment and that would provide for reductions once utility costs fall or capital improvements have been paid for.

With the proposed legislation, we would also help landlords protect their investment and offer incentives to them to maintain and invest in their buildings. Under the proposed legislation, we would lower interest paid on rent deposits by basing it on the consumer price index to reflect current market conditions. Currently, a landlord must pay 6% interest on rent deposits.

Our government would also create a faster eviction process for tenants who cause wilful or excessive damage or who are interfering with the reasonable enjoyment of a landlord's home. The proposed fast-track eviction process would cut in half the time required to evict these tenants.

The other goal of our proposed legislation is to promote investment to keep our rental markets strong. Our government wants to ensure that the healthy rental market we are currently experiencing continues. Ontario's vacancy rate is high. The vacancy rate in 2005 was 3.7%, and it is projected to remain that high until at least the year 2009. Average going-in rents are static or falling. In 2005, average rent increased by less than 1%—less than the rate of inflation. For example, in Toronto the 2005 vacancy rate for the least expensive apartments—that's the lowest 20% of the rental housing market—was 5.5%. As well, the average rent was \$726, just a \$1 increase over 2004. Since 2003, rent increases for these units have been below inflation. Tenants are benefiting from these favourable conditions when negotiating starting rents. The proposed Residential Tenancies Act would continue to allow landlords and tenants to negotiate starting rents on vacant units so that tenants could continue to benefit from the renter's market.

To help tenants even further, we would give landlords greater flexibility to offer rent discounts, up to three months' rent, to attract new tenants.

The proposed legislation would also encourage investment in the rental housing market by continuing to exempt units built after 1991 from rent controls. These provisions are and remain significant contributors to a favourable investment climate that would foster the renewal of Ontario's rental housing supply.

Of course, affordability will always be an issue for low-income tenants, and helping vulnerable groups such as low-income tenants is a priority for this government. The proposed legislation is but one part of our integrating housing strategy to improve the availability, affordability and quality of housing across this province. This strategy includes our \$365-million total investment in the Canada-Ontario affordable housing program, the Ontario rent bank program and the Ontario strong communities rent supplement program.

Our final element of building a more balanced, fairer rental housing system is addressing the concerns that both landlords and tenants have with the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal processes. Both groups believe that much more could be done to make the tribunal more customer-focused and accessible and its processes more understandable. I will be working with the chair of the Ontario housing tribunal, Dr. Lilian Ma, to make this

happen. We will increase accessibility for tenants and landlords by lowering some user fees and providing greater assistance with applications. As well, to reflect the spirit of the new proposed legislation and the tribunal's new mandate, we will be changing its name to the Landlord and Tenant Board.

In conclusion, we are ushering in a new era of tenant-landlord relations with this proposed legislation. We want to bring balance back to Ontario's rental housing market and keep our rental housing market vital and robust. I think that this piece of proposed legislation will achieve these ends. I'm confident that with the proposed legislation introduced today, we will bring about the kind of rental system that will bring strong communities across the province.

HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): Earlier today, our government launched HealthForceOntario, a comprehensive and far-reaching strategy to improve our province's health care system by improving one of its fundamental components: its human resources. Shortages of health care professionals are a worldwide phenomenon, and these shortages, these challenges, will increase in the coming years due to factors like an aging population, an aging workforce and increases in chronic diseases.

Our government is determined to address this issue head-on. Our goal on this issue, on all issues, is to look at the bigger picture. Our health human resources strategy, HealthForceOntario, is designed to address Ontario's health care issues for the next five to 10 years. Three fundamental components: new roles, develop Ontario's health care workforce, and work for Ontario to compete for health care professionals. Four new health care roles: physician assistant, nurse endoscopist, surgical first assist, and clinical specialist radiation therapist.

1420

The second part of our HealthForceOntario strategy is developing Ontario's health care workforce. In order to do this, we will establish a one-stop centre for internationally educated health professionals to quickly, clearly and easily obtain the information and counselling they need.

The third part of our strategy is to better equip our province to compete for health care professionals. We want health care professionals the world over to come to Ontario and practise their skills here. We're also committed to giving international medical graduates increased opportunities, and we filled 200 spots this year.

Finally, we're going to aggressively recruit the best and brightest health care workers to our province through a marketing and recruitment body, including a single portal for all health job opportunities.

These innovative reforms will make Ontario a better place for health care professionals to work. But what's far more important is that it will permit Ontario to pro-

vide better health care to its citizens. They're the big winners.

I'm tremendously proud of HealthForceOntario. I know we will be seeing positive results from all these reforms for many years to come.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Responses?

Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'm not sure that the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing had enough time to deliver his address. We'd entertain unanimous consent for more time for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke has asked unanimous consent for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to have more time. Agreed? I think I heard a no.

The member for Oak Ridges.

EDUCATION WEEK

Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): After hearing the Minister of Education's statement, it will be obvious to all that the art of spin and substance is alive and well in the Ministry of Education.

The minister has the audacity to stand in her place and boast of an era of peace and stability. This rhetoric comes on the eve of a strike by 876 educational instructional assistants who provide care to special-needs children in 186 schools in the city of London and in Elgin, Oxford and Middlesex counties.

While this minister tells this Legislature that schools across the province have good reason to celebrate, Pat Wilson, vice-president of the local CUPE bargaining unit responds with these words, "We would rather be working than walking the picket line. Our struggle is about getting more time to devote to students, because the children deserve better."

While the minister proudly claims that every student is being given the Ontario education advantage, she, her predecessor and the Premier have turned their backs on children with special needs by refusing to invest in their special educational supports.

The minister and her government continue to spin multi-billion dollar numbers, but they callously ignore the individual needs of the most vulnerable children in this province.

Until the minister can stand in her place and announce that she and her government will keep Dalton McGuinty's promise to autistic children, their boasting will ring hollow to all who know the truth.

LANDLORD AND TENANT LEGISLATION

Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): Here we go again from the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, another bill presented in the House that will not reach the

objectives put out in the bill. As it was stated in the National Post on May 2—and I agree:

"Dalton McGuinty's Liberals—who never met a bad election promise they couldn't keep or a good one they could—will introduce a new rent control bill. It will not go as far as Mr. McGuinty promised during the last election campaign, it apparently will go some way to punishing landlords and tenants by taking away more of their rights to a free market in rents."

The minister said this will be good for all good landlords and good tenants, but this is not what the legislation is required for. This legislation was supposed to be required to deal with problem areas. In fact, in my constituency the greatest number of calls are from landlords who can't deal with the problem of bad tenants. This legislation will do nothing to help that situation, only make it worse.

Once again, I think the minister is pushing forward legislation just for the sake of meeting an election promise. The rental market vacancy is at a historic high right now—around 3.8%—higher than it's been for years. This legislation does not do what it's supposed to do. The proposed changes are unnecessary and would have a negative impact on rental housing. Why would you introduce a piece of legislation that (1) doesn't come close to meeting the McGuinty election promise; and (2) is going to destroy the market that has come full circle and is working without your government's interfering?

What can I say? I even hear that Mr. McGuinty's own cabinet ministers don't agree with this piece of legislation. Once again the Liberals are missing the mark totally.

HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton–Victoria–Brock): I'm pleased to respond to the statement from the Minister of Health. What we see today is yet another announcement from the Ministry of Health, this time about health human resources. He announced new roles in health care but was short on details. How many more announcements will happen before we see these new positions in our hospitals and doctors' offices?

The minister also announced a new website, but Ontarians know, like the government's wait times website, that access to a website does not mean access to patient care. Again, how many announcements will we see before this website is up? How many before the centre is set up? There have already been over 20 announcements on family health teams, and those aren't doing so well. We hear that there are just a few in operation, so should we expect at least that many announcements?

One thing that makes me think there are going to be a lot of announcements before we see any progress is that there are no details, no dates, no timelines and, most importantly, no dollars. In fact, the minister today admitted in his press conference that he doesn't even know yet who will fill these new health care roles. And there are more questions that need answers: Who will be eligible?

Where will they train? What will they cost? Where is the Liberal plan?

Our party has a proud record on expanding the role of health care practitioners in Ontario. We created nurse practitioners. We expanded the role of registered practical nurses. Our government hired over 12,000 new nurses. We created the first new medical school in over three decades, the Northern Ontario Medical School.

The government is failing in its attempts to keep its promises to hire 8,000 nurses. We know and the minister knows that 1,000 of the 3,000 he has hired are temporary. Once again, the Minister of Health shows that he can hold a glitzy press conference with fancy backdrops. But when will he actually address the health care situation in Ontario?

EDUCATION WEEK

Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity–Spadina): The Minister of Education begins by saying, “Student achievement is on the rise.” I want to tell you how—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Order.

Mr. Marchese: I want to tell the Liberals how they have achieved this. Here’s how they’ve done it: They have manipulated the test. What they’ve done is, they have reduced the testing time from 12 hours to six hours. They have increased multiple-choice questions to more than ever before, and on the multiple-choice questions they have now allowed for the use of calculators. In spite of the denials of the minister and the EQAO, they have made the tests simpler, and that’s how they are able to get an increase in student achievement. I guarantee that their numbers are going to go up this year and next year because they will continue to manipulate the test.

The reality is this: ESL students are being short-changed. We have more ESL students than we’ve ever had, yet we have fewer and fewer ESL classes. We have school boards robbing from different programs to provide for special education because the money that should be given to special ed is simply not enough. More and more of our boards are having deficits than ever before, and they’re having to cut vital programs to make ends meet. The transportation funding formula that needed to be changed has still not been changed. School boards are crying for more money for the teacher salary line that’s causing deficits, and the government that promised to fix the Conservative funding formula has yet to do this. They have not changed that formula.

Our educational system is in trouble. They need support. In spite of all this blah, blah, blah from this minister and this government, our student needs need to be addressed, and the Liberals are simply not doing it.

LANDLORD AND TENANT LEGISLATION

Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity–Spadina): Then we go to the Minister of Municipal Affairs. I want to say this

for your benefit and the benefit of the rump here. “Here’s a promise: We will get rid of vacancy decontrol, which allows unlimited rent increases on a unit when a tenant leaves. It will be gone.” That was a Liberal promise. Here’s another promise.

Interjections.

Mr. Marchese: The other promise this government—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Member, please take a seat. Stop the clock. I would like the government side to come to order while this member has the floor.

The member for Trinity–Spadina.

1430

Mr. Marchese: Here is the other promise: “Ontario Liberals will restore real rent controls and provide a variety of measures to protect tenants. The Liberal plan is clear. We will bring in real rent control legislation within one year.”

Today’s announcement was an egregious betrayal of those promises. They have maintained vacancy decontrol, and what does it mean? It means every time a tenant leaves, they get whacked by increases in rents. The theory is that with an increased supply of units, the market will drive rents down. The reality is that rents have been increasing across Ontario whether the vacancy rate is high or low. Rents for two-bedroom apartments increased in Kitchener by 26.5% between 1998 and 2005, while the vacancy rate mostly increased. That’s what tenants are facing in this province. It is an egregious betrayal of tenants.

Not only that, this government says it is going to fast-track the eviction process. Imagine that—fast-track the eviction process. Let me tell you the current reality: 92% of all applications heard at the tribunal are from landlords. In 2005, the tribunal processed close to 70,000 applications to evict tenants from their homes. And this minister says, “We’re going to fast-track the eviction process even more.” The tenants have a lot to thank you for, Minister, and we’re looking forward to debating your bill.

HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): In response to the statement by the minister, there are concerns expressed today by RAO and ONA that the position of physician assistant will not be regulated. That’s why they say today, “There is a lot we don’t know about how this new role will function, how it will be regulated and what protection exists for patients if they have a complaint about the ... care they receive.”

Here’s a second concern that’s been raised by both ONA and RAO with respect to this recruitment from abroad: “‘This is a negative signal for nurses here at home,’ emphasizes Doris Grinspun, RAO executive director. ‘It is a signal that the McGuinty government has become distracted with quick fixes to the nursing shortage and is not addressing the serious shortcomings On-

tario nurses are facing. The focus must be on homemade solutions rather than looking at luring nurses from other, often more needy, countries.”

Lots of concerns were expressed with this announcement today.

ORAL QUESTIONS

TAXATION

Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the Premier. As I travel the province, people from all walks of life are telling me that they are working harder than ever but are falling further behind. They point to the McGuinty health tax. They point to the skyrocketing hydro rates. They point to soaring property assessments occurring on your watch. Their experience is, of course, that all of these charges, which are directly or indirectly your responsibility, are more than exceeding the modest wage increases they have been receiving.

Yesterday, the government of Canada brought in 29 separate forms of tax relief that will benefit every single resident of Ontario. This included a cut in the GST, an employment tax credit for working Ontarians, help for students with their books, and even a physical fitness and sports tax credit, which your Minister of Health Promotion likes even if you don't.

Can the Premier confirm that he supports all of this tax relief given to Ontarians in yesterday's budget?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): I am delighted to receive the question, and I hope that the leader of the official opposition and his colleagues will take note of what happens when a government is preceded by another government which acted in a fiscally responsible fashion. This Prime Minister Harper government inherited a wonderful legacy from the previous government and found itself in a very strong fiscal position.

Contrast that, Mr. Speaker, with what you and I inherited on this side of the House when we first formed the government. We inherited a fiscal mess, which was the result of determined and dedicated irresponsibility on the part of the previous government. We ended up drowning in a deficit. The federal Tories ended up swimming in cash. Believe me, I envy their state of affairs and I only wish on behalf of the people of Ontario that the previous government had acted responsibly when dealing with their money.

Mr. Tory: Only this Premier could call the sponsorship scandal and the hundreds of millions of dollars that were defrauded from Canadian taxpayers strong fiscal management on the part of the previous Liberal government.

That was a very interesting dissertation from the Premier, but let's try answering the question.

Yesterday, the government of Canada brought in 29 forms of tax relief for Ontario residents and others across

the country. I'll name three or four of them: an employment tax credit; a tax credit for workers for their tools; a tax credit for students for their books; a physical fitness and sports activity tax credit; pension income relief, and so on.

All you have to do is stand up in your place and tell us—the answer is yes or no—do you support these tax relief measures introduced by the government of Canada yesterday? Yes or no?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: Yesterday, he was asking me a question that led me to believe he was running against Mayor Miller, and now I get the sense that he longs for life in the federal government by asking about federal policy.

I'll tell you, we have nothing to do with that particular budget, but what we can do is work together to ensure that Ontario gets its fair share when it comes to dealing with the fiscal imbalance. There is something to which Mr. Tory can lend his support. An important question that Ontarians are asking themselves is whether or not we are going to be supported by Mr. Tory and the Conservative Party of Ontario when it comes to ensuring that the people of Ontario in fact have their fair share of the fiscal imbalance allocated to them. That is a very important question. I think that is more relevant to the debate that will be taking place inside this Legislature and indeed throughout our province.

Mr. Tory: I can only say to the Premier that not once but twice I have met with Stephen Harper—before you did in both cases—once when he was Leader of the Opposition to support—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Order. Stop the clock. Once again, I ask the government benches to come to order while someone has the floor. The leader of the official opposition.

Mr. Tory: I met with him once when he was Leader of the Opposition to support the all-party resolution in this Legislature to support Ontario's case, and once since he was Prime Minister, where I did exactly the same thing.

Yesterday's budget was well received by working families all across Ontario, because finally somebody has recognized their plight of working harder and falling further behind, and somebody's given them some of their hard-earned money back. In light of this good news, the only nightmare scenario would come if the McGuinty government decided to tax any of that money back. We've seen that before.

My question is this—and I recognize that we'll have to take the answer with a large grain of salt, given our prior experience. The question is very simple: Will you stand in your place today and indicate to this House and to the people of Ontario that you will guarantee Ontario families that you will not be raising their taxes?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: I say to the member opposite that we long for the day when we will have our books in order in this province. We are working long and hard to achieve that objective and we hope to be there sooner

rather than later. But there's an important lesson to be drawn by all Ontarians, and it's the difference between a government, whether federal or provincial, that assumes its proper responsibility to manage the books carefully, understanding that we don't have any money other than the money that is given to us by Ontario taxpayers.

Again I say to the member opposite, who is apparently determined today to talk about federal tax cuts in an Ontario Legislature, we long for the day—and hopefully it will come sooner rather than later—when we can, together, in this House, provide some relief to the people of Ontario by way of their financial contribution to our government, because we have been working long and hard to restore stability and integrity to the management of Ontario finances.

ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the Premier. We can talk about the careful management that takes in \$6 billion in extra revenue and still ends up with a deficit of \$2.5 billion, but that's for another day.

Yesterday, the federal budget provided for an extra \$2 billion to be spent on agriculture over the next two years. This year alone, they are allocating more than 1.5 billion new dollars towards this critical sector. This has been met with positive feedback. Dave Start from the Oxford corn producers says he's glad that the federal government recognized the importance of agriculture to the Canadian economy. Martin Lang, president of the Glengarry Federation of Agriculture, was encouraged to hear that they put in \$500 million more than expected.

My question to the Premier is this: If the federal government has now announced a significant increase in their budgeted assistance, when can we expect you to come to the table and reverse the disastrous spending cutbacks you have planned for this year that were announced in your budget? When are you going to reverse those?

1440

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): Again, I appreciate the question, but in fairness to the member opposite, he must be misinformed, because farmers know and Ontarians know that we continually increase the amount of funding that we make available, either through operating dollars or through extraordinary assistance, to farmers who find themselves struggling.

Now that we've been told there's a certain amount of money that's going to be flowing to Canadian farmers right across the country, the real issue is, are Ontario farmers going to get their fair share? That's the issue. I'm asking, with all sincerity, that Mr. Tory stand in his place and commit to this House, but more importantly to Ontario farmers, that he will stand side by side with our government to ensure that we get our fair share of those dollars for Ontario farmers.

Mr. Tory: The only place from which Ontario farmers are not getting their fair share is from the McGuinty

government, which has reduced planned spending on agriculture by \$284 million in this year's budget.

