



No. 24A

N° 24A

ISSN 1180-2987

**Legislative Assembly
of Ontario**

Third Session, 37th Parliament

**Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario**

Troisième session, 37^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Thursday 20 June 2002

Jeudi 20 juin 2002

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

Hansard on the Internet

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. The address is:

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/>

Index inquiries

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

Copies of Hansard

Information regarding purchase of copies of Hansard may be obtained from Publications Ontario, Management Board Secretariat, 50 Grosvenor Street, Toronto, Ontario, M7A 1N8. Phone 416-326-5310, 326-5311 or toll-free 1-800-668-9938.

Le Journal des débats sur Internet

L'adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance est :

Renseignements sur l'index

Adressez vos questions portant sur des numéros précédents du Journal des débats au personnel de l'index, qui vous fourniront des références aux pages dans l'index cumulatif, en composant le 416-325-7410 ou le 325-3708.

Exemplaires du Journal

Pour des exemplaires, veuillez prendre contact avec Publications Ontario, Secrétariat du Conseil de gestion, 50 rue Grosvenor, Toronto (Ontario) M7A 1N8. Par téléphone : 416-326-5310, 326-5311, ou sans frais : 1-800-668-9938.



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 20 June 2002

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 20 juin 2002

*The House met at 1000.
Prayers.*

PRIVATE MEMBERS'
PUBLIC BUSINESS

SKILLS TRAINING

Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough-Rouge River): I move the resolution, which reads as follows:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should:

Implement a comprehensive and effective training and retraining strategy relevant to today's economic and social needs;

Better utilize public and private institutional resources in order to rectify the ever-increasing learning gap;

Become an advocate on behalf of apprenticeship programs and remove barriers in areas of fees and access to such programs;

Initiate and crystallize a new relationship with other provincial jurisdictions and the federal government in order to better harness skills and training information and innovation and establish agreements to eliminate cross-border barriers;

Develop and implement cogent and comprehensive policy in areas of recognition of foreign credentials, transparent certification procedures, increased funding and programs of professional retraining for foreign-trained professionals.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): The member for Scarborough-Rouge River has 10 minutes for his presentation.

Mr Curling: Thank you for this opportunity to debate a very important subject. The main goal of this resolution is to connect the importance of skills training, retraining and lifelong learning, and to outline the important social and economic benefit that an effective training strategy has in Ontario.

This connection of issues has been the anchor of many serious studies and reports. It is time for all of us to take this very seriously. It's imperative that we recognize the role of an active and responsible government in articulating this benefit. I reach out to you today on this most important matter so we can build a consensus, an understanding, a partnership. It is time for a new contract.

With this in mind, now is the time to crystallize an action-oriented policy. It is time for leadership. In order

to have a comprehensive and effective training strategy, there are points of principles that we need to establish. What we need to establish is a training culture. What we need to advance is literacy awareness.

A training culture encompasses a change of attitude whereby we begin to interconnect the transformations in our society and economy. When we focus on training, we focus on people. And when we focus on people, we start from the beginning—the beginning of learning, literacy, skills development, training, education and apprenticeship. They are all interdependent; not one single aspect can function alone. The link between learning and society is training, and it is here where we sow the seeds of training culture.

In addition to a training culture, we need to be very serious about literacy awareness. Functional illiteracy is among us and is rampant. In Ontario, 20.2% of the adult population do not have basic literacy skills, while a further 24% would be considered to have inadequate skills to function in our society today, not to mention their inability to meet changing labour market needs. But it is not merely about numbers; it's about bringing dignity to people and worth in knowledge and understanding.

We need to refocus and reconfirm our commitment to the early development of literacy skills, in both children and adults. We need to develop a lifelong connection to languages and to ideas that invite exploration by eager young minds and willing adults.

We need to become advocates. Advocacy carries with it responsibilities, conviction and leadership. This must be done in a manner whereby apprenticeship initiatives are respected and connected to the economy and to society. It's imperative that such advocacy become a central and positive theme in the larger training strategy.

Skilled trades are honoured traditions. We must be vigilant in our efforts in recognizing and appreciating that those entering such fields receive all the support, the appropriate tools and proper funding for today's modern economy. For that to happen, we need to eliminate the barriers that currently exist and improve access to apprenticeship programs at large.

Disincentives are high: high tuition fees; smug recognition of several trades; remarks you hear from time to time that those who can't make it academically can go into apprenticeship. Streaming is another disincentive that we have in our society.

Most importantly, it is essential that we clarify the confusion about the many programs that are currently in play, so as to identify their roles and meanings. Clarity is

key to comprehension. Clarity and connection are key to a strategy. When we clarify the roles that colleges, universities, unions, businesses, professional associations and training institutions play, then we are better able to position and coordinate in a constructive manner the programs that currently exist.

1010

By doing this, we properly assist those entering skills training to visualize the direction and path to be taken. This is especially important to students in high school who want to choose a career path for skilled trades but do not receive relevant strategic counselling and information. When we eliminate the overlapping confusions, then we are better positioned to become true advocates.

Another acute challenge facing us is meeting and matching the skills needs today, from all sectors, for tomorrow's economy and society. The larger issue is that Ontario faces a severe skills shortage across all trades, from plumbers to electricians, drywallers, IT specialists, pharmacists and nurses, and that's just to mention a few.

Now we enter what we call a very important theme: the brain gain. The fundamental objective for us to constructively and dynamically move away from the so-called and over-dramatized brain drain phenomenon and tap into the brain gain reservoir. The brain gain reservoir is in our own backyard. It is the many talented and educated foreign-trained professionals.

The province of Ontario has thousands of foreign-trained professionals who, for many reasons, are unable to practise in their designated fields. This fact has a severe social and economic impact on both individuals and the economy of Ontario. To impose unnecessary and injurious barriers is inhumane and contravenes any serious attempt at solving these shortages. Also, it is irresponsible to build walls around those who pursue a noble educational and career path.

It is estimated that this underutilized, underemployed job talent costs Canada over \$2 billion per annum. The underutilized skills would benefit Ontario through economic growth and fill the current and potential skills shortages. Also, it would benefit local communities with their economic strategies and employment needs.

On the social benefit, it builds strong family values, establishes a sound foundation and brings dignity and pride and respectability to the family. The family would then be able to focus on the strong benefits of education and skills. Parents lose the respect of their children due to the way society has treated them. It does not recognize their skills, and they lose face in their family.

In other words, if we do not tap into this knowledge reservoir, we'll have a brain waste.

The regulatory bodies need to recognize their social and economic responsibilities by expediting the accreditation process and opening up the professional bodies. They are the gatekeepers to the professions. There seem to be too many obstacles in the way to achieve recognition.

A key role for the regulatory association is advocating on behalf of the potential professionals. They must also

support programs such as ESL and other support systems from the government that need to be sustained and expanded. They must standardize acceptance of accreditation and recognition of foreign degrees and experience and foster willingness to remove visible and latent barriers that exist.

Essentially, the assessment and recognition of the education of foreign-trained workers is grossly neglected and is an issue of growing importance in Ontario and in Canada as a whole.

At this point, I'd like to recognize organizations such as the World Education Services, OCASI and others who continually remind us that as a society and an economy we pay a heavy price for the non-recognition of immigrant credentials. In fact, they have put out a challenge—and I will today echo this challenge to Canadian and Ontario employers—to recognize the value of foreign-trained, skilled workers and professionals who today are citizens of this country and residents of this province.

