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of Ontario
Second Session, 38th Parliament

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de l'Ontario
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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Tuesday 17 April 2007

Mardi 17 avril 2007

Speaker
Honourable Michael A. Brown

Président
L'honorable Michael A. Brown

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Greffière
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 17 April 2007

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 17 avril 2007

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

TOWING INDUSTRY

Mrs. Julia Munro (York North): Last month, a severe winter storm caused a massive traffic accident on Highway 400 in Innisfil. Many cars, trucks and buses were involved. Many serious injuries were inflicted, but no loss of life occurred.

No loss of life occurring is a tribute to the fire, police and ambulance services that responded to the scene. However, there is one other responder who deserves our tribute.

Tow truck drivers worked bravely in terrible conditions to make rescues possible. One such driver was Glenn Currie of Currie Heavy Towing. He was at the controls of the biggest, strongest, most versatile heavy wrecker that day. He was assisted by others, but his role was central in lifting a tractor-trailer off a trapped driver, allowing the fire and ambulance personnel to remove that driver and save his life.

This is not the first time that Currie Heavy Towing has performed a task like this, and it will not be the last. They, like many other towers, do this without compensation. The Currie family does not request and will not accept any payment for life-saving emergency work. Glenn Currie, like his father, Alex Currie, is a humble man who does great things and is an inspiration to all residents of Ontario.

FOOD DRIVE

Mr. Khalil Ramal (London–Fanshawe): I rise in the House today to say thank you to all the generous people of London, Ontario, who have contributed to the London Food Bank's most successful annual spring food drive. The London Food Bank's annual spring food drive ended with a 17% increase in donations compared to previous years.

I'm proud that London is a community that pulls together to assist those who are in need. The food bank's 17% increase will result in 800 more people in London who will be helped by the food bank.

The generous contributions were not only from individuals in the London community but also from corporations like Freedom 55 Financial and others.

I am proud to stand up in this House as one of the four representatives elected by the people of London. London is a wonderful community to represent here at Queen's Park.

I would like to again thank everyone in London for their contributions, and I would also like to encourage all Ontarians to give back to their communities.

ONTARIO FARMERS

Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie–Lincoln): I'm pleased to rise to bring to the attention of the government members, ministers particularly, the great challenges currently facing farmers in the greenbelt area.

We all know that anybody can draw a green line on a map and colour it in. Real leadership requires making the tough but necessary decisions to invest in projects to ensure that initiatives in the greenbelt are successful.

Today we find ourselves with grape growers who grow juice grapes facing tremendous challenges with the closure of the Cadbury plant, meaning that at the end of this year those crops will not find a market. There are hundreds and, spreading out into the community, thousands of individuals broadly impacted by this decision. If the government is truly going to put taxpayers' money where its mouth is, they will invest and help our grape growers move on to other markets, particularly through a grape replant program, which I'll note did not receive a dime in this budget despite \$50 million going to Magna Corp., which is about to purchase Chrysler, I guess.

Secondly, Ontario beekeepers, particularly those in the Niagara Peninsula, are experiencing significant challenges. You may have seen the Toronto Star story today indicating 90% bee losses in many of the hives. This is important not only to the beekeepers themselves and their families but it has a tremendous impact on the tender fruit industry and the horticultural industry in general, not only in Erie–Lincoln but in St. Catharines, Niagara Falls, Niagara Centre and across the greenbelt area.

If the government stands behind its legislation, it needs to invest in these two projects.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto–Danforth): It's clear that the Minister of the Environment is neither familiar with the Kyoto Protocol nor with the full implications of climate change. She has misread the NDP's climate action bill, which passed second reading last week, but

that's not the main problem. The main problem is that she does not have a sense of urgency. She is not bringing forward her own climate change plans. According to an article in the *Globe and Mail* by Murray Campbell, she's looking at a target of 10% below 1990 levels by 2020—far too slow.

The scientific community is generally agreed that haste and urgency are required. Last fall the World Wildlife Fund put out their paper noting that at a two-degree increase in world temperature, we were looking at massive disruption of ecosystems, spread of world hunger and loss of fresh water. The earth has already warmed 0.8 degrees since 1900, and we're looking at going to two degrees—that red line—as early as 2026.

The minister should expedite the passage of the NDP climate act bill. The minister should make sure it goes through committee, goes to third reading and is adopted. If we're going to deal with this problem, we can't wait till 2020. We need to move it forward today. We need to move it forward now.

CHARITY HOCKEY GAME

Mr. Mario G. Racco (Thornhill): This past weekend, I was a witness to a historic event that took place in my riding of Thornhill. The B'nai Brith Youth Organization succeeded in breaking the Guinness world record for holding the longest floor hockey game ever played. The previous world record for the longest floor hockey game was held by the B'nai Brith youth chapter in Edmonton, which played for a total of 24 hours.

The event this past weekend took place at Rosedale Heights Public School in Thornhill, officially began at 8 p.m. on Saturday, April 14, and went uninterrupted until 8:30 p.m. on Sunday, April 15. The game was a resounding success. The brave group of 30 youths, which included players from Thornhill, Markham, Aurora, Richmond Hill and Toronto, played floor hockey non-stop for a total of 24.5 hours.

While the feat of breaking a world record is impressive in its own right, this occasion was made even more meaningful because proceeds were raised for two very worthwhile charities: the Shoot for a Cure Foundation, which raises money for spinal cord research, and Rebuild Homes, Rebuild Lives. The latter foundation is sending as many as 15 of the players who participated to New Orleans to help with the ongoing reconstruction from the devastation of Hurricane Katrina.

I would like to commend Ryan Bernkopf of the B'nai Brith Youth Organization, Lake Ontario chapter, for organizing this event and inviting me to participate as a witness.

ONTARIO LOTTERY AND GAMING CORP.

Mr. John O'Toole (Durham): I rise today because Premier McGuinty and David Caplan have refused to act on the suggestion to clean up the Lottogate scandal.

One constituent, Bob, said to me that he feels cheated, and he went on to say, "What is the Premier doing about it?" Here's the list since the CBC report and the Ombudsman's report. To date, we have had 145 questions on the OLG insider-winning scandal. That's 145 questions and zero answers. Dalton McGuinty will not accept responsibility or hold accountable his lottery minister, David Caplan. He fails the very test of ministerial responsibility, which his mother indeed followed.

1340

His government has also refused to answer our freedom-of-information requests. His government refuses to answer our order paper questions. And yesterday, the McGuinty government voted unanimously against an opposition day motion calling for an all-party committee of the Legislature to investigate this serious scandal.

"What are Dalton and David afraid of? What are they trying to cover up?" people are asking. "Will they ever do the right thing and take real action to restore confidence in the provincial lottery system?" My advice to them and to my constituents is, don't bet on it. You can't trust the policies coming from McGuinty.

But John Tory and the PC caucus will continue to press for accountability and integrity. The citizens of Ontario deserve no less, and they are looking for leadership they can trust.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): I'd just remind members early that the use of proper names isn't appropriate, that it should be the member's riding or the minister's position.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mrs. Carol Mitchell (Huron-Bruce): I rise in the Legislature today to remind Ontarians how the McGuinty Liberals have effectively moved forward to protect our natural environment and repair the damage that was done under the former Conservative government. Not only did the Tories increase emissions from coal by 127%, they also slashed the environment ministry budget, privatized water testing and left Walkerton residents with a horrendous water tragedy that residents will pay for for the rest of their lives.

The Leader of the Opposition is no different. Yesterday, he fell flat with a Harper-style announcement stating that he would reduce greenhouse gases 43 years from now. But don't worry, he would start the reduction somehow, in some way, in 13 years. We appreciate his endorsement for our plan to start replacing government vehicles with alternative fuels, to introduce energy efficiency in government buildings and to improve the building code to make homes more efficient, although there was one thing he was dead silent on yesterday, and that's the commitment to close the remaining coal-fired generating plants, which would be the single biggest way to reduce greenhouse gases. That's because the Liberals are the only party committed to closing those plants. Both opposition parties want to keep the plants open. We are going to close them.

I put this to the Legislature: If John Tory is really committed to the environment, why did his party vote against clean water, protecting green space, energy conservation, fighting toxic spills, expanding transit and renewable fuels?

YORK SUBWAY EXTENSION

Mr. Mario Sergio (York West): I rise in the House today to speak on the extension of the Spadina-York subway to York University and the third party's desire to slow down progress for GTA students, commuters and the business community as well. While the McGuinty Liberals are committed to ensuring that the subway moves forward, there are some in this Legislature who are opposed to progress.

We have worked with all levels of government to put the framework in place so this vital project can indeed be realized. We have committed the funding and we refuse to pull out. The McGuinty Liberals recognize the positive effects that this project will have for those in the surrounding region, but we also recognize that this will be a positive step towards keeping our air clean and our traffic moving.

Through investing in important initiatives like public transit, the McGuinty Liberals are demonstrating our commitment to fighting climate change and to working to curb the problems associated with urban sprawl. While the leader of the third party would like to kill the York subway extension, the McGuinty Liberals see its importance for commuters, students and Ontarians who want to begin to move towards a more environmentally sound Ontario.

We know there is always much more to be done, but the McGuinty Liberals, unlike the third party, are working to ensure that this vision is quickly realized.

INVESTMENT IN SAULT STE. MARIE

Mr. David Oraziotti (Sault Ste. Marie): Last week the Leader of the Opposition, John Tory, was in my riding of Sault Ste. Marie, and he said that residents were not seeing results under our government, proving that, once again, he and his party have no idea what's happening there. Let's look at the record.

We're investing \$100 million and have built the Northern Ontario School of Medicine, the first one built in Canada in more than 30 years. We're providing an unprecedented 90% funding for the new Sault Area Hospital, which we'll break ground on this year, while under the Conservatives the number of communities underserved by physicians grew from 63 to 142. They closed 28 public hospitals after promising not to cut health care spending. Now the Leader of the Opposition promises to take out the chainsaw and cut another \$2.6 billion from health care.

Education funding has increased in Sault Ste. Marie by over \$18 million, while the Conservatives closed 25

northern schools and underfunded education by \$2 billion.

Speaker, after five years of NDP mismanagement and eight years of Conservative indifference, we're getting results in Sault Ste. Marie. Our renewable energy program has allowed Algoma Steel to invest \$135 million in a cogeneration plant. We've helped Flakeboard expand with a \$5.2-million investment. We've provided \$15 million for a waterfront project, \$7.8 million for the new youth justice centre and \$4.7 for the Steelback Centre.

When the Conservatives were governing, they left us with a \$5.5-billion deficit that we've balanced.

The Conservatives can talk all they want about what they're going to do for Sault Ste. Marie, but we've delivered.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

LOI DE 2007 SUR L'ÉRECTION DE PANNEAUX DANS LES PARCS PROVINCIAUX ET À L'EMPLACEMENT D'IMPORTANTES ATTRACTIONS TOURISTIQUES PROVINCIALES PROVINCIAL PARKS AND MAJOR PROVINCIAL TOURIST ATTRACTIONS SIGN ACT, 2007

M. Lalonde propose la première lecture du projet de loi suivant :

Projet de loi 207, Loi exigeant l'érection de panneaux bilingues dans les parcs provinciaux, dans les parcs sous le contrôle de la Commission des parcs du Niagara et à l'emplacement d'importantes attractions touristiques provinciales / Bill 207, An Act to require bilingual signs in provincial parks, parks under the control of the Niagara Parks Commission and at major provincial tourist attractions.

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. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry–Prescott–Russell): The bill proposes that unilingual signs be replaced by bilingual signs in provincial parks, parks under the control of the Niagara Parks Commission and at other prescribed provincial tourist attractions in Ontario as it becomes necessary to replace unilingual signs.

Last August, I just happened to be touring with a group from Belgium, France and Africa. We know there are over 13 million people, according to 2004 stats, visiting Niagara Falls every year, and out of that at least three million are francophones. During that tour, they were telling me that there were no signs in—

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. The time to debate the bill is during private members' business.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION
AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY
AMENDMENT ACT
(SPEAKER OF THE ASSEMBLY), 2007
LOI DE 2007 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR
L'ACCÈS À L'INFORMATION ET LA
PROTECTION DE LA VIE PRIVÉE
(PRÉSIDENT DE L'ASSEMBLÉE)

Mr. Kormos moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 208, An Act to amend the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act respecting the Speaker of the Assembly / Projet de loi 208, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'accès à l'information et la protection de la vie privée en ce qui a trait au président de l'Assemblée.

Mr. Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward–Hastings): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: It is my understanding that this bill will make the Speaker's budget available so the public can access information on the association budgets. I question whether the bill is correct in that it is my understanding that association budgets are in fact part of the Legislative Assembly budget—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): I'm not sure what the bill contains, the member for Prince Edward–Hastings, but at this point in time I don't believe it's a point of order.

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

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1350 to 1355.

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

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Fonseca, Peter	Patten, Richard
Balkissoon, Bas	Gravelle, Michael	Peters, Steve
Bartolucci, Rick	Hardeman, Ernie	Prue, Michael
Bentley, Christopher	Horwath, Andrea	Qaadri, Shafiq
Bradley, James J.	Hudak, Tim	Racco, Mario G.
Broten, Laurel C.	Klees, Frank	Ramal, Khalil
Bryant, Michael	Kormos, Peter	Rinaldi, Lou
Cansfield, Donna H.	Kwinter, Monte	Runciman, Robert W.
Chambers, Mary Anne V.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Ruprecht, Tony
Chan, Michael	Marsales, Judy	Sandals, Liz
Chudleigh, Ted	Martiniuk, Gerry	Savoline, Joyce
Colle, Mike	Matthews, Deborah	Sergio, Mario
Delaney, Bob	Mauro, Bill	Smith, Monique
Dhillon, Vic	McNeely, Phil	Tabuns, Peter
Di Cocco, Caroline	Meilleur, Madeleine	Tascona, Joseph N.
DiNovo, Cheri	Miller, Norm	Tory, John
Dombrowsky, Leona	Mitchell, Carol	Van Bommel, Maria
Duguid, Brad	Mossop, Jennifer F.	Watson, Jim
Duncan, Dwight	Munro, Julia	Wilson, Jim
Dunlop, Garfield	Murdoch, Bill	Witmer, Elizabeth
Elliott, Christine	O'Toole, John	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Ferreira, Paul	Oraziotti, David	Yakabuski, John
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Parsons, Ernie	

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

Nays

Smitherman, George

Hon. Mike Colle (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker—

The Deputy Speaker: Usually we don't have points of order during—no, no. I thought it was in relation to your vote.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 68; the nays are 1.

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Hon. Mr. Colle: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker—

The Deputy Speaker: Perhaps the member for Niagara Centre would like to make a short statement.

Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): This bill amends the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act to provide that the act applies with respect to records in the custody of the Speaker, with the exception of records that pertain to his or her role as a member of the assembly.

The Deputy Speaker: Now, the point of order: the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

VISITORS

Hon. Mike Colle (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): I would like to welcome in the gallery Paolo Ponti, the Italian trade commissioner, who is with us here today. Mr. Ponti, welcome.

1400

EDUCATION AMENDMENT ACT
(PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE
AND SCHOOL SAFETY), 2007
LOI DE 2007 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR L'ÉDUCATION
(DISCIPLINE PROGRESSIVE
ET SÉCURITÉ DANS LES ÉCOLES)

Ms. Wynne moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 212, An Act to amend the Education Act in respect of behaviour, discipline and safety / Projet de loi 212, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation en ce qui concerne le comportement, la discipline et la sécurité.

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

Would the minister like to make a short statement?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne (Minister of Education): During ministerial statements, Mr. Speaker.

RECOGNITION OF SIGN LANGUAGE
AS AN OFFICIAL LANGUAGE ACT, 2007
LOI DE 2007 RECONNAISSANT
LA LANGUE DES SIGNES
COMME LANGUE OFFICIELLE

Mr. Parsons moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 213, An Act to recognize sign language as an official language in Ontario / Projet de loi 213, Loi visant à reconnaître la langue des signes comme langue officielle en Ontario.

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

Would the member like to make a short statement?

Mr. Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward–Hastings): Many of our fellow citizens who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing at times experience difficulty accessing public services. This bill, if passed, would recognize sign language as an official language in Ontario in the courts, in education and in the Legislative Assembly.

VISITORS

Mr. David Zimmer (Willowdale): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would like to introduce two representatives of the Toronto Professional Fire Fighters' Association: Scott Marks, who is the president; and Rick Berenz, who is the executive director.

MOTIONS

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader): I believe we have unanimous consent to move a motion respecting the modification of two government orders.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Do we have unanimous consent? Agreed.

Hon. Mr. Bradley: I move that the order of the House dated April 11, 2007, allocating time for proceedings on Bill 187, An Act respecting Budget measures, interim appropriations and other matters, and the order of the House dated April 16, 2007, allocating time for proceedings on Bill 155, An Act to provide for a referendum on Ontario's electoral system, shall be modified to the extent necessary to provide the following:

The standing orders for second reading of Bill 187 and third reading of Bill 155 shall be called consecutively at the outset of the orders of the day today and any required divisions on these bills shall be deferred and taken in succession, the members called in once, the division bells limited to 10 minutes and the chamber doors unlocked for 30 seconds between the two divisions; and

All the other provisions of the two time allocation orders shall otherwise continue to apply, and this afternoon's debate on the motion for second reading of Bill 198, An Act to amend the Ontario Water Resources Act to safeguard and sustain Ontario's water, to make related amendments to the Safe Drinking Water Act, 2002 and to repeal the Water Transfer Control Act, shall be considered a full sessional day for the purposes of standing order 46.

The Deputy Speaker: Mr. Bradley has moved that the order of the House dated April 11, 2007, allocating time for proceedings—

Interjection.

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

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

SCHOOL SAFETY

LA SÉCURITÉ DANS LES ÉCOLES

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne (Minister of Education): Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge David Clark, who is the chair of the Guelph Police Services Board and chair of the Community Task Force on Youth Violence, and Inspector Mark Allen, who is with the crime prevention section of the OPP, who are both here at the introduction of this legislation.

In December 2004, the McGuinty government directed the safe schools action team to review the safe schools provisions of the Education Act and related policies and programs. Through its review, the safe schools action team found serious discrepancies in consistency and fairness in the application of the safe schools provisions of the Education Act. It is clear from its report that a one-size-fits-all approach does not work when it comes to student safety and discipline. The McGuinty government believes that all students and staff have the right to feel safe at school and on school grounds.

Des écoles sûres sont une condition préalable au rendement des élèves et l'une de nos plus hautes priorités.

That is why I'm pleased to rise in the House today to highlight steps we are taking to build on our safe schools strategy. Earlier today, I announced proposed amendments to the safe schools provisions of the Education Act that would more effectively combine discipline with opportunities for students to continue their education. These amendments would ensure that there are strong consequences for inappropriate behaviour and provide programs so students can earn their way back into the classroom and complete their education.

Notre objectif est d'avoir une meilleure sécurité dans les écoles et une discipline qui marche.

The proposed legislative amendments would include adding bullying as an infraction for which suspensions must be considered. We also propose using a progressive discipline approach to choose the appropriate punishment in each case of inappropriate behaviour. For example, punishments could include in-school suspensions, referrals for consultation and other options, and this would be done before suspension or expulsion.

Another change would include replacing mandatory suspensions and expulsions for students, except in limited circumstances, with the requirement that principals and school boards consider and respond to all infractions that occurred in the most appropriate way. For infractions which currently carry a mandatory suspension, consider-

ation will now be given to suspension as one measure along a continuum of progressive discipline.

Cela nous permettra d'assurer la sécurité de tous les élèves.

We will invest \$31 million in 2007-08 to make Ontario's schools safer. Our government's investment will help build capacity in school boards to address inappropriate student behaviour, and provide training to principals and vice-principals on how to apply discipline in a non-discriminatory manner, including considerations for anti-racism, cross-cultural differences, and accommodating students with disabilities. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to just acknowledge the Ontario Human Rights Commission and Chief Commissioner Barbara Hall, who is with us today and who has worked with us on these provisions. That investment includes \$23 million for supports to address inappropriate behaviour, including programs for all expelled students and students serving long-term suspensions. These programs would be designed to address the causes of the problem behaviour that has led to students being suspended or expelled and allow them to continue learning outside the classroom.

These proposed improvements follow up on the recommendations made by the safe schools action team, which was led ably by Liz Sandals, parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education. I want to thank Liz Sandals and all the members of the safe schools action team for their important work on this issue.

Today's announcement builds on significant steps the McGuinty government has already taken with our education partners to make Ontario's schools safer, important steps such as bullying prevention training for teachers, principals and vice-principals, model projects to promote positive student behaviour, a partnership with Kids Help Phone to provide more resources for bullying prevention, including cyber bullying, and security devices for schools as part of a safe welcome program to help monitor school visitors.

Nous savons que la sécurité dans les écoles est un élément clé de la réussite des élèves dans leurs études et dans leur vie.

That is why the McGuinty government is doing more to make Ontario schools safer for our students in school and for the rest of their lives.

1410

CANADIAN CHARTER OF
RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

CHARTRE CANADIENNE
DES DROITS ET LIBERTÉS

Hon. Michael Bryant (Attorney General): Happy anniversary to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. I rise in the House today to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Twenty-five years ago, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II gave royal assent to the Canada Act, 1982. In doing so,

she brought Canada into a new era of sovereignty and self-determination.