One of your favourites is "compare and contrast." This is one of your favourites. Let's compare and contrast these Liberal representatives talking about the federal budget. We have the Welland Liberal MP, "Maloney had some praise—he said the winery excise tax reduction and more money to assist agriculture were good for Niagara's economy." And then we had—proving there's hope yet—Peterborough Liberal MPP Jeff Leal pointing "to the federal agriculture funding and the tax credit for people who buy transit passes as positive initiatives for the Peterborough area."

Let's compare that with Jim Wheeler, ADM of your Ministry of Agriculture and Food, commenting on the plight of Ontario farmers and saying, "How long should society support the production of a commodity that shows no hope of being profitable?"—Ontario Farmer, March 28, 2006.

Is this the policy of your government? Does this man's comment, Mr. Wheeler's, reflect the policies your government?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: I take it from that that Mr. Tory is not prepared to stand with Ontario farmers and, if necessary, take up our cause with the federal government to ensure that Ontario farmers get their fair share.

Again, from one question to the next it's difficult to figure out where this leader and this party are coming from. In the first question, they're telling us that we should be spending less by way of supports, either through health care or education or protections for the environment or support for farmers or support for the forestry sector or support for manufacturing and that we should be putting more money into tax cuts. But in this particular question, he's saying no, we have to spend more money to support Ontario farmers.

Our record is very clear. We have stood beside farmers through thick and thin. We're now, this year, putting \$120 million more for farmers than the Tories invested in their last year in government, by way of contrast. It's hard for us on this side of the House to figure out from one question to the next where this leader and his party stand.

Mr. Tory: What is very clear is that I will continue to stand with Ontario farmers. The question is, when are you going to start? That's the real question.

When Ontario Federation of Agriculture President Ron Bonnett had a look at your recent McGuinty budget, he was quoted as saying, "We need proof the government is serious about supporting agriculture in Ontario, and yesterday's budget offered none."

In commenting on yesterday's federal budget, the London Free Press said that Ron Bonnett was encouraged by yesterday's budget. Albert Witteveen, president of the Niagara North Federation of Agriculture, said, "It's good news" and added that it "should create optimism out there in the agriculture community, especially for the grains and oilseeds farmers." The CFIB says that confidence in our agriculture sector is declining and they

expect their businesses are going to be weaker than 12 months ago.

Premier, we need action from your government. My question is this: By what specific date are you and your minister going to come forward with specific measures to help the farmers of Ontario? When are you going to bring forward a plan to help the farmers?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: I want to welcome the leader of the official opposition in lending apparently some modest support to Ontario farmers. It's unfortunate that it was induced as a result of a federal budget.

But let's get to the issue of the day, and that is just how much of this new money is going to in fact come to Ontario farmers. I can tell you that that's the question that weighs heavily on the minds of Ontario farmers. I can also say that we have, throughout our mandate, worked closely with Ontario farmers. Each and every year, we have provided extraordinary assistance to farmers. I think we have a total of close to \$800 million by way of extraordinary assistance that we have brought to the table.

What we're saying to the federal government at this time, and I'd ask Mr. Tory to relay this to his colleagues on Parliament Hill, is that we are eager to sit down with them and work out a long-term plan to ensure that farmers no longer have to run to Parliament Hill or Queen's Park on an ongoing basis. The Minister of Agriculture has extended that invitation on an ongoing basis to the federal government—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Thank you. New question?

CHILD CARE

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): My question is for the Premier. Once upon a time, before Stephen Harper became Prime Minister, before even Paul Martin became Prime Minister, Dalton McGuinty promised to invest \$300 million of Ontario money to create 25,000 new child care spaces for Ontario's kids. My question is, when is the McGuinty government actually going to invest \$300 million of Ontario money to create those new child care spaces that children so desperately need?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): When the leader of the NDP begins to wonder why Ontario families are not going to be able to benefit from the commitments we had made jointly with the federal government when it comes to ensuring there was an adequate supply of new, quality, affordable child care spaces in Ontario, he need look no further than in the mirror. His party was more than complicit in ensuring we had an election here in Canada, and they did not take the necessary steps to ensure that that child care agreement was protected. If the leader of the NDP wonders why Ontario families will no longer be able to benefit from that remarkable achievement, that new program of bringing child care to the people of Canada, again I say he need look no further than in the very mirror itself.

Mr. Hampton: Premier, everyone knows that Stephen Harper is not a supporter of child care. But Dalton McGuinty, on the other hand, claims that he is a supporter of child care. It's Dalton McGuinty who promised to spend \$300 million of Ontario money to create 25,000 new child care spaces. I think what's bothering people is that it is the McGuinty government that has gone deadbeat on this promise. In the past year, you had \$3 billion of revenue windfall, but you couldn't find money for child care. Premier, don't blame the federal government. We know where they're headed. What's your reason for your failure to invest Ontario money in new child care spaces?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: It's not surprising to find that the Conservatives are apologists for the federal Conservative government, but it is passing strange to see that the leader of the NDP is now saying that somehow Prime Minister Harper bears no responsibility when it comes to what's going to happen to the promise of child care in the province of Ontario. Apparently, Prime Minister Harper had nothing to do with the promise of child care in Manitoba or Saskatchewan or British Columbia or Nunavut, for that matter.

We are pleased that we were able to put in place 14,000 new spaces. We've made that perfectly clear to Ontario families. We would like to be able to do more. If the leader of the NDP were to speak to his colleague on Parliament Hill, maybe they could move the federal government in the right direction so that together we could bring to Ontario families what we had arranged with the previous government, what would have been a total of 25,000 new child care spaces for Ontario families.

Mr. Hampton: I sense some desperation on the part of the Premier. The Premier, who promised \$300 million for new child care spaces, has failed to deliver and is now looking around, anywhere and everywhere, to find someone to blame. This is not about Saskatchewan, it's not about Nova Scotia, it's not about Manitoba, it's not about Alberta; it's about Dalton McGuinty, who promised \$300 million of Ontario money to create 25,000 new child care spaces, and now, three years into the McGuinty government, when you had a \$3-billion revenue windfall, you failed to keep that promise. Children want to know, parents want to know when Dalton McGuinty is going to keep his promise and stop blaming everybody else in Canada for his failure.

1450

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: Ontario families and Ontario parents and Ontario children, were they to voice their concern, would see it differently. I think what they really want to know is whether the leader of the NDP is prepared to join our government in making our case to the federal government to ensure that this new federal government will support the agreement we struck with the old federal government to ensure that Ontario families benefit from 25,000 new child care spaces. That's what we went to the wall for; that's what we earned for Ontario families. Then we had a change in government, and the question we have now is whether Mr. Hampton stands with our government in our case that we're

making before the federal government to ensure that we get those 25,000 spaces.

ASSISTANCE TO FAMILIES

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): To the Premier again: Your speeches blaming the federal government, saying they're not sending you enough money, might have some credibility if you actually spent the money you do receive from the federal government on the purposes it was intended for.

Let's take affordable housing: The federal government sent you \$150 million—federal money—for affordable housing, but your own budget shows that you invested only \$62 million in affordable housing. The question is, where did the rest of that federal money that was intended for affordable housing go? What did you use it for? Don't blame them if you're not going to spend the money they send you for the very purposes it was intended for. So tell us, where did that money go?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. John Gerretsen (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): The leader of the NDP is wrong. Every penny we have received from the federal government and that we're putting in ourselves is being spent on affordable housing.

It was about a year ago today that the historic agreement was signed with the federal government so that \$702 million of federal and provincial money could be invested in affordable housing. As a result, that housing has started to be built across this province. We implemented an early build program, a strong start program, that made sure that projects that were ready to go were actually being built. As a matter of fact, we've had some very good meetings with our service managers, who are making sure that that housing is being delivered at the local level, to make sure that housing is being built as quickly as possible. Right now, over 1,600 units have been built and another 1,600 units are under construction. Every penny of federal money and provincial money allocated for housing has been spent.

Mr. Hampton: I think housing advocates will really be interested to know that under the McGuinty government we now have phantom housing. But it's not just affordable housing. There are 443,000 children in Ontario—one in six—living in poverty. The federal government responded to that by creating the national child benefit supplement. But the McGuinty government claws back that federal money, \$1,500 a year per child, from the very poorest of Ontario's children. My question to the Premier is, why is the McGuinty government taking \$1,500 a year of federal money from the poorest children in Ontario and then blaming the federal government?

Hon. Mr. Gerretsen: I refer that to the Minister of Community and Social Services.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for franco-

phone affairs): I want to tell the leader of the third party what we have done with the money we received. All the money we received went towards children. First of all, we have flowed through permanently the July 2004, 2005 and 2006 national child benefit money. So it's done, and the money has been used to offer services to children. It's going towards Healthy Babies, Healthy Children, the Ontario child care supplement for working families, children's mental health programs and children's treatment centres. So I'm asking the leader of the third party which one he wants us to stop financing.

Mr. Hampton: It is your government's record. You complain that Ottawa doesn't send you enough money for child care, but you fail to make your own \$300-million investment in child care. You complain that Ottawa doesn't send you enough money for kids, but you take \$1,500 a year of federal money away from the poorest kids in Ontario. You complain about affordable housing, but the money that the federal government sends to Ontario for affordable housing hasn't been invested in affordable housing. People can't find the affordable housing.

My question to the Premier is this: With this kind of record on child care, with your failure in terms of the national child benefit, with your failure in terms of affordable housing, why do you expect anyone to believe you when you complain that it's all the federal government's fault and Dalton McGuinty doesn't have any responsibility for the failures in these areas?

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The Minister of Community and Social Services.

Hon. Mrs. Meilleur: I wanted to refer it to the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Hon. Mr. Gerretsen: Let's just go over the facts. The actual number of housing units that will be created with the affordable housing money, the agreement that was signed last year, is 9,000 rental units, 4,500 ownership units, 1,500 northern units and 5,000 housing allowance units to help low-income individuals. Housing allowance agreements have been signed with just about every service manager out there, and we expect that the vacant units that exist around this province will be made available at a lower rent for low-income individuals in the very near future.

We're on this on a day-to-day basis, because we know that housing is absolutely essential for our most vulnerable in society. We want to make sure that all of the money that we're investing and that the federal government is investing goes into either home ownership, housing allowances or affordable housing programs. It's being done as we speak.

TAXATION

Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie–Lincoln): A question to the Premier: Yesterday, as you know, we saw a budget coming out of the new Conservative government in Ottawa that cut taxes for working families and seniors in Ontario. It was a budget that kept its promises, unlike

what we've seen here in Ontario in recent times under Dalton McGuinty, full of broken promises and the largest tax hike in the history of the province; a government that tries to Hoover up every last penny out of the pocket-books of hard-working, middle-class families in this province.

Premier, my colleague the Leader of the Opposition asked you a very direct question: Are you going to move into the tax room caused by the tax reductions out of Ottawa? Are we going to see an increase in taxes coming from the McGuinty government to take up that tax room?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): I know they're looking forward to the budget of next year, and we look forward to delivering that at the appropriate time, but in the meantime, we will stay focused on our priorities, which we firmly believe are the priorities of Ontarians.

We're improving the quality of their health care. More specifically, we're getting wait times down. I think that's really important to the people of Ontario.

When it comes to education, we're getting class sizes down and student achievement up, and we want to get the Learning to 18 initiative under way. At the post-secondary level, we have a massive investment that will bring about 75,000 new spaces in training, colleges and universities.

When it comes to supporting the economy, we'll continue to work with our farmers, manufacturers, people in the forestry sector, and to build on our successes in the auto sector. We will continue to bring about protections for the environment so that we can guarantee to our children, and grandchildren in particular, that they will enjoy the quality of life that we experience here today. Those are the priorities of the people of Ontario, and we will remain focused on their priorities.

Mr. Hudak: I find it disconcerting that the Premier will not say he is not going to jump into the tax room now created by lower taxes coming from Ottawa and hope the Premier will clarify that he has no intention to further raise taxes on working families and seniors in Ontario. Premier, taxes are way up, hydro is way up, gas prices are way up, home heating costs are way up—and new user fees. Thanks to Dalton McGuinty's recent budgets, they can no longer afford tax hikes like they've seen from you in the past.

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I know that your finance minister is now, interestingly, in the Republic of Ireland, trying to sell his big spending and big taxing budget. Premier, you know that Ireland reduced their taxes significantly, shrunk the size of government and saw a major expansion of jobs that's the envy of the world.

Are we going to see from your finance minister a conversion on the road to Dublin? Is he going to come back with eyes open to lowering taxes or will we continue to see a gluttonous attack on the pocket—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The question has been asked. Premier?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: I don't know if there was a question there or not, Speaker, but I did like the line about "conversion on the road to Dublin."

We will remain focused on the task before us. We want to improve the quality of public education for all Ontario children. The party opposite wants to take money out of public schools and invest those in private schools. We see things differently.

We've invested ever more money in health care. The party opposite would take \$2.5 billion out of health care.

We think it's really important to eliminate coal-fired generation in the province of Ontario. The party opposite would put their faith in a technology that has yet to be invented.

I think there are some really good contrasts setting up for the people of Ontario as we move forward. But more than anything else, at this point in our mandate we remain focused on the most important job at hand, which is improving the quality of public services that Ontarians are entitled to rely upon.

TAXI INDUSTRY

Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto–Danforth): My question is for the Premier. Taxi drivers are worried after a wave of violence against cabbies. One of the victims, Mahmood Bhatti, a 40-year-old father of four, is dead. He was dead after an assailant attacked him from behind, stabbing him in the neck, killing him.

One way to help prevent violence against taxi drivers is to exempt safety shields from provincial sales tax, to make those safety shields more affordable to those who want them. Premier, will the government consider taking action to make that more affordable?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): Let me take the opportunity to express my sympathies, I'm sure on behalf of all members on all sides of this House, to the family and friends of the victim who experienced this terrible tragedy, and of course this falls hard upon the heels of other similar incidents. I think we all feel for the jeopardy, apparently, which some of our taxi drivers are now placing themselves in simply by going to work every day.

I say to the member opposite that it is the first time I've heard of this particular proposal. Let me just say that if there is anything our government might do that would have a real and lasting impact that would promote the safety of our taxi drivers, we are more than prepared to consider that.

Mr. Tabuns: As the Premier has indicated, driving cabs is one of the most dangerous jobs. It ranks in the top 10 most dangerous in terms of occupational safety. It ranks in the top five most dangerous in terms of being a victim of crime. Each day on the job, cabbies put themselves in harm's way. The least we can do to act to protect the lives of taxi drivers is to move forward on an exemption from the provincial sales tax. Is your government prepared to act quickly on this measure or others?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: Again, I want to commend the member opposite for the spirit with which this advice is

tendered, and to repeat once again that we are more than prepared to consider any proposals that would have a real and lasting impact when it comes to promoting greater safety for our taxi drivers.

I just think as a matter of fundamental principle that people, no matter where they work, should be able to go to work and their families should be able to have a sense that when somebody is going to work, they will return home at night and not expose themselves to undue hardships and undue danger regardless of where that workplace might be.

Again, I thank the member opposite for his suggestion. I say that we will take it under advisement and that we will consider any other thoughtful proposals as well.

WORLD JUNIOR HOCKEY
CHAMPIONSHIP
CHAMPIONNAT MONDIAL
DE HOCKEY JUNIOR

Mr. Phil McNeely (Ottawa–Orléans): My question is to the Minister of Health Promotion. Earlier this afternoon we heard the announcement that the 2009 World Junior Hockey Championship is coming to Ontario—to our hometown of Ottawa, the future home of the Stanley Cup.

Any hockey fan here today will know what a great event this is, attracting the best junior hockey players from around the world. The event also attracts tens of thousands of visitors and international media attention.

Minister, my question is about the impact this event will have on amateur hockey in Ontario. How will the World Junior Hockey Championship benefit the over 404,000 Ontarians involved in amateur hockey?

Hon. Jim Watson (Minister of Health Promotion): I think all members of the House will join me in congratulating the Ottawa bid team for winning this very prestigious tournament.

Applause.

Hon. Mr. Watson: It's the first time the New Democrats have ever applauded me, so I thank them for that.

We had tough competition from Toronto, Saskatchewan, Edmonton, Calgary and Montreal. I also want to salute the Toronto bid team, who represented Ontario very well. They did a great job. Darryl Sittler was their honorary chair. But I want to put on the record the bid committee for Ottawa, who put a lot of time, effort and expertise into their bid: Eugene Melnyk, the chair of the Ottawa Senators; Mayor Bob Chiarelli; Cyril Leeder, the COO of the Ottawa Senators; Scotiabank Place; Jeff Hunt of the Ottawa 67s; and Jules Lavictoire, president of the Ottawa District Hockey Association.

The great thing about the World Junior Hockey Championship: Net proceeds go back into amateur hockey and the young—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Thank you, Minister. Supplementary?

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry–Prescott–Russell): Oui, les gens de l'est de l'Ontario se réjouissent aujourd'hui de cette grande nouvelle.

Je félicite l'équipe de la ville d'Ottawa et le président de l'ODHA, Jules Lavictoire, pour leur travail à la préparation de la soumission qui a connu un franc succès.

Et à vous, monsieur le Ministre, merci d'avoir été présent à la présentation de ce projet de grande envergure.

Minister, it's been 20 years since we've seen a World Junior Hockey Championship in Ontario. Obtaining a major sporting event like this is great news for Ontario and for Ottawa, creating a great economic impact for the province, the city and also for the communities in my riding. Can you detail for this House how we, our government, were able to support Ontario's two bid cities and win these games for Ottawa?

Hon. Mr. Watson: I thank the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell. It was a great pleasure for me to join the Toronto and Ottawa bid committees during Easter weekend on behalf of Premier McGuinty to support those two Ontario cities. I also want to thank the Premier for personally involving himself in the bid. That did make a difference, both his contact with Hockey Canada as well as a video that he provided.

The estimated economic impact when the games came to Vancouver last year was \$41 million. I'm pleased today to announce that the McGuinty government is supporting the Ottawa host bid committee by providing \$2 million in provincial funds to support the operating costs of this very worthwhile activity.

The Ottawa District Minor Hockey Association is behind this bid, because they understand that the economic impact is not only good for the local economy but also for hockey in general. We wish the organizers the very best. The province will be there to help them in any way we can to make this the best World Junior Hockey Championship in the history of the tournament.