Governments also need to recognize their responsibilities by way of constructive, well-funded programs, by being the centre of relevant and coherent information, and being a true leader in institutional building.

More important, they must become involved, when advising potential immigrant applicants, with honest expectations of the system in Ontario and in Canada as a whole. It is one thing to lure potential professional applicants to come to Canada and Ontario. However, it is another not to fully inform and guide them about the possible barriers they might face. Canada must be honest with applicants overseas, as it must be honest when they are here.

We hear about Canadian experience, that many people have come here and haven't worked. It is in our interest to do so, and it is our honourable and moral duty toward new Canadians. The private sector, the businesses that benefit most from these professionals, also needs to take a leadership role and become part of the solution. An accurate understanding and evaluation of the skills, knowledge and experience of foreign-trained workers plays a role in enabling these workers to find jobs in which this preparation can be used to full advantage.

I'm reminded of the many and over-used anecdotes. We can see that many foreign-trained professionals are not being utilized fully. I hope my colleagues here will support this resolution.

Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, minister responsible for women's issues): It's my honour and pleasure to be here this morning and to listen to my colleague and friend the member for Scarborough-Rouge River, who I think, during his tenure in this position, committed his very best efforts. We hope to do the same and improve upon them. Of course I'll be supporting this resolution this morning.

Ontarians should have an opportunity to work and develop their skills in their own communities. He, as I do, believes in province-wide access to leading edge apprenticeship and training programs. We believe in providing the best possible opportunities for skilled workers, apprentices, adult students and job seekers.

I came to this place in 1988 as a former chair of the London Board of Education because I cared very much about apprenticeship training, and I'm very pleased and honoured to have this job now where I can get right in on the front lines and work, as my colleague did when he had the job, in the interests of our young people, our economy and our workforce.

In this week's budget, as in the past, we've announced that we'll make further investments in apprenticeships of \$5 million this year, rising to \$25 million by 2005-06. There's been an announcement every year for the last five years. We believe in a made-in-Ontario apprenticeship training system.

Skills training is an important factor in economic growth. Goldfarb's study of the views of international investors said that "the most important resource which many companies consider when making investment decisions is the availability of skilled labour." This is a problem all over the world, but we have an opportunity in Ontario to inspire our workforce and we're going to do it and provide opportunities for them.

We are very proud. It's a major selling point for new investment. Traditionally our province has the highest percentage of workers with post-secondary education in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. We know that 35% of our young people go on to post-secondary education, but just as important is to get the right programs so that those who do not and those who do will get into the skilled workforce, because that's where we need them.

We need more education and more skills to give our workers a wider range of opportunities for work and greater confidence to adapt to change. Trained workers are also more likely to upgrade their skills throughout their careers and that's the story of this next generation—upgrading. Technology does in fact get ahead of us.

But demographics is not on our side. We know that fully one third of Canada's workforce will be in a position to retire by the end of the decade; that's from the TD Bank. Last February the Canadian Federation of Independent Business reported that the demand for skilled workers is the highest it's been in the last 25 years.

There have been layoffs in the information technology industry. However—this is for young people; it's for the workforce as a whole—the industry still expects that its demand for skilled workers will exceed the current supply. The Information Technology Association of Canada estimates that 9,900 jobs will go vacant by the end of the year.

As early as 2010 all workers and job seekers will be competing in a job market where work is more complex and where employers demand higher levels of skills and training. This change will accelerate to the point where it's expected that half of the jobs people will have in 15 years will require skills to operate technology that is not yet invented.

What a challenge, especially when you realize that more than half of the people who will make up Ontario's workforce in 2015 are already working. That means these

workers have completed what we traditionally consider their education. My colleague is absolutely right. Training is lifelong. It's more fun that way, but it's certainly more productive.

We have three challenges: help new entrants into the workforce get the basic skills to find and keep a job; ensure that existing employees have access to the workplace-based training they need to remain relevant in an increasingly technological world, and that's why we're doing our journey person updating; replace a significant portion of our leading managers, professionals and highly skilled workers as they retire—and this means young people, when they go into these trades, could be entrepreneurs but will be managers much sooner than we were.

1020

We've developed a coordinated strategy for training, and that is developed in partnership with our businesses, our trainers, our unions, our students, our schools.

Job Connect—a great success story right here in the preparation programs in Canada. Some 85% of these people that are part of this program go back to school or get jobs, and we track it. This is one complaint I have with regard to our federal colleagues: we're not certain that they keep results. What we do get is that only 50% of their basic programs are successful, and that's not good enough.

Working with my colleague the Minister of Education, we're focusing on our high school students with more opportunities to learn about careers and have first-hand workplace experience before graduating from high school.

We listen to industry. We passed legislation that provided a more accountable framework for training skilled workers. We do intend to double the number of people entering apprenticeship programs. We intend to continue to work with our colleagues.

On Monday morning I was at the St Thomas campus of Fanshawe College. It's providing pre-apprenticeship training for people intending to be apprentice general machinists.

As you know, we're focusing on women in skilled trades and women in technological training.

The apprenticeship enhancement fund is a piece that supports that program in Elgin to support precision machine cutting training. This is updated under the apprenticeship enhancement fund.

There is so much that we are continuing to do. I'd like to talk about the Ontario youth apprenticeship program. We could go on to talk about our access to apprenticeship training, to literacy and basic skills—which my colleague and I have both been focused on during our entire lives—to adjustment services for people, getting more foreign-trained workers into the workforce faster—"bridging programs" we call those—for people with international training, as well as our summer jobs. We have programs right now for people who have come to Canada that get them into the nursing profession and the pharmacology profession very quickly, but that's because the nurses and the pharmacists are working with us.

I'd just like to conclude by asking my colleagues across the House to assist us in our efforts to provide a labour market development agreement with our federal government. It would give us almost \$600 million in apprenticeship and skills training funds that we could work together to deliver better. We've worked very hard to influence the federal government by providing results of our training programs and showing them where they work. I think by working together in this country we'll have a stronger Canada and a stronger workforce and greater hope and opportunity for not only our young people but people who come to this country from other countries and call Canada home.

Congratulations to my colleague.

Mr Monte Kwinter (York Centre): I rise in support of the resolution of my colleague from Scarborough-Rouge River. The issue that I really want to address is the integration of foreign trade professionals. This is something that is of particular interest to me because I have a very large number of immigrants in my riding, particularly Russian immigrants, who have had wonderful training at the highest level and find that not only are they not utilized, they're either unemployed or under-utilized.

For individuals to be fully integrated and to become contributing members of Canadian society they need to find employment that utilizes their skills and training. I've heard of the problems individuals face in working in particular professions and in having their credentials recognized. These systemic barriers, and I'm really going to elaborate on that in a minute, transform what should be a transitional underemployment to chronic underemployment. This wasted potential results in a personal loss to the individual and to the province as a whole. The province at some stage in its history created bodies that were empowered to regulate access to trades and professions in the province through licensing and registration requirements. These associations have operated in an extremely independent manner, often free of political scrutiny and accountability.

Many have used their role as protectors of the health and safety of consumers as a guise to protect the interests of their members through exclusionary entrance requirements. This has created even greater barriers for immigrants, who are viewed as a threat to the earning power of the members of some professional associations and as an unknown quantity with unknown qualifications by other bodies. For example, in Ontario there are at least 43 regulatory and professional bodies that regulate access to professions. In addition, more than 70 trades are regulated by the Ministry of Education. But there is no complete list of every regulatory and professional body in each province, nor of the provincial departments that are supposed to be responsible. There is also no single body in Canada that assesses educational equivalency.