In its last act in relation to Canada, the British Parliament permanently gave up its ability to amend the Canadian Constitution and placed this responsibility in the hands of Canadians.

Pour la première fois, les droits et les libertés fondamentaux de tous les résidents du Canada étaient énoncés clairement et concrètement.

The charter constitutionally guarantees freedoms and rights that had long been considered integral to the Canadian way but were never formally recognized as such. The first 25 years of the charter saw the development of constitutionally protected rights and freedoms through a series of decisions that sometimes radically changed our laws and legal processes. The charter is a vital source in our society because of the principles that it embodies, but also because it allows anyone to call on its protections through ordinary courts and tribunals.

Charter challenges have helped to shape our laws and our country, leading to the end of legal discrimination based on sexual orientation, and ended discrimination in the areas of gender equality, ethnicity, religion and a number of other areas involving immutable characteristics. It led to the end of legal prohibitions against abortion. It led to the end of mandatory denominational prayers in public schools, the end of Sunday shopping prohibition and much, much more.

The charter asks us, as lawmakers, to go the extra mile, to take extra steps when writing laws and formulating policy in order to meet higher standards guaranteed by the charter. This improves our laws and improves us as a democracy.

Over the years, the principles of the charter have come to represent the very essence of being Canadian. A 2002 survey found that 82% of Canadians believe that the Charter of Rights has a major positive impact on the protection of their rights and freedoms; 81% believe that the charter has become an important symbol of Canadian identity. Double-doubles, the maple leaf, hockey tape, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms: these are the touchstones of our Canadian identity.

The Charter of Rights has evolved into a unique Canadian interpretation of rights. This model has come to be seen as an international leader. If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, Canadians should all be proud of the charter and what it represents.

It's been a key instrument used to build the multi-cultural fabric of our nation. Pluralism does not equal relativism, but the charter has promoted respect for the religious rights of others and helps to ensure that cultural heritage is accommodated in a reasonable fashion. By encouraging tolerance and respect for the differences among us, it brings our society together.

Having the courts act as the ultimate arbiters of charter disputes promotes a more just society. The independence of our courts, not subject to political pressure, whim or the sometime tyranny of the majority, ensures the rule of law. This promotes the peaceful and productive resolution of legal conflicts and questions.

In the first 25 years of the charter, great attention was paid to the judges' decisions and how they interpret the charter. I have no doubt that in the next 25 years, focus will be upon their hopefully unassailable independence.

Speaking of the courts, I would be remiss if I did not mention the important historic role that the former Attorney General and soon-to-retire Chief Justice of Ontario, Roy McMurtry, made in the creation of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. I should also mention that the role that Ian Scott made in expanding the constitutional law branch across the government—the constitutional law branch that had been created by Roy McMurtry—has meant that every single ministry in the government has, for some time now, been infused with its charter of responsibilities.

So, ladies and gentlemen, members of the Legislature, the charter is out of its infancy and adolescence. A still-young nation celebrates a great anniversary today. Happy anniversary to the charter. Happy anniversary to all Canadians.

DANIEL BURNHAM AWARD

Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy Government House Leader): I rise today to share news about how the McGuinty government has been recognized as a leader on the world stage for our work in promoting strategic sustainable growth in this province.

Representatives from Ontario's growth secretariat are currently in Philadelphia as part of the American Planning Association's annual conference. Today, Assistant Deputy Minister Brad Graham of the OGS received on behalf of the government of Ontario, indeed the people of Ontario, the 2007 Daniel Burnham Award for comprehensive planning for our government's growth plan for the greater Golden Horseshoe. The Burnham award is considered by planners across North America to be the profession's highest distinction. I'm proud to say that this marks the first time in the history of the APA planning awards that a jurisdiction outside the United States has won this award.

The plan was created under the leadership of Premier McGuinty, but a large and diverse group of people across this province can also take credit for the accomplishment. Stakeholders, policy-makers, professional planners, government officials, local elected officials, environmentalists, developers and many, many engaged citizens of the province participated in the development of the growth plan. Indeed, members from across the way in past governments have led much of the foundational work, and we should all be proud of the recognition that comes with winning the Burnham award.

I'm proud to report that this plan has received unprecedented support from our partners in municipal government right across the greater Golden Horseshoe. In fact, His Worship David Miller, mayor of Toronto, said, "The greater Golden Horseshoe plan puts Ontario on the map as an international leader in sustainable community development."

One prominent planner, Carol Rhea of the American Institute of Certified Planners, has said, and again I quote, "This plan is a landmark comprehensive plan that is both visionary and pragmatic. It provides a strategic, innovative and coordinated approach to sustainable growth and development for 110 different municipalities."

Our province is booming. Nearly four million more people will be arriving within the greater Golden Horseshoe over the next quarter-century. Planning for growth means creating opportunity, complete communities with vibrant and diverse urban centres, while reducing development pressures on our important agricultural and natural areas. The people who are going to live in this area are going to need the right form of transit and transportation to help them to get around, the right kind of public amenities and communities to live in, and a clean and sustainable environment. In short, we are planning complete communities where people want to live, work and play.

The award-winning growth plan that the McGuinty government has developed will help to ensure we can continue to prosper. We're going to ensure that all this growth happens in a strategic way, a way that strengthens our economy and sustains our development while keeping the environment at the forefront of our planning efforts.

Our government has developed the growth plan in concert with many other key initiatives, such as ReNew Ontario, a multi-year, multi-billion dollar infrastructure investment plan to support the implementation of the growth plan; a legislated plan brought forward by my colleague John Gerretsen, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, that permanently protects a 1.8-million-acre greenbelt in the heart of the greater Golden Horseshoe—congratulations to Minister Gerretsen on that; major reforms to Ontario's laws governing how land use planning takes place; as well as efforts across various government ministries in brownfields redevelopment and planning.

I am indeed proud of the recognition that we have received from the American Planning Association's 2007 Daniel Burnham Award for a comprehensive plan.

"Innovative," "progressive," "groundbreaking," "cutting-edge": Those are some of the words that others are using to describe the work of the McGuinty government, and this is yet another example of Ontario being a leader on the world stage. As Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, I want to express to all of our partners involved in this historic, and indeed now award-winning, growth plan for the greater Golden Horseshoe my sincere and heartfelt congratulations.

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

SCHOOL SAFETY

Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): In response to the Minister of Education's tabling of amendments to the Safe Schools Act today, I want to be clear that we sup-

port any measures to enhance school safety, to ensure that suspensions and expulsions, if necessary, are administered fairly and without prejudice or discrimination, and that the appropriate supports are in place for those students who have the need.

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With regard to the proposed bill, however, we have serious concerns about the government's priorities and ability or commitment to implement this bill. Unfortunately, today's announcement is vintage McGuinty: long on rhetoric, short on substance. What concerns me most is that the minister appears not to know what's in the bill. On the one hand we are told, and the minister would have us believe, that this bill would put an end to mandatory suspensions, yet the bill makes suspensions mandatory for the same list of activities as in the existing bill.

When asked in the press conference if suspended students would be required, on a mandatory basis, to attend alternative programs to help them, she said, "No, it would be voluntary," yet the bill states that it would be mandatory for a student expelled to be assigned to a program for expelled students, and we support that. We support that students should have the appropriate supports, that the appropriate resources would be provided to our schools and our school boards to help those students who are having challenges within the school body.

We are disappointed that not one cent of the \$31 million committed in her announcement today goes to those programs that would help students—not one cent.

We would also suggest, finally, that there was nothing in today's announcement to respond to the Ontario Principals' Council safety concerns in our schools, that the Ontario Principals' Council says safety is in jeopardy in our schools today because of a lack of supervision created by this government's policy.

We will support whatever it takes to ensure safety in our schools. We'll support changes to the legislation that are necessary. But we are going to monitor very carefully this government's ability to implement the objectives that it has stated.

CANADIAN CHARTER OF RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

Mrs. Christine Elliott (Whitby–Ajax): I'm pleased to rise today on behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus to join the minister in celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The charter guarantees freedoms and protections that reflect the fundamental principles of justice rooted in our country's collective conscience. In enshrining equality rights, language rights, minority language and education rights among other such protections, Canada became a true leader on the world stage with respect to honouring our commitment to freedom.

It is our essential responsibility as legislators to ensure that the practices and policies of government indeed

reflect and uphold the rights guaranteed by the charter, and I would question this government's commitment to this responsibility, given the fact that it has taken them three years to allocate any meaningful funds to a starving legal aid system and, after having muzzled the vulnerable by cutting off public hearings in a rush to pass Bill 107, the human rights reform legislation, they have indicated that they will not proclaim this legislation until well after the next election.

DANIEL BURNHAM AWARD

Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie–Lincoln): I'm pleased to respond to the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal's statement about Brad Graham, the ADM, being in Philadelphia to receive an award.

Minister, this sounds a lot like the statement you made on December 19, 2006, about Brad Graham on his way to Philadelphia to receive this award. We certainly look forward to the announcement of Brad Graham's safe return to Pearson International Airport, bringing his award home. I do hope the minister this time—as I asked him to correct the record last time—recognizes the role of the previous Progressive Conservative government in the Smart Growth strategy that underlines this plan.

I would say to the minister that hopefully, though, he knows that I asked in estimates back in November for a list of the infrastructure projects that underline this plan, the funding assigned and the start dates. I remind the minister that he has not yet responded to my estimates request.

Secondly, there is an order paper question asking for the public infrastructure investments, the time frames and the dollars assigned to them. I hope the minister responds to this, because he knows a plan with lots of coloured pictures and diagrams is all well and nice on a bookshelf; it's the infrastructure investments that count.

So I hope Brad Graham sees the Liberty Bell; maybe catches a Sixers game; maybe goes to the Philadelphia Museum of Art, sees the Rocky Balboa poster, puts his dukes in the air, does a little dance and then comes back here, kicks the minister in the butt and says, "Get on with the infrastructure announcements or the actual programs. Put the dollars where your mouth is, aside from the same announcements over and over again."

SCHOOL SAFETY

Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity–Spadina): In response to the Minister of Education, in 2003, during the election campaign you said you would scrap the Safe Schools Act. In December 2004, you said you would have a report by the spring of 2005. In the spring, you said you'd have something by the fall. In the fall, you said the report would be complete by 2006. Now, in 2007, you add another safe school guideline: anti-bullying as it relates to cyber-bullying, and we support that. My worry is that you've introduced it at such a time

that it is quite possible you will not have the time to debate it, and these amendments are likely not to pass. We'll—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): When the ministers spoke, I seem to recall that we had the attention of all the members. I would hope that the same courtesy is extended during the responses.

Mr. Marchese: We'll be here until the end of June and beyond, and we hope you will as well. That will give us the opportunity to debate the bill and discuss its merits and lack of. But I want to tell you: You did this review, and the review focused on a number of topics, including consistency. We've known for a long time it could never be consistent, but you had to study that.

Fairness: Some groups were seen to be more likely to be suspended or expelled. We've known for years. It wasn't a perception that some groups were seen to be more likely. The human rights commission told you on a number of occasions through its studies. It's a fact that students of colour and students with disabilities were being discriminated against, expelled and/or suspended. You talk about discipline. There was a perception that there should be more judgment, as if we didn't know that, but you had to study that. Okay.

Prevention: There was a perception that the safe schools legislation focused more on discipline than on preventing behaviours leading to suspensions. As if we didn't know that. Okay, but you had to study that. For years we've told you, "Keep students in the school system." Provide alternative programs, such as the Toronto board did and York was doing at the time. We've told you for four long years, but you had to study it again, knowing what the human rights commission said, knowing what the NDP was telling you. But yes, okay, you had to do a thorough study of the matter.

Then you come up with this, and do you know what's missing, Minister? I suspect you know but you don't want to say. And you won't say, but I'm going to help you. What's missing is the following: What we need in the schools is adult supervision. What we need are youth workers who actually deal with students at risk, youth workers whom we used to have in the educational system and who disappeared under the previous regime and you have not brought back. They helped students at risk. There's nothing here that deals with that. We have no youth counsellors. We have no social workers. We're losing them.

Interjections.

Mr. Marchese: We're losing educational assistants, for the rump over here that doesn't listen very well. We're losing educational assistants who help in the special education classroom and deal with special needs. We are missing these people who work with students who've got mental illness, who've got a special education problem, who've got serious problems that need people with whom to work. If you don't have that, we won't solve these problems.

So we're looking forward to the debate. We want to be here until the end of the June to be able to discuss these issues with you.

DANIEL BURNHAM AWARD

Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto–Danforth): I'm going to address the remarks of the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal. Very simply, the Liberals' growth management plan will not curb sprawl. It will not stop gridlock on our highways. When this issue came before estimates, I asked the minister—

Interjections.

Mr. Tabuns: Mr. Speaker, what can I say? I know the truth hurts and that's why there's so much bellowing from the other side. But the truth is that the minister cannot say to what extent his plans are going to reduce congestion or gridlock. He cannot say—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Stop the clock. I'll ask once again that the attention and courtesy be given to the speaker who has the floor. The ministers had that courtesy; I think the responses should as well.

The member for Trinity–Spadina—or Toronto–Danforth.

Mr. Tabuns: A Toronto member nonetheless. As I was saying, the minister cannot say to what extent this will actually improve the situation. In fact, when you look at Canadian think tanks—the Neptis Foundation and the Pembina Institute—they say that the plan as written will not be different from business as usual. The projections of increased travel time for people in the greater Golden Horseshoe are there for everyone to see. We will spend more time in our cars, more time away from home. That's because the plan that was put forward has been weakened and weakened and weakened, and the roads that are being built to facilitate sprawl that were not in the initial plan that are going forward—the extension of Highway 404 to Ravenshoe, an extension that will allow sprawl to leapfrog the greenbelt—mean that what the minister has brought forward is simply a recipe for more sprawl and congestion.

1430

JUNE CALLWOOD

Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader): I believe we have unanimous consent for all parties to speak for up to five minutes to recognize the passing of social activist June Callwood.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Do we have consent? Thank you.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): It is somewhat of a daunting task to find the words that capture a spirit as vibrant as June Callwood. In fact, so many come to mind and to heart: courageous, committed, caring, crusading, passionate, persistent, unselfish, undeniable and, most certainly,

unstoppable. But today I'm going to choose one word above all others to capture June, and that word is "defiant." June defied convention. At a time when society still debated whether women should make a home or make a living, she set out to make a difference.

June defied tragedy. She turned the loss of her youngest child, Casey, into a miracle called Casey House.

June defied fashion. When society mistrusted street kids, she housed them. When it hid spousal abuse, she shielded its victims. When it met AIDS with fear and ignorance, she embraced those ravaged by the disease with love and understanding. And when each of these endeavours seemed impossible, she defied the odds and succeeded.

Even now, June defies description. She was a journalist who wouldn't settle for the sidelines. She was a writer, but a doer. She was a champion of the underdog who believed in enlisting the rich and powerful. She was a rabble-rouser who held the country's highest honour, Companion of the Order of Canada. She was a small-town girl who won over our biggest city. She was absolutely convinced that she could change the world, and yet she displayed no ego.

June even defied gravity. Her refuge was to soar in a glider high above the earth, which seems somewhat fitting, for she rose above private tragedy, public obstacles, petty disputes and even, on occasion, personal attack.

Most of all, June Callwood defied cynicism. She refused to believe that nothing could be done. She was resolute in the belief that everything was possible.

Son message était très clair lorsqu'elle a dit : « À partir du moment où vous constatez une injustice, vous cessez d'être un simple témoin. Vous avez l'obligation de faire quelque chose; sinon, vous participez à cette injustice. »

June's message to all of us was clear when she said, "If any of you happens to see an injustice, you are no longer a spectator, you are a participant. And you have an obligation to do something."

I had the good fortune to see June shortly before we put out our last budget. I knew she was sick. I'd certainly heard that she was sick, but I couldn't tell by looking at her. She seemed to defy cancer as well. I took the opportunity to thank her for all she had done for so long, on behalf of so many. She was much more interested in telling me why our budget needed to help children growing up in poverty. On the one hand, she was such a gentle person; on the other, she had this remarkable steely resolve when it came to making her case.

Just before the meeting ended, I asked her if she would honour Ontario's best volunteers by allowing us to rename our Outstanding Achievement Award for Volunteerism as the June Callwood Outstanding Achievement Awards for Voluntarism. She said yes, and she seemed quite moved by this. I remember her saying to me, "To think: All this for a girl from Belle River." I said, "You've come a long way from Belle River," and she

gently corrected me and said, "No, I never really left," which I took as a testament to her lifelong humility.

June never set out in life to be something; she wanted to do something for others, whether her family, her friends, her community.

A few weeks later, I visited June in the hospital. My intention was to lift her spirits. Instead, she lifted mine. That was June.

There has been lots of talk these past few days about the loss of an icon and whether those shoes can ever really be filled. It's only natural for us to lament such a tremendous loss, but I think June would want us to defy that sort of conventional thinking and focus instead on the future.

There are literally thousands and thousands of remarkable young women in our province who volunteer every day in places like Toronto and Ottawa, Cornwall and Belle River, who dedicate themselves to making a difference. What's more, this new generation of defiant souls see themselves as citizens of the world. So they are also travelling to places like South America, Africa and southeast Asia, because they feel what June felt—an obligation to do something—and they have learned from June and women like her that they can do anything. In this sense, June, you have even defied death, because your example, your inspiration and your kindness will live forever.

Our thoughts and prayers are with June's family and especially her husband, Trent, and her children, Jill, Brant and Jesse. We thank them for sustaining June and for sharing her with us.

Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition): If I can follow where the Premier left off, it is hard to know where to begin when it comes to June Callwood—writer, broadcaster, social activist, volunteer. She was an extraordinary person in every respect. She wielded a huge influence through what she said and what she wrote, but I think the greatest influence, the biggest difference she made, came from what she did and who she was.

I first met June Callwood as a young boy, as she was a good friend of my late grandmother. My grandmother was herself a noted community activist who devoted a lot of her time to helping the poor. Most of my encounters as an adult were not as an elected official but through our encounters in community and charitable work. As I said in my statement on her passing, you always knew where she stood and you always knew at the same time where she expected you to stand, and that is exactly as it should have been.

Former Prime Minister Paul Martin once said that he was afraid of her, but this was later interpreted by June Callwood's friend Rabbi Arthur Beinfeldas being "an expression of respect and admiration of her moral authority." I think the rabbi understood the June Callwood effect very well, that moral authority came from who she was as a person and what she did.

I went to Casey House last night to sign the book of condolences and, as you would expect, there was a steady stream of people in and out, flowers lined up against the

fence. I flipped through the book after I signed, and there were notes there from the Lieutenant Governor and from many prominent people, but page after page, the vast majority of the many pages, were filled with notes from average citizens who said things like, "I never met you, but I want to thank you," or they said, in many cases, "I intend to give some of my time in the future as a tribute to you and to carry on some of the work you did." It's consistent with what the Premier just said. It really was remarkable to see these people, average people who didn't know her and never met her, but she had obviously moved them and motivated them in her lifetime and by her passing.

I should say by way of one additional observation about that book of condolence that while the written tributes weren't confined by any means to the HIV/AIDS community, there were many which spoke very eloquently to what June Callwood had done, not just in a practical sense but, as they described it, in terms of the rights, dignity and self-respect of members of that community and their families.

1440

If you look at the history of Casey House, it sprang in part from a group of people who came together to care for Margaret Frazer, a teacher, a social activist and a feminist who had been diagnosed herself with terminal cancer in 1985. June Callwood wrote a book about the experiences of the group that helped, of which she was part, of course, called *Twelve Weeks in Spring*, the proceeds from which formed part of the initial financial underpinnings for Casey House itself. In that book, June Callwood had this to say, referring to Margaret Frazer:

"One of the lessons of Margaret's death is a redefinition of friendship.... She needed help and people came together suddenly to give it, but most of them were little more than acquaintances of hers. Very few were friends in the way the word is normally meant: that intimate relationship with someone whose loyalty and support have been tested, someone who has become as close as kin."

This may well explain the essence of June Callwood's magic. She had, in some respects, her own definition of friendship, which may in fact have been a redefinition of citizenship, which says that you don't just stand by and watch people suffer, whether they are victims of domestic violence, disadvantaged people or street kids. Indeed, it may be that that view of citizenship is also summed up by another passage I found in *Twelve Weeks in Spring*, which I thought worth sharing. June Callwood said this:

"Palliative care shouldn't be reserved for the Margaret Frazers who happen to have spent a solid ten years of their lives helping others. If the human community can't make itself into a tribe to help someone, anyone in trouble, it isn't worth saving from the bomb."

This is vintage June Callwood—some of the characteristics the Premier described of her personality.

Many people were in awe with regard to the serenity with which June Callwood accepted the end of her life,

and that includes me. I found a passage in a column she wrote in the *Globe and Mail* in 1989 dealing with what she called "the challenge of parting." Here is what she said:

"A human passage is marked by roads not taken.... At the end of the day the pattern of departures is random and whimsical. The old are tantalized by the lives they didn't live."