TRANSIT TAX CREDIT

Mr. John O'Toole (Durham): My question is to the Premier. You'd be well aware of the leadership shown yesterday in the federal budget with respect to a transit tax credit for citizens of all ages who choose to use public transit. For example, it's important for the citizens that in this program a typical TTC rider, who pays \$99.75 a month for a Metropass, would now receive a tax credit of \$185 a year. The credit would cover almost two months of transit travel.

The federal announcement is an excellent opportunity for the provincial government to show similar leadership. I put to you that it's probably time for a vision for you to work in partnership with Prime Minister Harper. Will your government consider a similar incentive that would harmonize the transit program with the federal government?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): To the Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Harinder S. Takhar (Minister of Transportation): We are very proud of the investments we have already made in transit. In the last budget, we provided another \$1.2 billion extra, for three major transit projects and \$400 million for roads and bridges. We are really wondering, which is not very clear in the budget that was presented yesterday, whether they will ever match the \$670 million we are providing for the Spadina subway, another \$65 million we are providing for the Mississauga Transitway and another \$95 million we will be providing for Brampton Transit. So we look forward to getting some details that these projects will be matched.

1510

Mr. O'Toole: I would remind the Premier this is really a fiscal question. The Minister of Transportation is talking about the last budget. It just shows how disconnected he is to the issue of public policy. I mean that respectfully. My question, Premier, to you, is quite direct and quite simple; you can deflect it to him as well. What this is about, Premier, is respecting the users here. We're not talking about Brampton Transit and the 10-year money you announced in the budget for the subway station that'll be built sometime under John Tory's government, that's for sure. What I'm asking you is to look at working in partnership, by harmonizing the transit tax credit, to make transit more affordable for the users. We're always talking about encouraging or incenting people to use public transit. It helps the environment; it helps gridlock. Premier, just stand up today, as you did with the taxi issue and do the right thing: Try and help make public transit affordable. Will you work with the federal government on this issue?

Hon. Mr. Takhar: Actually, I'm very surprised at the questioning of this member, because that is the government, the previous government, that actually did nothing for public transit; nothing at all. In 1995-96, there was \$660 million being spent on public transit; in 1999-2000, it came to \$68 million. They thought that was too much. Then they decided to decrease it to \$38 million later on.

What we have done is we have provided clear leadership on transit projects because we thought that was the only way to deal with some of the congestion issues in this province. We are really looking forward to getting some details from the federal government to see if they have in fact matched the leadership we have provided in our last budget. We look forward to those details.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): A question to the Premier: Rhonda Jane Wiley from Welland has been a front-line health care aide in long-term care for over 20 years now. She says, "I am horrified that seniors that fought for us to be free, and (who) built Canada, are treated like yesterday's trash. I don't blame this on the staff; I blame it on the government." Rhonda asked me to "tell Dalton McGuinty to ... check himself in for a month or two, and his bath day will be every Tuesday," but only on Tuesday. Premier, when are you going to keep your

promises to the seniors who worked so hard to build this province?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): To the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I would say to all members of provincial Parliament that we have 1,618 long-term-care homes in the province of Ontario. I've had the privilege of visiting many of them, sometimes announced and sometimes unannounced. My colleague my parliamentary assistant from Nipissing made a very regular occurrence of visiting long-term-care homes on an unannounced basis. What we find there as MPPs is important, I suppose, for the kind of questions we ask. The experiences I enjoy in my riding with quite a number of long-term-care homes is that they provide a very good quality of care.

We've invested 740 million additional dollars since coming to office in the provision of long-term care. By way of supplementary, I will enumerate some additional things we did, but I think it's incumbent upon us, and accordingly we've created an action line that has very prompt response to any complaints, such as those of the nature that might have been advanced by the honourable member. I encourage Ontarians to avail themselves of that if they do feel that the circumstances—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Kormos: You see, Rhonda Jane Wiley's experience with long-term care doesn't just include her own work in her workplace. She talks about her elderly mom, who was left on the toilet for over 30 minutes, ringing and ringing a bell that no one had the time to answer. She says, "My mother, brother and I decided to bring her home to pass away," to die. "We could not stand any more indignity. Our mother might not have been a lawyer, doctor or the person that discovered a cure for cancer, but she was our mother."

Premier, when are you going to keep your promises to folks like Rhonda and her mother? When are you going to make long-term care liveable for our seniors—our folks and our grandfolks?

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: Again, I'm dissatisfied in any circumstance where an Ontarian does not believe the level of care being provided in a long-term-care home is appropriate. But the honourable member has just raised a question in a fashion to suggest that every one of the 75,000 long-term-care home beds in operation in Ontario is being operated in an unsatisfactory circumstance. This is a preposterous suggestion. If the honourable member believes that, then I think he's not spending time in long-term-care homes.

I'd be happy any day to walk over to Wellesley and Sherbourne or to nearby long-term-care homes to take a look at the quality of care being provided there. Yes, we've done a lot in this area and we're working very hard to enhance the quality of care, because we recognize that these individuals are our most vulnerable. That's why I

think it's appropriate that we have invested \$740 million and that we have 2,334 additional employees in long-term care as a result of our very, very distinct investments.

FIREFIGHTERS

Mr. Dave Levac (Brant): My question is for the Minister of Labour. We all know that firefighters in this province face considerable risk to their health and safety, day in and day out. They willingly and courageously place themselves in harm's way in order to protect others and their property. They routinely work in extremely dangerous conditions, yet never allow the danger to deter them from their responsibilities.

But some of the occupational dangers firefighters face may not be as obvious as others. In fact, firefighters face a particular risk of developing certain occupational diseases such as cancer as a result of exposure to various chemicals, known and unknown. Under the current policy, the WSIB has presumptions that certain cancers are work-related to our firefighters; however, it does not cover all cancers.

Minister, I have received calls from constituents, stakeholders and, in particular, their families for the government to review the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act to create presumption in the act for firefighters making cancer claims. Minister, can you please tell me what steps we've taken to respond to such requests, which I've been working on since 1999?

Hon. Steve Peters (Minister of Labour): I thank the member for Brant; I know this is an issue that's close to his heart, and he's been a great advocate for firefighters in this province. As well, we at the Ministry of Labour take these concerns of firefighters very seriously. That's why we continue to work with the fire service health and safety advisory committee.

On the issue of presumptive legislation, we know it has been considered by other Canadian jurisdictions. Because of that, I have directed my parliamentary assistant, the member for Thornhill, Mr. Mario Racco, to undertake a comprehensive review of the treatment of firefighter cancer claims and to compile an inventory of scientific literature.

As part of this review, I have asked my parliamentary assistant to meet with officials from the occupational disease research and policy branch of the WSIB, the chair and members of the research advisory council of the WSIB, employer representatives and representatives of the professional firefighters' association. I know that this review will assist me as Minister of Labour to look at where we go with this complex issue, and I've asked him to report by July 15.

Mr. Levac: Minister, that's extremely good news, and I appreciate the efforts you're making to take care of our firefighters. It's good news that we're taking proactive steps to gain an understanding of this complex issue. By meeting with representatives from the WSIB, the professional firefighters' association, employers and all the

stakeholders and by examining other jurisdictions, your parliamentary assistant, Mr. Racco, will be able to gain comprehensive knowledge of this very difficult issue. I look forward to his report, and I hope that it's timely.

I do understand, however, that the WSIB recently announced that nine previously denied colorectal cancer claims from firefighters have been reconsidered and allowed. This is certainly good news for the firefighters, and especially their families, who are deeply concerned about their livelihood.

Could you please tell us what the WSIB is doing to ensure that the firefighters and their families are fairly compensated, before your review is finished, when they experience occupational diseases?

Hon. Mr. Peters: We recognize that the WSIB is an arm's-length agency and it would not be appropriate for me to comment on any individual claim. But you correctly noted that they have reviewed a number of claims. We thank the WSIB for that; it is good news. I can also tell you that the WSIB does recognize the link between certain cancers and firefighting activities, and compensates firefighters who contract these work-related cancers. Over 80% of firefighter claims for some types of cancers are allowed. This is a much higher allowance rate than for other occupations. As well, I think it's important to recognize that the Ministry of Labour and the WSIB will continue to work with firefighters in Ontario and the fire service health and safety advisory committees.

We recognize that this is an extremely difficult issue. I reiterate that I have asked my parliamentary assistant, Mario Racco, to undertake a comprehensive review of this issue, to undertake a broad-based consultation and to report back to me by July 15, 2006, with recommendations as to how we can move forward.

1520

LANDFILL

Ms. Lisa MacLeod (Nepean-Carleton): My question is for the Minister of the Environment. There is a proposal for the Carp landfill site in the city of Ottawa to more than double its size. While we're sure proud as heck that we're going to get the World Junior's and probably the Stanley Cup, the residents in the national capital are opposed to this landfill expansion. Through myself and the member for Lanark-Carleton, they have petitioned this Legislature, and by next Thursday some 10,000 signatures will be introduced into the Legislature opposing this landfill expansion.

My question is this: My constituents want to know, will the Minister of the Environment accept these signatures from the residents of Ottawa as 10,000 separate comments opposing the expansion of this landfill in the draft terms of reference for the environmental assessment?

And Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate the silence on the other side.

Hon. Laurel C. Broten (Minister of the Environment): As always, I want to assure the member opposite

that we consider the comments brought forward by all Ontarians. On January 12, 2006, Waste Management corporation announced it intends to go through an individual environmental assessment. Currently it's undertaking its own public consultation, and as I indicated when I was in Ottawa last week, the opportunity is now presenting itself for the community to come together and indicate their prospectus with respect to this landfill. That's what's taking place. That material comes before the ministry as we examine how to move forward with respect to the Carp landfill. These are important comments that will be coming forward, and I look forward to hearing more and receiving them.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Supplementary? The member for Lanark-Carleton.

Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark-Carleton): Madam Minister, the next step of the process is for you to set the terms of reference for the environmental assessment. You have a wide discretion in setting those terms. I believe the terms of reference should be as wide as possible. Will you assure the citizens who are living close to this site that all other alternatives to a landfill site at this particular area will be considered, including an alternate landfill alternative, in their proposal for an environmental assessment?

Hon. Ms. Broten: I know the member opposite understands that individual environmental assessments are proponent driven. The individual environmental assessment and the terms of reference of the EA are put forward by Waste Management corporation. But it is important that the community understand that if an EA were to proceed, the draft terms of reference the company is consulting on now, Waste Management corporation would evaluate alternatives to its proposed undertaking, alternatives to this site, identify and evaluate the potential impacts on human health and the environment and the surrounding community, and very importantly, demonstrate to me that it undertook public consultation and identified concerns and proposed satisfactory solutions to address those concerns.

I invite the community to participate in an individual EA process, if it goes forward. I invite them to continue to express their views to Waste Management corporation. This is what the EA process is all about. This process is about protecting the health and well-being of Ontarians, and I take that responsibility—

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. New question.

TIRE DISPOSAL

Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto-Danforth): My question is for the Minister of the Environment. Minister, study after study suggests that burning tires in cement kilns can lead to dramatic increases in emissions of cancer-causing dioxins and metals, yet you are proposing to allow the first operational tire-burning cement kiln in Bath, Ontario. Why are you proposing to let Ontario residents and our environment pay the price for your abandonment of a used tire recycling program?

Hon. Laurel C. Broten (Minister of the Environment): I'm very pleased to have an opportunity to set the record straight. The instructions I provided to Waste Diversion Ontario in the preceding weeks were to proceed at first with a household hazardous waste program, an electronics diversion program. I want to ensure that Ontarians who want to divert more waste from landfill have the tools they need to be able to do that. At the WDO AGM, what I said to them was, "Focus your attention in the immediate on those two programs."

In the interim, I am working with my ministry to consider options to mitigate the potential adverse impacts from existing stockpiles and to crack down on those illegal tire dumps. That's what we're doing in the province.

With respect to Lafarge, as I indicated yesterday, the process is under way. An application has been made. The scientific research will be analyzed in that context and a decision will be made by the ministry.

Mr. Tabuns: Minister, the facts are clear. In a speech on April 20, the one you're referring to, to Waste Diversion Ontario, you stated that the development of a tire recycling program for Ontario is being set aside. Now communities like Bath, Ontario, face the potential of increased health and environmental risks from tires being burned in cement kilns without even an environmental assessment. Will you protect Ontario residents and our environment from increased emissions of carcinogens and metals and ban the burning of tires?

Hon. Ms. Broten: As I indicated yesterday, my friend opposite should do more research as he asks questions. Let me refer specifically to the comments I made to WDO at their AGM: "Turning now to the used tire diversion program, I want to thank them for their work. We have carefully reviewed the options ... and I have decided to defer the finalization of a used tire program for the immediate future." The issue of used tires needs to be examined in this province.

With respect to Lafarge, I think it is incumbent upon all of us to take a look at the sound scientific research that has been undertaken. We are not scientists here in this room, but there are many wonderful scientists in this province. I listen to the advice that those scientists give me as we make decisions, and I will be listening to that advice as we move forward with respect to the examination of the issues in Lafarge, as we should in each and every circumstance across the province.

YOUTH CRIME PREVENTION

Mr. Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex): My question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services. Our government is committed to tackling both crime and the root causes of crime in order for us to live in safe and vibrant communities. These efforts are essential. Minister, last month you made an exciting announcement that is sure to reduce reoffending rates among youth who have come into conflict with the law. Could you tell us more about this announcement and how it will benefit Chatham-Kent Essex?

Hon. Mary Anne V. Chambers (Minister of Children and Youth Services): I would like to respond to the question from the member from Chatham–Kent. He's referring to an announcement that I made last month about 12 new youth intervention centres. This is in addition to 15 that we opened a little more than a year ago. Of the 12 new centres, Lindsay, London, Cornwall, Belleville and Sault Ste. Marie are in operation now. The member's centre in Chatham is in the development stage. In fact, that particular centre will receive \$450,000 per year to run programs.

These programs are for young people between the ages of 12 and 17 who have been ordered by the courts to participate—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Answer?

Hon. Mrs. Chambers: —in these types of interventions as part of their probation. I have met with a number of these young people at different centres and, clearly, this is an effort to address their anger management issues, their life challenges—

1530

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. Supplementary.

Mr. Hoy: Minister, this initiative appears to be an important step forward in making our communities much safer. At the same time, it provides youth who have come into conflict with the law the tools they need to choose a better path. I know there has been a greater focus on reducing the overuse of custody in favour of community-based programs. These programs will help a young person reintegrate into the community in those cases where the youth does not pose a threat to a community and its safety. Minister, what led to this shift, and in what other ways is our government responding to this change in direction?

Hon. Mrs. Chambers: In the year 2003, the federal government introduced the Youth Criminal Justice Act. That new Youth Criminal Justice Act is designed to strike a better balance between the use of custody and the use of other programs which are intended to address dysfunctional behaviour when the incidents are of a minor nature. So this act balances the use of custody for those youth who have committed more serious offences with programs for youth who have committed minor offences. I have to tell you that that's where the majority of youth actually fall.

This type of approach has been found to work and to reduce recidivism. We are in fact spending \$22 million per year on a variety of programs, including those delivered through these intervention centres.

EDUCATION LABOUR DISPUTE

Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): My question is to the Minister of Education. Minister, you spoke earlier in your announcement about stability in the school system and about all students deserving the same opportunity. As of tomorrow, this will no longer be true in the Thames Valley board of education, as the educational assistants and instructional assistants who look after the most

vulnerable in the school system are asked to go out on strike in order to achieve a contract.

I have a letter here that was sent to you, Madam Minister. It says, "It is with great concern that I send you this e-mail." In fact, it's sent by Ann Larson, an EA at Sir Frederick Banting Secondary School in London. What's most important is that she asks for your assistance to help create that stability you spoke of. It says, "It is the students who are losing out. They have special needs and we need to have the time to address them."

Madam Minister, the main issue seems to be that they need more time to look after these vulnerable students. Will you do what you can to make sure that this work stoppage doesn't happen so these special-needs students are not put at greater risk than they presently are?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Education, minister responsible for women's issues): I do appreciate this question. I know that in your time, when this member was on the government side, not having peace and stability was the order of the day. That is not the case since 2003 in our Ontario today in our education system.

I happen to know that the individuals involved with the Thames Valley area are in negotiations right now as we speak. I am extremely hopeful that because they are continuing in a dialogue, they will be able to resolve their issues. I am extremely hopeful that these groups coming to the table to negotiate, as is their right, will produce results that will make all of us particularly pleased. We believe that we need to keep the students first—all students. I certainly hope that's the case today.

PETITIONS

LANDFILL

Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark–Carleton): This is about the Carp landfill site.

"Whereas there is currently a proposal to more than double the size of the Carp landfill in west Ottawa; and

"Whereas this site has been in operation for some 30 years and had been expected to close in 2010; and

"Whereas the surrounding community has grown rapidly for the past 10 years and is continuing to grow; and

"Whereas other options to an expanded landfill have yet to be considered; and

"Whereas the municipal councillors representing this area—Eli El-Chantiry" and Peggy Feltmate—"and the MPP Norm Sterling" and Lisa MacLeod "all oppose this expansion;

"We, the undersigned," some 500, "support our local representatives and petition the Minister of the Environment not to approve the expansion of the Carp landfill site and instead to find other waste management alternatives."

I have signed that.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mrs. Carol Mitchell (Huron–Bruce): I'm pleased to present a petition.

"Whereas long-term-care funding levels are too low to enable homes to provide the care and services our aging seniors and parents who are residents of long-term-care homes need, with the respect and dignity that they deserve; and

"Whereas, even with recent funding increases and a dedicated staff who do more than their best, there is still not enough time available to provide the care residents need. For example, 10 minutes, and sometimes less, is simply not enough time to assist a resident to get up, dressed, to the bathroom and then to the dining room for breakfast; and

"Whereas those unacceptable care and service levels are now at risk of declining;

"We, the undersigned, who are members of family councils, residents' councils and/or supporters of long-term care in Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to increase operating funding to long-term-care homes by \$306.6 million, which will allow the hiring of more staff to provide an additional 20 minutes of care per resident per day over the next two years...."

I affix my signature to this.