I want to talk about the profession of veterinary medicine—this will be very interesting to Dr Galt—to tell you about the systemic barriers. For example, for a foreign-trained professional veterinarian to get the ability

to practise in Ontario, they've got to pass three exams: the A, B and C levels. At the C level, which is the practical examination, it now costs \$6,000 for a foreign-trained veterinarian to take that test; that compares to \$666 for a Canadian-trained applicant. So it's 10 times as much for a foreign-trained applicant to try the exam as it is for a Canadian-trained applicant. For a recent immigrant who comes to this country, usually with limited resources, that is a systemic barrier. It just makes it virtually impossible for them to do that.

The other thing I want to talk about, and this comes directly from the department of veterinary medicine at Guelph, is some responses to questions asked by foreign-trained veterinarians.

It says, "If I am a foreign-trained veterinarian, can I enter the" department of veterinary medicine "program at the Ontario Veterinary College with advanced standing?" They've already got a degree in their home country, so they want to know if they can get advanced standing. The answer is, "Due to the large number of regular applicants we have every year for the 100 spaces in each entering class, and the unlikelihood of spaces opening up in a class, we are unable to accept these requests..." So they've said, "If you want to get in, apply like everybody else." We all know that it's very difficult to get in in the first place. All they're asking for is some recognition of their particular training.

Another thing: "Can I do this on an occasional or part-time basis?" The answer is, "The veterinary courses are only available to people who are registered in the" department of veterinary medicine.

Another question: "Can I gain experience by working or volunteering in the OVC veterinary teaching hospital?" "Due to the large number of requests and the limited resources available, we regret that we are unable to permit volunteers in the hospital in order to gain veterinary experience." It's like the old adage, "I'm too light for heavy work and too heavy for light work." They're caught in a Catch-22.

There are many other areas where these systemic barriers are preventing us from achieving what my colleague has already stated: a brain gain instead of a brain drain.

I encourage all members of this Legislature to not only support but to enact legislation that will allow this problem to be addressed.

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): I want to say right off the bat this morning that this caucus will certainly be supporting the resolution before us today. We feel very strongly, as does the member bringing this forward, that one of the most important investments any government makes is in its people. Certainly where training is concerned, if we have any hope of competing in an economy that is becoming more and more global and moving more quickly as time goes by, we need to be re-assessing our priorities and looking at where we're placing our emphasis, where establishing the fundamentals and the framework upon which our economy, industry and work in support of communities is concerned.

The government will say, as they have this morning, that they are going to put more money into apprenticeship and training and the development of that kind of capacity in the system. But if their track record to date is any indication, we'll be waiting a long time. I would suggest to people that they not hold their breath. For example, in the budget that was just delivered here on Monday this week, people who are close to our colleges and universities will understand that, yes, there was a little bit of money put in to recognize the fact that we have a major challenge coming at us next year under the aegis of the double cohort. But there really isn't anything in the budget to recognize the need for us to invest heavily in the development of our skills and apprenticeship programs where our public sector training institutions are concerned.

1030

We have colleges and universities out there already starving, having been cut back significantly over the last six or seven years, both in capital and operating, now desperately trying to find the money they will require to deal with the overwhelming number of students who will come at them next year, never mind the challenge that's there, given to them by those who work in the industrial sector of our communities and with the economy, to shift gears from time to time, to be flexible as the minister has suggested, to make sure we are putting in place the programs, training and supports, that we have the instructors and facilities to actually provide the kind of training the member from Scarborough-Rouge River brought before us this morning. I want to make a couple of points with respect to that, besides what I've already said.

One is that if we don't invest in our colleges and universities and provide for the training and apprenticeship of some of the skills we need, we will be further behind as far as competing in the global economy is concerned. The other thing—and later on I'll expand on it a little further—is this issue of foreign-trained professionals in our communities. I don't think one has to look much further than the area of trying to find doctors for, it seems, all communities in our province while at the same time we have literally hundreds, maybe thousands, of already trained foreign doctors across the province driving taxis and working in professions that aren't in keeping with the investment they have made in their own education and training, and the desire they have to participate as professionals—doctors in our communities.

I only have to look at my own situation in Sault Ste Marie, where we're into more than a crisis—we're beyond a crisis. We have some very difficult realities confronting us in my community in the not-too-distant future that could be responded to in some very serious way if the government would only live up to its rhetoric in terms of actually doing something to provide foreign-trained doctors with the opportunity to practise in our communities.

If the government's initiative, commitment and resolve to move aggressively and constructively on the front of foreign-trained doctors is any indication of what

they're going to do where so many other skills and professions are concerned, I'm afraid we're going to be disappointed. Communities are going to be disappointed, and individuals looking for the kind of support these foreign-trained professionals can provide will be very disappointed as well.

Having travelled and spent some time in Europe over the last couple of years looking at how they develop their economy and what has given countries like Ireland and Finland a step up—and as a matter of fact taken countries that were lagging behind the European economy in many serious and significant ways for a number of years to the very front of the pack—I have to say that overwhelmingly most obvious is their understanding of the need to invest heavily in the buildup of intellectual capacity, invest heavily in their colleges and universities, so that technological innovation is out there on the cutting edge and in the forefront and money is being put into those institutions for research and development, which of course suggests that money needs to be put in as well, and they are doing it to make sure there are students attending so they can participate and drive in many significant ways that very important research and development capacity and component.

When you look at what we're doing here in Ontario, it's almost the exact opposite. We're not looking at investing in public institutions that will give us that edge in those areas in the global economy. We're thinking that the best way we can compete is to reduce standards, to reduce taxes, to provide less protection for our environment, for example, and also to reduce the role of government where giving leadership is concerned and in investment in those public institutions that we know are necessary and required if we're going to be able to compete.

For example, in Europe, starting back in the 1970s, the European Union, in partnership with member countries that were lagging behind somewhat or didn't have the resources, there was a tremendous focus on making sure the educational system was shored up, strengthened and invested in, such that in the early 1970s, major capital investments were made in educational institutions, colleges and universities. Not only that, but in the last 10 or 15 years, recognizing the need to make sure that all of their people have opportunity and are educated and that money doesn't get in the way of them considering going to college or university, they've wiped tuition fees out altogether.

The member from Scarborough-Rouge River, who's bringing the resolution forward this morning, mentions that we need to look at the question of fees and tuition where training and skills development are concerned. In Ireland and Finland, for example, there are no tuition fees for post-secondary education. They recognize that entrance into any profession any more, at a minimum, is a post-secondary education of some sort in those particular areas. So they've made it as easy as possible, if students qualify, to get into those programs and take advantage of them, because they know that will contribute to the

overall furthering of their economy and the well-being and social security of their particular jurisdictions.

That's all I have to put on the record on that this morning. I think it's a very important subject. It's something this government needs to turn their minds to immediately—if it's not too late already—in terms of our ability to compete out there and to provide the skills necessary to our people and to include our people in that very important exercise of doing business with the rest of the world.

1040

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford): I'm pleased to join in the debate this morning with respect to the member from Scarborough-Rouge River's resolution on training. I want to thank the member for bringing this forth. We're already doing a lot of what he's saying here, so I think it's appropriate to recognize that.