In June Callwood's case, I think it's very fair to say that there weren't too many good roads not taken. I don't think there were any lives not lived which tantalized or traumatized her as she faced the end. She could go with serenity and with her fighting spirit intact.

I think the greatest tribute we can pay to her is to do what the people who signed the book said they would do, and the Premier made reference to this as well: to volunteer for something, to take up a cause, to carry on her work.

To Trent Frayne and to the Frayne-Callwood children and the extended family, we express our condolences but also our gratitude for the life of June Callwood and for the support and inspiration they gave to her throughout. To June Callwood, we simply say thank you.

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): We celebrate the life of a truly remarkable woman: a journalist, an author, a mother, a wife, a pilot, a feminist, a political activist—all of those things characterize June Callwood but none of them completely describes her. Her legacy has many aspects; probably the most enduring, though, was her strength and her humanity. She was a fighter for equality, a liberator, using her words as her weapon. Callwood left behind, and leaves behind, a rich legacy as a journalist, a writer and a social activist.

She once said, "If you see an injustice being committed, you aren't an observer, you are a participant." That's why I believe she was known as Canada's conscience.

Throughout her life, she fought for equality and she preached courage. She spoke her mind and pulled no punches. She was a woman who didn't tell government what to do; she went out and did it herself. She founded or helped to found more than 50 social organizations. She passionately exposed the tears in Canada's social fabric and was compelled to work to change them. She was a trailblazer for women's rights, gay rights and the rights of the underprivileged, with a history of activism going back over 40 years.

She started by founding Digger House, a shelter for homeless youth, in the late 1960s. She then went on to found Nellie's, one of Canada's first shelters for women in crisis, in 1974, and then Jessie's Centre for Teenagers in 1982. In 1988, she founded Casey House Hospice, named after her dear lost son. Casey House was the first hospice in the world to provide support and palliative care for people afflicted with HIV/AIDS, at a time when little was yet known about the disease and the ignorance and fear surrounding it was intense.

I suspect probably every member of this Legislature, present and past, has received a fund-raising letter from

June Callwood for Casey House or been asked to attend a fund-raising function. In fact, I expect that virtually every member of this Legislature has been reached by June Callwood in some way or fashion. I know the member for Parkdale–High Park worked with June Callwood on a number of social issues, especially with her at Nellie’s as a volunteer when it first opened and then later at Margaret Frazer House.

One of the most challenging meetings I ever had as Attorney General was a meeting with June Callwood, who came through the door, was polite and dignified but obviously had spent a great deal of time thinking out exactly what she was asking for and thinking out the plan of action, about how to do it. At the end of the meeting, you felt compelled to take up the cause, because here was someone who conducted herself with such dignity, with such intelligence and with such compassion that you felt compelled to take on the cause and to follow her lead. She motivated us, she encouraged us and she inspired us to make our world a better place.

This will not be the end of June Callwood. It may be the passing of June Callwood, but it will not be the end, because she has left such a rich legacy, which will go on.

Callwood once said in an interview in 2004, “If there is any kind of message in the way I’ve lived, it’s that we’re here to take care of one another. It was Kurt Vonnegut who said that we’re all in this together, whatever ‘this’ is. That’s how I feel, that we’re in it to help one another.” And she firmly believed that this is how people should always conduct themselves.

Our thoughts are with June Callwood’s husband, Trent Frayne, her children, her family, her extended family and her friends. We have lost a great Canadian, but her work will go on, and her work will lead many of us to do better work ourselves.

The Deputy Speaker: Please stand and join me in a few moments of silent remembrance and respect.

The House observed a moment’s silence.

The Deputy Speaker: Of course we will see that the Callwood family receives the remarks from Hansard today.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ONTARIO LOTTERY AND GAMING CORP.

Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the Premier, and it concerns the lottery scandal. Last night, you used your parliamentary majority to crush our motion that would refer this entire scandal to the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly. Once upon a time, this move would have outraged you, as the former member for Ottawa South, Dalton McGuinty, as opposed to the Dalton McGuinty who sits as Premier today. The former member for Ottawa South,

Dalton McGuinty, said the following in 1991, and I quote from Hansard:

“Our public and our traditions of fairness demand that this matter be reviewed by a committee of this House. The course that the government members of the committee have embarked the committee upon means that this government has no intention of dealing with this matter publicly and fairly. Government members have accused us of being on a witchhunt. We are on a hunt—a hunt for the facts, and we will pursue those facts relentlessly, rigorously and unfailingly.”

My question for the Premier is this: Why did you use your parliamentary majority to crush our attempts to do exactly what you said you would have done and thought should be done in similar circumstances in 1991? What do you have to hide?

1450

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): I can’t recall those words back in 1991, but something tells me we were not presented in opposition with an Ombudsman’s report and an independent objective analysis of the issue at hand. Something tells me that the government of the day had not turned the matter over to the Ontario Provincial Police. Something tells me that the government of the day had not moved ahead on some very specific recommendations to restore confidence in whatever was broken in the first instance. Something tells me that those circumstances were markedly different from the circumstances that obtain today and the approach that’s been taken by our government to restore public confidence in Ontario’s lottery system.

Mr. Tory: I think the Premier would have said at that time, in 1991, when he was Dalton McGuinty, the member for Ottawa South, that really what was not being addressed and what he wanted to see addressed at that time was the question of ministerial accountability, the question of what the government did, what its response was, what it knew, when it knew it and so on. But before seeing his values changed by the power of the Premier’s office, this is what Dalton McGuinty, the Leader of the Opposition, had to say: “There are many, many more questions that we feel ought to be answered, and for that reason once again I’m asking you to allow this House, through an all-party legislative committee, to subpoena witnesses and have them answer questions under oath.” I believe that was in December 1996.

That’s an attitude that makes a lot of sense. Perhaps the Premier can explain why a move of about two metres from this seat here to that seat over there has caused his opinion to change so dramatically about the need for accountability, for an independent investigation and for a legislative committee to be able to get to the root of these matters and find out the truth.

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: To the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal.

Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy Government House Leader): The member is quite aware that this government has

taken very quick and decisive action where previous governments decided to sweep these matters under the rug. Where they looked the other way and would not take the proper action, we've called in KPMG, one of Canada's leading independent auditing firms, I believe. They should be quite familiar to the member opposite. They are the auditing firm for your political party. Indeed, they've welcomed the Ombudsman and his independent investigation into this matter, probably one of the most thorough and sweeping investigations we've seen. In addition to that, they have directed that the materials that were reviewed by the Ombudsman be turned over to the Ontario Provincial Police for their review.

But in addition to that, all members should want to know that quick and decisive action has been taken to implement some of the 60 recommendations of both the Ombudsman and KPMG. Seventeen have already been implemented. An additional 25 should be complete by the end of June. The other 18 have begun and are ongoing.

This is in marked contrast to the approach of previous governments. This has not only lived up to but exceeded the kind of standard we saw previously. We've shone a light on these matters, we are getting to the bottom of them and are quickly implementing the appropriate—

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

Mr. Tory: I hope the Premier will choose to answer these, because these are statements he made. Here's one from 1996 when he was on this side of the House that is very reasonable and applies very well to the lottery scandal. He said this: "If the Premier is convinced that the minister has nothing to hide, then why not agree to the all-party legislative inquiry? Do the minister a favour. He's going to be hanging under a cloud after the result of this commissioner's inquiry. There's always going to be a lingering doubt. Do the minister a favour. Give him the opportunity to come before a legislative committee." Once again, a very reasonable statement and one I find myself agreeing with.

The question for the Premier—because it's his statement—is this: Why the 180-degree turn from what he was saying just a few years ago? There can only be one of two answers: either you didn't mean it then or you're trying to hide something today. I think we will choose door number two. What are you trying to hide? Why won't you refer this to a legislative committee so that we could have a full airing?

Hon. Mr. Caplan: In fact the leader of the official opposition is quite wrong. The Ombudsman has commented on the actions of myself and the government. In his report—and I understand that members opposite don't wish to accept the Ombudsman's finding—he says, "I commend the minister and the government for its openness and responsiveness to my report and recommendations and for their immediate and resolute commitment to ensuring change."

In fact, for eight years we saw government members on the other side—if you look to your left and right—

who sat in the cabinet of the day who would not call one agency before the standing committee on government agencies. It took this Premier and this government, with a commitment to transparency, with a commitment to reforming the institutions of this House, redemocratizing it, to ensure that the government and members are empowered to be able to look at agencies.

The Deputy Speaker: Response.

Hon. Mr. Caplan: In fact, the standing committee on government agencies was chaired by a member of your own caucus. They looked into government agencies and in fact three more government agencies—that will be six in four years—

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. New question.

Mr. Tory: This minister is so amusing. Redemocratization of the House? This is the only government I've heard of that brought in time allocation on a piece of democratic renewal legislation. They take credit for all of the things they did after they got caught.

My question is for the Premier. Yesterday, you instructed your caucus members to use your majority, not to do time allocation this time, but to stop a legislative inquiry from happening—yet another attempt to obscure and cover up this scandal. We're not going to let you cover up this scandal. We're going to use whatever tools we have to get to the bottom of this lottery rip-off. We are going to use the selections available to us through the estimates process to call the Premier and the minister before the committee to answer questions they have refused to answer in the House.

Will the Premier show some leadership and commit here and now to appearing before the standing committee on estimates to answer any and all questions that the committee might have for him? Will you commit to doing that?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: To the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal.

Hon. Mr. Caplan: In fact, I have already had an opportunity to attend the estimates committee to answer all questions that were put.

I can assure you, the member from Erie-Lincoln did in fact request information and was provided information through that process. I look forward to asking members opposite, because I do know—and the leader of the official opposition has indicated—that both Mr. Hudak and Mr. Sterling were former ministers at the period of time the Ombudsman talked about, when they looked away.

I'd like to pose some questions: What did they know? When did they know it? Why didn't they take the appropriate action?

I look at the Ombudsman's comments from his March 26 press conference when he says, "I conclude that they"—the OLG—"put profits ahead of public service. I think there was a point, a crossroads, in" the year "2002"—

The Deputy Speaker: Response.

Hon. Mr. Caplan: The leader of the official opposition should look to members on his left and members

on his right who were there at the time, who chose to look the other way—

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. Supplementary.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Tory: Well, my supplementary question is for the Premier, and I would say to the minister, he'll have plenty of chances to answer questions when he comes to the committee on estimates, and he'll have a lot of chances to ask questions when he's over here about the end of October.

Now to the Premier: You obviously have some reason to stonewall. You have something to cover up. You have some piece of information that you're trying to hide. The estimates process—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: Order. I need to hear the question, please. Leader of the official opposition.

Mr. Tory: Premier, we asked about whether you would appear to discuss your estimates, not whether the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal would appear to discuss his, and it would be appreciated if you could get up and answer the question as to whether you will appear to discuss the estimates of your office. If you don't, then it's obvious you must have something to hide, something that you don't want to talk about or some piece of information that you want to keep hidden because, as you well know, the estimates are one important part of the process where the executive is to be held accountable by the Legislature for spending. Why won't you show some leadership, why won't you give some meaning to the words you spoke about empowering committees and agree to appear in front of the estimates committee to discuss your estimates?

The Deputy Speaker: Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal.

Hon. Mr. Caplan: I certainly thank the member for agreeing in advance that I will be here subsequent to October 10, but I won't do him the same courtesy, because I know my colleague from Don Valley West is going to make sure that Mr. Tory is a footnote in history.

The facts are these: That 6,557 ticket-checking devices have already been implemented as of April 2007; in fact, by the end of June, some 8,800 should be in place. All lottery terminals selling online products have customer-facing video screens—currently 8,871. Screen displays have been enhanced beginning in March 2007. Font size was increased for all validation messaging for both winners and all non-winners. In fact, in January, a 29-second audio and video display is produced on a screen for validation of wins over \$10,000. Also, currently there is a sign posted at each location reminding people to sign the backs of their tickets as part of the silent seller display on the retail—

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The Deputy Speaker: Final supplementary?

Mr. Tory: Here is the record of weak leadership that we're seeing on display today. The Premier will not answer questions in this House about the lottery scandal.

He orders his people to shut down the attempt to refer the lottery scandal to the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly, and now he is refusing to answer to a committee of the Legislature for his own estimates.

This is the same Premier who once talked about transparency and accountability, and the best he can do is to refer these questions to someone else. It's very clear that Dalton McGuinty hasn't changed the Premier's office; the Premier's office has changed Dalton McGuinty.

The people of Ontario want some accountability. The Premier won't even offer to be accountable for the millions of dollars that his office spends through the estimates process. My question to the Premier is this: Why won't you appear in front of the estimates committee? Why won't you hold yourself accountable, as you said you would, and make a change to the process, as you said that you would, and get to the bottom of this rip-off of innocent people across this province that happened on your watch?

Hon. Mr. Caplan: In fact, I quite look forward to presenting the information to the committee when asked. I look forward to placing questions to Mr. Hudak and to Mr. Sterling about what they knew and when they knew it and why they didn't act. As the Ombudsman has indicated, the crossroads was in 2002. The answer may be, in part, that an Ian Urquhart column back in 1999 indicated that Ron Barbaro was brought in to run the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp. as a business. This was the mindset of the previous Conservative government. These are the people they brought in. This is the culture that they developed and nurtured. These are the changes that need to be made. No Ontarian should doubt that I, as minister, will get to the bottom of the matter, and then we'll take the quick and decisive actions to ensure that all Ontarians have trust and confidence in their corporation. That stands in stark contrast to this member and his colleagues when they sat in government, when they either sat on their hands and looked the other way or when they simply swept these matters under the rug. Speaker—

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. New question.

NORTHERN ECONOMY

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): Premier, just one year ago northern Ontario was the home of some of Canada's leading natural resource companies. Decisions about what investments to make and where to focus research and development needed to sustain future jobs were being made right here in Ontario. But under the McGuinty government one year later, first Inco, then Falconbridge and now Algoma Steel have been gobbled up by foreign-based companies who will now make the big decisions outside of Ontario; indeed, outside of Canada.

My question is this: Is the McGuinty government at all concerned about the foreign takeover of three of the leading companies in northern Ontario?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): We're always concerned

about any struggling sector or part of our province, and long ago we rolled up our sleeves in an effort to partner with management and with labour in a number of different areas.

I had the opportunity last week to speak to a CAW convention, and after I delivered my remarks, I was approached by CAW members from Thunder Bay. They are very, very concerned about the position taken by the NDP not to proceed with the subway, very concerned about the impact that's going to have on their jobs, their community and their local economy, and they're very eager to hear Mr. Hampton change his mind in that regard. I undertook to put that to him. They want to hear from him. They want to know why he has adopted a position that is harmful to CAW and, in particular, harmful to the economy of Thunder Bay.

Mr. Hampton: I'm not sure where the Premier is, but I know that working people across northern Ontario are very concerned when leading natural resource companies that have been the providers of some of the best-paying jobs have now been taken over by companies that are based halfway around the world. Working Ontarians are concerned about their natural resources, they're concerned about natural resource jobs and they're concerned about where the future decisions are going to be made in terms of research and development and future job development.

Premier, how many other northern Ontario companies have to be taken over or go out of business before the McGuinty government shows some concern about sustaining jobs and sustaining communities in northern Ontario?

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

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: To the Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

Hon. Rick Bartolucci (Minister of Northern Development and Mines): Do you know what northerners are concerned about? Northerners want jobs. They want to have some type of certainty. They want to know that this government cares enough about them that jobs are going to be sustained, that jobs are going to grow. Over one year, from March 2006 to March 2007: 18,400 net new jobs in northern Ontario.

Let me tell the leader of the third party that this government will compare its record any time against what they did in northern Ontario between 1990 and 1995.

Mr. Hampton: I say to the McGuinty government, I welcome the comparison. But I can tell you this: The 32,000 people who are out of work—direct and indirect jobs across northern Ontario—are not going to be happy about your answer or this government's inaction.

Here's the reality, Minister: The decisions about future investment in research and development, whether it be in the steel industry in northern Ontario or whether it be in the mining industry, are no longer going to be made in northern Ontario. If people want to talk with someone, they'll have to fly to Switzerland or they'll have to fly to Brazil or they'll have to fly to India.

Let me tell you, when the price of steel starts to decline—and it's a market that goes up and down—or when the price of nickel or copper starts to decline, those decisions will be made elsewhere. I simply say, what is it going to take for the McGuinty government—

The Deputy Speaker: The question has been asked. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Bartolucci: Here's the record that we're going to be comparing ourselves against. Between 1990 and 1995, an average of 1,000 people a week joined the ranks of the unemployed when the NDP were in power; 5,513 jobs were lost in the north under the NDP. When the leader of the third party and the member from Nickel Belt were in cabinet, the number of people in north-western Ontario employed in the natural resources sector collapsed from 11,700 to 6,000. In northeastern Ontario, the number of people in the natural resources sector plummeted from 27,700 to 21,700. I will compare our record on job creation and prosperity in northern Ontario against their record any time.

MANUFACTURING JOBS

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): To the Premier: 110 workers at the Buchanan Forest Products sawmill in Hudson, near Sioux Lookout, have learned this week that they are losing their jobs. Effective April 28, 110 workers will be laid off. The company is clear: This is a direct result of the softwood lumber deal. That was the softwood lumber deal put forward by the Harper government and supported by the McGuinty government.

Premier, my question is this: Do you still think your government's support for the Harper government's softwood lumber deal with the United States was good for working families in northern Ontario?

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

Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for aboriginal affairs): The leader of the third party conveniently likes to ignore all the economic indicators in North America. He knows as well as every member in this House that there has been a total collapse of the US housing market, thereby severely lessening the demand for softwood lumber from this country. That's what's happening. Our mills are having to adjust to that. Just like he talked about in his previous question, lumber is a commodity like minerals, and the demand and the prices go up and down in a cycle just like they do in minerals, as accepted in the first question. So it's accepted in this question, too, that lumber is the very same, but we have a \$1-billion transition fund to help our industry try to get through this cycle.

Mr. Hampton: It was the McGuinty government that said that the US softwood lumber deal proposed by the Harper government was going to be a good deal. It was you, the Minister of Natural Resources, who said this was going to sustain softwood lumber jobs in northern On-

tario. Well, Tembec sawmill in Timmins, 130 jobs gone; Domtar sawmill in White River, 250 jobs gone; Domtar sawmill in Nairn Centre, 140 jobs gone; now 110 jobs at the sawmill in Hudson.

Premier, industry leaders warned you about the softwood lumber deal, community leaders warned you, union leaders warned you. They said the softwood lumber deal is not going to be a good deal. Premier, do you still think your support for the Harper government's softwood lumber deal was a good deal for working families in the forest industry in northern Ontario?

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Hon. Mr. Ramsay: What the member refuses to recognize is how competitive a jurisdiction Ontario is, compared to the other provinces, because of the changes that the McGuinty government made to the forest sector. By supporting forest inventory and the forest roads, we're in a position now where companies from across the country want to do business in Ontario.

The proof of that is in the export levels that are happening out of Ontario. Where Quebec is exporting about 50% of what they could, Ontario is exporting 95% of what Ontario could, under the quota system. That shows that we're at almost full capacity in what we could be doing. We're the most competitive jurisdiction in this country, and we're very proud of those commitments we've made to the industry, and the industry is very pleased with the commitments we've made to them.

Mr. Hampton: I was in northeastern Ontario not long ago, and what people are concerned about there is in fact the exporting of raw logs out of northeastern Ontario under the McGuinty government to mills in Quebec, where they're being processed and where the jobs are.

Premier, this is about your government. This is about 32,000 good-paying forest sector jobs that have been destroyed under the McGuinty government. In some cases, it has been your policy of driving hydro rates through the roof that has closed paper mills and has shut down sawmills. In other communities, it has been your support for the softwood lumber deal, which is turning out to be a disaster for sawmills across the north. In Ignace, 60 jobs gone, and the company was very direct: This is a direct result of the softwood lumber deal. That's a town that's completely dependent upon its sawmill.

Premier, I want to ask you this simple question: How could the McGuinty government abandon all of these working families who are involved in the forest sector across northern Ontario?

Hon. Mr. Ramsay: It's too bad the leader of the third party doesn't like to talk about some of the good success stories that we've had. In contrast to your very first question, when we had a multinational walk away from a pulp and paper company in northern Ontario, at Terrace Bay, Buchanan Forest Products came to the government and said, "We'd like to work with you and get this plant up and running again." We have that; we have a really good story. We're going to be going there again this week and helping them with biofuel boilers and making sure they have even greater efficiency than they do today.

These are good stories that you like to ignore because we're working with the companies. In Cascades and some of these, we're going to come back too. We're working to make sure we have an indigenous-based industry. We're working with the companies and making sure we get that sector back on again.

ONTARIO LOTTERY AND GAMING CORP.

Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe-Grey): My question is for the Premier. I'm hoping the Premier will have the intestinal fortitude to actually answer a question about his own office. Premier, you've dodged our questions in this House. You've ducked our attempts to have an inquiry into the lottery scandal conducted by the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly. Now you're ducking and dodging our call to have you appear before the estimates committee to answer for your attempts to cover up the lottery scandal and to answer for your own ministry. What are you afraid of, Premier? What are you hiding? Why can't you show the respect and leadership people expect from their Premier and appear before the estimates committee, as you were asked by members of this House?