LANDFILL

Ms. Lisa MacLeod (Nepean–Carleton): It's no surprise that I stand here before you with a petition for the Carp landfill site from the residents of Nepean–Carleton.

"Whereas there is currently a proposal to more than double the size of the Carp landfill in west Ottawa; and

"Whereas this site has been in operation for some 30 years and had been expected to close in 2010; and

"Whereas the surrounding community has grown rapidly for the past 10 years and is continuing to grow; and

"Whereas other options to an expanded landfill have yet to be considered; and

"Whereas the municipal councillors representing this area ... and the MPP, Norm Sterling"—and Lisa MacLeod—"all oppose this expansion;

"We, the undersigned, support our local representatives and petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to ensure the Minister of the Environment does not approve the expansion of the Carp landfill and instead to find other waste management alternatives."

I obviously support this and will affix my signature.

SERVICES FOR THE
DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. John Milloy (Kitchener Centre): I have a petition on the subject of the transformation of the developmental service sector.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature to express our gratitude to the government of Ontario for taking the lead in beginning discussions with the federal government on the development of a national income supplement program for people living with developmental disabilities and where we have seen the government work tirelessly for the betterment of the developmental service sector; and

"Whereas we agree that the three remaining institutions should be closed to integrate the clients from those institutions into the community and moving them out through an individualized plan that meets the needs of the clients and offer those with developmental disabilities the best opportunity to live in total community inclusion; and

"Whereas we urge this government to invest in services and local community agencies for people with developmental disabilities so they can increase wage rates and ensure the continuum of service with great personnel that comes with the commitment necessary for a sustainable sector; and

"Whereas we thank the Premier of Ontario for his leadership role in closing the three remaining institutions and showing commitment to this sector that will guarantee that people with disabilities finally have the opportunity for total community inclusion;

"... we urge this government to continue its work in the transformation of developmental services, as this is the first review of this magnitude that this sector has seen in over 20 years."

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Ted Arnott (Waterloo–Wellington): I am presenting this petition on behalf of the member for Dufferin–Peel–Wellington–Grey. It comes from Caressant Care in Arthur, and it reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas long-term-care funding levels are too low to enable homes to provide the care and services our aging seniors and parents who are residents of long-term-care homes need, with the respect and dignity that they deserve; and

"Whereas, even with recent funding increases and a dedicated staff who do more than their best, there is still not enough time available to provide the care residents need. For example, 10 minutes, and sometimes less, is simply not enough time to assist a resident to get up, dressed, to the bathroom and then to the dining room for breakfast; and

"Whereas those unacceptable care and service levels are now at risk of declining;

"We, the undersigned, who are members of family councils, residents' councils and/or supporters of long-term care in Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to increase operating funding to long-term-care homes by \$306.6 million, which will allow the hiring of more staff to provide an additional 20 minutes of care per

resident per day over the next two years (2006 and 2007).”

I support this petition as well.

1540

NURSING STAFF

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

“Whereas we, the citizens of Ontario, ask that you will revoke layoff notices given to six RNs (five full-time, one part-time). The nursing staff currently work at Thamesview Lodge and Victoria Residence in Chatham-Kent, but residents of both homes will move into their new facility ‘Riverview Gardens’ in early April. Layoffs at that time will result in 233 hours less of nursing care per week at the new facility.

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows: to revoke the layoff notices and consider that:

“As they are going to a new facility, the elderly residents will need time for readjustment; they will need more emotional support and understanding, someone to listen to their concerns;

“Higher-needs patients require more care, and both Thamesview Lodge and Victoria Residence were recognized as having higher needs in 2005 compared to the previous year;

“More nursing staff will be required in order to ensure the residents’ care, safety and protection.

“If layoffs occur, more pressure will be put on remaining staff to cope with all of this, resulting in health issues such as burnout, stress on staff and also [on] the residents themselves.”

I have signed this petition and I hand it to Billy Barnier, our page here from Chatham-Kent.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. John O’Toole (Durham): I’m pleased to present a petition on behalf of my constituents from the riding of Durham.

“Whereas, without appropriate support, people who have an intellectual disability are often unable to participate effectively in community life and are deprived of the benefits of society enjoyed by other citizens; and

“Whereas quality supports are dependent on the ability to attract and retain qualified workers; and

“Whereas the salaries of workers who provide community-based supports and services are up to 25% less than salaries paid to those doing the same work in government-operated services and other sectors;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to address, as a priority, funding to community agencies in the developmental services sector to address critical underfunding of staff salaries and ensure that people who have an intellectual disability continue to receive quality supports and services that

they require in order to live meaningful lives within their community.”

I’m pleased to sign this in their support.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough): I’m pleased to present this petition on access to cross-border travel on behalf of my colleague from Mississauga West, who is unable to be here. I wish to thank Streetsville Secondary School for gathering the signatures, and especially thank Joyce Hsieh and Jennifer Choi for their help. The petition reads as follows:

“Whereas the United States government, through the western hemisphere travel initiative, is proposing that US citizens will require a passport or single-purpose travel card to cross the Canada-US border; and

“Whereas a passport or single-purpose travel card would be an added expense, and the inconvenience of having to apply for and carry a new document would be a barrier for many Canadian and US cross-border travellers; and

“Whereas the George Bush government proposal could mean a loss of as many as 3.5 million US visitors to Ontario, and place in peril as many as 7,000 jobs in the Ontario tourism industry by 2008, many of which are valuable entry jobs for youth and new Canadians; and

“Whereas many of the US states bordering Canada have expressed similar concerns regarding the punitive economic impact of this plan, and both states and provinces along the US-Canada border recognize the importance of a safe and efficient movement of people across that border is vital to the economies of both countries;

“Be it therefore resolved that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario support the establishment of a bi-national group to establish an alternative to the proposed US border requirements, and inform Prime Minister Harper that his decision not to advocate on behalf of Ontarians is ill-advised, and contrary to the responsibilities of elected representatives in Canada.”

I will affix my name to this petition.

NATIVE LAND DISPUTE

Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant): This petition is titled, “We Demand Leadership in Land Dispute.” It’s to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the McGuinty government was notified of this land issue over a year ago; and

“Whereas the standoff has been ongoing since February 28, 2006; and

“Whereas there has been no leadership from senior levels of government;

“We, the undersigned, demand that the McGuinty Liberals start showing some real, consistent and timely leadership in dealing with the current standoff in Caledonia.”

I continue to support these petitions and affix my signature.

ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

Mr. Mario Sergio (York West): I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, which I would like to read to you.

“Whereas the people of Ontario deserve a universal, high-quality public health care system; and

“Whereas numerous studies have shown that the best health care is that which is delivered close to home; and

“Whereas the McGuinty government is working to increase Ontarians’ access to family doctors through the introduction of family health teams that allow doctors to serve their communities more effectively; and

“Whereas the McGuinty government has fulfilled its promise to create new family health teams to bring more doctors to more Ontario families;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support the McGuinty government’s efforts to improve access to family doctors through innovative programs like family health teams.”

I concur with the petitioners, and I will affix my signature.

RECYCLING

Mr. Ted Chudleigh (Halton): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas waste from Ontario public schools that could otherwise be recyclable is contributing to increased landfill sites; and

“Whereas diverting waste is critical to sustaining a healthy environment now and in the future; and

“Whereas there is a need to encourage recycling initiatives in all schools; and

“Whereas the private member’s bill proposed by the geography club from Georgetown District High School under Making the Grade will require all Ontario school boards to have two recycling bins in each classroom, one for paper and one for drinking containers. As well, cafeterias must have adequate recycling containers outlining items acceptable to be recycled;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass the private member’s bill that will amend the Ontario school boards education act to divert waste from Ontario high school classrooms and cafeterias.”

I agree with this petition, and I’ll sign my name to it. Thank you, Isaac, for taking this petition.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Mario Sergio (York West): I have a further petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“We, the undersigned, who are members of family councils, residents’ councils and/or supporters of long-

term care in Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to increase operating funding to long-term-care homes by \$306.6 million, which will allow the hiring of more staff to provide an additional 20 minutes of care per resident per day over the next two years (2006 and 2007).”

I present this to the Legislative Assembly, and I will sign it.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): I have a petition similar to quite a number that have been read. This arrived from the People Care nursing home in the great city of Tavistock.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas long-term-care funding levels are too low to enable homes to provide the care and services our aging seniors and parents who are residents of long-term-care homes need, with the respect and dignity that they deserve; and

“Whereas, even with recent funding increases and a dedicated staff who do more than their best, there is still not enough time available to provide the care residents need. For example, 10 minutes, and sometimes less, is simply not enough time to assist a resident to get up, dressed, to the bathroom and then to the dining room for breakfast; and

“Whereas those unacceptable care and service levels are now at risk of declining;

“We, the undersigned, who are members of family councils, residents’ councils and/or supporters of long-term care in Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to increase operating funding to long-term-care homes by \$306.6 million, which will allow the hiring of more staff to provide an additional 20 minutes of care per resident per day over the next two years (2006 and 2007).”

I will affix my signature, as I agree with the petition.

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay): I have a petition entitled, “Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the average price of gasoline has skyrocketed to over \$1 a litre, the highest price at the pumps in Ontario history;

“Whereas high gas prices are causing great hardship for ordinary motorists, small business owners and industry;

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberals promised to take action to keep gas prices low;

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberals have broken that promise and done nothing to help ordinary families getting hosed at the pumps;

“I petition the Ontario government to immediately pass Bill 74.”

I affix my signature to that petition.

OPPOSITION DAY

ENERGY POLICY

Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition): I move that the Legislative Assembly call upon the government,

To recognize that the McGuinty Liberals have presided over a 55% increase to Ontarians' electricity bills since coming to office, despite their promise to cap rates until 2006; and

To recognize that the McGuinty Liberals' irresponsible, unpredictable and unplanned electricity policy will only increase costs for consumers and business going forward; and

To recognize that families, farmers and businesses in communities such as Ottawa, Kingston, Aurora, Brantford, Guelph, Kitchener, London, Niagara Falls and North Bay will be amongst some of the hardest hit by skyrocketing rates and increased charges; and

To recognize that the unpredictable McGuinty Liberal energy policy is and will continue to choke Ontario's economy, chase potential investment from the province and seriously damage our competitiveness; and

To recognize that a well-planned, informed and non-political electricity policy is needed immediately, that such a policy must include meaningful conservation measures and that no one source of generation should be shut down without an adequate amount of reliable and affordable supply available to replace it.

It's addressed to the Premier of Ontario.

1550

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Michael Prue): Mr. Tory has moved opposition day motion 1. The speaker is Mr. Tory.

Mr. Tory: I want to speak for just a few moments on this, and of course a number of my colleagues will join in as well. I move this motion, and we brought it forward today, because we think it is important that a debate like this take place. There really doesn't seem to be any other time at which the government is willing to have such a discussion, and yet the stakes are so high.

This is not just about politics; in fact, it really shouldn't be about politics at all. This is not just about nuclear or coal or wind; those things are all a part of it. It's not about Dalton McGuinty or John Tory or Donna Cansfield. The Premier and the minister would argue it's all about the past. But I'm prepared to come here, and frankly I think many of us are on all sides, and just say that we should start from a premise that past governments of all stripes did or didn't do whatever they did or didn't do, and that we are where we are, and that the question going forward is, what are we going to do about it? The reason we wanted to have this debate today and that I moved this motion is because I think it is appropriate that we should spend more time in this place discussing the question of what kind of plan will, and should, we have to move us forward on this issue.

I think this brings us to the motion. One of the things you have to accept, if there's any possibility that my friend the minister or the Premier are going to reconsider anything they're doing, is to understand full well what the consequences are of the so-called plan—I can't even really bring myself to call it a plan; it's a series of unconnected measures, decisions, promises, public relations gestures and press conferences—to understand what the consequences of that hodgepodge of things are so far. It is, I would argue—the language is in the resolution itself—misguided. It is something that features yet again, as we've seen in so many other areas, a litany of broken promises, and it's irresponsible.

I think if you want to really examine what's going on in this area and the impact it's having, you have to start from a couple of premises that you accept, which this government has given no indication whatsoever they accept in any area, including today, when we asked I think three or four times, including my colleague from Erie—Lincoln, about taxes. They don't get the fact, plain and simple, that people out there in Ontario, in all the cities I mentioned and in many other cities and towns, are working harder and yet they're falling further behind. They just don't get that fact. Sometimes I think the problem is, well, maybe when it's us in the opposition that are standing up and saying these things, people just dismiss it because we're saying it in opposition: "Oh, well. There they go again."

Let me read from a quote that came from the Toronto Sun, where they talk about the fact that "while average workers make do with piddly wage gains of a mere 2%—if they're lucky to get a raise at all—at Queen's Park, the number of civil servants making over \$100,000 a year or more jumped 20% in a year, with most of them working at hydro. In fact, McGuinty's Liberals paid \$340 million more a year in salaries since coming to power.

"Meanwhile, cash-strapped families—carrying record household debt—are paying more in taxes with McGuinty's health levy, while the cost of insurance, home heating, gasoline, property taxes and hydro goes through the roof."

You could find a hundred articles, and if you ever go canvassing door to door, that's the big issue people talk about, besides their cynicism about politicians. I think the two are connected, as my friend the new member from Nepean—Carleton would know, because she has recently done that, and I was out there with her.

You go to a city like London, and you see that the rate of the increases that have taken place—notwithstanding that Mr. McGuinty, of course, promised to cap hydro rates until 2006. He has presided over a 55% increase in hydro rates since he has been the Premier of Ontario, this coming from the same man who solemnly promised, just like he wouldn't raise taxes and all the rest, that he would see that those rates were capped until 2006. It was his promise, not mine, not anybody else's here; he made that promise.

You see in the city of London, for example, quoting from the London Free Press on April 29: "London

ratepayers will ... be hit with a 12.9% increase in their hydro bills....

"Meanwhile, the Ontario Ministry of Labour reported that ... 12 public sector labour agreements were settled for" wage increases "of 2.8% ... seven agreements in the private sector averaged 1.7%"—a different debate we should have another day about the public sector wage increases far outstripping what people in the private sector are getting.

The London Free Press, in the editorial, concludes, "It doesn't take a mathematics degree to know people are rapidly falling behind." That's exactly what is going on here because of this policy that is seeing these wages go up.

There are two other realities, I would suggest: first, that he said he would cap the rates and they have gone up 55%, and second, he—meaning Mr. McGuinty—is the one who is shutting down supply that is reliable and affordable at a time when supply is scarce. The same Premier who says that we're going to have brownouts and blackouts and various and sundry other dire consequences which are serious for the economy and for the people of Ontario is the very same one who is shutting down a part of the electricity supply capacity of this province without any idea at all as to where the power's going to come from.

The minister stands up and tells us that this one's under construction and that one's under construction. There are a couple now where, I agree, they've moved a bit of earth around. But at the end of the day, if you said, "Where's the power going to come from?" they are still telling us that inflated megawatt numbers from wind power, for example, are going to be part of their solution to that problem, when everybody, including their own IESO, for example, says that wind power should be factored in at a 10% reliability factor. It was Mr. McGuinty who came to this House and said, "Wind is not reliable and gas is volatile, so we've decided that we're really going to invest in those and put all our might behind that, because that's what the people of Ontario should be doing."

So what are the consequences? Well, the consequences are, I think, threatened job losses, severe consequences for the economy of this province. Again, don't take it from me. Mr. Gerry Macartney, the head of the London Chamber of Commerce, didn't buy into using—he says, "I don't know if I'd use Mr. Tory's word, 'devastating,'" when I had said that the effect would be devastating, on April 16, 2006, in the London Free Press, but he did go on to say that "these hydro increases could have a critical and debilitating effect on the bottom-line profitability and job creation of some businesses." To me, if that happened, that's devastating. It's devastating at a time when we have enough problems in this province, let alone having the energy policy of Mr. McGuinty and his party adding to them.

Worse than that, when I've been out touring some of the small manufacturing plants in Ontario, they talk about a couple of other things, the result and the responsibility of this minister and this government. Number one, they

can't really rely on the electricity system, so when they have these flickers and brownouts and voltage reductions and so on, these people tell me how much money it costs them to have to shut down their production for an afternoon or a day or a few hours and have the workers there being paid while that's going on. Secondly, they talk about the fact that they can't—as businesses have to do, and I understand this—price their products and do business with people properly when they're in a situation where they don't know from one week or one month or one year to the next what's going on with hydro pricing policy in the province of Ontario.

Of course, we all know that as jobs are lost, not only does it have a devastating—to use that word again—impact on families because people are without work, but it has a devastating impact on government revenues. We've estimated, just based on averages, that the 55,000 manufacturing jobs already lost in Ontario, partly because of these energy policies, have cost the government treasury \$200 million a year just because people are not paying tax on incomes that they're not earning.

The Association of Major Power Consumers put out a story, and they talked about the potential impact on our economy of continuation of these energy policies through 2025 and so on as being \$16 billion a year on GDP and electricity rate increases of 25% a year—not just this year but every year going forward. Mr. Adam White, the president, went on to say that the brunt of the losses would be faced—guess where?—in northern Ontario, in the pulp and paper industry, "in towns like Kapuskasing and Dryden and Thunder Bay and Kenora," to quote him in his report. Just what they need up there is more of a contribution to continued job losses.

He goes on to say something that is very true, which is that you are going to have a spinoff effect on southern Ontario at the same time, because we all know, from touring the mines and the pulp mills and whatnot, all of these different economic installations, that you can point to one machine after another that was built and manufactured in southern Ontario.

This government is not keeping the promises that they made, not me. Secondly, they are shutting down supply at a time when they're calling into question whether we will have enough electricity "to keep the lights on," to use the minister's favourite expression, in the province of Ontario. They are not coming forward with any meaningful conservation plan. Let's be real about this. The minister has come forward with a little drib here and a little drab there, a little announcement here and a little announcement there. On Monday it's air conditioners; on Wednesday it's a promise to do something about fridges. This, of course, from the same bunch that took a measure that was in place to help people replace their energy-inefficient appliances and repealed that some time ago. Now they're going to try and present themselves as heroes by bringing a new program in, and at the end of the day there has been no meaningful conservation program at all to really incent people, including the big users of power, to do anything about this.