I'd like to say that in terms of apprenticeship training and dealing with providing the resources and training of our young people and people who want to upgrade their skills, I'm proud of the record of Georgian College in my riding. They've done a tremendous job, through the support of Minister Cunningham, in terms of these initiatives that the member opposite is seeking.

Certainly the automotive institute at Georgian College is one of a kind in the country. For many years it's been training young people with respect to the skills necessary to get into the automotive sector, be it marketing, production or sales. Also, the new program with respect to women in skilled trades and technological training has been a tremendous success at the college and is providing much-needed skilled trades personnel in tool and die and related to the automotive sector. We're very proud, in Simcoe county, of having Honda and a number of automotive companies that relate and provide parts to the automotive sector.

The college has a very proud record. I think their placement rate is about 93% to 95%, and it's geared toward vocational training and focused on the trades. They have other programs in terms of tourism and aviation. I think the ministry has given them great support to provide those programs and bring forth what's needed.

Certainly there's more that can be done, and we'd like to see the federal government play a much more active role than they have. In terms of the budget, I would quote Minister Ecker: "The government has modernized our apprenticeship system and increased funding by nearly 50%.

"In 1996, the federal government agreed to devolve primary responsibility for training to the provinces, along with nearly \$2 billion from employment insurance funds to pay for employment programs. Six years later, Ontario is the only province where the federal government has refused to sign an agreement. We continue to urge them to sign the labour market development agreement to allow Ontarians to access almost \$600 million in apprenticeship and skills training funds."

That is something that's part of this resolution in terms of working together with the federal government. I call on the member from Scarborough-Rouge River to use his influence with respect to the federal government to try to get them to co-operate with this province in terms of providing the funds that are necessary for skilled trades training. If not a major disappointment, it is discouraging to have a federal government that doesn't recognize the needs of the largest province in this country with respect to population and in terms of employment.

I want to commend the minister for the hard work that she's done in terms of this area. I believe we're moving in the right direction. I also want to commend the member from Scarborough-Rouge River for bringing attention to this and I think it supports the work we're doing.

Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I hope that all members might join with me in welcoming this great school group from Our Lady of Lourdes school in the great riding of Toronto Centre-Rosedale.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you. As you would know, that is not a point of order. We welcome you.

Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain): I'm very pleased to speak to my colleague's motion today. This is a very, very important issue. We're going to have a crisis on our hands in a few years if we don't deal with the skills shortages. I'm very proud to work with the member in giving the government ideas to address this challenge.

I want to talk a little bit, because my critic's role is colleges and universities, about the colleges and how they address skills development. They provide access to qualified students. They address skills shortages and respond quickly to industry requirements. They assist the market in maintaining global competitiveness. They provide programs that support the knowledge economy through curriculum development and renewal. They have laboratories and state-of-the-art equipment to provide our graduates with the needed skills.

Unfortunately, there's been a 40% decrease in funding in the last decade but a 35% increase in enrolment. When you take into consideration that 40% of post-secondary students in this province are college students, that's a significant gap.

We did acknowledge the government funding of the northern colleges in the budget this week. It was something we had talked to the government about, and we're really happy that they acknowledged the need up there and did fund the northern colleges. We thank the minister for that. But the rest of the colleges in the province got less than 7% of the money allocated for the double cohort. That won't be enough to address the challenge in 2003-04. It's in this area that the colleges have come out this week and said, "What do you expect us to do? We have thousands of extra students coming, we have a skills shortages crisis looming and yet you give us less than 7% of what you gave the universities and the colleges for the double cohort."

I only have a couple of minutes, but I want to talk a little bit about the challenge of my city and my colleague

Dominic Agostino's city of Hamilton. Our population is growing rapidly and is becoming much older. This is true for a lot of the province, but Hamilton is one at the top with this challenge. Immigration now accounts for approximately 85% of Hamilton's total population growth, and that percentage could rise to 100% over the next couple of decades. However, by 2013 the number of adults in the labour force pre-retirement age group will exceed the number of youths in the labour force pre-entry group. In other words, the 55- to 64-year-olds will exceed the 15- to 24-year-olds. This gap of course widens mathematically in the future years. Therefore, Hamilton's labour force growth will cease altogether shortly after 2016 and the absolute size of the workforce will actually begin declining. This is a very significant challenge for Hamilton, as it is for the rest of the province.

Mohawk College is a very important partner in addressing these challenges, and this week Mohawk College did not get the funding they needed in order to graduate students and give apprenticeships to address this huge challenge.

The other point I want to make is that we are the only province in the country that has not signed a skilled trades agreement with the government.

Hon Mrs Cunningham: We actually signed it. They haven't signed it.

Mrs Bountrogianni: OK. The minister says, "We actually signed it. They haven't signed it." I have had conversations with both sides and I understand the differences. However, I think in this case, the point that Ontario is the only province where an agreement has not been reached says something. I'll stop there on that issue. I do hope that we sign that agreement.

Educational institutions will inherit massive staffing obligations over the next decade. We need to hire professors for community colleges. The amount of money that was given this week in the budget will not allow that to happen. I make a plea to the government to address the colleges' budget shortfall so we can address the skills shortages.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): Good day—I thought I was answering the phone. I was doing two things at the same time. As you know, we're all busy in this assembly and sometimes trying to get straight what we're doing is quite interesting.

First of all, I want to rise in support of my good friend Mr Curling, who brings this resolution forward in order to deal with what I believe is a very serious issue in this province, the whole issue of training. You know, for example, that one of the unfortunate things the government has done over the last six or seven years was to really gut the apprenticeship training system in the province.

Before coming to the assembly, I was one who benefited from the apprenticeship training system in this province. I'm a journeyman electrician by trade and learned my trade by working in the mines in the Timmins area and going off to trade school in Ottawa and Toronto to learn the technical part of the trade to be able to write my licence.

I've got to say to the government, you just don't get it. What happens is that for years we've had an apprenticeship training system that was there to train people to work in the skilled trades in the plants and mines and various places across the province. It was a system, by and large, that worked fairly well. Ontario, compared to other jurisdictions, qualified some of the best tradespeople in the world.

Now we've gone to a system where there is no longer any incentive for employers to hire apprentices. There used to be a time, for example, when I went in when the employer was given a tax cut by way of a percentage of the wages they had to pay me in order to be able to train as an apprentice. So, for example, the first year of my apprenticeship the employer got a tax credit to offset the wages they paid me as a newly hired apprentice-trainee in the electrical field, and in the second and third years, progressively the tax reduction became less and less. As a result, the employer had an incentive to hire me.

The second thing the program did was that it allowed me to go off to trade school a number of times, and trade school was paid for by the province of Ontario. You went to a college of your choice, one of our community colleges. I chose both George Brown and Algonquin College to do my training and, when I went there, I didn't have to pay any tuition to get in the door. That was paid by the province. Unfortunately, this government now views apprenticeship training as any college program, and apprentices who are going off to get trained are now having to pay tuition to get in the door. That means, quite frankly, that most apprentices—obviously they're younger—don't have the money, in most cases, are married and have obligations at home. I know, from the very few apprentices who are being trained in the province and talking to some of the people in the trade schools, they're finding it very difficult to go off to trade school because there really is no incentive there.