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

Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy Government House Leader): I would say to the member that I understand the partisan political perspectives of members opposite, indeed of all members of this House. But an independent, unbiased officer of the Legislature, Mr. André Marin, the Ombudsman, said just this past weekend, on CH television, "I'm pleased with the recommendations that were accepted. I think the recommendations are very substantial." Key to them: screening of retailers, the secret shopping scheme he recommended, the policing of retailers by an outside agency, a new adjudicative agency to decide who gets the award when it's in dispute.

"These are radical changes, and I'm happy with the government's response. The government chose to forward it to the OPP; it's not a recommendation I made."

The point is, many of these things could have been done under a previous government when this member sat in the cabinet. Regrettably, this member and members of his caucus decided to sweep these matters under the rug and not take their responsibility seriously, but the folks on this side of the House today certainly do. We've gotten to the bottom of the matter and we're acting decisively to protect—

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

Mr. Wilson: Premier, your minion here talks about taking responsibility seriously. It's an absolute—

The Deputy Speaker: I've asked members to use temperate language. I think we're getting near the edge

of that, and I ask the members to reconsider what they're saying and how.

Mr. Wilson: It is rude and it is disgraceful that the Premier would not answer questions about his own ministry. It's not only a requirement of this House and of our democracy; it's something that he said he would do during the last election campaign: He would promote members, he would promote committees and he would be held accountable for his role as Premier of this province should he be elected Premier. I guess that was something very nice to say to the electorate—say anything to get elected.

I ask you today, what makes you so high and mighty that you won't do what every other minister is required to do in this Legislative Assembly, and that is to appear and be accountable before the estimates committee for your—

The Deputy Speaker: The question has been asked. Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal.

Hon. Mr. Caplan: I have twice appeared before the estimates committee, and I look forward to another engagement to answer questions from all parties in the Legislature. But I guess the question for the member opposite is, when he was sitting at the cabinet table, if he was so serious about these matters, why did he and his House leader and his colleagues not allow the standing committee on government agencies to call one government agency in eight years—not one? This government, on the other hand, in four years will have six government agencies called for review by an all-party committee, in fact chaired by a member of your caucus, to sit and ask questions and to make recommendations about the way those agencies run. I think that stands in stark contrast—in fact, I know that the Ombudsman comments quite specifically, where he commends me as the minister and commends the government for our openness and responsiveness, because it is in stark contrast to the way things have been done previously. The Ombudsman does note that there was a crossroads in 2002, but this member and members of his caucus and members of the cabinet chose to look the other way, chose to—

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. New question.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): My question is for the Premier. Last week the joint hospital laundry facility in North Bay announced it is closing. Sixteen jobs in laundry services will be cut and another 10 jobs may be transferred out of the city. All of the laundry will now be shipped over 130 kilometres away, at considerable environmental and financial cost. My question is this: Is this what happens under the McGuinty government's private, profit-driven hospital scheme—the cost of the hospital deal goes from \$200 million to \$500 million to \$1 billion, and the hospital laundry workers lose their jobs in order to pay for the private company's profits?

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

Hon. George Smitherman (Deputy Premier, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): If the honourable member cared to pay attention to it, he would know very clearly that North Bay General Hospital, associated with dramatic enhancements to their funding, most certainly has more people employed today than when our government came to office, providing important health care services to the people of that area.

We are very proud indeed that our member, Monique Smith, has been able to build hospitals in that community that Mike Harris couldn't deliver for that community. But the issue with respect to the laundry is most assuredly a decision that the local hospital board took. They saw it as an opportunity to piggyback on the capacity for laundry services that's there in the Sudbury community and they made this decision purely as a local part of decision-making processes.

Mr. Hampton: For the McGuinty government, shipping laundry some 300 kilometres back and forth may make sense for you, but I can tell you, for the people of North Bay, watching the laundry go 160 kilometres down the highway one way and then come 160 kilometres back doesn't make sense, and workers and community leaders have told you that. But it's clear the McGuinty government isn't listening.

My question again is this: Premier, how many other North Bay hospital services will be cut or consolidated somewhere else? How many hospital worker jobs will be cut or privatized under the McGuinty government's private, profit-driven hospital scheme, which has already driven up the cost of the hospital at least \$500 million?

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Hon. Mr. Smitherman: It's passing fancy that today the honourable member is concerned about some trips back and forth from North Bay to Sudbury, but he's not concerned whatsoever about the decisions he's taken to cut 35 million rides by transit users of a long-promised and long-supported subway line here in York.

Where was the honourable member when his party saw ancillary services contracted out at St. Thomas Elgin General, at Trillium Health Centre, at Halton Healthcare, at Joe Brant Memorial, all under his watch? Where was that honourable member when two years in a row they massively cut the budgets of all hospitals in the province of Ontario? Where was he then? Silence.

OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR GENERAL

Mr. Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay–Superior North): My question is to the Minister of Government Services. Minister, last week, rumours were swirling around Thunder Bay that the Registrar General's office was about to close its call centre in the city, with the 30 jobs involved being relocated to Toronto. Obviously, such a possibility was of great concern to me and my colleague Bill Mauro, as our region has already suffered significant job losses in the forestry sector and any further job losses struck us as unacceptable.

After speaking with you about this issue, I was grateful to learn that the call centre is not closing, that there are no job losses as a result of any reconfiguration of the office and that indeed we have seen, and will continue to see, employment increases at the ORG office in my community.

Having said that, there continues to be some confusion as to the status of the provincial office in Thunder Bay that I believe requires absolute clarity. Minister, can you inform me, my constituents and the members of the House as to what exactly is the situation with the ORG operation in Thunder Bay?

Hon. Gerry Phillips (Minister of Government Services): I do want to share with my colleagues from Thunder Bay that the call centre is not closing. We are actually going to be adding staff. It's an outstanding office, I might say to all of the people watching this. The member will know that actually we've added 102 permanent full-time jobs. Now, 80 of those were part-time temporary jobs, but another 22 are incremental jobs.

What we are doing at this outstanding office is we are moving production from our Toronto office to Thunder Bay. We are moving our premium service from Toronto to Thunder Bay. Now, there will be several people in Toronto who are employed at our Registrar General office that will be doing calls that are currently handled in Thunder Bay. At net-net, we are adding jobs to Thunder Bay. This is, I might say, an outstanding office doing great work for the people of Ontario.

Mr. Gravelle: Minister, thank you very much. Clearly, this is a good-news story for employment opportunities in Thunder Bay, and obviously I am relieved that the rumours of the job losses have proven to be completely unfounded.

In your initial response, though, Minister, you made reference to new services that will be provided by the ORG in Thunder Bay, and new jobs. Are you in a position to provide any specific details as to what this will involve and, perhaps more significantly, will this mean further job opportunities for our constituents?

Hon. Mr. Phillips: The two things that we are adding to Thunder Bay: the production of birth certificates, the part that is done currently in Toronto, will be moving there; and what we call the premium service.

I would just say to the Legislature, if you remember, 18 months ago all birth certificate applications were by paper and that office said, "We can do this online. Furthermore, Minister, if you do it online, we can guarantee that if we don't have it delivered in 15 business days, it's free."

I want to tell the people of Ontario and the Legislature, we had zero online applications 18 months ago. Since then, we've had 400,000 applications and 128 refunds. I always say, Pizza Pizza can't do that. We've had terrific service. Our employees at Thunder Bay are an example and we're going to continue to build on that centre of excellence, delivering great quality to the people of Ontario.

ONTARIO LOTTERY AND GAMING CORP.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds–Grenville): I have a question for the Premier, and hopefully he will respond to it. What we're seeing here today is unique—I think shamefully unique. We're asking the Premier questions about his estimates, how he's going to deal with his estimates, his office's estimates, and he's referring it to the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal. Anyone viewing the proceedings today should be wondering why the Premier will not deal with questions about his office and the conduct of officials in his office. I ask him once again, will he appear before the estimates committee to justify the expenditures in his office?

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

Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy Government House Leader): As I have indicated, I have twice attended the estimates committee, and I look forward to attending once again. This member, with all of the phony outrage and fake bluff and bluster, knows quite well that when he was a member of the crown, I believe Premier Harris was called three times before the estimates committee and did not appear once. I think anybody who is watching at home understands the source that this is coming from. It is phony outrage. It is completely fake. The member opposite well knows that the Premier has not attended the estimates committee, which was the case under your government. If you would come clean and just be clear with Ontarians that I have been to the estimates committee, that I will be at the estimates committee and that I have answered every question that has been posed in this House and will continue to do so, because it is this government that decided to get to the bottom of these matters, to roll up our sleeves and to deal with it, unlike yourself, sir, who swept—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The answer's been given. Supplementary.

Mr. Runciman: I suspect that any former Premier in this place had the intestinal fortitude, the courage and the leadership to stand up and answer questions about estimates dealing with the Premier's office, not a referral to a minister who has nothing whatsoever to do with the estimates of the Premier's office—nothing whatsoever.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: Okay, turn it down a notch, please. Thank you.

Mr. Runciman: This is a significant abuse of the rules of the House in my view—a significant abuse. I ask the Premier once again a very clear-cut question: Estimates for your office are coming before the estimates committee in the next week or two. Will you appear to justify the expenditures in your office?

Interjection.

Hon. Mr. Caplan: My colleague says that's simply a cheap stunt. I wouldn't go that far. I recall previously in

the House when we couldn't get ministers or a Premier to even attend question period in this House. Of course this government has introduced legislation requiring the attendance of the Premier, of the cabinet, here in the House, to answer questions daily that are posed by the members of the official opposition.

This member in fact was the chair of the executive council, the chair of cabinet. In that eight-year period when they were the government, they did not call one government agency in front of the standing committee on government agencies. That is a glaring omission. The record under this government: In four years, six agencies will have been called for members of all parties to review, to make recommendations and to get a response. I'll stack the record of this administration compared to this member and his colleagues any day of the week and twice on Sunday.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity–Spadina): To the Minister of Education: From 2003 to 2006, 159 schools in Ontario were closed. Some of these schools are being closed and sold to cover board deficits. The Ottawa-Carleton District School Board recently decided to completely disrupt the programming of over 500 students in two schools—Bayview and R. B. Curry—to leave the more valuable Bayview property available for sale. The parents of R. B. Curry, constituents of the Premier, are losing their school despite having a vibrant program for over 232 students. Minister, what happened to keeping good schools open?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne (Minister of Education): I'm happy to respond to the member opposite. I really believe in the institution of school boards. I believe in their ability to have a plan for their communities. The reason school boards are important is that they know about their communities.

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We're also dealing right now with declining enrolment across the province. We have got to give school boards the ability to plan in that environment of declining enrolment. We froze school closures for two years; we put a moratorium on. We brought out a series of guidelines. We've asked boards to consider the value of programs to the community, to the students, to look at the services that are delivered in a school community, because we know that schools are worth more than just the bricks and mortar; they are hubs for communities. We've asked school boards to look at those factors.

But at the end of the day, school boards have to be able to plan. They have to be able to meet the needs of the students who are in the system as opposed to students who are not.

Mr. Marchese: Thank God we had a moratorium on school closures. By the way, I'm a bit displeased, because the Premier is losing a school despite having a vibrant program for over 232 students. I'm glad the board has a plan, because the plan I described isn't working.

You can't put school boards in a position of having to close schools to make up for a lack of funding and then wash your hands of the responsibility by appointing a review, which is what you did. You promised to keep good schools open, not to review them. Minister, when did "keep good schools open" become "displace, divide and disperse"?

Hon. Ms. Wynne: Just off the top, let's remember that under the government of that member, 155 schools closed across the province. Under the NDP, 155 schools closed.

Since we've been in office, we have put into the funding formula a supported schools grant that helps boards keep isolated schools open. We have put funding into the funding formula for small schools, to guarantee that those small schools have a principal and a secretary. So we have given boards extra resources to keep schools open.

But boards have to be able to do their planning. We need to have school trustees in communities who know what the needs of their communities are, and those school trustees have to have the authority to make their plans, consolidate programs and provide the programs that their students need. That is why I look forward to continuing to work with the Ottawa board and with boards across the province as they put their plans in place.

SERVICES FOR THE DISABLED

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel (Lambton–Kent–Middlesex): My question is directed to the Attorney General. The McGuinty government has been a champion in advocating for the rights of 1.5 million Ontarians who live with disabilities. I understand that the federal government recently announced that it will add its signature to a landmark United Nations treaty on protecting the rights of people with disabilities and that Canada will join 53 other nations to endorse the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Minister, on this, the 25th anniversary of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, could you explain the importance of this convention and indicate to the Legislature if the government of Ontario will support this initiative?

Hon. Michael Bryant (Attorney General): Absolutely, the answer is yes. On March 14, I was very pleased to write the Minister of Foreign Affairs and express Ontario's support for Canada's intention to sign the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The convention seeks to promote the fundamental rights and freedoms of persons with disabilities through progressive implementation of measures to ensure their dignity and full participation in society. The broad objectives of the convention are consistent with the goals of the McGuinty government and the policies and measures that we've taken to protect and enhance the rights and lives of persons with disabilities.

As Ontario will be required to implement some of the convention's terms, we've asked for assurances from the

federal government that we be consulted, as all provinces ought to be consulted. I also expressed Ontario's support in a conversation with the Minister of Foreign Affairs last month and look forward to updates from Parliament in this regard.

Mrs. Van Bommel: Minister, I'm very pleased to hear that we will be supporting the convention.

I also understand that you and Chief Justice McMurtry recently announced that a new Ontario courts accessibility committee has been established to help promote barrier-free courts in Ontario and to better respond to the accessibility needs of persons with disabilities. Minister, could you explain what steps the Ministry of the Attorney General is taking to improve the accessibility of Ontario's court system?

Hon. Mr. Bryant: I thank the member for her question. On April 2, the McGuinty government announced that we were acting on recommendations from a report presented by Chief Justice McMurtry to the Ministry of the Attorney General on how to make Ontario's court system fully accessible. The committee comprised representatives of the judiciary, the bar, the Ministry of the Attorney General and the province's accessibility directorate. It will be co-chaired by Justice Susan Lang of the Court of Appeal and the assistant Deputy Attorney General, court services division.

In addition, a pilot project has designated a site accessibility information coordinator for each of seven court locations: one each in Brockville, Hamilton, London, Newmarket, Toronto, Sudbury and Thunder Bay. The coordinators are providing information on existing services that are available, tracking information requests and the steps taken to meet these requests. The data will help the ministry to assess accessibility needs to further expand the service in the future.

I want to thank Chief Justice McMurtry for his tremendous dedication and commitment on this and many, many other issues and look forward to—

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

ONTARIO LOTTERY AND GAMING CORP.

Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke): My question is for the Premier. Repeatedly today you have been asked—and you have not even addressed the question; you have referred it to your minister. It's a very simple and not unusual question: Will you, as you claimed to be placing so much importance upon the work of committees in this legislative body during your campaign stumping speech in 2003, appear before the estimates committee so that you can be asked questions about the expenses arising out of your office? It's a simple question, Premier. Please don't refer it. Please answer this question: Will you appear before the estimates committee so that your expenses can be reviewed?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): No, I won't. Just so they

hear it again: No, I will not. I'll follow the precedent set by Premier Harris. He was asked on three separate occasions if he might appear.

I can say proudly, though, that we have reduced the budget of the Premier's office by \$150,000 from the days of the Conservative government. I can also say that our cabinet office budget has been reduced by \$2.3 million since the Conservative days. So we're being very careful with the people's money.

Mr. Yakabuski: At least we have an answer, but it's very disappointing, Premier.

Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie–Lincoln): No surprise.

Mr. Yakabuski: Not surprising, but disappointing.

First of all, you refuse and you crush the ability of this Legislature to bring this whole issue before a legislative committee. Now you are asked to please appear yourself so that you can answer questions on your own estimates and expenses arising out of your office with regard to this issue for this House, and you steadfastly say no.

Premier, what is left for us to determine your role and that of the people in your office with regard to this scandal?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: The members opposite have lost all faith in the Ombudsman and his ability to deal with these kinds of issues. They, furthermore, entirely discounted the ability of the Ontario Provincial Police to deal with these kinds of issues. It's in their interests to continue to play games with this, and I understand that. But I think what Ontarians want us to do, and we hear them loudly and clearly, is all those things that are necessary to restore their confidence in the integrity of their lottery system.

The Ombudsman has looked at this. He has given us a number of specific recommendations. KPMG has laid out a number of additional recommendations. We have turned this matter, beyond that, over to the Ontario Provincial Police. There are a number of changes that have already been made that are manifest at the lottery terminals themselves today in Ontario. We will continue to do everything we need to do to ensure that we keep our sleeves rolled up. We don't try to brush things under the carpet, as was done by the previous government. We will move forward to improve the quality of the services provided by the Ontario lottery and gaming system.

1540

MANUFACTURING JOBS

Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East): Premier, it's official: Genfast Manufacturing Co. in Brantford threw 210 people out of work today. The sudden Genfast closure is yet another example of the way tens upon tens of thousands of workers are being thrown on the scrap heap in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario. One is of them is a gentleman named Alex MacPhearson, of Hamilton Mountain. At 64, after 25 years of service and just 10 days to go until early retirement, he was cut off his benefits despite the fact that he has three types of terminal

cancer. He has stomach, lung and throat cancer and no compensation whatsoever.

Premier, where do you suggest that Mr. MacPhearson turn for some help with this inhumane situation that he now finds himself in?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): Let me first say that we are tremendously concerned any time that anybody in the province of Ontario loses their job, whether it's Mr. MacPhearson in his very trying circumstances or other workers as well.

I know that the NDP are exceptionally negative when it comes to their outlook on our economy, but the truth bears repetition that since the past three and a half years, we are now ahead by 340,000 net new jobs. The unemployment rate is at its lowest level in five years.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business recently announced that there are 70,000 job vacancies right now in the province of Ontario, mostly in the skilled trades. That's why we're expanding the number of people enrolled in our apprenticeship programs by up to 7,000 more on an annual basis. That's why we've created room for 86,000 more young people in our colleges and universities to invest in them, so that they continue to take advantage of all these new opportunities that are appearing in this economy.

Ms. Horwath: Premier, no severance, no termination pay, no job benefits or no job and no benefits: Is that your idea of success in this province? When manufacturing plants are falling like dominoes in McGuinty's Ontario, you have no plan to help hard-working and loyal, long-service employees like Alex MacPhearson. Alex's next cancer appointment is May 17, and without benefits, he won't be able to afford his cancer medications without having to beg for charity. Will you embark on a personal undertaking to ensure that Alex MacPhearson is covered for his cancer drugs and can live out his life in dignity? And will you finally acknowledge that your failure to protect good manufacturing jobs in this province is creating massive hardship for hard-working Ontario families?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: To the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Steve Peters (Minister of Labour): I'm proud of the record that, when communities have experienced job losses, our Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities is very quickly there to reach out to work with those communities and with those affected employers.

As well, it's important to understand that the Employment Standards Act does protect employees in this province. After three months of employment, an employee is entitled to notice-of-termination pay or notice in lieu if the employer ends that employment. An employee may also qualify for severance pay after five years of service. Severance pay is intended to compensate the employee for loss of seniority and job-related benefits and recognizes long service.

There is something the honourable member could do, and that would be to pick up the phone and call her colleague Mr. Layton in Ottawa. One of the things we

need to see proclaimed is Bill C-55, which would better protect workers in the province of Ontario from those companies that have gone bankrupt. I would encourage the honourable member to pick up the phone, call Jack Layton and help us out in that regard.

TFO

M^{me} Monique Smith (Nipissing): Ma question s'adresse à la ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones. Elle est au sujet de TFO.

En 1986, lors de la création de ce qu'on appelait à l'époque La Chaîne française, tout le monde n'était pas convaincu qu'il y avait de la place en Ontario pour une chaîne à temps plein, à 100 % française; qu'une telle initiative était viable.

Regardez maintenant l'essor que connaît cette petite chaîne. TFO est devenue pour la francophonie ontarienne une institution fondamentale et un outil de développement indispensable. C'est avec un immense plaisir que la communauté francophone a accueilli un TFO indépendant le 1^{er} avril 2007, autonomie accordée par le gouvernement McGuinty. Qu'est-ce que cela représente pour la communauté francophone de l'Ontario?

L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur (ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones): Je voudrais remercier la députée de Nipissing pour l'intérêt qu'elle porte à la communauté francophone, parce qu'elle représente une grande communauté francophone.

La chaîne TFO sera dotée de son conseil d'administration et sera gérée de façon autonome à la fois sur les plans administratif et budgétaire. Elle a son propre conseil d'administration, ses propres gestionnaires et son propre budget.

Nous avons d'ailleurs alloué une subvention ponctuelle de 15,4 \$ millions pour soutenir les coûts de transition, de réinstallation et de démarrage, de même que les coûts de conversion au numérique. Nous continuons à allouer une subvention annuelle d'environ 15 \$ millions pour veiller à ce que TFO réponde aux besoins culturels et éducatifs spécifiques de la communauté francophone et remplisse son mandat en matière de télédiffusion et de communication.

La communauté franco-ontarienne nous demandait depuis longtemps que TFO devienne autonome, avec son propre conseil d'administration, et nous avons livré la marchandise.

M^{me} Smith: C'était demandé depuis longtemps; c'est vrai.