1600

I want to conclude my remarks by simply saying this: I believe, as the resolution tries to state, that this policy—it isn't even a policy—this hodgepodge, this lack of a policy, this lack of a plan, is going to have a devastating effect on the economy and on a lot of cities and towns and therefore on a lot of families and people across Ontario.

An editorial in the Windsor Star says that “the OPA”—the power authority, in writing their report—“was restricted in studying the use of clean coal technology and politically committed to pursuing alternate sources of energy no matter the cost and no matter the risk. As we've said before, it's like asking the fire department to draft a firefighting strategy that doesn't involve the use of existing hydrants.”

The editorial from April 12 concludes by saying, “McGuinty's energy plan will cost electricity consumers more money, do little for the environment while severely damaging the economy and create a climate of protracted uncertainty that will scare off investors and lead to devastating job losses.” That's the Windsor Star. I think it sums it up.

I think it's a good thing that we're having this debate in the House this afternoon. I would urge all members on all sides, including those who might have the courage of their convictions on the government side of the House, to vote in favour of this resolution and send a message to this Premier and this government: There is no plan. There is no policy. This is not good enough. Stop doing this damage to the province of Ontario and its economy.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Hon. Donna H. Cansfield (Minister of Energy): I am absolutely delighted that the member for Dufferin–Peel–Wellington–Grey has given me this opportunity to put before him what I have put before many members of the House: the vision, the plan, the opportunities and the initiatives of the McGuinty government. Although the member would like to suggest that we should not go to the past, I think there's a very famous quote that says that if you do not learn from history, you are doomed to repeat it.

I am pleased to have this opportunity. I'm not sure if this really is a debate, but I am pleased to be able to speak to the issue.

The fact of the matter is this: There has been no other government in the last 20 years that has done more for Ontarians when it comes to ensuring a safe, clean, reliable and affordable supply of electricity than this government. That is a fact. Since 2003, when the people gave us the mandate to turn this province around, we have been carrying out our energy plan for Ontario, and we have a lot to do. Just like the \$5-billion debt that the Harris-Eves Tories left behind, a health care system in shambles and a public education system that suffered from cuts and chaos, so too was the state of the energy file by the summer of 2003. On every issue, from supply to conservation to transmission to ridiculous pricing schemes that have left our children and grandchildren in

debt, the energy system we inherited in 2003 was, to say no more, a complete mess.

The opposition asked about our energy plan. I sometimes wonder if they know themselves what a plan might look like. The previous government's energy plan consisted of a chain of events and misfortune that resulted in the following for Ontario families, farmers, small businesses and industry: no new generation capacity added to the grid for eight years; no conservation strategy for eight years; no investment in our transmission infrastructure; and a poorly planned and executed electricity marketplace that, within six months, caused prices to skyrocket and resulted in an additional \$1-billion debt.

In the eight years prior to our administration, our demand in this province grew by 8.5% and our capacity fell by 6%. Put another way, the Tories actually took 1,865 more megawatts off-line than they brought online during the course of their mandate, leaving our government and our future governments to pick up the pieces. A legacy of debt, less generation, no conservation, no energy plan: That is the record of the opposition party.

The member for Dufferin–Peel–Wellington–Grey even acknowledged that his party completely mismanaged the energy sector. I quote: “I'm prepared to sit here, though, and say to you honestly that some of the decisions that were taken, or either not taken or were taken that were incorrect on energy, were taken by Conservative governments”—March 16, 2006.

I'm not going to argue with that. When it comes to energy policy, unlike the members opposite, we are committed to getting things done. The key principle that is the foundation of the McGuinty government's energy plan is ensuring a safe, clean, reliable and affordable supply of energy for generations to come.

The McGuinty government's energy plan is composed of four key elements: building new generation capacity to ensure that Ontario families and businesses have the power they need; maximizing our existing transmission and generating assets to ensure that we are getting the most out of our public assets; creating a culture of conservation to ensure that we use electricity wisely and efficiently and to ensure that we provide Ontario families, small businesses and industries the tools to reduce their energy use and their bills; and putting the infrastructure in place to ensure sound planning to address Ontario's long-term energy needs.

As I have said before and will say again, we are committed to keeping the lights on in this province. While other parties have dithered and withered, our record demonstrates leadership and action. We have shown leadership and we have taken decisive action in every area of our energy plans since day one. Let me highlight some examples.

On supply, we have embarked on the largest investment in our energy infrastructure since Sir Adam Beck was running Hydro almost 100 years ago. To date, we have brought online 3,000 megawatts of generation capacity, enough power for 750,000 homes. The McGuinty government has set the wheels in motion to bring online

over 11,000 megawatts of electricity, enough power for over five million homes. There is no other jurisdiction on this continent that will bring more power online in the next five years than Ontario. That's leadership.

Building new is critical, but we know that we can get more out of what we already have. While the Tories botched refurbishment and investment in our generation and transmission assets because they chose to sell them, we're committed to ensuring that our taxpayers' dollars are invested more wisely and responsibly. When the Tories invested in the refurbishment of Pickering A, unit 4, it was more than \$750 million over budget and years behind schedule. When we refurbished Pickering A, unit 1, we did it on time and on budget, and that's just one difference between our record and theirs.

Let me give you another example of how the McGuinty government is maximizing our existing public assets. We are investing more than \$1 billion in one of our signature hydroelectric facilities, the Sir Adam Beck generating stations 1 and 2, through the Niagara tunnel project. Currently, the project is one of the largest tunnel projects in the world and will produce enough electricity to power 160,000 homes.

On conservation, we have passed groundbreaking conservation leadership legislation, the first of its kind in Canada, and we're only the second jurisdiction in North America to do it. We have created a chief energy conservation officer and have issued directives to our conservation bureau that will generate up to 1,300 megawatts of conservation, which will result in an investment of up to \$1.5 billion by 2010. While the third party cancelled every single conservation program we ever had in 1993, we are committed to rebuilding a culture of conservation and catching up with our peers.

We have also brought on new efficiency standards for large residential gas-fired furnaces, street and industrial lighting ballasts and refrigerated display cabinets, along with tougher standards for residential and commercial air conditioners, household clothes washers and household water heaters. Ontario now matches California standards for 95% of the product categories regulated through standards.

On securing energy for our future, this government has put the infrastructure and public agencies in place to ensure sound planning. As a government, we are committed to ensuring Ontario has a safe, clean, reliable and affordable supply of electricity for generations to come, and the McGuinty government is making it happen. We are making it happen by taking the politics out of pricing.

1610

The Ontario Energy Board has introduced a responsible plan for energy pricing that has reflected the true cost of generating electricity. We have to face the reality that electricity prices are rising across North America, as they are rising around the world, and we cannot continue to leave a legacy of debt for our children and grandchildren, unlike previous governments.

The previous government decided to mitigate the disastrous market opening and placed an artificial 4.3-

cents-per-kilowatt price cap. That price cap wound up costing the people of Ontario \$1 billion. Burying your head in the sand and asking your kids and grandkids to pay for your electricity may be something the Tories are interested in doing, but to me it's not leadership, and it certainly isn't to the McGuinty government. We will not be the Grinch that stole Christmas from future generations, like Mr. Eves and the member from Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey. Instead of artificial price caps, our plan is to help Ontario families save money on their electricity bill through aggressive conservation initiatives and targeted relief for our most vulnerable.

Along with passing the Energy Conservation Leadership Act, creating the conservation bureau and issuing directives, we have also done the following. We are installing 800,000 smart meters by 2007, and in all Ontario households and small businesses by 2010. The conservation bureau has launched the Every Kilowatt Counts campaign.

But we know that low-income families spend a greater amount of their income on electricity costs, and that is why the Minister of Finance has announced that we will provide \$100 million in assistance to almost 1.5 million low-income Ontarians to help them pay those bills. We've also doubled the emergency energy fund.

Our energy plan also includes an aggressive plan to replace coal-fired generation with cleaner sources of energy and conservation to help clean up our air, improve the health of Ontarians and contribute to the sustainability of our environment for future generations while ensuring the reliable supply of electricity.

The true cost of coal is in air pollution-related diseases, hospital visits and premature deaths. When the health and environmental costs are included, it is clear that coal-fired generation is not only the dirtiest option, it is the most expensive option.

I heard the leader of the third party indicate that bottom-line profitability was very important to businesses in Ontario, but I'm sure he did not mean that it would be at the cost of human life. This study shows that although the financial cost of coal-fired generation could amount to about \$1 billion a year, when we consider the health and environmental damages, the total cost of coal-fired generation in this province is a staggering \$4.4 billion a year.

That being said, maintaining reliability is the first principle of our plan. The Minister of Energy is working together with Ontario Power Generation and a number of ministries to assess the impact of closures on their workers and their communities. The government understands the implications coal has on our health and on our environment; clearly the member opposite doesn't.

Despite his repeated calls for a non-partisan approach to energy policy, this motion put forth today is laden with politics. The member has not stepped up to the plate and put forth any concrete ideas in this motion. That's the problem sometimes with the party across the way. As was said earlier, they can just say anything they like. They don't really have to put in place a plan. They didn't

have one in government, and they certainly don't have one now. What I want to know is whether or not his plan would keep all the coal-fired plants open, or would they close them, and if so, by what date? Because Mr. Tory certainly would be on record for the elimination of coal as recently as 2005.

The member opposite and his colleagues are also quite fond of throwing the idea of clean coal around, but everyone is aware of the fact that there are no technologies in commercial use today to reduce greenhouse gas emissions or to eliminate mercury and other toxic emissions. Often what people forget when they just suggest putting in end-of-pipe scrubbers is that what comes out of those scrubbers is sludge, liquid solid waste, which is a hazardous waste. It's not healthy. It just contributes consistently to the pollution of our planet. That's not an answer. It never has been and it shouldn't be in the future. Maybe one day there will be technologies. There are none now, and we're not into half measures when it comes to the air we breathe.

The incidence of asthma in this province has increased by 600% in the last 10 years. I have a son who has asthma. You know, with asthma you can breathe in, but you cannot breathe out. It's terrifying, and people actually die from it. I think we have a responsibility to clean up our air, and I think you have that same responsibility. That's another plan.

Our plan to bring about new small-scale renewable energy is proving to be a cash crop for our farmers. It's called a standard offer program, and here is what Ron Bonnett, president of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, had to say about it when it was announced earlier this year: "Standard offer power is good for farmers and the power supply. It will let farmers provide clean power to Ontario, while earning useful new incomes and building independence for farmers and all Ontario."

Over the next 10 years, this program will help add up to 1,000 megawatts of renewable energy to Ontario's electricity supply. That's enough for 250,000 homes. It's a program that Dr. David Suzuki has said "will revolutionize the market for clean, renewable energy in North America and lay the groundwork for a healthier, brighter future." This program is in addition to the more than 1,300 megawatts of new renewable power that Ontario has contracted for this past year.

Encouraging communities to develop more renewable electricity will spur the kind of innovation in the electricity sector that will help clean up our air, create jobs and contribute to our long-term prosperity. The investment in this province, with 11,000 megawatts, is \$11.5 billion; \$3 billion alone on renewable.

We have also created a net metering program to allow Ontarians to participate in the market. It's more attractive for small generators such as farmers to produce renewable energy, because they can achieve credit for the excess energy they produce.

Just like our farmers, small businesses across Ontario are important to the economy, and we are also working with them to keep their bills lower through the regulated price plan and through conservation. I was pleased to be

able to work with the Ontario Convenience Stores Association as one of my first responsibilities as parliamentary assistant, finding solutions to help small businesses—6,000 of them right across this province. Small businesses that use less than 250,000 kilowatt hours per year have the option of being covered by the regulated price plan set by the Ontario Energy Board for the next year: the first 750 kilowatt hours at 5.8 cents and the remainder at 6.7.

In addition, I have directed the conservation bureau to develop programs geared toward small commercial customers. The conservation bureau will focus on delivering up to 100 megawatts of energy savings by targeting appliances and energy-efficient lighting. While some may scoff, let me tell you that Rabba stores certainly haven't scoffed. There are seven Rabba stores in Toronto. They changed their lighting from T12 to T8. Their savings per year are \$10,000 per store, or \$70,000. Their payback is three years, and then that money goes to their bottom line.

To address the concerns of the industrial sector, we have extended the revenue limit on OPG's unregulated assets for three years, to the spring of 2009—4.6, 4.7 and 4.8 cents—and the rebates will be disbursed quarterly. For the 13-month period ended April 30, 2006, the total revenue limit rebate is expected to exceed \$800 million. Along with the revenue limit, I have directed the OPA to seek up to 1,000 megawatts of combined heat and power projects across the province through an RFP process, which will largely assist large industry developing self-generation to better control their energy costs.

But it isn't enough to ask just Ontarians to do their part to conserve. The government certainly must lead by example, and that is exactly what we are doing. The government is well on its way to achieving the 10% electricity conservation target at government-owned facilities, in particular through innovations like deep lake water cooling, a project that is helping to conserve 9.8 million kilowatt hours a year, and energy retrofits across the entire government real estate portfolio. Some 387 individual conservation projects have been identified, projected to save 62 million kilowatt hours; 106 of those projects were completed as of March 31, 2005.

This government is committed to conservation because we know it's cheaper to save a kilowatt than to produce it. This is in stark contrast to the party opposite, which really made no attempt at energy conservation because, and I quote a former energy minister, "The private sector asked us to get out of large-scale government conservation programs." They "may have made the odd person feel good, but they had absolutely no effect." That was Mr. Jim Wilson in Report on Business.

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As I mentioned earlier, we've already brought 3,000 megawatts online and we've set the wheels in motion for 11,000 megawatts within the next five years. As I indicated, this means \$11.9 billion in all projects and the creation of 90,000 person years of employment. The Ontario economy is strong, and our energy plan is

building a stronger province. In March, the Ontario economy created 31,200 net new jobs, the second-best monthly gain in three years. The majority of those jobs were full-time employment, and the unemployment rate fell to 6.1%. There were more jobs created in Ontario in March than in any other Canadian province. Since coming into office, there have been almost 230,000 net new jobs created.

I would like to conclude with this: The government is pursuing a comprehensive approach to energy policy, one that ensures that we acquire electricity in a way that maximizes benefits and efficiencies and reduces cost and waste. Our energy plan is comprehensive and it is delivering results. While there is much to do to continue to address Ontario's immediate energy needs, we are also taking a responsible approach to addressing the long-term challenge.

Our vision for this province is clear: an Ontario with a safe, clean, reliable and affordable supply of power; an Ontario where our industries are leaders in the global economy; an Ontario that is the centre for investment in the energy sector—\$11.5 billion to date; an Ontario that has clean air that our families, children and grandchildren can enjoy; and an Ontario that continues to be the envy of the world.

Many years ago, having participated in an event, I often like to use an aboriginal prayer that I believe is, to paraphrase: It is the responsibility of all of us to walk carefully on this earth, for we walk on our future. I think it's the responsibility for all of us to walk carefully on this earth, because we not only walk on our future, we walk on our children's future. I do not think that responsibility is limited to this government; I think it's a responsibility for all governments.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke):

It is my pleasure to rise and speak in favour of our leader's opposition day motion today, which I will not repeat, that speaks of the unacceptable consequences of this government's failed energy policy, beginning with a 55% rate increase since taking office and a 16% rate increase in the past year. The government was laying the groundwork for a couple of weeks before that, telling us about the huge increases in energy prices in other jurisdictions, but as usual they either don't square with the people or they don't tell them half the story. They were using the state of Massachusetts as an example and citing their 32% increase in hydro rates. However, what they didn't tell you is that Massachusetts primarily gets its power from natural gas and oil. Natural gas is one of the sources this government sees as the solution to bail them out of their failed energy policy, which began with a promise to shut down 20% of the capacity in this province.

If you go back to the time when Dalton McGuinty was in opposition, I can assure you that in his caucus there was far from unanimity on that promise. In fact I know that the previous member from my riding, Sean Conway, who was the energy critic at the time, did not agree with

that policy. You have heard him repeatedly make it pretty clear on different talk shows across this province that he thinks the government was absolutely wrong to make that kind of irresponsible promise, which our leader talks about in his motion, to shut down 20% of our province's capacity with no realistic, workable plan to make that happen under the timelines that they constricted themselves with for purely political reasons. No government has politicized the energy sector like this government we're seeing today. Time and time again, they cite the concerns and studies by particular groups with regard to health concerns and everything else, but they do not present solid evidence to support their claims. It's hard to make a case against people when they stand up and make all kinds of claims about what they want to do and how much they care about people's health and everything else. The fact is that in this province, our standard of living is going to drop if they have their way with their energy policy. That is a threat to everybody's health in this province; our standard of living is an important component of a healthy Ontario.

Dalton McGuinty has been in the government now for some 913 days in this province. Well before that, he was completely aware of the looming energy shortage coming in this province with regard to the capacity at the time, the expected retirement of certain pieces of that capacity framework, and the ability to bring new generation in on time to replace that, under restrictive timelines as well. He was well aware of that. But irresponsibly, he made a promise that he knew he could not keep. Mark my words, this government will not keep that promise. They cannot keep that promise, because the IESO, which has the responsibility to ensure that there will be power in this province, will not let them keep this promise. Thank goodness they are there to keep the lights going in this province, because we cannot depend on this government to do so. They would rather shut down an economy than face the fact that their energy policy has failed.

Some 145 days ago the OPA, the Ontario Power Authority, released a report. We had a commitment from the Minister of Energy on that day, December 9, that they would report back to this House within 60 days to give their decisions, based on the recommendations for the power supply outlook in this province in the Supply Mix Advice Report tabled on December 9. It is now 145 days—not 60 days; 145 days—and we have heard nothing from that minister. We have heard nothing from that minister because these people are so boxed in by this failed energy policy—you know, the Premier was talking about the tax assessment issue and he said, "We're seized on this." You know what? They're "seized" on something else too. It's time that the people of this province gave them a little lubrication on the way out the door. So 145 days and no action, and no answer on the part of the minister.