For that reason, the NDP caucus has been working on a package to revamp the entire apprenticeship training system. We believe, as my good friend Tony Martin talked about earlier, that training, education, is a key component to the development of a strong economy. One of the things we believe as New Democrats is that we need to have not only community colleges to train people coming out of high school or deciding to go back to college or university, but we have to have a good apprenticeship training system. We're working on a program now that would see, if we were elected as the government, a newly devised apprenticeship training program that goes beyond the skilled trades as we understand them. So if an employer out there is working in manufacturing or production-type work, they would be able to say, "There are some skilled jobs that we have within our employ that don't fall under the old category of skilled trades, but we think there needs to be some skills training for those people to do that."

1050

So in co-operation with our community college system or our universities, we would be able to develop the

proper training programs to make sure there's accredited training and at the same time have a type of tax credit for the employer to be able to offset the costs of training those employees while they're in the apprenticeship training system. We would also reverse what the government has done by way of putting tuition fees in place for apprentices across this province.

The reason we believe that, as my good friend Mr Martin from Sault Ste Marie has raised, is that if you look at the successful economies of Europe, one of the key components of those economies working has been training. They call Ireland the Celtic Tiger. Mr Martin's done a lot of work on this, working between Sault Ste Marie and Ireland to develop trade opportunities between his city and region and Ireland.

The story of Ireland's success is that one of the first things they did—if you remember, way back when, Ireland had an economy that was not doing as well as it is now. Quite frankly, it was one of the worst economies in Europe. Then the government there decided to focus in on what the best opportunities were. They decided it was on the tech side, and they provided free college or university education to anybody who had the marks and who wanted to go. As a result, they've built a skills base within the economy, so when employers and future investors are looking to invest in Ireland, they've got the people to draw into those employers to do the jobs that have to be done. As a result, the Irish economy has moved in leaps and bounds and is one of the leading economies in Europe today.

So I say your old ideological ideas of the right don't work. What you need to do is to take a look at what's happening in Europe under some progressive governments. Look at training from the perspective of an investment in our future, not only of our people but also in our overall economy as an economic activity.

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): My compliments to the member from Scarborough-Rouge River for bringing forward this resolution. It is certainly one that I can enthusiastically support, particularly from being out in rural and small-town Ontario on the task force that the Premier set up a few years ago on rural economic renewal. Skills training was one of the top three issues they kept bringing forward.

I well remember doing some follow-ups last June, just a year ago now, being in Seaforth when a very significant industry in that community made the statement that if they were to close in that small town, they would never build again in small-town Ontario because of the difficulty of getting skilled workers into that community. I thought that was most unfortunate. It wasn't line workers; it was the skilled mechanics and the skilled electricians.

Lack of skilled workers is more of a problem in small-town Ontario than in the big cities. A large part of it has to do with a cultural issue. Parents want their kids to go to university. There's something wrong with going to colleges. A typical conversation with a guidance teacher is, "Oh, you wouldn't want to go to college or become a

skilled worker. You'd want to go to university. I went to such and such university. It's a great university. Wouldn't you like to go there?" I think it's unfortunate that that happens.

Have a look at some of the skilled workers at GM. A little overtime and they're over \$100,000 a year. That's what skilled workers can accomplish.

I wanted to make reference to the comments from the member for Sault Ste Marie, talking about lack of R&D. Have a look at the challenge fund. I was recently at the bioconference. Ontario is the best place to do R&D, for any company. That's why we have so many pharmaceutical companies here. The Japanese delegation recognized that. Individuals at the bioconference walked up to me and told me that: there is no place like Ontario to do R&D.

He was also talking about nothing for the north. I don't think he looked at the budget. There is \$100 million for northern and rural colleges and \$6 million for northern and rural universities. I think he should have a look.

The member for Timmins-James Bay talked about the apprenticeship program being gutted. Yes, \$100 million was gutted from the apprenticeship program by the federal government. Let's look at who is doing the gutting. No wonder they have a surplus, with what they've cut from health care, down to 14 cents on the dollar, and cutting \$100 million out of apprenticeship programs for our students who want to get some skills training. That's where the problem is.

I also appreciated the comment from the member for York Centre and some of the systemic barriers that are out there. I was unaware of that differentiation that he brought forward. But that's not the only place. We also have barriers for our physicians and many of our other professions.

Mr Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale-High Park): It is my pleasure to briefly join this debate. The member for Scarborough-Rouge River is trying to elevate the discussion in this House, but it does not come without a price. It is about this House recognizing that we have an obligation.

The world has changed mightily in the last 10 and 15 years and we have fallen behind other jurisdictions. What the member for Scarborough-Rouge River is trying to tell us is, let's get back to first principles here. Let's see if we can, in a non-partisan way in private members' hour, subscribe to the idea that every member of our community and our society who lives in Ontario should be able to reach their potential. They should be able to reach their potential for their own self-potential, but also, frankly, for the benefit of the rest of us.

We don't do well. We, in the Liberal portion of the House, see inimitably that what's advanced in the last number of years as our rights doesn't mean anything if they can't be exercised by a broad sweep of society. Sadly, that can't be said to be true about Ontario today.

For example, I point to the area of high schools where we have general and utter confusion when it comes to workplace curriculum. In grades 9 and 10 for example,

we have nothing there for kids who might find themselves on a track to colleges and universities. There is confusion again at the college level where right now, if you call up colleges, they will tell you different things about how they will interpret the new curriculum. Does that matter in the soup of things? It does, because the principle here is that we would allow that to happen, that we would allow what's happening, which is kids to dead-end in our high schools right now.

Last year 55% of kids in grade 9 failed the applied math test. Now we may think, "Tough on those kids," but do you know what that means? We have a car crash that's going to reverberate because kids won't qualify for many of the courses that would get them into apprenticeships that would maximize their skills and training along the way.

It's the business of this House that this not happen. Instead, right now we have something that we have to untangle: we have what we call curriculum casualties. If we had subscribed to the principles that were put forward by the member for Scarborough-Rouge River, we wouldn't have let that happen. We would have a higher regard for the fact that the old-fashioned race is, "How many people can we get out of high schools and into colleges and universities? Let's not worry about the rest." Well, the rest is 45% or 50% of the kids. In 1950 that didn't matter. In 1960, 1970 and 1980 it didn't matter as much. But it matters today and we do not have a plan here. We have an itchy-bitsy, tiny program to try and address the needs of the rest of the youth of this province.

We have something that, on all sides of this House, we have to say has been inadequately addressed in terms of our sincerity in welcoming people from other provinces, and it is disheartening to see other fingers being pointed. We can't get a training program going and we can't get foreign-trained professionals to work to their ability. That is a failure on all our parts. I want to thank the member for Scarborough-Rouge River for putting us in a position to address that and to take the first step, which is recognition of the basic principles to actually address that situation.

Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming-Cochrane): I appreciate having time, even if it's just a few minutes, to support my colleague from Scarborough-Rouge River on his very foresightful resolution today to really try to transform Ontario into a skills-culture society. That is something we really have to do to make sure that, in a world that's being driven by knowledge-based industry, we keep our competitive edge in Ontario, and that all our working men and women in this province are competitive and can be world leaders in all the various skill sets.

I'd like to compliment the member for Northumberland on his observation that part of our culture really has to change, that we, as parents, would say we want our children to go to university and many of us will dismiss the tremendous skills and jobs that are out there. Whether we're guidance counsellors or parents, we need to make sure our young people are exposed to all the possibilities to earn a living. Gyproc installers in Toronto make up to

\$100,000 a year. It is tremendous what our skills contribute and how you can make a very good living and raise a family with the many skill sets that are available in Ontario.