Nous entendons tous que TFO, par son action innovatrice, parle à l'intelligence, suscite la réflexion, éveille l'intérêt, interpelle l'imagination et nourrit le sentiment d'appartenance à la francophonie d'ici et du monde. Cette autonomie revêt un caractère extrêmement significatif, car elle va permettre à TFO d'élargir ses horizons et d'aspirer à un brillant avenir. Quelles sont vos aspirations quant à la nouvelle autonomie de TFO?

L'hon. M^{me} Meilleur: J'espère que TFO va continuer à grandir, à se développer et même à se dépasser. J'espère que TFO va continuer à nous informer sur l'actualité entourant nos villes et nos villages, nos institutions, nos artistes, nos hommes et nos femmes qui à chaque jour écrivent une nouvelle page de notre histoire.

J'espère que TFO va continuer à nous raconter l'histoire des Franco-Ontariens, ses luttes et ses victoires, qu'elle va continuer à développer des partenariats avec les francophones d'ici et d'ailleurs.

J'espère que TFO soit à la hauteur des ambitions de l'Ontario français et qu'elle continue à nous donner une voix. TFO est un instrument de dialogue que nous pouvons engager entre nous, avec d'autres communautés francophones au Canada et avec la francophonie internationale. En ce sens, elle est une véritable pierre angulaire de la vitalité francophone en Ontario. L'autonomie de TFO va grandement renforcer les fondements institutionnels de l'Ontario français.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener–Waterloo): My question is for the Premier. You made a 2003 election promise to build a strategy for seniors that would guarantee that our seniors would be treated with dignity and respect. However, you have failed to do so. Today, about 50% of the long-term-care residents—that's about 35,000 people—still live in older homes that are not wheelchair accessible. They have three- and four-bed wards and they don't have ensuite baths. In fact, they're only meeting the design standards from 1972, as opposed to 1998.

I am asking you today, Premier, to commit to a capital renewal plan in order that these vulnerable older people can live with dignity and respect and be accommodated in homes that have rooms where they are private or semi-private, where they have ensuite baths and are totally wheelchair accessible. Will you commit today to a capital renewal plan?

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

Hon. George Smitherman (Deputy Premier, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): We all look forward with great intrigue and fascination to whether the Conservative Party will actually develop policy for the coming election around health care, and most especially how they will rationalize their daily requests for greater resource with their commitment to cut health care funding by \$2.6 billion. For our part, with respect to long-term care, we're very proud that, even before this fiscal year, we had invested 740 million new dollars in long-term care. We have a bill that will soon be called for, I hope, third reading in this House that will enhance the protections that are available for our residents in long-term care.

We most certainly do agree that across the province of Ontario there are a number of homes which require upgrade. We're working very, very carefully within our ministry to develop an appropriate program that would

see especially those smaller homes among C and Ds appropriately redeveloped. We are very concerned that if we follow the pattern established by my honourable friend when she was a minister, the homes in rural Ontario—some 50 or 60 beds—would all disappear. That has been their strategy in the past.

PETITIONS

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka): I have a petition to do with funding at Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare and it reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas demand for health services are expected to continue to rise with a growing retirement population in Muskoka-East Parry Sound; and

“Whereas studies indicate that overcrowded emergency rooms result in higher mortality rates; and

“Whereas growing demand and lack of availability of long-term-care beds places increased pressure on acute care beds; and

“Whereas the operating budget for MAHC must reflect the growing demand for services in the communities of Muskoka-East Parry Sound;

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

“That the McGuinty government and the Minister of Health provide adequate increases in the operating budget of Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare to maintain current health services for the people of Muskoka-East Parry Sound and allocate more long-term-care beds for Muskoka-East Parry Sound.”

I support this petition.

1550

REGULATION OF ZOOS

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn (Oakville): I've got a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly, “Regulate Zoos to Protect Animals and Communities.” It reads:

“Whereas Ontario has the weakest zoo laws in the country; and

“Whereas existing zoo regulations are vague, unenforceable and only apply to native wildlife; and

“Whereas there are no mandatory standards to ensure adequate care and housing for zoo animals or the health and safety of animals, zoo staff, the visiting public or neighbouring communities; and

“Whereas several people have been injured by captive wildlife and zoo escapes are frequent in Ontario; and

“Whereas these same regulatory gaps were affirmed recently by the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario in his annual report;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support MPP David Zimmer's bill, the Regulation of Zoos Act.”

I agree with this petition, and I'll sign it.

ENDANGERED SPECIES LEGISLATION

Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke): I have a petition for the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Liberal government tabled the Endangered Species Act, 2007; and

“Whereas the Minister of Natural Resources posted the legislation on the Environmental Registry for public comment; and

“Whereas there has been no face-to-face consultation with the people who will be affected most by this legislation; and

“Whereas the proposed Endangered Species Act, 2007, could significantly affect municipalities, private property owners and economic development across the province of Ontario; and

“Whereas the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, the Ontario Forestry Coalition, the Ontario Forest Industries Association and many other groups have asked the McGuinty government to hold public consultations before passing this legislation; and

“Whereas the McGuinty government previously promised to hold consultation where legislation could have a significant impact on the public; and

“Whereas the Ministry of Natural Resources is virtually bankrupt and unable to fulfill its role and responsibilities as required by the Endangered Species Act, 2007;

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

“That the McGuinty government hold public consultations across the province to provide the public with an opportunity to express their concerns with the Endangered Species Act, 2007, and that the McGuinty government provide dedicated funding for all aspects of the legislation’s implementation.”

I support this petition as it’s signed by many people from my riding, and I send it down to the table with Jacob.

REGULATION OF ZOOS

Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West): I have a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly, and it is about regulation of zoos to protect animals and communities. I’m pleased to support my colleague the member from Willowdale and to read it. It reads as follows:

“Whereas Ontario has the weakest zoo laws in the country; and

“Whereas existing zoo regulations are vague, unenforceable and only apply to native wildlife; and

“Whereas there are no mandatory standards to ensure adequate care and housing for zoo animals or the health and safety of animals, zoo staff, the visiting public or neighbouring communities; and

“Whereas several people have been injured by captive wildlife and zoo escapes are frequent in Ontario; and

“Whereas those same regulatory gaps were affirmed recently by the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario in his annual report;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support MPP David Zimmer’s bill, the Regulation of Zoos Act.”

I’m pleased to affix my signature in support of this and to ask page Cody to carry it for me.

ONTARIO LOTTERY
AND GAMING CORP.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that people continue to come into my office to sign because of their great concern on what’s been going on at the lottery corporation.

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty and David Caplan ignored stories of millions in rip-offs within Ontario’s lottery system for months, if not years;

“Whereas they acted only after they were caught and their first attempt was to ‘spin the scandal’ rather than fix the problems;

“Whereas Ontarians have every right to expect leadership from their government; and

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty and David Caplan have failed to protect the integrity of the lottery system in Ontario;

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

“That Dalton McGuinty start upholding the standards of integrity, responsibility and accountability, make the protection of the interests of all Ontarians a priority, and demand the resignation of David Caplan, the minister currently responsible for the lottery system.”

I affix my signature as I agree with this petition.

REGULATION OF ZOOS

Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough): I have a few petitions today.

“Regulate Zoos to Protect Animals and Communities

“Whereas Ontario has the weakest zoo laws in the country; and

“Whereas existing zoo regulations are vague, unenforceable and only apply to native wildlife; and

“Whereas there are no mandatory standards to ensure adequate care and housing for zoo animals or the health and safety of animals, zoo staff, the visiting public or neighbouring communities; and

“Whereas several people have been injured by captive wildlife and zoo escapes are frequent in Ontario; and

“Whereas these same regulatory gaps were affirmed recently by the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario in his annual report;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support MPP David Zimmer’s bill, the Regulation of Zoos Act.”

I agree with these two petitions and will affix my signature to them.

POPE JOHN PAUL II

Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): This petition is to the Parliament of Ontario, of course. It reads as follows:

“Whereas the legacy of Pope John Paul II reflects his lifelong commitment to international understanding, peace and the defence of equality and human rights;

“Whereas his legacy has an all-embracing meaning that is particularly relevant to Canada’s multi-faith and multicultural traditions;

“Whereas as one of the great spiritual leaders of contemporary times, Pope John Paul II visited Ontario during his pontificate of more than 25 years and, on his visits, was enthusiastically greeted by Ontario’s diverse religious and cultural communities.

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to grant speedy passage into law of the private member’s bill by Oak Ridges MPP Frank Klees entitled An Act to proclaim Pope John Paul II Day.”

As the proud proponent of that bill, I’m pleased to affix my signature and pass this petition on to the table.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 30(b), it now being 4 p.m., I am now required to call orders of the day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BUDGET MEASURES AND INTERIM
APPROPRIATION ACT, 2007LOI DE 2007 SUR LES MESURES
BUDGÉTAIRES ET L’AFFECTATION
ANTICIPÉE DE CRÉDITS

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 10, 2007, on the motion for second reading of Bill 187, An Act respecting Budget measures, interim appropriations and other matters / Projet de loi 187, Loi concernant les mesures budgétaires, l’affectation anticipée de crédits et d’autres questions.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): With respect to Bill 187, pursuant to the order of the House dated April 11, 2007, I am now required to put the question.

On April 2, Mr. Sorbara moved second reading of Bill 187, An Act respecting Budget measures, interim appropriations and other matters. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

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—no, I apologize. We’re going to be doing something a little differently. We’re going to go to the next vote now, with regard to the order of the House.

ELECTORAL SYSTEM
REFERENDUM ACT, 2007LOI DE 2007 SUR LE RÉFÉRENDUM
RELATIF AU SYSTÈME ÉLECTORAL

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 10, 2007, on the motion for third reading of Bill 155, An Act to provide for a referendum on Ontario’s electoral system / Projet de loi 155, Loi prévoyant un référendum sur le système électoral de l’Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): With respect to Bill 155, pursuant to the order of the House dated April 16, 2007, I’m now required to put the question.

Mrs. Bountrogianni has moved third reading of Bill 155, An Act to provide for a referendum on Ontario’s electoral system. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say “aye.”

All those opposed will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members now. This will be a 10-minute bell. We will first vote on Bill 187 and then vote on Bill 155 after that.

The division bells rang from 1600 to 1610.

BUDGET MEASURES AND INTERIM
APPROPRIATION ACT, 2007LOI DE 2007 SUR LES MESURES
BUDGÉTAIRES ET L’AFFECTATION
ANTICIPÉE DE CRÉDITS

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Mr. Sorbara has moved second reading of Bill 187, An Act respecting Budget measures, interim appropriations and other matters.

All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be counted by the table.

Ayes

Bartolucci, Rick	Fonseca, Peter	Peters, Steve
Bentley, Christopher	Gerretsen, John	Phillips, Gerry
Bountrogianni, Marie	Gravelle, Michael	Qaadri, Shafiq
Bradley, James J.	Jeffrey, Linda	Racco, Mario G.
Brotten, Laurel C.	Kular, Kuldip	Ramal, Khalil
Brownell, Jim	Kwinter, Monte	Ramsay, David
Bryant, Michael	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Rinaldi, Lou
Cansfield, Donna H.	Leal, Jeff	Ruprecht, Tony
Caplan, David	Marsales, Judy	Sandals, Liz
Chambers, Mary Anne V.	Matthews, Deborah	Sergio, Mario
Chan, Michael	Mauro, Bill	Smith, Monique
Colle, Mike	McGuinty, Dalton	Smitherman, George
Crozier, Bruce	McMeekin, Ted	Takhar, Harinder S.
Delaney, Bob	Meilleur, Madeleine	Van Bommel, Maria
Di Cocco, Caroline	Milloy, John	Watson, Jim
Dombrowsky, Leona	Mitchell, Carol	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Duguid, Brad	Mossop, Jennifer F.	Zimmer, David
Duncan, Dwight	Oraziotti, David	
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Patten, Richard	

The Acting Speaker: All those opposed to the motion will please rise one at a time and be counted by the table.

Nays

Bisson, Gilles	Kormos, Peter	Scott, Laurie
Chudleigh, Ted	Marchese, Rosario	Sterling, Norman W.
DiNovo, Cheri	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tabuns, Peter
Dunlop, Garfield	Miller, Norm	Tascona, Joseph N.
Elliott, Christine	Munro, Julia	Tory, John
Ferreira, Paul	Murdoch, Bill	Wilson, Jim
Hardeman, Ernie	O'Toole, John	Witmer, Elizabeth
Horwath, Andrea	Prue, Michael	Yakabuski, John
Hudak, Tim	Runciman, Robert W.	
Klees, Frank	Savoline, Joyce	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):
The ayes are 55; the nays are 28.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Pursuant to the order of the House dated April 11, the bill is ordered referred to the standing committee on finance and economic affairs. We will now open the doors for 30 seconds.

**ELECTORAL SYSTEM
REFERENDUM ACT, 2007**

**LOI DE 2007 SUR LE RÉFÉRENDUM
RELATIF AU SYSTÈME ÉLECTORAL**

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Mrs. Bountrogianni has moved third reading of Bill 155, An Act to provide for a referendum on Ontario's electoral system.

All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be counted by the table.

Ayes

Bartolucci, Rick	Fonseca, Peter	Peters, Steve
Bentley, Christopher	Gerretsen, John	Phillips, Gerry
Bountrogianni, Marie	Gravelle, Michael	Qaadri, Shafiq
Bradley, James J.	Jeffrey, Linda	Racco, Mario G.
Broten, Laurel C.	Kular, Kuldip	Ramal, Khalil
Brownell, Jim	Kwinter, Monte	Ramsay, David
Bryant, Michael	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Rinaldi, Lou
Cansfield, Donna H.	Leal, Jeff	Ruprecht, Tony
Caplan, David	Marsales, Judy	Sandals, Liz
Chambers, Mary Anne V.	Matthews, Deborah	Sergio, Mario
Chan, Michael	Mauro, Bill	Smith, Monique
Colle, Mike	McGuinty, Dalton	Smitherman, George
Crozier, Bruce	McMeekin, Ted	Takhar, Harinder S.
Delaney, Bob	Meilleur, Madeleine	Van Bommel, Maria
Di Cocco, Caroline	Milloy, John	Watson, Jim
Dombrowsky, Leona	Mitchell, Carol	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Duguid, Brad	Mossop, Jennifer F.	Zimmer, David
Duncan, Dwight	Oraziotti, David	
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Patten, Richard	

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

Nays

Bisson, Gilles	Kormos, Peter	Scott, Laurie
Chudleigh, Ted	Marchese, Rosario	Sterling, Norman W.
DiNovo, Cheri	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tabuns, Peter
Dunlop, Garfield	Miller, Norm	Tascona, Joseph N.
Elliott, Christine	Munro, Julia	Tory, John
Ferreira, Paul	Murdoch, Bill	Wilson, Jim
Hardeman, Ernie	O'Toole, John	Witmer, Elizabeth
Horwath, Andrea	Prue, Michael	Yakabuski, John
Hudak, Tim	Runciman, Robert W.	
Klees, Frank	Savoline, Joyce	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):
The ayes are 55; the nays are 28.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

**SAFEGUARDING AND SUSTAINING
ONTARIO'S WATER ACT, 2007**

**LOI DE 2007 SUR LA SAUVEGARDE ET LA
DURABILITÉ DES EAUX DE L'ONTARIO**

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 12, 2007, on the motion for second reading of Bill 198, An Act to amend the Ontario Water Resources Act to safeguard and sustain Ontario's water, to make related amendments to the Safe Drinking Water Act, 2002 and to repeal the Water Transfer Control Act / Projet de loi 198, Loi visant à modifier la Loi sur les ressources en eau de l'Ontario afin d'assurer la sauvegarde et la durabilité des eaux de l'Ontario, à apporter des modifications connexes à la Loi de 2002 sur la salubrité de l'eau potable et à abroger la Loi sur le contrôle des transferts d'eau.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): When we last debated this item, the member for Scarborough Southwest had the floor. I will now call for further debate on the bill.

Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton–Victoria–Brock): I'm pleased to stand today and debate Bill 198, Safeguarding and Sustaining Ontario's Water Act, 2007. I'm pleased to share part of my time today with the member from Simcoe North for the debate. I appreciate the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka speaking to Bill 198 last Thursday for me.

The first amendment to the Ontario Water Resources Act is to add a purpose, which states: "The purpose of this act is to provide for the conservation, protection and management of Ontario's waters and for their efficient and sustainable use, in order to promote Ontario's long-term environmental, social and economic well-being."

I think we would all agree that this is a great purpose. We all want to protect our water resources in Ontario. Although stakeholders and those concerned are not quite convinced that this proposed legislation will actually meet its grandly stated objectives, I will certainly be putting some of those points forward in my comments this afternoon.

We all strongly believe that we must work together to protect the most important natural resource we have: our water. However, there are some significant problems with this bill that will not allow for the protection of our water resources as claimed by the current government in this legislation.

Firstly, while proposing to ban diversions out of the basin, this bill still allows for large-scale diversions between individual Great Lakes within the basin. Ontario has three basins, and the Great Lakes are all contained in one basin alone.

Also, despite imposing a new water tax on the taking of water used for industrial or commercial purposes, this bill does not encourage or support the development and practice of water conservation in Ontario. I think conser-

vation is often forgotten by this government, and certainly one of the pillars we should work towards is more conservation.

1620

The fact of the matter is that in 2003, almost four years ago to the day, Dalton McGuinty announced, "We will stop allowing companies to raid our precious water supplies.... We will end this reckless giveaway." That was 2003, almost four years ago. We're now in 2007, with the first implementation of the proposed legislation to take place not until 2009: That's six years away from the 2003 election promise that was made by Dalton McGuinty. Even their own Liberal backgrounder on this bill, handed out in the flashy photo op, says, "This is the first of several steps required...." So we're nearly four years into their mandate and they're finally taking the first steps to protect our precious water resources, which I mentioned was clearly stated as a Dalton McGuinty promise.

This government has had four years, I say again, to put together strong, comprehensive legislation to properly protect our Great Lakes and water resources, but this bill is a very small step. There's a very strong odour of some political motivation, I would say. The bill represents the 11th hour again, the last second, a supposed green attempt for a rollout by the McGuinty government, trying to get the people of Ontario to really believe he is going to do something about the environment.

The Great Lakes–St. Lawrence River Basin Sustainable Water Resources Agreement, protecting and working to sustain our Great Lakes water resources, is of vital importance to the province of Ontario. The Great Lakes holds nearly one-fifth of the fresh surface water on our planet. But according to the Environmental Commissioner's 2005-06 annual report, by 2001, water levels in three of the five Great Lakes—Lake Superior, Lake Michigan and Lake Huron—had been lower than normal for four years in a row.

According to an article in the Ottawa Citizen on April 14, the national chairperson of the Council of Canadians argues that this Liberal government's water strategy is concerning, given growing concerns over water scarcity and the impact of climate change in Canada and worldwide. They also argue that many people forget to mention that most of Canada's water is not renewable. I quote: "[I]n recent years, one-quarter of Canadian municipalities have faced shortages. One-third rely on groundwater to provide for daily needs. Water shortages in the Prairies cost \$5 billion in economic damage in 2001 alone."

Many concerned Ontarians have begun to realize that our abundant water resources might not last forever, especially without a conscious effort by government to show the necessary leadership to protect and conserve them. This bill implements the Great Lakes–St. Lawrence River Basin Sustainable Water Resources Agreement that was signed in December 2005 by Ontario, Quebec and the eight US Great Lake states. Proposed amendments to the Ontario Water Resources Act in this bill include—

sorry for being technical, for those watching at home—section 34.3, which talks to the prohibition of intra-basin transfers, elevating a ban on diversions out of the Great Lakes–St. Lawrence River Basin from a regulation to be part of the pact act.

However, Ontario already prohibits the diversion of water out of its three major water basins. It was actually the previous government that implemented the policy which banned the transfer of water out of the basin, and that was there in 1999. The proposed bill simply changes this ban from regulation into statute. That transformation from regulation to statute is important, perhaps, but it's not over the top for this government and this minister to try to pat themselves on the back. It is hardly groundbreaking. We, the previous government, did it in 1999. It was in regulation, but it had been adhered to, so it's not something new that was brought on.

One major problem is that the bill still allows for large-scale water transfers among watersheds within the basin, known as the intra-basin diversions. The proposed amendments to the act prohibit the diversion of water for new or increased intra-basin transfers of 379,000 litres per day or greater from one Great Lakes watershed to another Great Lakes watershed, subject to strictly regulated exceptions.

An exception standard sets out the criteria that must be met by applicants before these proposals will be approved.

In terms of the exception standard, although water taken from the basin must be returned to the basin, as transfers from the basin are prohibited, there are no guidelines in this bill that stipulate the quality of the water that must be returned to the basin. I think this is a very glaring omission, especially from a government that spends so much time touting its so-called leadership on the issue of water quality in Ontario.

Then we go on: Subsection 34.6(3) enshrines in the Ontario Water Resources Act the exception standard, set out in article 201 of the Great Lakes agreement.

The exception standard sets out seven criteria that must be met by applicants for proposals for new or increased transfers from one Great Lakes watershed to another. It states that there must be no significant adverse impact to water quantity or quality. The phrase "significant adverse impact" is both vague and unclear and does not assure Ontarians that the quality of their water will be protected.