Do you know what one of their excuses is? "Well, we had to go back to a consultative process because some people raised some issues with regard to the recommendations of the report with respect to new-build

nuclear in this province.” My goodness gracious, 913 days in office and you haven’t had the ability to do some consultations, when you knew about the looming supply issues that existed in this province? They are paralyzed by the failures of their Premier and his irresponsible decisions to make promises he couldn’t keep. It didn’t seem to bother him on some promises, but for some reason, on this one he just will not admit that the only thing left on that policy is to bring the coroner in and pronounce it dead, because they cannot follow through on this.

Our leader talked about Adam White with AMPCO and the effect that this government’s policy is having on jobs and our economy, and therefore our standard of living. Here are some of the things they’ve done because of that failed policy: They’ve put out an RFP to the industry and they got responses to it. They accepted contracts in Mississauga, since cancelled, because they accepted bids that were not realistic. You know what? When you have no intention of following through on your bid, you can make it pretty darn low, or if you’re about to go bankrupt, you can make it pretty darn low. That’s what happened with bids that were accepted by this government under the RFP process. Now they have to go back, wasting more time. We at least have started on a plant with Sithe power up in Brampton.

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How much time was wasted because they didn’t seem to understand the realities? They didn’t understand how the sector works. They didn’t understand what good numbers were and what bad numbers were. They just hopped in it because, do you know what? They are so desperate, they are in such a box because of their failures, and the people of this province are paying for it. They’re paying for it with 55% hydro rate increases in this province over the last 913 days.

The minister makes unsubstantiated claims every time she gets up and makes an announcement that is either designed to misinform the public or—

Mr. Dave Levac (Brant): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I could quote the orders of our behaviour but I think the member knows—

Mr. Yakabuski: I withdraw—when she stands up and makes these claims about the projects that they’ve opened up.

In the last couple of months we’ve had three wind projects. She calls them “209 megawatts” of wind between Melancthon, Kingsbridge and Erie Shores. Mr. Speaker, that’s 20.9 megawatts of power. According to the IESO, you can only claim 10% reliability for those projects. But she gets up here and says, “Well, this is power for X number of homes.” She talks about their plans over the next few years, 11,000 megawatts of power, meaning power for five million homes. If you use those figures, then their decision to shut down 6,500 megawatts of power in this province is shutting off the power to three million homes. What kind of sound logic is that? When they came into office, I guarantee that the first thing the people in the industry and people in the ministry would

have been telling them was, “We’ve got a real problem on our hands with regard to the medium- and long-term ability to supply power in this province.” And your decision is, “Well, do you know what? We’ve got a plan. The first thing we’re going to do is shut down 20% of that.” That’s a good plan, and that has caused a great deal of the issues they’re dealing with now, making bad decisions as a result of putting themselves in a box.

The minister talks about conversation—conservation. Conversation too; they talk a lot. They have a lot of conversations about conservation but they’ve done little. They nixed the plan that was in place; they nixed the program that was in place to ensure that energy-efficient appliances would find their way into Ontario homes, thereby reducing the demand on our strained power supply. They nixed that plan.

Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie–Lincoln): Why?

Mr. Yakabuski: That’s a good question. I guess it wasn’t a Liberal plan. But almost two years later we have no plan to replace that. While they’ve continued to talk about continuing to look for ways to increase the power supply, as I say, we’ve got a report that has been sitting on the minister’s desk for 145 days that she has an absolute duty to the people in this province to respond to within the time that she promised: 60 days. She has failed on that.

We could go on for some time, but I know I have other members of this caucus who want to speak on this issue.

The port lands was another RFP boondoggle that they actually turned down. Hello, did they just wake up or something? When somebody told them, “Do you know what? Toronto is in a real pickle. We’ve got to have power in Toronto or we’re going to have blackouts and brownouts by 2008,” with no respect to the process whatsoever, again talking about that box they put themselves into, they signed a deal without even looking at other proposals. I’m not here to condemn the project. I am here to condemn a process that a government has no respect for because of their own ridiculous commitments to embark on voyages that will only end with a sunken ship.

I do want to wind up and leave some time to my other caucus colleagues, but I’m very pleased to support the motion by our leader, John Tory. He understands the mess that this government has created. It is time for this Legislature to clearly send that message. I hope that the members on the other side of the House, who know your policies are wrong, will support this motion.

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): It’s my intention to share the time allocated to New Democrats with my colleague from Timmins–James Bay, but I cannot resist the opportunity to say a few words about the issue before us today.

Having an electricity strategy in Ontario for a reliable supply of electricity, an affordable supply of electricity and a sustainable supply of electricity has really been the foundation of Ontario’s economy. Ontario’s economy is a manufacturing economy. It is not a Hollywood econ-

omy, as some on the Liberal benches would want us to believe. It is not a financial services economy, as some in the McGuinty government want us to believe. It is a manufacturing economy. If you're going to have a manufacturing economy, it means you have to have a hydroelectricity strategy that provides affordable electricity, a reliable supply of electricity and a sustainable supply of electricity. But sadly, as this resolution indicates, all of that is now going down the drain with the McGuinty government.

I want to reflect on just part of what was promised by Dalton McGuinty and what this government is now failing to deliver. Before the last election, Dalton McGuinty said that the private electricity market was dead and that a McGuinty government stood for public power. Three years into the McGuinty government we begin to see just how false those words, those promises, were, because what we've seen under the McGuinty government is that virtually all new generation is private, profit-driven generation, and that carries with it certain repercussions.

The reality is that no matter where you go in the world—in North America, Europe, Australia—the difference between private, profit-driven electricity schemes and public, not-for-profit electricity systems is that the private, profit-driven schemes cost consumers at least 20% more. And there's good reason for that. Anyone who is going to invest \$1 billion or \$2 billion in a new generating facility—that's an awful lot of money. No one carries that kind of cash around; no one has that kind of cash on hand. You have to borrow that amount of money. For a private company to go out and borrow that kind of money, they're likely going to pay an interest rate of about 8%, whereas if government builds a generating facility, a generating station, government can borrow that money for about 5%. The difference between \$2 billion borrowed at 8% for 25 years, and \$2 billion borrowed at 5% for 25 years, is hundreds of millions of dollars in added interest. That's what happens with private, profit-driven electricity: You have to pay tremendously increased borrowing costs, and that gets added to the hydro bill.

The second thing that happens when a private, profit-driven company has \$2 billion tied up in capital like that is that they want at least a 15%, 16%, perhaps 20% profit. That gets added to the hydro bill. So no matter where you are, as soon as a government starts moving toward private, profit-driven electricity, you're going to drive up electricity rates by at least 20%.

But you know, the McGuinty government has done more and worse than that. If you look at other provinces—Quebec, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, British Columbia—what you find is that there is essentially one entity in the province that is responsible for electricity supply. That entity does the planning; they do the forecasting; they build the generation; they build the transmission; they may in some cases build the distribution, or they may work with municipalities to build the distribution lines. That results in efficiency, efficiency for the consumer. By and large, if you look at Hydro-Québec,

Manitoba Hydro, Saskatchewan Power or BC Hydro, the people who run those systems get paid about maybe \$400,000 or \$500,000 a year—not bad pay, not bad work if you can get it. But what has the McGuinty government done in Ontario? The McGuinty government has actually now created seven bureaucracies to look after the hydroelectricity system, and when they add on the so-called smart meter entity, that will be eight.

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Get a load of some of these. You have the Ontario Power Authority, which is headed up by Dalton McGuinty's former fundraiser, Jan Carr. Mr. Carr gets paid \$800,000 a year. Then you have Hydro One, which is headed up by Mr. Parkinson. Mr. Parkinson, even though he uses the company helicopter for his own personal use to go back and forth to his cabin, is getting paid \$1.5 million a year. Then you have Ontario Power Generation, and the top-paid person there gets paid over \$800,000 a year.

Then you have the Independent Electricity System Operator, and there are lots of people over there making money in the six figures. Then you have the electricity financing authority, and there are lots of people over there making more than six figures. Then you have the electricity safety authority, and there are lots of people over there making more than six figures. Then you have the Ontario Energy Board, which is more bureaucratic than ever, and there are lots of people over there getting paid more than six figures. Then you have the new smart meter entity.

What do all these eight entities do? They drive up the hydro bill. If you're going to be paying \$1 million here, \$1.5 million here, \$1 million to this friend of Dalton McGuinty, almost \$1 million to Dalton McGuinty's former fundraiser, that drives up the hydro bill a lot. Let me tell people at home: There are now a lot of people who are growing very fat in the hydroelectricity bureaucracy that Dalton McGuinty has created, getting fat salaries, fat bonuses and fat expense accounts, and the good people of Ontario and the workers in the industries and businesses of Ontario are paying for Dalton McGuinty's largesse to his friends.

It is worse than that because these huge increases in hydro rates are killing, not thousands of jobs, not tens of thousands of jobs, but over 100,000 good-paying manufacturing jobs in this province. The announcements have come one on top of the other. One of the most recent is the closure of the B. F. Goodrich plant in Kitchener-Waterloo, and they were very clear in their press release: 1,100 jobs gone in Ontario, and one of the major reasons: they cannot afford to pay Ontario's hydroelectricity rates. They are looking to other jurisdictions.

Mr. John Milloy (Kitchener Centre): They didn't say that.

Mrs. Liz Sandals (Guelph-Wellington): It didn't say that.

Mr. Hampton: Oh, Liberals don't want to hear this.

Similarly, go to Domtar in Cornwall, which laid off over 800 workers. What did they cite when they laid off

800 hard-working people? What did they cite when they said they were moving their production to Quebec? They cannot afford to pay Dalton McGuinty's absurdly increased hydroelectricity rates.

Over 500 workers at the Cascades plant in Thunder Bay out the door, and what did Cascades say in their press release when they announced they were shutting down the paper mill, when they announced they were laying off 500 workers, when they announced they were moving the production to Quebec? They said they cannot afford to pay Dalton McGuinty's absurdly increased hydroelectricity rates.

And so it went for the Abitibi mill in Kenora, the Weyerhaeuser mill in Dryden, the Bowater pulp operation in Thunder Bay and the mill in Red Rock and the mill in Terrace Bay, and layoffs in Fort Francis, Sault Ste. Marie and Ottawa. The Domtar example in Ottawa is educational for people because that Domtar mill had two paper machines on the Ottawa side of the river and one paper machine on the Quebec side of the river. What did Domtar announce? They're shutting down the two paper machines on the Ontario side and they're going to continue to run the paper machine on the Quebec side. In fact, they're going to make investments in the paper machine on the Quebec side.

Interjection: Why?

Mr. Hampton: Why? Because Domtar can't afford to pay Dalton McGuinty's absurdly elevated, absurdly increased electricity rates.

I see that the member of the Liberal cabinet, the McGuinty cabinet, from Sarnia is here. She should know that very soon there are going to be some facilities in the Sarnia area that will be announcing layoffs, because the chemical industry has indicated very clearly that they cannot pay Dalton McGuinty's absurdly elevated electricity rates.

Just this week we had the mining industry here, and what do you think was at the top of the list of concerns of the mining industry? They were very clear. The mining industry, responsible for about 200,000 well-paying jobs in this province, said very clearly that at the top of their list of worries and concerns is the McGuinty government policy of driving electricity rates through the roof.

This hasn't been thousands of jobs destroyed, it hasn't been 10,000 jobs destroyed; it's been hundreds of thousands of jobs destroyed, and more are going to join the list every week as a result of a McGuinty government that has—

Interjection.

Mr. Hampton: No, they have a hydroelectricity policy. They just don't want the public to know what the real hydroelectricity policy is. The real hydroelectricity policy of this government is to go nuclear, go big and go expensive. That's going to add much more to the hydro bill. Because you know what? Not one nuclear power plant in this province, whether newly built or refurbished, has come in on budget or under budget. All of them have resulted in expenditures grossly over budget. One example is Darlington. Darlington was supposed to cost

about \$4 billion to construct. When it was finished, under the Peterson government, it cost over \$14 billion. Now the McGuinty government says they're going to go back into nuclear. They say \$40 billion for new nuclear. If history in Ontario is any record, it won't be \$40 billion, it won't be \$60 billion; it will be \$80 billion plus. That is the record of the nuclear power industry in this province. Do you know what that will do to hydro bills? Do you know what that will do to jobs in this province? It will chase more jobs out of this province than we've ever seen before. That's what we're facing.

There are some absurd results coming from this policy. My part of the province, northwestern Ontario, is not even part of the southern Ontario grid. It's on a separate electricity grid. That's why, when the lights went out in the blackout of the summer of 2003, when the lights went out everywhere else south and east of Wawa, the lights in northwestern Ontario stayed on, because it's a separate electricity system. That part of Ontario has an abundant supply of electricity. Virtually every town is surrounded by four or five power dams, where electricity is generated at a cost of about two cents a kilowatt hour. But do you know what the paper mills and pulp mills in northwestern Ontario that are located right next door to those power dams are being forced to pay for that electricity under the McGuinty government's policy?

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Interjection: How much?

Mr. Hampton: Close to eight cents a kilowatt hour. Imagine that. There you are.

Historically, a mill was located on the Winnipeg River or the Rainy River or the Wabigoon River or near the Nipigon River because of abundant supplies of inexpensive hydroelectricity, and that supply is still there. In fact, that supply can't be taken to southern Ontario—there is no transmission line. It can't be taken to Manitoba—there is no transmission line. It can't be taken to Minnesota—there is no transmission line. It's an energy island by itself. It's an energy island that has the most affordable electricity in North America, and paper mills and pulp mills should be doing a great business there. But as a result of McGuinty government policy, those mills are being forced to pay close to eight cents a kilowatt hour for electricity that only costs two cents a kilowatt hour to produce.

What has the result been? The destruction of thousands of jobs and the destruction of the economies of several communities—no rational reason for it, no excuse for it. Why is it happening? Because of the McGuinty government's absurd electricity policy that we are seeing now.

The other element of this is, if you look around at some of the most successful jurisdictions now, they've made significant investments in electricity efficiency. For example, California has in effect been able to avoid a 12,000-megawatt increase in their electricity consumption through energy efficiency measures. Do you know what 12,000 megawatts amounts to? It amounts to three

Darlington-size nuclear plants. Imagine that: \$14 billion plus \$14 billion plus \$14 billion avoided. That was the cost of Darlington. That's what they've avoided through a thoughtful, focused strategy on electricity efficiency.

Do you have to reinvent the wheel to do that? No. The first thing they did in California was implement a very up-to-date building code so that in California you cannot construct a building of any kind unless it meets their electricity efficiency standards. Just by doing that, California in the last 15 years has avoided a 6,000-megawatt increase in their electricity consumption.

What was the second thing California did? They passed legislation requiring all electrical appliances to be energy efficient. So in California, you can't purchase and install a fridge that's an electricity hog. You can't purchase and install an air conditioner that's an electricity hog. You can't go out and purchase a stove or any other electrical appliance that is an electricity hog. What does that mean? Well, the difference between an ordinary fridge that is not efficient in the use of electricity and a fridge that is efficient in the use of electricity is that the fridge that's efficient uses one quarter the amount of electricity of the one that isn't built with efficiency in mind.

Has the McGuinty government done any of these things? For all of their platitudes, for all of their holier-than-thou speeches, for all of their sanctimonious talk, have they done any of these things? No. No new building code, no legislation, no regulations requiring the most up-to-date energy efficiency appliances.

You don't even have to look to California. You only have to look to our sister provinces, Manitoba and Quebec, both of which have implemented very aggressive electricity efficiency policies. If you live in Manitoba now, a homeowner in Manitoba who said, "You know what? My hydro bill is getting too high. This is ridiculous," could apply for and receive a \$5,000 low-interest loan. They could use that loan to put in high efficiency heating, to re-insulate their home, to put in energy-efficient windows, to purchase energy-efficient appliances and reduce not only their electricity bill but their natural gas bill. And they would pay that loan back with what they save on a monthly basis on their hydro bill and their natural gas bill.

A similar situation in Quebec: Quebec has almost the same strategy. In fact, Quebec is going even further. This past summer, Quebec started looking at older apartment buildings that were constructed in the city of Montreal and started retrofitting those buildings virtually from top to bottom to get electricity usage down.

Is anything like that happening in Ontario under the McGuinty government? Not at all. You get these superficial advertising campaigns that offer nothing for people other than, "Feel good." You perhaps get the Minister of Energy wandering around with a light bulb from time to time, but there is no energy efficiency strategy under the McGuinty government.

Maybe people are wondering, "Well, why is that?" I want people at home to know why that is. It's because

while the former Conservative government just came right out and said they were in favour of privatization and deregulation and then started doing it through the front door, the McGuinty government wants to pretend that it's not in favour of privatization and deregulation, but that's exactly what they're doing through the back door. In fact, there has been far more privatization and deregulation of the hydroelectricity system under the sanctimonious McGuinty government than there ever was under those bad guys Mike Harris and Ernie Eves—far more privatization.

But that privatization agenda carries with it a very big cost, because private companies who want to now control the electricity system aren't interested in an energy efficiency strategy which reduces electricity consumption. Ford is not interested in a strategy which results in people buying fewer cars. General Motors isn't interested in a strategy which results in people buying fewer cars. Exxon isn't interested in a strategy which results in people buying less gas. They want consumption to increase so they can make more profit.

And so it is with the private investors now favoured by the McGuinty government in Ontario. They are absolutely opposed to an energy efficiency strategy. They're opposed to an energy efficiency strategy which would see us use electricity and other forms of energy in a more efficient way and, over time, result in us consuming less electricity and less energy. They're opposed to it because if the market isn't growing, that means their profits aren't growing. That's the real source of the McGuinty government electricity policy. That's the real source here.

I say to folks at home that I may have some differences with the Conservative Party in terms of the motion they've brought today, but I commend the Conservative Party and the Conservative leader, Mr. Tory, for bringing this motion forward, because I have to say that this issue goes to the heart of the Ontario economy. Right now, the absurd McGuinty policy of driving electricity rates through the roof is wiping out good manufacturing job after good manufacturing job virtually everywhere across this province, and the situation's going to get worse and worse. People across Ontario need to know why it is happening and need to hold this government accountable.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Ms. Monique M. Smith (Nipissing): I'm happy to speak to this resolution today. The leader of the official opposition would have us completely forget the past. He would like us to completely forget what happened under his party's government and what happened during the blackout.