Germany is an example that for 150 years has had a skills and apprenticeship culture. Part of their success, I believe, is that they start that at so young an age. I think we've allowed our apprenticeship programs to develop much later in life. We need to be identifying those opportunities in high school and start to co-share with work a little more in apprenticeship programs and the academic work we do in high school.

I would say to the minister, who is here and I'm glad she is here, that we should not be putting barriers to apprenticeship programs. I consider the new classroom fee the minister introduced as a barrier to apprenticeships. It's \$400, and a lot of people might say, "What's \$400?" But if you take an electrician, for example, basic in-classroom training is \$400. Then it's another \$400 for your intermediate training. If you go into advanced training, which an electrician is going to require to get her ticket, it's another \$400. Then you work for a year, and if you go into optional industrial electronics training, that's another \$400. So a \$1,600 penalty on trying to be an electrician in this province has been imposed by the minister and the Ernie Eves government.

We're trying to make sure we transform ourselves into a learning culture, and yet we put penalties in the way of people. That's not a very good signal we're sending our young people. We want to encourage them to get training and take away those barriers. Let's get Ontario trained and competitive.

1100

The Acting Speaker: The member for Scarborough-Rouge River has two minutes.

Mr Curling: Let me thank my colleagues for supporting this resolution. I'm sure it's on their minds, and basically what the resolution does is raise the awareness of it. I just want to make sure too that some of the things that may slip away from us, like the fact I raised that about 44% of our people being functionally illiterate or illiterate—it's difficult to train any nation if they have that sort of inability.

The anecdote goes, and we hear very much, that we have so many doctors and engineers driving taxis. It seems to me that that's why they are such bad drivers. They should really be doctors and engineers. The fact is, if we could concentrate on putting people where they are better utilized, we wouldn't have that brain waste; we would have a brain gain in all this. So I would encourage the government to let them practise medicine and engineering.

At the end of the day, there's a need to leverage our diversity. The key to this is connecting people—talent, knowledge, education, experience and the economy—a new contract between Canadians who are foreign-trained professionals and the directorial bodies of their respective professions—which I call the gatekeepers—the government and the private sector. The new contract must be

bold and innovative, whereby a centralized solution is the desired objective. The new contract is the essence of a training culture. Therefore I ask for and appreciate very much my colleagues' support of it.

As a matter of fact, I'm very passionate about the fact that it brings dignity and self-worth to individuals and their families that a father or mother can stand up and say, "You should go to school and get an education," and the kid cannot turn back and say, "But what happened to you, Dad? You're an engineer and you're driving a taxi." I encourage us all to develop that training culture to bring dignity back to the family.

The Acting Speaker: This completes the time allocated for debate on ballot item number 51. I will put the question at 12 o'clock noon.

AUDIT AMENDMENT ACT, 2002
LOI DE 2002 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LA VÉRIFICATION
DES COMPTES PUBLICS

Mr Gerretsen moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 5, An Act to amend the Audit Act to insure greater accountability of hospitals, universities and colleges, municipalities and other organizations which receive grants or other transfer payments from the government or agencies of the Crown / *Projet de loi 5, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la vérification des comptes publics afin d'assurer une responsabilité accrue de la part des hôpitaux, des universités et collèges, des municipalités et d'autres organisations qui reçoivent des subventions ou d'autres paiements de transfert du gouvernement ou d'organismes de la Couronne.*

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): The member for Kingston and the Islands has 10 minutes for his presentation.

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): I'm very pleased to speak on this bill today, because it's something I've always been extremely interested in, both at this level of government and at the local level.

As a matter of fact, back on December 20, 2000, I introduced a similar bill, Bill 180, which was not debated because the House prorogued. Immediately after the throne speech that was made in this House by the government in April 2001, I reintroduced the bill as Bill 5.

Let me say at the outset that this is not a new idea. Similar bills—maybe not exactly the same—have been introduced by other members in this House. Mr Maves from Niagara Falls introduced a similar bill back in 1996 that was approved by this House but unfortunately didn't go anywhere.

Let me also quickly say that this is not a new idea to this House in any way, shape or form. We go right back to 1989 when, under a Liberal government, the public accounts committee at that point in time urged a bill of a similar nature, and again back in 1993. As a matter of

fact, similar bills have been introduced and discussed by the public accounts committee over the last 13 years under all three different governments.

What is the purpose of the bill? The purpose of the bill is to give greater accountability about how the taxpayers' dollars are being spent—not to the government necessarily, but to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. Some 60% of all the money the government spends goes to transfer agents or grant recipients. In effect, what this bill will do is give the auditor the right to follow the money, to see whether that money is actually being expended by the grant recipients for the purposes for which it was intended. It also gives him powers to inspect, and powers to examine under oath individuals who may be receiving these grants in one way or another. But it also puts an obligation on him to keep confidential the information he receives; it can only be used for the purposes as contained in the act. So any freedom-of-information issues are addressed in the act.

Why should the Provincial Auditor have these powers? Well, the Provincial Auditor is one of the five officers of this assembly who are responsible not to the government, not to the opposition, but to the 103 members who are elected to this Legislative Assembly. He would be responsible to the Legislative Assembly.

As I mentioned earlier, this goes right back to 1989, when the public accounts committee at that time passed a motion endorsing that the auditor would be given these kinds of powers. It's happened on three or four occasions since that time. Every time, what seems to happen is that the finance minister of the day—all well-meaning, well-intentioned individuals, regardless of political stripe—has said, "Yes, this is a good idea. We're studying it and we may actually do something about it."

This government actually went farther than that. In its throne speech of April 19, 2001, it made the statement that it would propose "amendments to the Audit Act that would empower the Provincial Auditor to ensure that institutions funded by Ontario taxpayers use that money prudently, effectively and as intended." Well, that has not happened as yet. I know the government members will very well say, "Well, it's going to happen." All I can say to that is that similar promises have been made over the last 13 years without effect. What I'm simply asking the members of this assembly to do is to pass this bill and send it off to committee. Let's see if we can collectively come up with a bill, perhaps with some amendments, that will make all the grant recipients, including government departments, in one way or another more accountable to the Legislative Assembly through the Provincial Auditor.

I know that from time to time all of us may disagree about certain government programs, as to whether money should or should not be spent, but that's not the issue here. Surely we all agree that whatever money is being expended under government programs should be expended wisely, in a cost-efficient and accountable fashion. That's what this is all about. That's what the work of the public accounts committee is all about. I would urge the members to see it that way.

As a result of the public accounts committee making a request to the Minister of Finance as to whether or not he would be introducing amendments to the Audit Act, as have been promised over the last 13 years by governments of all three political stripes in the House, he stated in a letter addressed to myself, as chairman of the public accounts committee, "I am pleased that the standing committee on public accounts supports the expansion of the Provincial Auditor's powers to permit full-scope value-for-money audits of grant recipient organizations." Those are the words of Mr Flaherty, who was then the finance minister. So I would simply ask, if we truly believe in the notion that whatever money is being expended publicly should be expended in a truly accountable fashion, that members of all sides support this bill.

1110

I know there may be a fear out there, particularly by some of the transfer agents—in hearings for health on this issue back in 1996—who are not all that much in favour of it. The hospitals, the universities, the colleges, the municipalities, have all said, "We really don't need this." Maybe they fear the fact that the Provincial Auditor will be, in effect, doing complete audits of them. The amendments specifically state that the Provincial Auditor will only have the ability to audit the books of those particular agencies, of the universities and the colleges and the hospitals and the municipalities and other grant recipients, to the extent of the grant or the money that is actually being transferred to them, for the sole purpose of ensuring that the money is being spent in the areas that the government has given the money for in the first place.