The issue of intra-basin transfers is a very significant concern for many stakeholders and groups in regard to this legislation. Diverting water out of the upper Great Lakes and into the lower Great Lakes will work to compound the possible and projected effects of climate change. These effects will have a profound impact on Ontario, degrading ecosystems and destroying fish, bird and wildlife habitat.

Allowing these large-scale intra-basin diversions to continue is dangerous because of their potential effects on the water levels of the upper Great Lakes such as Lake Huron and Georgian Bay. I know that has been brought

up by the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka, and we'll certainly be hearing much of that as the bill moves forward.

Groups affected, such as the Georgian Bay Association, are concerned that the exception criteria for this supposed ban on new intra-basin transfers are vague and could be subject to much interpretation. York region is leading the way in terms of establishing a precedent for intra-basin transfer opportunities. York region wants to draw water from Lake Simcoe and send its sewage to a treatment plant on Lake Ontario via an extension to the big pipe—a classic example right there of the intra-basin transfer.

Various stakeholders and interested parties are concerned about the long-term impacts of this big-pipe proposal and the general in-basin diversion exception because of the precedent that it does set. Other municipalities will also request and likely be awarded exceptions under the legislation for similar in-basin transfers.

Mary Muter, head of the environmental committee for the Georgian Bay Association, has stated her concerns with intra-basin transfers allowed by this bill. She says, "Once one 19-million-litre pipe goes in, others will follow and we could have a raft of pipes across southern Ontario, diverting Lake Huron/Georgian Bay water into Lake Erie and Lake Ontario."

In an article published in the Toronto Star on April 10, Mary Muter said, "Lake Huron/Georgian Bay water levels have been close to record low levels for the past six years. We are concerned that allowing the York region transfer out of the Lake Huron/Georgian Bay basin in Ontario will set a precedent that others will follow and cumulatively will lower lake levels even further. This will result in even more dried up wetlands and loss of fish habitat."

Allowing intra-basin transfers in this legislation is concerning, as it sends a message to other US jurisdictions on how far they have to go to fulfill the Great Lakes agreement.

She states, "No state has the ability to divert water from one Great Lake to another the way Ontario can, just because of our geography."

Dan McDermott, director of the Ontario chapter of the Sierra Club, has a similar concern. He states, "It would be hypocritical of Ontario to divert water over hundreds of kilometres between Great Lakes because" of "its geographical advantage ... while telling US jurisdictions they cannot transport water from one end of town to the other because these communities straddle the edge of the basin."

So we need to protect our water resources and to show some leadership when it comes to conserving and protecting the Great Lakes. How can we expect other jurisdictions to be careful with our water if the government of Ontario cannot take the lead in such an important area?

1630

According to Karey Shinn, chair of the Safe Sewage Committee here in Toronto, the inter-basin transfer is a "leak in the Great Lakes agreement." I quote: "The inter-

basin transfer proposed will ensure water from Georgian Bay is polluted as sewage, all the way to Lake Ontario, where it will be discharged through the Duffin Creek sewage treatment plant in Pickering. This will put additional stress on existing Lake Ontario drinking water intakes for most of Ontario's population along the shore, including Toronto residents." As my colleague the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka made reference to in his comments last week, "Diverting water out of the upper Great Lakes and into the lower Great Lakes will work to compound the possible and projected effects of climate change."

According to the Environmental Commissioner's 2005-06 annual report, Ontario has seriously neglected its duties when it has come to the Great Lakes agreement. From what we've been seeing so often, it's certainly clear that Dalton McGuinty needs to wait for a report from an independent officer of the Legislature before taking any action. In this case, it was the Environmental Commissioner's report that provided the need for this government to act. But there is also the minister responsible for the OLG, as we've seen and discussed for I think almost 150 questions now, waiting for the Ombudsman's report before doing anything to deal with those issues that are so important to the people of Ontario, that are still sitting on his hands and that he's still not taking responsibility for. We ask him every day.

The Minister of Children and Youth Services has been scathed by not one but two dreadful reports by the Ombudsman, for a lack of interest and leadership in the children and youth ministry. The latest report was for her neglect to share any care and compassion for needs of the children of our brave military men and women. That was last week.

We see a trend happening here, the shameful leadership by the Dalton McGuinty government and the ministers that I have mentioned.

Under "Water taking," subsection 34(1) states, "Despite any other act, a person shall not take more than 50,000 litres of water on any day by any means except in accordance with a permit issued under section 34 (1)." The exceptions currently listed include private domestic wells or water used for domestic and other non-commercial uses or municipal supplies. Also exempt are institutions such as schools and long-term-care homes; environmental uses such as wetlands projects or hydro powers; and agricultural uses. Additional exceptions are water takings that started before March 29, 1961.

I have some comments on private wells which I'll get to later.

This bill also includes a water conservation tax, which allows the government to charge commercial and industrial users of water to promote the practice of water conservation by highly consumptive users. But this new tax is not guaranteed to promote water conservation at all. The reality is, it's a new tax. What will it be used for? Maybe it's administrative. How much will it be? Something this government does extremely well is implementing new taxes under the guise of fancy names

designed to dissuade people from seeing what is really happening: another money grab out of the pockets of hard-working families in Ontario. They take your money; you're not sure where it goes.

All this tax will do is give the government more revenue to pay for an expanded administration. They're going to charge \$3.71 per million litres of water. It will not really work to move companies towards the practice of water conservation.

In an article published in the *Toronto Star* on April 4, Ramani Nadarajah, executive director of the Canadian Environmental Law Association, was quoted as saying, "It's not going to have a huge impact in terms of actually resulting in water conservation." It's not just us saying that; this is from the Canadian Environmental Law Association.

The Council of Canadians stated in the *Ottawa Citizen*, on April 14, "We believe Mr. McGuinty's proposal will do nothing to deter corporations from removing millions of litres of water from the Great Lakes, and will only serve to further commodify Canada's water, leaving it at great risk of depletion."

The new tax will start with highly consumptive commercial and industrial users of water such as water bottlers, canners, breweries and producers of abrasive products, but taxes on companies with fewer impacts on watersheds will begin to be phased in after 2009.

Certain sectors are exempt from paying this water tax, which has raised concerns by some interest groups about the fairness of such a water charge. The Canadian Bottled Water Association, in an article published in the *St. Catharines Standard* on April 8, stated that they are reluctantly willing to pay but believe there should be no exceptions.

Again from the Council of Canadians: "the government is sending the wrong message—that bottled water is here to stay."

So we'll be looking at the Liberal consultation process very closely. We hope that it does come soon, that we do go out to committee and hear from the public about this bill. What can we say to the Dalton McGuinty government about new taxes? They keep coming on. They promised not to raise your taxes. They signed a piece of paper with the Canadian Taxpayers Federation—all in print, all on video. We still have it, but they keep increasing your taxes. I hope the public remembers that when it comes to election time.

Certainly breaking promises has been a trend. Close coal generation plants—let me see. It got broken, re-broken and re-broken, and we still don't know for sure what's going to happen with that. How can we believe what they say?

The clean air plan was certainly based on closing the coal plants. That's what they said. They had no plan, but they did tell us they were going to close the coal-fired plants. People voted for them for that, and they did not come through on that promise. It was under Elizabeth Witmer, who was Minister of the Environment, that the Lakeview coal generating plant was closed. We came

through on the environment for the people of Ontario. The pillars may have come down when the Liberals were in power, but it was under the previous Minister of the Environment, Elizabeth Witmer, that the Lakeview generating plant was closed.

There are other promises for the environment: diverting 60% of municipal waste. Our diversion rate now is about half of that, despite that amazing promise never delivered on by the Minister of the Environment. She has finally had to admit that they're abandoning that promise of waste diversion of 60%. It's not surprising.

Another one: Six years after Justice O'Connor's recommendations, of which Dalton McGuinty promised he would implement every single one, there are at least 34 of the recommendations that remain unimplemented, even with the passage of that politically named Clean Water Act. I'll get into some more details about that, and I'm sure the members opposite have heard them before.

We can go on for a while about the promise-breaking, saying anything to get elected, but I simply don't have that much time and I know the member from Simcoe North is anxious to participate.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): No, no. Twenty minutes left.

Ms. Scott: In another 20 minutes or so.

The Clean Water Act: The Minister of the Environment touts that continuously as an excellent example of how their government has demonstrated strong leadership on water protection. We all know that the Clean Water Act, like this current bill before the Legislature, is just an empty shell, with regulations, details—the devil's always in the details—to be determined long after the next election. We've seen that pattern consistently in the present Liberal government—after the next election, after 2007. When the Clean Water Act came before the Legislature, there was a bunch of undefined terms that were central to the ability of the bill to reach its objectives. They were unclear. All of those things were left to regulation.

Again in this bill, Bill 198, we are given vague definitions that are problematic for people trying to make decisions and for the public just to understand what's going on in the bill. What is the bill going to do or not going to do when it comes to the protection of the Great Lakes? I think you should be a little more definitive—don't mind the pun.

I think it's also fair to talk for a few moments about the minister's speaking notes about the so-called Clean Water Act. She so often puts those two pieces of legislation together. We've stated very clearly that we support clean water and source water protection for Ontarians; there's not a question about that. But they're trying to drive the message that we're against clean water, and it's simply not true. The Clean Water Act was just a political name. It was about downloading responsibilities onto municipalities, avoiding, abdicating responsibilities at the provincial level. Dalton McGuinty does a good job of avoiding responsibilities.

Every farmer and small business person in Ontario is in favour of clean water. They don't need to be hit with a

hammer. The Clean Water Act was downloading responsibilities onto the municipalities and the rural landowners. They are stewards of the land, and they have continually been beaten upon by this McGuinty Liberal government. The difference between what Dalton McGuinty believes and what we see on this side of the House is that when a government tells a farmer or a community church or a small business owner that it is introducing new rules that will cause them to spend money to protect clean water, we on this side of the House would ensure there's certainly proper funding allocated.

1640

The Clean Water Act was clearly flawed legislation. Over 250 amendments came to the original bill. Over 100 of those were the government's own amendments for the legislation. So the minister will say a lot of money was spent on the science and research ahead of the introduction of this bill—they might have spent a lot of money; they probably wasted a lot of money—but they certainly didn't get it right. The largest number of amendments were brought forward by their own government. I think the people of Ontario who came out to the Clean Water Act committee hearings to drive the message home.

So there should be some simple guidelines here with respect to this legislation before us this afternoon, as with Bill 43, the Clean Water Act. If the government is going to bring in policies or regulations that affect the existing use of your property, you should have the ability to apply for some form of compensation. If a government intends to change the existing or permitted use of your property in the future, you should receive advance notice and the opportunity to make your opinion known before new rules come into force. If the government decision dramatically hurts your ability and your family's ability to earn a living, there should be an opportunity to appeal. These are straightforward concepts, and they've been ignored by the minister and by the Premier. It all boils down to, certainly, respect, and we don't see the Liberal government giving respect to the people, certainly in rural Ontario. It has been awful.

This is where the government actions affect the citizens, like I've mentioned with the Clean Water Act. They have to be able to be heard. I'm still waiting and we're all still waiting, and no doubt we'll continue to wait, for the Minister of Agriculture to step up to the plate to do her job of protecting the farmers who feed our cities. We're still waiting for some feedback on that. But she has decided to spin that Liberal rhetoric instead. Under Dalton McGuinty, this protection of your agriculture community is not going to happen. They haven't come through in three and a half years. I can't see that they're going to come through in the last six months, not that anyone would believe if they did promise something; you couldn't.

My fear, once again, with Bill 198 is that hard-working Ontarians in rural communities are going to be pinned with the bills while the minister gleefully takes credit. Again, more thoughtfulness, more planning: We don't see it here. The reality is that they politically

polarized the Liberal Clean Water Act. They did that intentionally. It's just an empty shell. They threw some money at it after they heard, all from rural Ontario, how flawed this legislation was. They threw some money at it to keep everybody quiet, threw things in regulation and then they threw a party after the Clean Water Act. They had the big party, the clean water party—free food, free bar. They had great baseball caps, those blue baseball caps. Maybe we're going to have a whole bunch more parties if they're throwing out this green legislation before the election—pat themselves on their back that they've done a great job for the environment.

In discussion around both Bill 198 and Bill 43, there's real concern by rural residents about private wells being metered. Let me quote from the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of the Environment at that time, the member from Perth–Middlesex, on August 25 in the hearings in Peterborough: "I think I'll have to post a sign in every Tim Hortons and every feed mill in Ontario that says, 'There will be no metering of private wells.' The minister has said that over and over again." This is the member from Perth–Middlesex. He was quite confident at the time. But in Durham region just recently there was a meeting about the very topic, as their health department presented a seminar where a senior official noted that charging well owners for drawing water from their wells is coming for sure; that's a senior official who noted.

Certainly I and other members of my caucus have gotten calls and notes of concern about their wells being metered. Both the member from Perth–Middlesex and the Minister of the Environment have either said what they could to avoid this issue or more certainly have provided the assurance to the rural residents of Ontario that they would require. But, pardon the pun, Mr. Speaker, we all know that the word of Dalton McGuinty doesn't hold water.

Regardless, there are concerns—a lot of concerns—out there not being addressed properly by the ministry. In the same seminar it was noted that 23% of residents in Ontario obtain water from wells. That's a large group—it's certainly a large part of my riding—that I'm sure Dalton McGuinty would love to find a reason to throw an additional tax towards, along with the health tax which he promised he wouldn't do. More taxes, more taxes; someone is paying for Dalton McGuinty's \$22-million spending spree.

The Minister of the Environment stated last week in the Legislature, "Absolutely no way can this legislation allow for the metering of homes" from private wells. Again, a very pointed statement saying that metering of private wells and homes won't happen. Whether you can believe them or not, I'm certainly not sure. I would say no because our promise-breaking is up way over the 50 mark. They've broken promises.

The Trent-Severn Waterway is in my area, so we're still talking water. It's all about water. Addressing the symptoms of climate change is vital. It's also equally important that we focus some of our attention on adaptation.

My riding of Haliburton–Victoria–Brock is almost 10,000 square kilometres in central Ontario. I've got 50 towns and hamlets and I have several watersheds within my riding. The city of Kawartha Lakes is the third-largest agricultural employer in the province. Tourism is also a big part of our economy.

We are known as cottage country to the people who flock there every summer to their cottages. In Haliburton county alone the seasonal population grows by 50%. So the population grows by 50% during the peak tourism season. Ecotourism is certainly also growing in that area. We have a wonderful part of Ontario, and people flock to enjoy our beaches and our waters. We're all here to help protect them.

In the southern part of my riding, the Trent-Severn Waterway goes through. But its reservoir lakes are in the northern part, in the Haliburton county part. I've received numerous letters from cottagers on Kushog, Kashagawigamog, Canning Lake, Horseshoe Lake, White Lake and others. There is a coalition now for equitable water flow in the Trent-Severn Waterway. So there has been a lot of initiation within my riding, and I'm glad to see that the federal government, with the member from Simcoe North, Bruce Stanton, and the member from my federal riding, Barry Devolin, have got support for a review of the Trent-Severn Waterway. We look forward to the results of that review coming out.

Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough): I asked them for a review too.

Ms. Scott: I see the member from Peterborough is supportive of that also. That's good. The parties are working together, on some levels, with water.

Certainly we've heard of the water fluctuations that go on. Many residents and property owners, recreational users and tourists are affected by that fluctuation of water levels and other environmental impacts of that system, not to mention all the great fishing that we have in my riding. Their habitat needs to be protected. Water resource protection and management, renewable power and economic rejuvenation are all things that need to be considered for this area.

The Frost centre was a vital environmental and outdoor education, environmental stewardship and conservation centre that was suddenly closed in 2004 by the McGuinty Liberal government. The local area—

Mr. Leal: Is it reopening, though?

Ms. Scott: I'm going to get to that. Thank you, member from Peterborough.

The member from Parry Sound–Muskoka and myself brought forward petitions. Over 10,000 signatures were signed in a very short period of time that helped force the present government to form the Frost working committee with people who volunteered their time for almost a year. They created a report, which they submitted to the government, and we're happy to hear that the government has seen that their ways were incorrect in 2004 by the closure of the Frost centre and put a competition out there for someone to reopen the Frost centre. So I'm happy to say that the FCI group was successful. There

was also a great bid by the Friends of the Frost Centre, but the FCI group was successful, and we're looking forward to the opening in June, I say to the member from Peterborough. Hopefully, you will be attending.

We can see that the people in Haliburton–Victoria–Brock were on the edge of saying, "You have to educate the young about the environment. You cannot close down centres like this. It's a mistake." We need as much education on the environment as we can so we're all environmental stewards. I want to thank everyone involved for that steadfast campaign on the present Liberal government on how that closing of the centre was wrong and how we've taken it, how that has moved forward. We wish the Frost Centre Institute all the best for their opening. I know they're working very hard, and we look forward to having them in the riding.

1650

In regards to Bill 198, again, it's all about the environment. We saw the \$22.4-billion increase in this year's budget spending. That's equal to an increase of \$4,500 per household. But we're also seeing from this increase in spending more broken promises—not a big surprise—and meagre results. Are Ontarians any better off? Polls say no. I don't think so; they're not feeling better off. But they're spending more of the money.

In the recent budget, the Ministry of Natural Resources was cut by \$36 million. Even properly intended environmental legislation could not be implemented without adequate resources, and here we have the present Liberal government cutting \$36 million from the budget. The Minister of the Environment had to be disappointed. She had to be begging the Minister of Finance for some more money to support all these environmental promises. But I guess they're farther down the road. You don't need any money up front here now. But really it doesn't look like there's a commitment to the environment when the budget for the Ministry of the Environment went up just such a small, small amount.

But the government across the way is certainly listening to the polls. They must be, because we've been on the big rollout of green promises. They've seen the polls. They've seen that there's a huge focus on the environment, a huge shift onto the environment. It's been keeping me busy, anyway, following all the announcements. Implementation dates of course are way down the road. It was five years ago that Dalton McGuinty was out there starting on the election promises that he was going to do wonderful-sounding things for the environment. That was five years ago. It sounded good.

Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka): Coal-fired plants.

Ms. Scott: Oh, I've already mentioned the coal-fired plants, the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka said. There were lots of things in that promise-breaking Liberal red ink that we saw in the platform of 2003. One of them was, "We will stop allowing companies to raid our precious water supply. We will end this reckless giveaway." We're now in 2007. First implementation of this legislation is to take place in 2009. So, you know, broken

promises, extended dates—it's becoming the norm. Say anything to get elected.

Kicking off this big fanfare six months out of an election, two and a half months or whatever left in the legislative agenda—he's got a lot to do, he's got a lot of time to make up. He started making those promises over five years ago. And even if this legislation does get passed, it's not until 2009 that these rules come in. So six years after the 2003 election promise we're just starting to take action. I thought if the environment was the priority that it was supposed to be, we'd have seen things within maybe the first six months or first year of our mandate. But, no, it's the last six months of the mandate.

Great photo ops, though, that we're doing. Great locations: Lake Ontario is where we did the big photo op for this bill that we're discussing today. More promises; who knows if they'll keep them? I don't think the people of Ontario are paying attention. They're not going to believe what the Liberal government has been promising and started promising before they even were the government. So I hope that they do take stock of this. There's certainly lack of leadership, no question, on the environment.

Interjection.

Ms. Scott: Look at that: The member for Peterborough is telling me there's an announcement coming in my riding. In a week's time? The dialysis unit? Okay, that sounds great. I'm actually attending the fundraiser this Thursday. Thank you, Mr. Leal, for the dialysis unit at the Ross Memorial Hospital in Lindsay.

We hope we've got lots of clean water out there. And we're hoping that the Liberal government actually is going to do something about the environment instead of making all these promises, having all these parties saying they're doing great things and yet doing nothing.

Yesterday our leader, John Tory, made a significant policy announcement on climate change. We're still hearing that the Liberal government is going to bring a climate change plan in, but, again, I guess a little closer to the election will be the climate change plan. But that will come after the election.

Mr. Dunlop: It's tough to make priorities.

Ms. Scott: It's tough for the priorities.

The environment and climate change all require leadership. We haven't seen leadership by the Liberal government over here. We've announced a plan with targets and how we're going to get to those targets.

Interjection.

Ms. Scott: Well, we'll see what you're saying. Let's see what you're saying.

Interjections.

Ms. Scott: The plan is out there. The press release is out there. The Liberals are a little jealous because we've got a plan out there and they have no plan. They've been in government for three and a half years, and there is no plan.

It was the Conservative government that closed Lakeview. You talk about coal plant closures. We're the only ones who actually did the coal plant closures. You guys take the credit, but that's politics aside.

I know the member from Simcoe North wants to add some comments on Bill 198. I'm sure we'll be sending this out to committee as soon as possible, because we want some public input. So I would like to thank the members for their time and attention and their heckling—I appreciate that—and pass it to the member for Simcoe North.

Mr. Dunlop: I'm very pleased to rise this afternoon and make a few comments on Bill 198, An Act to amend the Ontario Water Resources Act to safeguard and sustain Ontario's water, to make related amendments to the Safe Drinking Water Act, 2002 and to repeal the Water Transfer Control Act.