The leader of the third party referred to the blackout of a few summers ago and the fact that his area wasn't directly affected because they were on a different grid. My area was affected, and the people from Nipissing remember the blackout. They remember the legacy of the Harris government, what the Conservatives did and the chaos that was the hydro plan, or whatever you would call it, because I don't think we could call it a plan during those years. What we were left with was an impossible legacy, and what we're doing is dealing with that.

1700

Part of this resolution today says that no one source of generation should be shut down. With that, I disagree. I believe we should be shutting down coal. Coal is dirty and it kills. It produces carbon dioxide, which contributes to global warming. It produces sulphur dioxide, which contributes to acid rain. It produces nitrous oxide, which contributes to smog. Scrubbers reduce some of the effects of SO_x and NO_x, but they do nothing about carbon dioxide. Scrubbers don't do anything about the carcinogens like arsenic, beryllium, chromium and cadmium. They cost hundreds of millions of dollars, and they don't address those particular issues. Scrubbers don't do anything about mercury, a neurotoxin that leads to reproductive disabilities and learning disabilities.

The cost-benefit analysis shows that coal costs \$4.4 billion per year when you include the health and environmental costs. Those are costs that the leader of the official opposition doesn't want to talk about, but let's just look at the health costs for a minute. Those health costs include 668 premature deaths, 928 hospital admissions, 1,100 emergency room visits and 333,000 minor illnesses. That's the technology that John Tory and the Conservatives support. They don't want to address this issue.

The member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke said that there was no one to substantiate these allegations or these positions that we're taking. Well, I disagree. You might be familiar with Dr. Greg Flynn, the president of the Ontario Medical Association. He said, "This year nearly 6,000 people will die—our friends, our family, our neighbours—and they will die as a result of not only the acute effects of smog, but the cumulative effects of smog. We also know that the cost of smog in our health care, and our economy, is at least \$1 billion.... The government and the public cannot afford to not take action on air pollution."

Dr. Flynn also stated, "Closing Ontario's coal-fired plants is the right thing to do. It will improve our health, it will improve our economic well-being. It will make us healthier both in the short run and the long run. It takes courage to establish priorities like this—to establish firm and solid plans to replace the power that we need. It will take considerable commitment to bring these plans to fruition. But I applaud the government for its courage ... for its commitment to make sure that its promises are carried out in a reasonable period of time and in a reasonable way." That is Dr. Greg Flynn, the Ontario Medical Association president, supporting our decision to shut down coal.

Many of my colleagues will talk about some of the other aspects of our plan, but I would like to focus in on one particular aspect that I know is of great interest to my constituents, and that's our conservation plan. Recently, just this past weekend, I attended the North Bay home builders' association trade show at Memorial Gardens, as did thousands of residents of North Bay and area. I was fascinated and really encouraged to see how many displays there were about conservation. North Bay Hydro

was there promoting its conservation plan. Greening Nipissing was there.

The leader of the third party talked about the plans they have for conservation in Quebec and Manitoba. Well, we have some of those plans here. I've had Greening Nipissing, which is a local grassroots organization, come to my home and do an assessment of my home to determine how I can save more energy, how my home can be more efficient and more energy-conscious. They did that assessment. They gave me the recommendations. Through a federal government program that I hope still exists—although I look to the leader of the official opposition to lobby his brethren in Ottawa to continue these programs to ensure that our environment is protected; I hope this program will continue—they will see refunds to some of our residents for the investments they make in their homes.

There were other service providers at Memorial Gardens that day talking about different ways to insulate your home, different little tools, little tricks you can do to conserve.

We as a government have introduced a conservation bureau. We created the bureau that has launched the Every Kilowatt Counts campaign, a direct-mail campaign that will inform residents of Ontario and assist them, through incentive coupons, to purchase more energy-efficient light bulbs, programmable thermostats, ceiling fans. We're seeing rebates for replacing inefficient central air conditioning units and also the installation of programmable thermostats. We're seeing the investment, through the conservation bureau, of \$9.25 million to upgrade lighting and appliances in our social housing to support energy conservation. Across the province over the next three years we will see smart meters being introduced into our homes and into our rental properties.

These are great steps forward in conservation. We have to conserve. It is a source of energy that Ontarians need, and we recognize that and we're moving forward with that. We're not putting our heads in the sand, as the previous government did, and allowing the lights to go out across the province and allowing us to be without power for hours and, in some locations, days. We are moving forward with a plan that will see the lights stay on across the province.

I'm glad the leader of the official opposition highlighted North Bay in his resolution, because I always appreciate the opportunity to talk about all the good-news things that are happening in North Bay: the investment we're making in our bridges and roads and in the completion of four-laning our highway; our new hospital that's being built, which is terribly exciting for our community—we're all very excited about the upcoming groundbreaking this fall. We have much good news to celebrate in North Bay.

While we do recognize that there are struggles ahead in the energy sector, we also recognize, as responsible Ontarians, that we don't want to saddle our children and grandchildren with a debt. We can't leave a legacy for our children and grandchildren to pay the debt for the

power we're using today. We need to conserve, we need to look at alternate sources and we need to reduce.

Mr. Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington): I'm pleased to have this chance to speak in support of the opposition day motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition. This motion calls upon the government:

"To recognize that the McGuinty Liberals have presided over a 55% increase to Ontarians' electricity bills since coming to office, despite their promise to cap rates until 2006; and

"To recognize that the McGuinty Liberals' irresponsible, unpredictable and unplanned electricity policy will only increase costs for consumers and business going forward; and

"To recognize that families, farmers and businesses in communities such as Ottawa, Kingston, Aurora, Brantford, Guelph, Kitchener, London, Niagara Falls and North Bay will be amongst some of the hardest hit by skyrocketing rates and increased charges; and

"To recognize that the unpredictable McGuinty Liberal energy policy is and will continue to choke Ontario's economy, chase potential investment from the province and seriously damage our competitiveness; and

"To recognize that a well-planned, informed and non-political electricity policy is needed immediately, that such a policy must include meaningful conservation measures and that no one source of generation should be shut down without an adequate amount of reliable and affordable supply available to replace it."

This motion is as timely as it is absolutely necessary. While the motion is critical of the government's electricity policy to date, it offers a constructive recommendation. This is the role of the opposition.

The subject of this motion is very well chosen, because it affects the vast majority of households, farm families and people in business—businesses that are large and small, including businesses that sustain jobs in the manufacturing sector and in Ontario's tourism industry. It is well chosen because it affects us all and the entire economy of the province. If electricity issues are managed well, the province is more likely to prosper. If electricity issues are mismanaged, the province is more likely to stagnate.

I have enjoyed the privilege of serving my constituents in this House over the years. In that time, we've seen hydro issues move to the forefront and become more and more contentious and politically charged. The irony is that since 1990, all three of the major political parties in Ontario have held office, and none of us would be so bold as to boast that our energy policies met the test of perfection. The controversy over privatization versus public ownership; Sir Adam Beck's principle of power at cost, which eventually evolved into a situation where we weren't paying the full cost, leading to a massive debt in the billions of dollars carried by the old Ontario Hydro; hydro rates which were kept artificially low because historically one of the competitive advantages our industries enjoyed had been low-cost power; the need for effective conservation so that our precious energy re-

sources are not squandered and wasted; in some cases, legitimate environmental concerns about air pollution from old coal-fired generating stations; proper management of hydro infrastructure; and of course the need for security and certainty of supply, which ensures that the lights actually do stay on: These are some of the key issues.

Irrespective of which party is in power, my view is that hydro today is perceived less as a source of strength, affordability and certainty than it once was in Ontario. Regrettably, hydro has become yet another political football. From time to time through the years that I have been privileged to serve here, business leaders, farm families, municipal officials and families paying their bills have called on me to voice their concerns about hydro, and I have done so. This Liberal government, which literally holds nothing dearer than hanging on to power at all cost, may need to be reminded that their mismanagement of hydro will eventually be a major part of their undoing. Our energy critic, the member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, is doing a top-notch job of raising key energy issues in this House. I want to compliment him for the tenacity and effectiveness he brings to the job of holding the government to account. His predecessor as our energy critic, the member for Durham, has a wealth of knowledge on electricity issues that continues to inform this debate. I look forward to his comments this afternoon as well.

1710

It is fair to point out, though, that the McGuinty Liberals, in the election of 2003, amongst their long list of promises, assured Ontarians that they would freeze electricity rates at 4.3 cents a kilowatt hour until 2006. They broke that promise. Now it seems that rates will continue to go up for the foreseeable future. While I realize that we have to pay the full cost of generation, transmission and distribution of electricity, since 2003 the McGuinty Liberal government has completely mismanaged Ontario's electricity system.

One of the most distinct examples of this is their stubborn refusal to be up front about our coal-fired electricity generators. There isn't a member of this House who doesn't care about air pollution and greenhouse gases. All of us support stronger measures to ensure that the air we breathe is cleaner and that we reduce harmful carbon emissions. However, responsible management and, dare I say, common sense would dictate that you don't shut down one fifth of your generating capacity unless you have replacement generating capacity ready to be turned on. Yet this is the Liberal electricity policy, causing uncertainty, leading to reduced investment and ultimately fewer new jobs.

What is needed most of all and what this resolution calls for is that we must take the partisan bickering off the table. To me this resolution suggests, "Let's get to work for good public policy, respect the work and expertise of our professionals in the hydro sector, set aside our ideological baggage, stop fearmongering, be practical and take action to ensure that Ontario has reliable and affordable electricity for generations to come."

Mrs. Sandals: I'm pleased to be able to comment on the opposition motion here today. Before I address the opposition motion, I couldn't help but want to comment, after the leader from the third party spoke, to remind him that when we refurbished Pickering A, unit 1, unlike the previous government, we did it on time and on budget. So it is possible to do these refurbishments within cost.

However, let's deal with the motion that's on the floor. I would like first of all to correct the record, because I think some of the premises in the motion are just plain wrong. The motion identifies my constituency of Guelph as having been one of the municipalities hardest hit in the province by skyrocketing rates. The concept of "hardest hit" is an interesting one, because every residential consumer in Ontario will pay exactly the same cost for electricity. It is being increased by 0.942 cents per kilowatt hour. If you use 1,000 kilowatt hours per month, that translates into an extra \$9.42 per month. It doesn't matter where you live in Ontario; that's the increase.

The variability in increase, and it is significant, comes as you move from municipality to municipality, and it's due to the charges increased, or decreased in some cases, by the local distribution companies. It happens that in Guelph the increase by the local distribution company is actually just 73 cents for 1,000 kilowatt hours, meaning that if you were to use 1,000 kilowatt hours in Guelph per month, your bill would go up to \$10.15. But if you go and talk to the local distribution company, Guelph Hydro, they will tell you that Guelph consumers actually don't use that much per month. On average, a residential consumer in Guelph uses about 600 to 700 kilowatt hours. The average household bill in Guelph will increase just \$6.72 per month, or about \$80 a year.

When you talk to consumers in Guelph, they quite understand that we can't go on in this endless cycle of having electricity costs that are below the true cost of production, and some debt that's building up and up somewhere that somebody—our children—is eventually going to have to pay off.

Consumers in Guelph understand that \$80 a year is not an unreasonable cost to pay for the true cost of electricity, to make sure that we're not injuring our children. That is in fact the average increase in Guelph: \$80 a year. Not a bad deal.

The local paper, in an editorial, pointed out that there's no question that this move is necessary, that the continuing subsidization of hydro rates has left consumers with an unrealistic view of how much the power they use costs. That incorrect view of the price has led to abuse and does not endorse conservation, conservation that is very necessary, and my colleague from Nipissing has already spoken about that.

The Leader of the Opposition thinks that perhaps we should forget the past record. Well, I think the past record is very informative, because the Conservative government decided that when it came to generation, they would just wait for the private sector to build it. As a result of that, the generating capacity in this province

actually fell on their watch and the distribution system in this province became neglected.

I totally understand that they did not cause the black-out, but in Guelph we were out for four days. It took four days to come back up, in part because we didn't have the generating capacity in this province anymore to solve our own consumption problems. We didn't have distribution in this province that was reliable enough to bring things back up quickly. In fact, neglect of the system, waiting for somebody else to plan it, did have an impact on my constituents in Guelph.

One of the things that is very important is that we increase our capacity to generate electricity in this province, and we have been very attentive to that. In particular, we have been very attentive to the issue of renewable generation. We have contracted for 1,300 megawatts of renewable transmission.

I'm very pleased that the first of those projects to come online actually came online in Guelph. It's not a large project—it produces 2.5 megawatts of electricity—but I think it's a very exciting project. When you have a landfill—and we have a landfill in Guelph, the Eastview landfill, which has been closed—the organic materials sitting in that landfill generate gases such as methane. What is happening at the closed landfill in Guelph is that there have been pipes inserted to collect that methane as it off-gases, there have been generators installed that are fuelled by that methane, and we are now generating electricity from the closed landfill site—a very ecologically friendly, sustainable project.

If I go to my neighbours to the northeast, in fact to the Leader of the Opposition's own riding, the very first major wind farm in Ontario is in his riding, in Melancthon. The Melancthon project is generating 67.5 megawatts of electricity. That wind farm came into production this year, 2006, and is one of three wind farms currently up and running under our government.

Another exciting thing we have just done is brought in a standard-offer contract for solar energy and other renewables. I have to tell you that when my colleague from Kitchener Centre arranged for to us meet with the solar energy in Waterloo, they were very excited about this project. There are a lot of things we are doing to make sure that our province has a sustainable energy future.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

1720

Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant): I wish to comment on some of the reasons behind Premier McGuinty's 55% increase in the price of electricity. I'd like to quote—I'm sure a number of members here will remember hearing this: "When it comes to natural gas, prices there tend to be volatile, and it remains a significant contributor to global warming. Wind turbines: We are investing heavily in those, but again, those are an expensive form of electricity and they're not reliable, because sometimes obviously the wind does not blow. When it comes to solar, those tend to be expensive as well." Who said that? For those who may not know,

that's a direct quotation from Premier McGuinty, the man without a plan, but a bit more on this quote later.

Now that warm weather has returned, it won't be long before people's thoughts turn to their air conditioners. Air conditioner demand during last summer's heat wave obviously blindsided this government, something I certainly heard from constituents. I was door-knocking with some of my staff in Haldimand county during that heat wave. At the door, the topic obviously was the heat and, in many cases, the cost of air conditioning. People indicated that both husband and wife were working, they work hard, they didn't feel they live in a Third World country, they didn't want to cut back—this is what I was being told—and they expect the electricity to be there for them to purchase. At that time, the Premier was touting wind turbines as a replacement for coal plants.

What was evident during those hot days last summer down in Haldimand county was the smog. You could see it coming across Lake Erie from the Ohio Valley. As we know, Premier McGuinty was importing power from coal plants in the Ohio Valley at the same time he was talking about closing our own plants in Ontario. Thankfully, he has broken that promise for the time being.

I just want to go back to the Premier's quote on April 13. I get a bit of a laugh when I compare the promises and actions of this particular Premier: "When it comes to natural gas, prices there tend to be volatile, and it remains a significant contributor to global warming. Wind turbines: We are investing heavily in those, but again, those are an expensive form of electricity and they're not reliable, because sometimes obviously the wind does not blow. When it comes to solar, those tend to be expensive as well."

Premier McGuinty says natural gas is expensive and it contributes to global warming, wind turbines are expensive and don't work, and solar is too expensive. The solution? There are some options: Build a gas-fired plant in Toronto; tout wind turbines as a replacement for the cost-efficient coal-fired system we have in the province. I see some inconsistent messaging here. I see a Premier who obviously badmouths wind and pursues wind power; who badmouths natural gas and pursues natural gas; who continues to pursue coal power but badmouths coal as well. And we see that obviously moving forward in spite of that 2007 closure promise.

What continues to astonish me is why the Premier is so ideological in his attempt to destroy our electricity environment, our energy-based economy and, by extension, much of our way of life, all at the same time. Despite the record number of smog days last summer, the Premier continues to refuse to invest in clean air technology for the coal-fired plants. Natural Resources Canada says, "Coal-fired electricity generating plants can be retrofitted or built so that they produce low to zero emissions."

At the Lambton generating station, emissions reduction technology now in place is reducing mercury by 95%. The former government was truly visionary in protecting the integrity of the environment with that \$250-

million investment in SCR—selective catalytic reduction—technology implemented at both OPG Sarnia and Nanticoke.

To sum up, where is the plan? I see a plan. It consists of basically crossing one's fingers. That's not good enough. You can't label gas as expensive and dirty and build a gas plant. You can't say that wind turbines don't work and then build them. People in Ontario are increasingly shocked that the technology exists to clean up our air and there's a refusal to invest.

I now wish to wrap up; my colleague to the left may take over. Again, clean air is too important; supply is too important. We need a plan, we need leadership and we need someone with the ability to match their words to their actions.

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins—James Bay): I'm really pleased to join in this debate, because I think it's one of those crucial debates we have in this House from time to time. Hopefully, we will walk away from this having tried to change the ways, the current policies, of this government, the McGuinty government, when it comes to electricity policy.

To put the first thing on the record, I've heard some of the members talk about how terrible it is that we ran an electricity system here in the past and weren't really dealing with it at cost, that it cost us a lot of money and that is why we have to increase the cost, in order to pay for the debts of the past etc. Let's remember what hydro policy in this province was all about: It was one of the key factors that drove the economy of Ontario. We decided 100 years ago this year that we would create a public utility. We've gone down this road before. When hydro was first being developed, there were all kinds of privateers out there trying to develop electricity projects and charge what the market would bear in various parts of this province. The government of the day, through a commission, understood that if it didn't do something, some parts of the province might have a cheaper electricity price than others and would be advantaged in attracting industrial and other processes that used a lot of electricity.

So the government back then said, "We need to have a public utility that provides electricity at cost, because if we can do that, it will become one of the cornerstones of the Ontario economy." Over a 100-year period, or about a 90-year period now, the economy of Ontario has benefited from that policy. If you look at the development of the mining and forest industries in northern Ontario, a large part of it was because of electricity costs. It is a type of industry that uses electricity to a large extent. My good friend the Minister of Northern Development and Mines will know that in his own backyard, in Sudbury or Timmins, Falconbridge and Inco are the largest utility customers in the province of Ontario. For companies like Avenor, Abitibi, Spruce Falls, now the Tembec mill in Kapuskasing, and others, 25% to 30% of their costs are electricity costs. So we decided by way of policy that we would not allow privateers in the system of electricity, that we would deliver electricity at cost because it is one of the key elements that drive the Ontario economy.