I know there may also be a fear—and I would just say to those organizations that accountability is what it's all about. This has nothing to do with the notion of academic freedom, as I've heard from some of the transfer agents, some of the universities and colleges. This has to do with making sure that the money that is collected from you and me as taxpayers is being spent properly, in truly authorized government programs that are out there from time to time.

There is also the fear that, will the Provincial Auditor, in effect, be auditing grant recipients that get a very minuscule amount of money from the government? I would surely hope that all of us in this House can agree that the Provincial Auditor, being held in as high esteem as he is, and his office are only going to audit those organizations that may be necessary from time to time. He's not going to make complete audits in situations where the transfers to particular grant recipients are of a very small and very minor nature. I think that kind of concern that's been out there can be alleviated.

One may very well ask why, traditionally, the finance ministries and the Ministers of Finance, of all three political stripes in the House, have been reluctant to endorse this. They've always said so, but they've never really done anything about it. It may have something to do with the fact that maybe there's a feeling that they may actually lose some power.

I think the fundamental difference in governments holding their transfer agents responsible to government is

that this is an accountability issue not of the transfer agent to the government but of the transfer agent to the Provincial Auditor, who, after all, is an independent officer of this assembly. That's where the fundamental difference lies between the amendments that I'm proposing and the Public Sector Accountability Act. There may very well be reason for there to be a Public Sector Accountability Act, whereby the government may want to hold the people that we give the money to accountable. But the kind of accountability that I'm talking about is through the Provincial Auditor, the independent agency that exists for this purpose.

I would hope that members of this House will not only endorse this concept, because surely to goodness we all want to make sure that money is being expended wisely and in an accountable fashion, but that they would also see this process through by referring it to a committee of this House and by adopting whatever comes out of that committee by way of amendments and otherwise.

I look forward to the ensuing debate and hope that all members of the House will accept this in the spirit that it's given, the notion that we all surely want to make sure that all government money is being spent in a wise and prudent fashion.

Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton): I'll be sharing my time with the member for Northumberland and the member for Durham.

It was interesting to listen to the member speak. I hope he didn't talk himself out of this bill.

Efficient, effective and accountable government is very important to the people of Ontario. Our government recognized this back in 1995 when the Common Sense Revolution, largely based on the principles of transparency and accountability, helped lead our party to a landslide victory. Taxpayers rewarded us for our commitment to an effective, efficient and accountable government by giving us a second consecutive majority win, in 1999. We were certain that this was something that taxpayers in Ontario have come to expect from their government.

Ontario taxpayers understand the value of each and every dollar and the importance of priority-setting and responsible spending. They relate to the old saying, "Every penny counts." So too does their government. Unlike the federal Liberals, where last year it was the human resources boondoggle and this year it's the questionable contracts to party-faithful friends, we take the word "accountability" very seriously. The Ontario government's definition of accountability is actually based on what the word is meant to mean. Accountability is a way in which organizations and their workers must answer to and take responsibility for their performance to those who pay for and use their services. Those people are the taxpayers of Ontario. Without accountability, faith and respect in all government, institutions would not exist.

This government, as we have said in the past, solidly believes that tax dollars belong to the hardworking people of Ontario, not to the government. Taxpayers, citizens

and users of government services expect, in fact demand, that the government deliver quality services in the most efficient manner possible. Over the past seven years, the government has improved and will continue to improve its own ability to deliver the most efficient and effective services possible to the people of Ontario.

This morning, Bill 5 will receive second reading. This is An Act to amend the Audit Act to insure greater accountability of hospitals, universities and colleges, municipalities and other organizations which receive grants or other transfer payments from the government or agencies of the Crown. It is a bill that further demonstrates the government's ongoing commitment to accountability and transparency to better serve Ontario taxpayers and ensure future prosperity for the people of this great province.

Mr Speaker, allow me to quote something from our leader, Premier Ernie Eves, who was the finance minister back in 1996: "The people of Ontario expect their government to live within its means ... we are finding savings in every area of government activity. The government is making the same difficult decisions and adjustments that we have all had to make at home and at work in our everyday lives." Today, the discipline that then Finance Minister Ernie Eves brought to the way government spends taxpayers' hard-earned dollars is continuing as he now leads us as Premier of Ontario.

This is why we continue to pursue a consistent course of tight fiscal discipline, balanced budgets and debt reduction in order to provide more resources to priority areas. As a result, excluding health care and education, real program spending per person is down by close to 30% since 1995-96.

This year's budget continued with our tradition of efficient, effective and accountable government. We are doing even more to ensure taxpayers receive the best value possible for their hard-earned dollars.

As I mentioned earlier, Bill 5 is An Act to amend the Audit Act. Currently, the Provincial Auditor can do inspection audits of grant-recipient organizations, which is a strict evaluation of accounting records only. Under a value-for-money mandate, the Provincial Auditor would be able to assess whether grant-recipient organizations are delivering services with due regard for economy and efficiency and how they measure the end report on their own effectiveness.

Over the past decade, the Provincial Auditor has lobbied for this extended mandate and has had the support of the public accounts committee, of which the member is Chair, I believe. Since 1990, the Provincial Auditor and the public accounts committee have been requesting significant changes to the Audit Act, including the right to broaden the scope of current strict evaluations of accounting records of grant-recipient organizations. To date, five of the other nine provinces in Canada have the legislative mandate to conduct full-scope audits on grant recipients. On April 19, 2001, the government announced in the speech from the throne its intention to allow the Provincial Auditor to conduct broader audits on publicly funded institutions.

Following the speech from the throne, a private member's bill had its first reading on April 23, 2001, as the member mentioned. Bill 5 is a reintroduction of MPP John Gerretsen's Bill 180 from the previous year. Under Bill 5, the auditor would be able to conduct full-scope value-for-money audits of grant-recipient organizations. This act will address this government's belief that the public has the right to know that their tax dollars are being spent efficiently and in their best interests.

Effective, efficient accountability is required not just of the government of Ontario but of all institutions funded by taxpayers. Bill 5 would ensure that other organizations, such as hospitals, universities and colleges, continuously strive to follow the best management practices. This government is determined to make this happen. We want to make these organizations more open and accountable to the public because taxpayers simply deserve to know how their money is being spent. No other jurisdiction in North America and no other government is so actively pursuing value for taxpayers' money.

1120

I said it before and I'll say it again: the government has been saying for years that tax dollars belong to the hard-working people of Ontario, not the government. That is why efficiency, effectiveness and accountability are so important to Ontario and its future prosperity.

I congratulate the member from Kingston. Perhaps he is like a phoenix rising from the ashes when he has been converted to the responsible, efficient and accountable use of taxpayers' dollars. I hope this is so, and I hope it is not a new head of the hydra that may be appearing for the first time.

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): I'm pleased to join the debate. Clearly the issue of understanding the province's finances and the public having a right to see them is of paramount importance.

To the previous speaker, I'd quote Mr Eves too. In 1995 he said, "We're going to get rid of two sets of books." Well, on Monday this week we found we still have two sets of books. The budget was tabled here on Monday and the estimates were tabled here on Monday, and in many ministries' spending there was a \$400-million or \$500-million difference. And it was Mr Eves who in 1995 promised we'd have the budget presented before the fiscal year started. So I think we have made very little progress in the last seven years in getting a clear picture for the people of Ontario of our finances. This year's budget said we'll finally do it next year, April 1, 2003.