First of all, I want to congratulate my colleague the member for—I call her the member from Lindsay, to be quite honest with you, because that's where the main centre of the riding is. It's one of the largest ridings we have in Ontario, and I share about 50 kilometres of border with that particular riding. I can tell you that her constituents are very happy with the job she has done as a rookie MPP, following in her dad's footsteps. I'm sure that as long as Laurie Scott wants to be a member of provincial Parliament, she'll get strong support from her community.

I can tell you that there are a lot of environmental concerns in that particular part of the province. I can think of a couple almost immediately. The member mentioned, first of all, the Trent-Severn Waterway, which is one of the most beautiful heritage river systems in our country. We're very proud that my colleague the MP for Simcoe North, Bruce Stanton, and Barry Devolin, the member for her riding, teamed up and got unanimous support in the federal Parliament to do a complete study on upgrading the Trent-Severn Waterway because it's such a strong environmental and economic generator of interest and money, not only for Ontarians but for Canadians and for a lot of American travellers as well.

We also share an area called the Carden Plain, which is probably one of the largest areas of limestone development you can find anywhere in the province, I believe. If you go out in the area behind Gamebridge and Brechin, there are literally hundreds and hundreds of acres of land where you can basically kick the topsoil off the top of the ground and you have class one aggregate right below that. I'll get to that in a second.

I do want to say, though, as we comment on this bill, that I don't think there's probably a person in this province and certainly no one in this House who doesn't believe in good, clean drinking water, monitoring it carefully and making sure that we protect this very valuable resource for future generations.

I have an organization in my riding—and they're also in part of the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka's riding—called the Georgian Bay Association. I really have enjoyed working with the Georgian Bay Association. Different people sit on that committee, representing different cottagers' associations right up the shore of Georgian Bay. Their whole concern is to provide good water quality, proper levels and maintaining the pro-

tection of Georgian Bay. In my particular riding, I have approximately 500 kilometres of shoreline, so you can imagine how many cottage associations, ratepayer associations and groups come to my office and write to me and write to the ministry about their concerns. I can tell you that clean water and the protection of water is probably the highest priority they have. I could start here and name probably 75 ratepayer or cottage organizations that have a deep concern for this.

1700

Why I wanted to zero in for a second on the Georgian Bay Association is that they've drawn attention to water levels in Georgian Bay. This whole bill is about Georgian Bay and Lake Huron—the Great Lakes, of course. What they're concerned about is that we are seeing declining water levels in Georgian Bay. For many decades, people believed there was a cycle where you would have seven or eight years where the water levels would increase, and then they would decrease over the next seven years, and that cycle would continue on. But what we've seen in basically the last 20 years is a continual lowering of water levels, and then that has some very serious consequences as far as wetlands are concerned, as far as real estate values are concerned and, of course, just the look of the shoreline if you're getting water levels that are receding way out into the lake. Then there's the whole issue around who actually owns that land.

I can't begin to explain how valuable a source Mary Muter from the Georgian Bay Association is, not only for myself and for the association, but she's a resource that government can take advantage of and use her input and knowledge. I can tell you that she has some strong concerns about this bill, and I certainly hope that they'll be given prime opportunity at committee to mention or to put on the record the concerns they have and potential amendments that should be made to the legislation.

I can tell you one thing that they are strongly opposed to; I got a message from Mary this morning on my phone. The intra-basin transfers or diversions should be banned or prohibited. That's the one thing they're asking for. I would love to hear a lot more from the ministry and from the people in this House on that kind of content.

Why they're so concerned is, you go right back to the water level question and a report they put out. There's only one Georgian Bay. I know I can't put these up in the House, because you can be kicked out of here or they'll take it away from you, but I was at a Rotary function in the fall up in Midland when Mary came and spoke to the community and really sounded the alarm on Georgian Bay water levels. This particular organization paid I believe it was \$250,000, and they provided a report called the Baird report on water levels in the Great Lakes. They concluded that probably the greatest factor or the number one factor in declining water levels in Georgian Bay is the fact that there's a problem with erosion in the St. Clair River. It's gotten much deeper, and what you've seen is that Lake Erie has gone up in height and Georgian Bay and Lake Huron have gone down. So it's causing some fairly severe problems.

Now we're into this study mode, where everyone wants to study this to death, but the reality is that we have to study it fairly quickly, because what we're seeing is that this can't go on for five or 10 or 15 years. We actually need some input, some infrastructure money invested. It's not just Canadian money or Ontario money. This will be money from all the jurisdictions that border on the Great Lakes and are part of the International Joint Commission. You can imagine how difficult it could be trying to put something through that organization, with just the bureaucracy alone. But the reality is that the Great Lakes, I believe, provide 20% of the fresh water in the world. I could be wrong on that statistic, but I don't think I am. You can see, just to the world's supply of water, how important maintaining the level of Georgian Bay and Lake Huron is, and making sure we properly protect and enhance that great resource that we call the Great Lakes.

That is one of the areas. I don't have all of the details that the Georgian Bay Association would like to submit at committee hearings, but my guess is that they will be there. They'll comment on the positive things in the bill, and of course, they'll comment on the things they feel should be changed to enhance the bill as well. I look forward to that, and I look forward to trying to sit in on some of those committee hearings so I can take part in that.

When you have 500 kilometres of shoreline in your riding, and your riding borders Lake Simcoe, Lake Couchiching, the Severn River and probably 150 kilometres of Georgian Bay, and you've got some of the largest islands in the province in your riding—I can tell you that we take it very, very seriously. I know that a lot of the governments in our country today are on this environmental swing. You've seen that in the last probably eight or nine months, where everybody sort of jumped on the environmental bandwagon and everyone has gone green. The folks in my riding have been green for decades. This is not new to them. They've always been concerned about water quality, water levels and the proper kinds of development around this very, very valuable resource.

For that reason, I'd like to make some comments on a number of other areas that are of great concern to the residents of the riding of Simcoe North. Of course, I think it impacts on many of the other ridings as well, because people like to travel to these beautiful parts of the province like the Kawartha Lakes, Muskoka and Lake Simcoe. These are all beautiful tourist regions. The people who visit our areas are expecting good, clean, fresh water and they expect our governments to protect this water as well.

I'm not saying for a second that this bill hasn't got a lot of good points to it, but we want to make sure we get it right, and we want to make sure that when we do get it right, the infrastructure follows it. You can study these things to death, you can create all kinds of legislation, but in the end, if you don't take action and actually implement the bill in a proper fashion and put programs in

place, like what the Georgian Bay Association is asking you to do with the Great Lakes water levels and that, then you're not accomplishing anything. We could be sitting here 15 years from now and some of these things won't be corrected.

While we're at that, I wanted to mention something. We're talking about water volumes, the lowering of the lakes and the climate change issue. I have to go back to my old issue: The number one issue, probably, in the riding I have today is this development of the landfill site at site 41 in the township of Tiny. It's been an ongoing, long process but Walkerton changed everything. We thought that Justice Dennis O'Connor's report on the Walkerton inquiry basically would have stopped the building of upward gradient pressure landfills in the province of Ontario. It hasn't done it.

The day we opened the Ontario Clean Water Act hearings—it was the Friday before that when the minister gave the final approval on the design on site 41. That was almost a slap in the face. I believe that five busloads of people from Tiny township, from Elmvale and Midland, came down from site 41. They all wanted to point out, “You know what? I think we've made a mistake here, Minister. We can turn this thing around.”

It wasn't a problem for Minister Dombrowsky, the former Minister of the Environment. She clearly found a change, when she decided that the Adams mine had suddenly become a lake, because there was water in the bottom of it. They called it the Adams Mine Lake Act. And do you know what? It was changed in this House.

We know there was opposition up there to that particular lake, but they were mixing water and waste. That was simple, and that's what was happening in the Adams mine lake, and I know it was a big issue for the man who is now the Minister of Natural Resources. I understood he might have quit over it if they hadn't provided that type of legislation.

If we went out right today and dug a hole the size of the base of the Adams mine lake in the field that holds site 41, I can guarantee that overnight it would fill up and you could call it a lake. You could call it a lake, but we can't get the government to change on that.

They compensated people in Kirkland Lake. They put a process through. It was all part of the legislation. I introduced a bill here and put in literally thousands of petitions. We've gone nowhere with it, it's getting closer and closer to actually opening, and I think it's a mistake. I thought that Walkerton had changed everything. I thought that's why we had a Clean Water Act. I thought that's why we had this bill in front of us today. I thought that's why the whole world was going green, because people died because of poor water in Walkerton. Who will ever know whose fault it was, but the reality is, it happened, and I thought we were supposed to follow it.

1710

One of the things following it is the government saying, “We'll put a tax on the water bottlers.” That's got to be probably the most—I mean, I can understand. I haven't had a water bottling company call me yet. I don't

think it's a terrible thing to them, because—you know what?—they're just going to pass it on to the customer. I would be interested to know. I think if it's going to cost them another five cents or three cents for water, the bottle of water will go up two or three cents. The customer pays, so it's a tax, plain and simple as that.

The problem is, how are they going to administer that tax? For every million litres or so of water, they're going to charge four or five bucks or three bucks or something like that. Who's going to administer that? You know what? There will be a whole department of the Ministry of the Environment created in all likelihood, and that will take away from resources that are needed out there for enforcement and approvals etc. It will be to try to administer this little bit of money that they're getting back out of it.

I'd actually be more concerned about what they could possibly do to improve on—could we possibly reuse the plastic bottles, for example, which I think are probably the number one thing that gets thrown in the garbage or left on the side of the road these days?

One thing I want to essentially say about the site before I get off this particular topic is the amount of water that will have to be pumped out of the ground to actually dry the site so they can install the landfill. I understand that over about a 40-year period of that landfill, it will be around 80 billion litres.

Ms. Scott: No. Eighty billion?

Mr. Dunlop: Eighty billion—not million; 80 billion litres. That's how much will have to be pumped out into Georgian Bay. It will flow down through the St. Clair system into Lake Erie, Lake Ontario, the St. Lawrence River and out into the ocean. So 80 billion litres of good, clean groundwater will leave that site.

While we're on water quality, I wanted to go back to something that's near and dear to my heart, and that of course is the quality of water in what I would call the sixth Great Lake, Lake Simcoe. I think I've said that in this House before. I'm very proud. It's a lake that I have 100 kilometres of shoreline on. Ms. Scott shares some of that shoreline with me, and she certainly knows the issues facing the constituents, particularly the ratepayer associations, around that I guess about 400 kilometres around Lake Simcoe.

Water quality is everything, and the protection of Lake Simcoe is a high priority of mine, my personal priority. As an MPP, I feel you need some top priorities in your riding, and I can tell you that working with not only the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority, but all the different special interest groups like, for example, Environmental Defence, Ladies of the Lake, Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition—we can go on and on. They are all interested in the same thing: making sure that that lake is protected and the natural resources are put there.

Now, this government—and this is what I tried to point out last year in a resolution. I am going to read this resolution back on the record, if I may, because I believe it's something I would like to repeat. I read it when I speak at events. It's a resolution that was passed by all

members, by everyone who was present in the House, on November 23 last year:

“That, in the opinion of this House, the provincial government must:

“Recognize that the county of Simcoe and the cities of Barrie and Orillia offer a superior environment and quality of life for families to live and work;

“Recognize that Lake Simcoe has been an integral part of the heritage and culture of the region and that the lake generates approximately \$250 million per year in economic benefit;

“Recognize the development pressures that the Oak Ridges moraine and greenbelt legislation and Places to Grow Act have placed on the Lake Simcoe watershed;

“Recognize that the protection and improvement of water quality in Lake Simcoe must be a government priority;

“Recognize that the intergovernmental action plan will require substantial provincial investment in infrastructure to accommodate the anticipated growth of approximately 250,000 citizens over the next 25 years;

“Provide the means for adequate funding to accommodate the approved growth in the Lake Simcoe watershed;

“Recognize the research and reports by various stakeholder groups that have worked tirelessly to promote the need for water quality protection and improvement of the Lake Simcoe watershed; and

“Ensure that any future development must go hand in hand with comprehensive watershed planning and funded protection of the Lake Simcoe and Nottawasaga watersheds.”

That was supported in this House, and I still appreciate the fact that all three parties supported it that particular day.

I wanted to say that while I was disappointed, on the week of March 19 when the federal government came out with their budget—I see the member from Whitby–Ajax is here today behind me; her spouse, of course, is the Honourable Jim Flaherty, the Minister of Finance—I was so thankful that Minister Flaherty and Prime Minister Harper provided \$12 million under a national water strategy for the protection of Lake Simcoe over two years. That’s a wonderful start. Four days later, on March 22, when I expected it, after all these discussions that are apparently taking place between the federal and provincial governments, not a nickel was put into it. Not a nickel was put into Lake Simcoe, and after this House had passed this resolution.

So although we can stand here and pretend we’re really glorious, having these fancy press conferences, promoting Bill 198 and the Clean Water Act and everything, when it actually comes to doing something, they don’t do anything; it’s all spin.

That’s very, very disappointing, because Lake Simcoe, Georgian Bay—these are all areas that are some of the most interesting parts of our beautiful province. Although they don’t hold seats in those areas, it’s interesting that not a penny came, even to try to provide some assurance that the government actually cared about the water in

Lake Simcoe. They’ve planned on a Barrie and area option of growth under the intergovernmental action plan that I think has basically been ignored.

We’re going to see 300,000 or 400,000 people added to the population of Simcoe county over the next 25 years, and I’m going to tell you, there has absolutely got to be a strong infrastructure plan put in place so that lake can be protected and, at the same time, the Nottawasaga River can be protected because we have two watersheds in Simcoe County, plus the Severn Sound Environmental Association.

So, as I said earlier, we take our water very, very seriously. Obviously, at the committee hearings, we’ll want to hear from people like the Georgian Bay Association, the water bottling people. I would expect the quarry people and the golf course operators will want to come in and see what’s next for them. There are a lot of people who will have a lot of interest in this bill and, of course, the general population, because in my opinion, this is probably the first step in metering rural housing if these guys stay in power, or if they’re ever fortunate enough to get back in power after the next election.

I can tell you, I look forward to those committee hearings. That’s what’s important at this point. I do appreciate the fact that I’ve been allowed to share some of Ms. Scott’s leadoff time today. It’s always a pleasure to follow her, and I look forward to debate and comments on my 22 minutes that I spent here this afternoon.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay): First of all, I want to say that I think the participation of both members was useful in laying out what this bill is all about and what some of the pros and some of the cons are to this particular bill. I’ll have a chance a little bit later to speak to some of these.

But I agree with them. There’s an issue here to be dealt with, and that is that the issue of water-taking from one of the Great Lakes to another does represent a problem when it comes to how the water levels in the upper-stream Great Lakes are affected and how that affects the wetlands as well.

We know, for example, the big pipe project that is now being contemplated, bringing water from Georgian Bay down to north of Toronto and then discharging that water through the sewer system and then into Lake Ontario. I think something like almost 20 million litres a day is going to be taken out of that Georgian Bay basin and transported over pipes into the north Toronto area.

Georgian Bay and Lakes Huron and Superior are pretty large and can probably take that hit on a one-day basis, but you start looking at the cumulative. That’s the question I would like to see if my colleagues are able to speak to: the cumulative effect that withdrawing 20 million litres a day is going to have on the water levels up in Georgian Bay.

The other issue is that this may not be the only project. We know that other municipalities on both sides of the border are looking at similar endeavours, as far as drawing of water from those particular lakes. I think one of

the things we need to assure ourselves of is that whatever the amount of water that's drawn from the upper-stream lakes is not going to affect water levels negatively as you discharge them into the lower-stream lakes.

The other part that we didn't get into is, what does that mean for the ecology of both of those lakes, drawing from one to the other? Are there issues having to do with the ecology of both of those lakes?

1720

Mr. Leal: I wish I had longer than two minutes to respond to my colleagues the members for Haliburton–Victoria–Brock and Simcoe North. I can tell you, as a person who is on a well and septic tank within the city of Peterborough, we will not be putting meters on private wells. This gentleman from Durham region who was spreading that information was absolutely wrong. It was a disservice to many people when he put that information out there because he's totally wrong on that matter.

Interjection: It's fear-mongering.

Mr. Leal: It's fear-mongering at its worst.

Let me tell you that Bill 198 is of course of great concern to me. The Trent-Severn runs through my riding. Right now, Ken East, who is with the Trent-Severn, is doing the watershed study within the Trent-Severn. I'm very concerned about water levels because of two floods that hit my community in 2002 and 2004.

Let me say, there are new provisions, if passed, for new and expanded transfer of over 379,000 litres between the five Great Lakes watersheds that will be subject to new environmental criteria upon adoption of this agreement. The proposed new increased transfers would not be approved unless it is demonstrated that the water transferred will be returned to the source Great Lakes watershed with an allowance for consumptive use. Smaller proposals may be exempted if returning the water is not feasible, environmentally sound or cost-effective. The need for water control cannot be avoided through water conservation or efficient use. The amount of water is limited to reasonable quantities. There will be no significant adverse impacts to water quantity or quality. The proposal incorporates water conservation and efficiency measures. The proposal complies with applicable laws, including a boundary Safe Drinking Water Act. This will mean that the Ministry of the Environment reviews are fully integrated to ensure that any new transfer requirements—

The Acting Speaker: Thank you very much. Questions and comments?

Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant): I commend the member for Simcoe North on his presentation. And the member from Haliburton–Victoria–Brock, our environment critic, did a great job of explaining Bill 198, this water act. Both Garfield Dunlop and Laurie Scott know of what they speak and they represent ridings of beautiful rivers and lakes.

We know that the Great Lakes provisions in this proposed legislation put in place strict regulation with respect to increases in any current diversions. We know it outlines stricter rules with respect to some of the very

large proposals that require that water be returned to the same lake from whence it was drawn.

I'd like to make mention of an idea concerning a Lake Erie pipeline. I represent a riding—half of my riding is under water. There are not many votes out there, but there's lots of work to be done in that area in the crown land under Lake Erie. This idea has been kicked around by farm groups as far as drawing water from Lake Erie for irrigation-based agriculture, given the series of droughts we went through several years ago. It would benefit farming and the irrigation-based agriculture on the Norfolk Sand Plain in Brant, Oxford, Elgin and Norfolk county. For example, once it hits Highway 3, the water can be chlorinated for use by towns along there. I know there is interest in Kitchener–Waterloo. We know that Guelph and Brantford can well be at their limit. Again, the water is taken out and returns back to the same lake.

Mr. Khalil Ramal (London–Fanshawe): Thank you for giving me the chance to speak and support the bill before us here, the proposed Safeguarding and Sustaining Ontario's Water Act, which would amend the Ontario Water Resources Act and other legislation.

I heard the member from Simcoe North speaking about this issue and the other member from the Conservatives talking about the importance of our water in the province of Ontario. No doubt about it: It's very important, especially in this era. As you know, we need a lot of water, especially clean water, and there are so many different treaties and protocols between us as a province and the states around us about the amount of water we can take from the lakes which surround the province of Ontario. In order to protect this clean water we have to come up with laws and regulations to make sure that water is safe and being used in a good way, especially for the agriculture community across the province of Ontario.

It's important to us as a party right now in power to make sure all of the safeguard mechanisms are in place, to make sure all the water remains clean, remains used efficiently and without any waste. All of us were talking about it. It's important especially for the farming community and also people who live in the cities. In London we put on a big project to utilize the water to come to London and the surrounding area because we know it's important, the water. We are lucky in the province of Ontario. We live in an area where we have a lot of water, but we don't want to take it for granted. As you know, many different countries across the globe are fighting very hard for clean water. We have a lot here, but in order to make it accessible and maintain it as clean as possible and utilize it to be beneficial for all the farming communities and the cities who benefit from clean water, that's why I'm speaking in support. Hopefully the members opposite will come forward and support us, because it's a good way to do it.

The Acting Speaker: That concludes the time available for questions and comments. One of the opposition members has an opportunity to reply if they wish.

Ms. Scott: I'm pleased to conclude and thank the member from Simcoe North for helping out with the hour leadoff. I know he has done a great job of bringing the concerns of Lake Simcoe and all of his riding to the Legislature with respect to clean water and the effects that are happening up there with the leapfrog effects from growth and his acknowledgement of what the federal government is doing in their Trent-Severn waterway study.

The member from Timmins–James Bay made some good points on how this is all going to work with the Great Lakes and the water levels, the effect.

The member from Peterborough had the first-hand experience of a lot of water a couple of years ago, I guess we can say, and the infrastructure needs that are there. We have another Liberal member on record now as saying that they are not going to meter private wells, so I'm glad that the member brought that forward.

The member from Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant, who has a great deal of background in the environment and who was the critic for our party for the environment, has been following the Clean Water Act and now this bill and he gives a lot of valuable input, and the member from London–Fanshawe, who was on the Clean Water Act tour with us, so he heard first-hand the concerns from rural Ontario.

Bill 198 has got different sections that we have mentioned here. The real intent of what environment policies should be addressing is that we have to change the way we do business for the long term here, and I think that has certainly come out in the bill. It's not just our environmental health; it's our economic health. If we don't have a good economy we don't have a strong environment. We all have to work together.