These people didn't come and invest in Ontario on a whim. They came to invest in Ontario because we had something to offer. One of the things we offered for years was cheap electricity at cost. We said, "We believe that we should provide this electricity at cost to industry and to the residents as a way of developing the economy of Ontario." If you look along what is now Highway 401, much of the development along that area has been done because of electricity policy. There are all kinds of industrial manufacturing plants that have established themselves there over the years, and one of the reasons was electricity costs. If all of a sudden you turn that policy on its head and say, "We are changing from being a low-cost area of electricity and we're now going to go to a market system that charges market prices," you've changed one of the cornerstones of your economy and you're going to drive the economy down.

Some people say, "Don't worry. We can convert our economy to another type of economy." Listen, Ontario in large part is based on manufacturing and the production of commodities: fibre from trees of all types, iron ore, gold, copper, zinc. The manufacturing processes in southern Ontario, by and large, are what have driven the economy of Ontario. If we are the richest province in Canada, it's because those industries have established themselves here and done business here. All of us in this House—most of us, I would say—have fathers or grandfathers who worked in those industries and did quite well. Some of us did as well. I worked in the mining industry. Those jobs weren't there by a fluke; they were there because Ontario, yes, had the geology to offer, but we were able to offer the conditions to invest, and one of those conditions was the price of the electricity.

So when I hear this argument, "Oh, we've got to go to market forces. The private sector does it better. We weren't selling it at the true cost of electricity," you're going to tell me that the price we're charging for electricity today is the true cost? Has anybody looked at what's happened over the last five or six years? We used to have one entity that did everything for electricity. It was called Ontario Hydro. That meant you had one CEO, who got about a hundred thousand bucks a year; you had basically one administration; you had one payroll; you had one of everything in order to run a large public utility. We've now gone to eight corporations or agencies, where we pay eight different CEOs, in some cases, over \$2 million a year, depending on what agency they're at. They all have their own payroll departments; they all have their own accounting departments; they all have their own everything because they're no longer one entity. We've broken it up into a number of different little companies, all of which have their own overhead.

1730

We now pay more for electricity, not only because we've deregulated the price to the market, but we're having to pay for all of these agencies and corporations to provide their part of the business of delivering electricity. When I get my electricity bill at home, it says that I pay for the generation of electricity, I now pay for

the transmission of electricity, I now pay for the delivery of electricity to my home and I pay for debt retirement. You look at your hydro bill and there's more than just 11 cents—11.5 cents if you're a resident; eight to nine cents if you're industry. You're not just paying that for electricity; you're paying for all the other stuff.

People understand that you're having to pay more, but there are two reasons we have to pay more: One, we've deregulated the price of electricity. We've said that we will turn the policy of 100 years in the province on its head in order to go from a policy that said that we deliver electricity at cost and sell it at cost to one where we've gone to the marketplace, and now we've got to support all of these different entities we've created that have been spun out of Ontario Hydro. So now we've got, rather than having one utility that was much more efficient—imagine breaking your company up into 10 parts and saying, "I'm going to pay for 10 new CEOs. I'm going to pay for 10 of everything." That's going to save you money? Come on, John Tory. You're in the business sector; you understand this.

One of the reasons we're paying so much is that we've gone from one large utility to a whole bunch of different small companies, which all have their own administration and crap to put on the bill. We're paying more because we deregulated the price, and we're paying more because we went and broke up what used to be Ontario Hydro into a whole bunch of different organizations—not to talk about what it does to the administration of that. Has anybody dealt with the ESA lately, the Electrical Safety Authority? Ah, I see members' eyes roll. There used to be a time that it was really easy, right? If the person was an individual at home and needed an electrician to come in and wire up their house because they were building a new house, it was simple: The electrician went to Ontario Hydro and applied for a permit, which was fairly cheap; the electrician would go and do the work; Ontario Hydro would come and do the inspection, disconnection and reconnection, and away you went. Now you've got to go through various agencies to make this happen. You have to deal with a multitude of different organizations to do what used to be done by one company. It's become very bureaucratic. When you're looking for somebody who has made the decision so that you can get to the decision-maker, everybody's hiding behind everybody else's agency. It's a real dog's breakfast out there.

We've gone from having a very efficient utility to having a whole bunch of little companies, some of them larger than others, and all of them having to work through their own administration and the cost of that, which basically added nine layers of bureaucracy where we used to have one. And we're defending that? The government is saying that's a good thing?

Listen, I remember the last election. The Liberals were apoplectic; they were opposed to the government's plan of deregulating electricity and privatizing the system. Dalton McGuinty had it in writing. All of a sudden, whoops, he became the Premier, and all of a sudden he changes his policy. I'm saying, aside from the—I can't

use that word; it would be unparliamentary—Dalton the Fiberal, as they would call him; the issue is—

Interjection.

Mr. Bisson: “Fiberal” is not a bad word, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: It has been ruled out of order in the past. I will ask you to withdraw it again.

Mr. Bisson: I will withdraw. Can I use the word “Liberal”?

The Acting Speaker: I don’t think you can use that one either. You’re going to have to find a new word.

Mr. Bisson: I can’t think of very many good ones for the word “Liberal,” Mr. Speaker.

Interjection.

Mr. Bisson: I withdraw. I think it gets ridiculous, the words we can’t use in this Legislature over a period of time, but that’s a whole other debate.

I just say that we’re now in a situation where we have really turned the economic development part of what hydro was all about on its head, and we’re now having to pay a lot more than we ever have before.

Here’s the interesting part. The government says, “We’re going to get rid of all coal-fired plants.” First of all, let’s understand how much electricity we generate in this province and where it comes from. About 25,000 megs is what we’re able to generate in the province of Ontario, for a demand of around 21,000 to 22,000 megawatts, depending on what’s going on. Anyway, the long and short of the story is that about a third of the generation comes from coal, about a third of it comes from falling water and about a third of it comes from basically nuclear generation. The government says, “I’m going to take out a third by 2007”—whoops; no, they just changed that to 2009. And they don’t have a plan to replace the third. We’re now going to take out of the Ontario hydro system a third of our generation capacity and we haven’t said how we’re going to replace it. So I think the gig is pretty simple: The government wants to go by way of nuclear. That’s where they’re going. So they’re saying, “Well, we’re taking coal out.” They’re not prepared to go down the road of falling water, which is hydroelectric generation—which is the cheapest, by the way—and they obviously don’t want to invest in coal, because they’re getting rid of it, and you can’t put up enough windmills and gas-fired turbines and others because they’re too expensive. The only affordable alternative, in their view, not mine, is to go nuclear. I’m just saying that that is what this is all about. It’s about a government that has decided to go back down the way of Darlington, where we spent billions of extra dollars in order to build hydrogeneration by way of the nuclear industry.

I just have to repeat what my leader, Mr. Hampton, said earlier in the debate on that particular issue: It’s a really expensive alternative. How much have we spent for Darlington? Was it around \$12 billion? Just help me out; I can’t remember the number offhand. It cost us about \$12 billion to build Darlington. To replace what Darlington has to be, we’re going to have to pay three times that in order to replace the coal-fired generation that we have in the province of Ontario.

So I say to the government, it’s bad enough that you continue down the road of deregulating the price of electricity and sending it to the market, which is driving jobs out of Ontario, especially northern Ontario. It’s bad enough that you basically broke up the entity called Ontario Hydro and created these eight or nine little organizations, some bigger than others, that are costing us more money to administer. But at the end of the day you’re going to put us into one of the highest options as a means of generating electricity. It just, to me, is absolutely nuts, because what we’re doing is we’re going to take the hydro price and increase it even more.

I get phone calls at my office, Mr. Speaker, as you and all other members do, from all kinds of constituents. Mr. Loreto, who called me earlier this week, was looking at his hydro bill and said, “My God, Mr. Bisson, what’s going on? My hydro bill—look at this. I decided to pull my hydro bill out from years before and I looked at what it is now. Now I pay a delivery charge for this, an extra charge for this, I pay this, I pay that. I’m paying more money now”—and I don’t have the numbers in front of me but he was paying huge amounts of money more than he paid before. He said, “I used to pay \$25 a month” in order to maintain this particular little apartment unit that he has, and he was now paying 250 bucks, about five years later, because of everything that has happened to the system. And people like this are on fixed incomes; they’re pensioners. What do you do when you’ve got a pension cheque coming in and you don’t get the big increases but everything else starts to go up, like electricity prices? At one point you just can’t take it anymore. It’s the same in industry. The government has to recognize that it has to stop this. People like Mr. Loreto and others across the province cannot have their utility rates, their electricity rates, go up to the degree that they did.

I’ll end on this point because I’ve only got a couple of minutes left: the issue of what this has meant to northern Ontario. We have lost tens of thousands of jobs in northern Ontario because of this electricity policy. We now have Tembec in Smooth Rock Falls that wants to shut down their plant. I think what they’re up to is that they want to shut down that plant so they can use their power dams to cross-subsidize Kapuskasing as a means of being able to reduce the high electricity prices they’re paying in Kapuskasing. They have a kraft mill in Smooth Rock Falls, they have a paper mill in Kap, and they’re saying, “We can cross-subsidize our electricity prices in Kap as a way of doing it.” I say, directly at the feet of the government, hydro policies are directly going to affect what’s going to happen in Smooth Rock Falls. If Smooth Rock Falls goes down, Lecours Lumber, which sells 30% of their chips to Smooth Rock Falls, is going to have a problem trying to selling their chips. Most people don’t understand that but the entire forest industry is integrated. You cut the tree; it goes to the sawmill. The sawmill takes the dimensional lumber and the rest of it, which becomes chips, goes to kraft and pulp mills. They don’t round lumber the way they used to. So now you’ve got

Tembec in Timmins, which sells about 50% of its chip production into Smooth Rock Falls; you've got Lecours north of Hearst—Constance Lake—which sells about 30% of its chips into Smooth Rock Falls. Those two particular plants, as a result of electricity prices, are going to be in jeopardy of closing down because of this government's policy.

1740

I say you've got to wake up over there, guys. You've got to wake up to the fact that the energy policies you've created are killing northern Ontario. The quicker you wake up, the better we'll be able to work at trying to find a solution to stabilize electricity prices and bring them back down again so that we don't end up shipping all of the new investment that is being made in the industry out of Ontario, to jurisdictions like Manitoba and Quebec, because they have lower electricity prices.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak in this debate. Although I have a few little problems with the motion, they're not enough for me to vote against it, because the intent of this is that this government's electricity policy is nuts and has got to change.

Mr. John O'Toole (Durham): It's certainly time to revisit the purpose of this afternoon's important debate and bring civility and non-partisan comments to the debate.

I'm just going to reflect on our leader John Tory's summation here and the important leadership that's evident in the summation: "To recognize that a well-planned, informed and non-political electricity policy is needed immediately, that such a policy must include meaningful conservation ... and that no ... source of generation should be shut down without an adequate amount of reliable and affordable supply available to replace it."

I think that's a very, very important element of what all parties today are trying to say, with perhaps one exception.

I think it's important to revisit for a few moments the beginning of the debate. You have to really start with Adam Beck, a brilliant leader, who said that we should have power at cost. But what he really meant was power at the cost of the economy. Really, we have never paid the true cost of power. We could argue that, but when this debate began under the NDP, it ultimately resulted in the formation of the Macdonald commission report in 1994-95.

Subsequent to that, under the leadership of the Conservative government at that time the NAOP committee, the nuclear asset optimization plan; a lot of good work with Sean Conway and Floyd Laughren and others. I was privileged to serve on that.

The next initiative under the Conservative leadership was the select committee on alternative fuels. A lot of work that was done on that committee is still very meaningful: looking at maintaining the balance of the energy, as well as the environment, as well as the economy.

The penultimate work was the work done by the electricity conservation supply task force. The task force was initiated by I believe Jim Wilson, who was the min-

ister at the time. I had the privilege to serve on that. There were eminently non-political people. I would just mention a few: Mike Crawley, for example, the president and CEO of AIM PowerGen; as well as Paul Norris, who is the president of the Ontario Waterpower Association. These were people who were stakeholders. There were knowledgeable people like Jan Peeters from Olameter; Tom Parkinson, who is the present CEO; and Rebecca MacDonald. There was an array of experts who came to a fundamental consensus, including the power workers, who were members of that committee.

The general resolution, signed off—I have the signed document here, as a member of that committee. They made one conclusive recommendation that was clear. The very first recommendation says, "Ontario faces a looming energy shortfall in the years ahead as coal-fired generation is taken out of service and existing nuclear plants ... end ... their ... operating lives."

They said clearly in the evidence of the report that you could not survive without some redress to clean technologies. In fact it goes on in more detail under "Phase-out of coal," how ill thought the technology, without considering or at least scientifically examining the options.

But how they started this political demise: In their election booklet they promised to shut the coal plants by 2007. They knew then, they know now and they still refuse to respond with a reasonable response that our leader, John Tory—

Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough): It's a pleasure for me to have an opportunity to make a few comments on the motion that was presented to the House today by the member from Dufferin—Peel—Wellington—Grey.

I had the great opportunity to be in the riding of the member from Dufferin—Peel—Wellington—Grey last Thursday. I was in the town of Caledon and I had the opportunity to meet Her Worship Mayor Marolyn Morrison, a delightful lady doing a very good job as mayor of that community. I was there to launch a program called Flip the Switch.

The Flip the Switch program was developed in cooperation with the town of Caledon and Bullfrog Power. Caledon is one of the first to adopt green power in the province of Ontario. On that day, I had the opportunity to meet the member's assistant, who was there to read a very laudatory letter about the agreement that was being signed by the town of Caledon and Bullfrog Power. Indeed, the president of that company, Tom Heintzman, was there and indicated in a public way that Bullfrog Power was becoming the first retailer in Ontario to supply 100% green electricity and that it was the policies of this government that allowed Bullfrog Power to develop. That was recognized on that day by the very laudatory letter that was read by the assistant of Mr. Tory.

Another point I'd like to make: It's of note that in the Toronto Star of April 19, 2006, there was an excellent article written by Ian Urquhart. The title of that article was "Opposition Bombast Veils Facts of Rate Hike." As he goes through the article, he articulates an interesting

position. He quotes from the New Democrats, ““We acknowledge people must pay the true cost of electricity,”” and from the Conservatives, ““John Tory is not going to make any promises he can’t keep, including making a pledge on hydro rates 18 months before an election.”” It goes on to say, ““This represents a change for Ontario politics. From 1993 to 2003 ... both NDP and Conservative governments” were advocating freezes that led to \$1 billion in debt being added to the cost of electricity in Ontario.

All three parties I think sense that the price of electricity is going up. The question is, how did we get there? We’ve provided a plan to the province that is building on new generation capacity, maximizing our existing transmission and generation assets, creating a culture of conservation in Ontario, and putting the infrastructure in place to ensure sound planning for Ontario’s long-term electricity needs.

I note that in the next number of weeks we will be providing a response to the OPA report, which will provide the framework for Ontario’s electricity future.

The Acting Speaker: The time for debate has now expired.

Mr. Tory has moved that the Legislative Assembly call upon the government,

To recognize that the McGuinty Liberals have presided over a 55% increase to Ontarians’ electricity bills since coming to office, despite their promise to cap rates until 2006; and

To recognize that the McGuinty Liberals’ irresponsible, unpredictable and unplanned electricity policy will only increase costs for consumers and business going forward; and

To recognize that families, farmers and businesses in communities such as Ottawa, Kingston, Aurora, Brantford, Guelph, Kitchener, London, Niagara Falls, and North Bay will be amongst some of the hardest hit by skyrocketing rates and increased charges; and

To recognize that the unpredictable McGuinty Liberal energy policy is and will continue to choke Ontario’s economy, chase potential investment from the province, and seriously damage our competitiveness; and

To recognize that a well-planned, informed, and non-political electricity policy is needed immediately, that such a policy must include meaningful conservation measures and that no one source of generation should be

shut down without an adequate amount of reliable and affordable supply available to replace it. Addressed to the Premier of Ontario.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard some noes.

All those in favour will please say “aye.”

All those opposed will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1750 to 1800.

The Acting Speaker: All those in favour will please rise and be counted by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Jackson, Cameron	O’Toole, John
Barrett, Toby	Klees, Frank	Runciman, Robert W.
Bisson, Gilles	Kormos, Peter	Scott, Laurie
Chudleigh, Ted	MacLeod, Lisa	Sterling, Norman W.
Elliott, Christine	Marchese, Rosario	Tory, John
Hardeman, Ernie	Martiniuk, Gerry	Yakubuski, John
Horwath, Andrea	Miller, Norm	
Hudak, Tim	Munro, Julia	

The Acting Speaker: All those opposed will please rise and be counted by the Clerk.

Nays

Arthurs, Wayne	Hoy, Pat	Qaadri, Shafiq
Balkissoon, Bas	Jeffrey, Linda	Ramal, Khalil
Bartolucci, Rick	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Ramsay, David
Bentley, Christopher	Leal, Jeff	Rinaldi, Lou
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Levac, Dave	Ruprecht, Tony
Broten, Laurel C.	Marsales, Judy	Sandals, Liz
Cansfield, Donna H.	McMeekin, Ted	Sergio, Mario
Caplan, David	McNeely, Phil	Smith, Monique
Crozier, Bruce	Milloy, John	Sorbara, Gregory S.
Di Cocco, Caroline	Mitchell, Carol	Van Bommel, Maria
Dombrowsky, Leona	Mossop, Jennifer F.	Wilkinson, John
Duguid, Brad	Oraziotti, David	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Fonseca, Peter	Patten, Richard	Zimmer, David
Gerretsen, John	Phillips, Gerry	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 22; the nays are 41.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion to be lost.

It now being after the hour of 6 o’clock, this House stands recessed until 6:45 this evening.

The House adjourned at 1802.

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