We hope that this bill will go out for input, for consultation, to everyone concerned. The member from Simcoe North brought that forward. I'm sure the ladies of Lake Simcoe will come out. Many of the associations in his riding have been green long before a lot of people in Ontario were paying attention to our environment.

So I thank the members for their time and look forward to further debate.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr. Bisson: I'm going to attempt, as best as I can with my voice today, to hold it together for a few minutes. This stupid cold keeps on coming back. But I want to put a couple of things on the record. I really had a couple of questions that I want to place because I don't pretend to understand all of the intricacies of the various projects that are being proposed in the southern part between Georgian Bay and Lake Ontario, so I'm hoping I'm going to get some responses from members in regard to that.

1730

I just want to raise a couple of concerns. Those concerns may be based on assumptions that I may be erring in making, so I'm looking for a bit of help here in this particular debate.

The first one is, I'm not sure if I understand it right: The big pipe project is, as I understand it, to draw water

from Georgian Bay to cities north of Toronto and then discharge that water into Lake Ontario. I guess if that is the case—because I was just trying to double-check my facts here really quickly, and I wasn't able to get to some of the people I needed to talk to—I understand the need. Every community needs to have safe drinking water, and we need to draw water from somewhere. Be it Lake Ontario or Georgian Bay or Lake Simcoe or wherever it might be, we need to do that. But there are a couple of things that are kind of troubling me. I again look for a little bit of help from some of the members of the assembly. That is, if you're drawing from one watershed and you're discharging to another, it seems to me that there probably is some inherent problem with that in regard to what possibly might be in the water where you're drawing from one watershed and then dropping it into a separate watershed that's not connected.

One of the things that I think we need to take a look at—and it would be interesting to see this at the committee stage—is, for example, if we're drawing water from the Georgian Bay watershed into north of the city of Toronto and providing water for those communities, presumably that water then will go down the drain and eventually end up back in Lake Ontario. Yes, I understand that all those lakes are connected by river and that water that basically starts in Lake Superior flows all the way to Lake Erie and beyond. I understand that. But it seems to me that I've heard in this debate, by way of the media and others, that there are some concerns in regard to possibly what some of the consequences are environmentally from drawing water from that one watershed to the other. I think that's one of the things that generally the public needs to know: Is this an issue, yes or no? And if it is an issue, what is able to be done to mitigate it?

I guess the last question is, can you mitigate it? I think that's just a fair question to ask in debate. I don't pretend to know what the answer to that question is. I'm not a water scientist, so I don't pretend in any way to know what the answer to the question is; it's only a question I pose. I say it again just to be very clear: If we're drawing water from one watershed, be it the Georgian Bay watershed, and eventually by way of drainage we're allowing it to go to another watershed, which is Lake Ontario, in the end, what does it mean to the ecologies of both Lake Ontario and Georgian Bay?

The other issue that I think is an interesting one is the issue of water levels from one lake to another. I've flown over Georgian Bay I don't know how many times—I'm a pilot—and I understand how big that is. It's an awful big body of water. There's a lot of water. It's connected to Lake Huron. But the point is, if you're drawing 20 million litres per day on a project such as the big pipe project and you figure out the cumulative effect that may or may not have on water levels, again that's something that you've got to take a look at and take into account: Does drawing that kind of water over a period of time have a cumulative impact on the environment of Georgian Bay? I recognize that you probably have to draw a heck of a lot of water to bring Georgian Bay and

Lake Huron down by half an inch. That's an awful lot of water. But again, it's a cumulative effect. If we have a policy where we allow water to be drained from one watershed to go into another and you have water being drained at large volumes such as 20 million litres a day and you've got one for community A and one for community B and one for community C and you do that around the Great Lakes, it does represent at one point some type of impact on the watershed. I would just say from the perspective of the wetlands, that's really where you're going to see those effects first.

So again, I don't pretend to be the expert. I'm not a water scientist; I'm not a biologist, so I don't pretend to know the answer to those questions. But they're questions that I want to pose in this debate so that when we do get to committee we're able to have people come to us and tell us, yes or no, that is an issue. Will the draining of water at those levels affect the water levels in the lakes, which may or may not be a problem? I think what's probably a more desperate problem is what happens upstream on the rivers that flow into Georgian Bay and Lake Huron and others and what that means to—it's funny, this place. Sometimes I look around the Legislature and I get chuckles. Anyway, I was just saying what that means to the wetlands. I think it's something we need to take into consequence. We recognize that the wetlands are the purifiers of the water that we eventually are able to drink. Wetlands are able to absorb a fair amount of toxins and are able to purify that water. If we affect our wetlands in a negative way, that affects the ecology, and that effect on the ecology is felt further down the food chain or up the food chain, depending on which way you look at it, *vis-à-vis* the water itself and the water quality. It also affects the organisms that live off the water, everything from small micro-organisms all the way to larger mammals, and even us at the other end of the food chain.

I don't pretend that this is a catastrophic problem, but I think we need to ask ourselves a couple of questions. Experience has told us that far too often in our society, not only here in Canada but across the world, we have at times done things that we thought were not going to negatively affect the environment and then found out that they did. It caused huge problems when it comes to people's health and what it means to the local ecology, to the point of almost not being able to repair it.

I will tell you one story that I know of particular to where I live. We have a family cottage on Kamiskotia Lake that my parents bought in the early 1960s. Back at that time, the Kamiskotia mine was in operation there. That mine was originally opened during the war because it was able to produce copper for the war effort. At that time, we were in a hurry to get copper into the smelters around Canada and North America to build the machinery and munitions we needed for war.

We had very weak requirements when it came to what this mine had to do to protect the local environment. What they did in this case was that they had an underground operation where they mined copper, they skipped

it to the surface—skipping is the process of bringing ore from underground to the surface—and processed it through the mill. Then what you do in a mill in a copper or gold mine is that you crush the rock into very fine powder or dust. You put in water and chemicals, and then, by a process of flotation, take out the valuables, and what's left is all of the garbage, the compacted dust that used to be rock and all the chemicals. That is then discharged into tailings dams, and those tailings dams are supposedly designed to contain that discharge so that there's a natural process of evaporation and a natural process, as well as a man-made process, of bringing down the levels of chemicals within those tailings dams to eventually be able to rehabilitate them.

A great example is Detour Lake mine, which is south of Moosonee and just north of Timmins, about halfway in between. They built a gold mine there back in the 1980s. It operated about 20 years. If you went there today, because it's been decommissioned under the mine closure act, you wouldn't even know there was a mine there. We operated a gold mine there for 20 years, and if you fly over, you can hardly see a footprint of a mine because all the buildings have been taken down. But what's more remarkable is that the technology of discharging the waste into the tailings dam was such that they were able to mitigate the impact on the environment so that you can hardly see it when you fly overhead.

In the case of Kamiskotia Lake, which I talked about earlier—and this is why I raise it in this debate—they discharged the tailings just over the edge. They didn't build tailings dams because, they said, "We're in a war. We've got to go out and fight the Germans and the Japanese, and we're going to do what we've got to do to get the munitions we need." As a result, it's a huge ecological problem in the area. What happened was that the tailings got into the environment, spread over a fairly large area, and eventually got into the water table. When it got into the water table, all hell broke loose. You had cyanide and all kinds of chemicals leaching into the water table and coming up in areas 10 and 15 miles away.

I remember being on a fishing trip on the Kamiskotia River with my brother some years ago in an area where we used to fish for trout and pickerel—clear water. You could drink it out of the river naturally because there was absolutely no human contact on that river. There's no housing; nothing. It's basically out in the bush. We were out fishing and we were not catching anything. Imagine these pages. I'll bring you fishing. Sarah would know very well because she probably fishes somewhere up in Sudbury. I'm going to single her out. Anyway, I'm having fun. What the heck. The point is that you don't catch any fish where you know there used to be fish.

My brother and I were thinking to ourselves, "Is it the bait we're using? Is the sun too hot? What is it?" So we decided to float downstream. We kept on going down the river and eventually ended up in an area further than where we normally fished and started noticing a discoloration of the water. The water was no longer brown,

because we know that the mud in that area makes the water look brown. It started to have a red tinge to it. So we kept on going a little bit further and a little bit further. Finally we got to an area where there were plumes of red goo coming up in the river. It was the discharge from the Kamiskotia tailings that had worked its way into the aquifer. The aquifer is dumping itself in different parts of the environment, and in this particular case in the Kamiskotia River. It polluted everything downstream. As a result, there's no longer any fishing, no longer any sort of activity as far as game along that river because it was, quite frankly, poisoned.

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We reported it to the MNR and the Ministry of Mines at the time. I was a member of provincial Parliament at that point; I guess that would have been the early 1990s sometime. As a result of some investments that we started and the Conservatives finished and, actually, the Liberal government is continuing—we've had to spend almost \$40 million of mitigation through the mine reclamation fund to try to contain the spill that happened at the Kamiskotia mine. That's but one small example of what could happen if you don't pay attention to what you're discharging into the environment. Here was a mine that was built for a good reason, for the war effort. We wanted to have copper to furnish the war effort, and we didn't take the time to do a simple thing such as contain the tailings.

Here we are, some 60 years later, still paying the price. The ecology of the Kamiskotia River was negatively impacted. It almost got into Kamiskotia Lake, the lake that our cottage is on. We're upstream, so we got kind of lucky there, but the damage that thing did was amazing. If you take the time and come to my constituency, I'll gladly bring you for a flight in the airplane to show you the affected area. That one mine is fairly large.

All I'm saying is that that doesn't have to be the case. There are all kinds of great examples where mines built under the current mine reclamation act that was passed in the early 1990s by Shelley Martel, when she was the minister of mines, that has been in place now for that many years—it has done a really good job of protecting the environment. I invite anybody to fly over Detour Lake mine and take a look at the impact that the Detour Lake mine has had on the environment. It's almost nil. And I would argue, if you take a look at the De Beers mine up in Attawapiskat, that 10 years after its closure, you won't even know that there was a mine there.

All I'm saying is that there is a way for us to extract resources from our environment and benefit economically from it, but there are also some things that we've got to do to protect ourselves from future liability and damage to the environment. I think this is one of these acts that we've got to be fairly careful of in making sure we get that done.

On that point, I'll just end this part of the debate by saying that we really need to look at this act from the perspective of asking, "Do we really understand what we're doing? Have we looked at the science? Does the

science say that it's okay to draw water from one aquifer and dump it into another aquifer?" Because that's what we're going to be doing by way of this bill. If the answer is yes, we can do that safely, that there might be science that allows us to do that, then God bless, let's do it. But if not, then we have to ask ourselves a question: "Should we be doing this?"

The other thing I want to speak to is the royalties that we're going to be charging in this particular initiative. As I understand it, this bill will provide the province of Ontario the ability to charge a royalty of about \$3.71 per million litres of water drawn. All I'm saying is that, man, that's awfully cheap, and we need to understand why that's awfully cheap. It's cheap because, I think the answer is, we signed the NAFTA agreement. Under NAFTA, we've limited ourselves as a nation to be able to control our own natural resources and to control royalties on those resources, in this case, the Great Lakes waters.

As I remember it—I again would have to go back and look at this in some detail—we hamstrung ourselves by signing the NAFTA agreement, locking ourselves into things that may not necessarily have been to our advantage as a nation and as a province. As a result, as I understand it, we are only allowed to charge what would be the administrative costs of our managing this water system or the water-taking from any water-taking permit. So the ministry is only able to recoup its cost, and we cannot benefit from that natural resource as a people. I just think that's kind of a weird situation to put ourselves in.

Imagine Ralph Klein having royalties that would basically say that you can only cover the administrative costs of issuing permits. Alberta certainly would have sales tax on everything you buy today, the people of Alberta would not have a heritage fund, and the province of Alberta wouldn't be as rich as it is today. But I've got to take the opportunity, while talking about royalties, to talk about how you could go wrong on the other side of royalties. That's what has happened in the last budget with regard to the De Beers mining project.

We have a situation where if you develop a mine north of 50, you are charged a 5% royalty—and that's fair—for any extraction of natural resources for mining that comes out of the ground. So if I start a gold mine, a diamond mine, a zinc mine or whatever it might be, and I'm in an isolated area—30 kilometres away from a road; it's declared isolated—I pay a 5% royalty. We do that because the mine has to pay for the complete infrastructure of operating the mine. They've got to build the roads at their cost, which are public roads eventually. They've got to bring in the hydro lines at their own cost, which become public. In the case of the mine up in Attawapiskat, De Beers is building a power line from south, north of Timmins, all the way up to the De Beers Victor site, which is 400-and-some-odd miles, entirely at their cost. The people of the communities in between are going to get to utilize that power as a result, so we're getting a public benefit from it, the same way that we operate winter roads and other infrastructures that are going to be built.

So De Beers, as a remote mining project, was supposed to be charged 5% on royalties for diamonds that are extracted from the ground. De Beers made a decision to go forward with the project, based on the economics and based on what is there, knowing that they would only pay 5%. Imagine their surprise when they found out in the budget a couple of weeks ago that royalties have risen to 13%. But what really galls them is not only that it has changed the economics for their project; you've almost tripled the royalties. In fact, they tell me now that if they had to sell this project to De Beers international—the global De Beers company—they probably would not have approved it. This mine would not be being built today because the economics would be such.

The point is that you can go open a gold mine next to the De Beers mining project in Attawapiskat, at the Victor site, and you'll pay a 5% royalty on the extraction of gold but you'll pay 13% on the extraction of diamonds. I just say to the government that this is really a dumb idea for all kinds of reasons.

The first thing is, it's unfair. That's the first thing. You don't tax GM differently than you do Ford. There is a tax regime that is based on industry, and the diamond mining industry is the same as any mining process. It's the extraction of ore from underground. So we should have a tax regime that says, "If you're gold or you're diamond, you pay the same royalty," the same way that Mr. Ford, Mr. GM and Mr. Chrysler pay the same type of taxes based on the same formulas. You shouldn't treat one differently than the other. That's the first argument.

The second thing is what it means for us when it comes to investment. This project is \$1 billion-plus to construct. The amount of money that you're going to get in extra royalties is going to be somewhat significant. But the danger of loss of future projects is very costly for the province of Ontario. Ontario was able to attract that billion-dollar investment from De Beers. Why? Because De Beers Canada convinced their international company that Ontario was a stable place to do business. It was maybe more expensive to have labour here. It certainly was a lot tougher to get environmental approvals here, but the one thing they were able to say—they had a good find—was that there was stability in Ontario. You knew that if you went into a project in Ontario, the government of Ontario wouldn't act like a banana republic somewhere else in the world and change the rules on you like that. That was the basis by which they sold the project.

We're now sending a message to the international community, "Come and invest in Ontario, and maybe we'll change the rules for you at the 11th hour of the development of a project or after it has gone into production." Who wants to invest in that climate? So the amount of money we're going to lose in the future from people who will not develop mines in northern Ontario, is going to outstrip by far any gains that we're going to make from royalties at 13%. I just say to the Premier, to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines and to the Minister of Finance, really, back off from this one. We're going to have a chance to go to committee. Think

about what you're doing and back off it because, in the end, this is going to be harmful.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for this very short time I've had in debate. But I think I posed a couple of interesting questions to the members of the assembly and hope to hear more about this as we go into committee.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you very much. Questions and comments?

Mr. Leal: I listened very intently to the speech from my colleague the member from Timmins–James Bay. Perhaps I can be of assistance in terms of the big-pipe issue. The big pipe, of course, is a proposed extension of the York region sewer system to service communities beyond the Lake Ontario watershed.

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The first phase of Bill 198 regulates new and increased transfers of water related to water withdrawals. The return of this water, usually in the form of waste water, would also be captured under Bill 198. He spent some time looking at that aspect.

The bill would also establish authority to make regulations governing the transfer of waste water between the Great Lakes watersheds, and authority to include requirements and other approvals, such as sewage works approval, that may be necessary to deal with transfers.

Bill 198 would also regulate new and increased transfers of water. Bill 198 would also contain a transition provision that would allow existing transfers to obtain a determination, from the director, of how much water is currently being transferred by the taking and therefore not considered increased taking.

These new legal authorities would allow the province to ensure that any newer increased transfer such as through the York region big pipe will meet the necessary legal requirements. Prior to this agreement being in place in the legislation, there was no specific legal requirement for intra-basin transfers between Great Lakes watersheds such as the big pipe, the extension of the York region system beyond the Lake Ontario watershed.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 198 goes to great length to address some of these intra-basin transfers. It's a very significant piece of legislation, which I think will serve the water basins of the Great Lakes very effectively.

Mr. Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie–Simcoe–Bradford): I want to respond to the comments from the member from Timmins–James Bay. Certainly this is an important piece of legislation. I share the comments that were made by my colleague from Simcoe North with respect to the seriousness of the situation facing the Lake Simcoe and Georgian Bay bodies of waters. They are certainly issues because of the Liberal government's decision to exempt the Simcoe county and Parry Sound–Muskoka areas from the green belt, which have led to significant water pressures.

I was here last week listening to my friend from Simcoe–Grey commenting about his concern about the water sharing across areas like Nottawasaga over to Georgian Bay in terms of watersheds. Crossing watersheds is something that's going to be allowed by this particular bill, which is a dangerous piece of legislation

in terms of dealing with it in our area. As the member that was representing the town of Innisfil and also Bradford West Gwillimbury when we were dealing with the issue of trying to get water down from Georgian Bay, from Collingwood, through purchasing it through Alliston, we weren't able to do that. So Bradford West Gwillimbury had to look for their water from Lake Simcoe, and that being from Innisfil, to the tune of millions and millions of dollars.

Now we're faced with tremendous growth pressures in our area and a government of the day that has really no plan for our area, leaving it irresponsibly open to a shortage of water and of sewage capacity because of what they're doing by exempting it from the green belt—with no plan.

Mrs. Liz Sandals (Guelph–Wellington): I'm delighted to be able to briefly respond to the comments of the member from Timmins–James Bay because water taking is a big issue in my riding. My municipality of Guelph is dependent on ground water, and water taking from the Grand River watershed is a significant issue. We also have a number of water takers, including water bottlers, breweries, gravel quarries, limestone quarries—so quite a big issue in my riding.

I'd like to make it clear that one of the things that is in this bill is requiring a permit to take water for any use over 50,000 litres per day except domestic use, municipal use or livestock watering. The things that we've heard about this impacting on private wells just aren't true. Those are specifically exempted in the legislation.

However, a thing that is new in the legislation—when we're looking at the commercial and industrial permits to take water, which is what we're really talking about here—is something that, again, will be very well received by my constituents because it gives the Ministry of the Environment the ability, which they do not have in the legislation at the moment, to look not just at the quantity of water that is being removed but, if it's being returned, the quality of the water as it's being returned to the watershed. When you've got gravel extraction and other processes where there's a lot of pumping but then the water is ultimately returned, the quality of the water being returned is, in fact, a significant issue.

I'm looking forward at some point in the future to also be able to speak more about this bill, because it is of importance. But it is a big step forward in managing our water assets in Ontario.

Mr. Miller: I am pleased to add some comments to the speech from the member from Timmins–James Bay on Bill 198. The member from Timmins–James Bay spoke at length about the De Beers diamond mine which is opening in his riding, west of Attawapiskat. Certainly, that's a very important project for all of Ontario but especially for his riding in northern Ontario.

He talked about the new tax that this government just pulled out of the box in the last budget, which was very

much a surprise to De Beers, the company that's developing this \$1-billion new diamond mine. It's the first diamond mine in the province of Ontario and, unfortunately, as the representative from De Beers said at the Meet the Miners reception here recently—it may be the last and only diamond mine that ever develops in the province of Ontario because of the Third World taxation policies that this government is bringing into effect. He went on at length about how surprised the company was to have a tax brought in just as they're about to go into production on this new mine. All of a sudden the rules of the game were changed. They made all their plans based on the stable tax rates in the province.

He communicated with his head office that we had a stable government here and then the government, at the last moment, pulls a fast one on the company and changes the rules of the game. That's not the way to encourage economic growth and jobs in northern Ontario and for the whole province, and I think it's very unfortunate that this government has decided to change the rules just as this important project is about to come into production. That was very clearly expressed by the representative of De Beers at the Meet the Miners reception recently here at Queen's Park.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Timmins–James Bay has two minutes to reply, if he chooses to do so.

Mr. Bisson: I do, and I will be very short because I know members are pressed for time. I thank the members for all their comments. The thing on the De Beers thing that I find quite astonishing is—I understand this as a New Democrat. I don't understand why the Liberals don't get it. You would think it would be us who wouldn't figure this out. All of us in the caucus understand that if you change the regime in the way that you're doing it, you're going to lessen the ability to attract future investment in mining.

Mining is such a capital-intensive business that, by the time you invest in the exploration industry until you bring a mine, you're literally talking billions of dollars. Who's going to spend billions of dollars if they think you have a tax regime or jurisdiction that is basically Third World or, as De Beers said, “a bit of a banana republic”?

These people will pay taxes. De Beers is prepared to pay taxes, but the point we're making to you is that the loss you're going to get in future investment will be far wipe out the money that you're going to raise within this particular royalty. I just say to members, to the Premier, the finance minister, the minister of mines: You're going to have to rethink this one.

The Acting Speaker: It being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 6:45 p.m. this evening.

The House adjourned at 1759.

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