I'm extremely supportive of measures that will add clarity to our finances. Right now, they're not. The auditor made the point about the two sets of books, telling the people of Ontario that there is confusion in the finances. He quoted a billion-dollar expenditure in health that in one set of books was recorded in one fiscal year and in the other set of books recorded in a different year—a billion-dollar swing.

In terms of the need to understand the finances of our partners, it's extremely important. The province has

taken about \$5 billion of debt that in the past would have been on the province's books and moved that debt off the province's books on to off-book debt financing. They moved it on to school boards. School boards now have about \$2 billion worth of new debt to fund new schools that used to be on the province's books and now has been put on the school boards' books. By the way, I would add that the school boards are paying at least a quarter of 1% higher interest to borrow that money. The taxpayers are essentially just wasting at least \$5 million a year in extra interest costs to have the school boards borrow that money rather than the province. Exactly the same thing is happening with our colleges and universities. They've got about a billion and a half dollars of new debt that previously would have been on the province's books and is now on their books. Of the increased grants for colleges and universities, \$100 million is going to go to pay the interest on that new debt. Exactly the same thing, I might add, has happened with nursing homes. There are 20,000 nursing home beds, long-term-care beds, being built. In the past the province used to help fund that. No more. The province has said, "You go out and borrow that money and we'll pay you \$10 a day per person. We'll pay essentially the principal and interest costs."

So I say to the people of Ontario, why is it important that we understand the finances of our transfer partners? It's because there is at least \$5 billion of new debt on their books that used to be on the province's books. Creative accounting, which frankly has got a lot of businesses in trouble, moved it off the province's books on to their books and it's costing \$12.5 million a year in extra interest costs.

So why is it important that we have a good look at and a good understanding of these books? It's because an awful lot of the finances are the responsibility of the provincial taxpayers, and in the interest of clarity—I'd say at least \$5 billion of new debt—we have to understand that.

So I appreciate the proposal by my colleague. I think it will add a note of transparency to the province's books at a very timely point.

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): I'm happy to speak to this resolution this morning and, right up front, to say that we certainly will support the effort of the member from Kingston. We think any move forward to improve accountability, to let the people of Ontario and ourselves know how money is being spent, where it's being spent, whether there is value for investment and then by that to give us some indication of perhaps where money might be more appropriately spent is always very helpful.

I guess it surprises me that there aren't in place some vehicles that would allow for the auditing of the MUSH sector financial statements, financial carryings-on, by the Provincial Auditor, though I say that recognizing that in most instances the MUSH sector, those municipalities, universities, schools, hospitals and other groups funded by the provincial government, do act very responsibly, do take their responsibility very seriously. I think that if you

were to take a look at any of their financial transactions at any given time you'd find that they're operating above-board and honourably and trying to do the best they can with the money they have. However, that's not what I wanted to focus on in my comments this morning with regard to this issue.

I'd like to first of all say that I hope—and knowing the member from Kingston, I'm sure I'm correct here—that this isn't an attack on the MUSH sector, on municipalities, universities, schools, hospitals etc. It's rather a challenge to this government to be more responsible, be more accountable, to work more co-operatively with their partners in the delivery of public services in this province, particularly when you consider the major shift that has happened over the last six or seven years in terms of who delivers what any more in Ontario. It's hard to figure out from one week to the next who's responsible for what and who, at the end of the day, will be held to account for what. Just from that perspective, if this isn't, hopefully, somehow a criticism or an attack on these sectors, then I think it would prove to be a valuable exercise.

I'm sure if you talk to any of the people particularly in municipalities these days, you'd find that they would appreciate anybody paying attention to the concerns they're raising about the fact that they're being asked more and more to deliver services they were never expected, when they got into the business of municipal government, to have to deliver, and alas, to their chagrin—and we've made this point many, many times over the last six or seven years—there isn't the money. There is the responsibility shifted down, there is the download of the requirement to deliver all kinds of services, from health services to housing to ambulance to all kinds of other things that traditionally have either been delivered directly and solely by the province or in partnership with the province that municipalities are now being asked to deal with, and they're simply not being given the resources and the wherewithal to live up to that very onerous and serious responsibility. So I'm sure that these organizations, these agencies, these vehicles of government would welcome the auditor coming into their jurisdiction and looking at their books and then working with them to send a message to the general public out there, and then through them, in particular to the government to say, "It's not a question of irresponsibility. It's not a question of somebody doing something untoward or illegal here. It's a question of governments, colleges, universities, hospitals trying desperately to find ways to be creative, to stretch that dollar that they are now getting to cover those areas that they are being asked to cover, and they know they don't have the resources to do it." So I'm sure they'd welcome in the bat of an eye anybody coming in to talk to them about that particular issue.

1130

For example, the colleges and universities sector: if you look at the budget that was delivered on Monday, yes, there's some increase in that budget to universities and colleges, but that increase is targeted almost solely

and completely to the very real challenge that colleges and universities are going to meet next year. There has been absolutely nothing up to now to colleges and universities to deal with the reality of the double cohort, the doubling of their enrolment in first year that will happen next year and that will require them to provide classroom space, to provide dormitories for students, to provide teachers, to provide the supports in terms of libraries, and the list goes on and on. There has been absolutely no indication that this government up to now understood the very heavy financial burden that will place on colleges and universities.

This year we have in the budget, yes, a commitment to giving those institutions some relief where that is concerned, but no recognition whatsoever of the fact that their budgets have been reduced so significantly over the last six or seven years that most of that money will probably be taken up with simply shoring up what they already have. So to suggest for a second, as some members here have even as early as this morning, that somehow colleges and universities are getting some kind of a windfall here because of this budget, particularly northern colleges and universities that have had their budgets struck so viciously that they're now starving to death, some of them barely standing any more, talking about all kinds of things that we wouldn't even have considered 10 or 15 years ago in terms of things they might have to or want to or need to do to keep themselves afloat—yes, I think they would probably welcome with open arms anybody who would be willing to come in and sit down with them and look at their books, look at the challenge they're facing and provide them with some suggestion as to things they might do to be more creative, to perhaps raise more money, and to send a message particularly to the two senior levels of government, each of them declaring over the last five or six years ever-increasing surpluses in revenues coming into their coffers, to talk to them about maybe spending some of that money in the MUSH sector and particularly, as I've said, in the colleges and universities sector.

If you look around the world today in some of those jurisdictions that are head and shoulders above everybody else where being competitive in the economy is concerned, these jurisdictions, in partnership with their umbrella organizations—for example, the European Union and countries like Ireland and Finland—are investing heavily in the buildup of infrastructure in municipalities to support the kind of economic activity that's now beginning to happen. There's investment of a significant nature in colleges and universities because they know that it makes more sense to invest in the buildup of intellectual capacity. It makes more sense to invest in vehicles that will give you the cutting edge in technological change, give you the capacity to do research and development and to have students involved in that.

In Ontario, and this is where our MUSH sector becomes rather agitated and anxious and fearful, the only strategy, it seems, to make us competitive or to keep us in the mix somewhat or somehow where the North Ameri-

can or global economy is concerned is this issue of tax breaks, that if you give ever more and increasing tax breaks, somehow we're going to be more competitive.

I think we've seen, as indicated by what was in Monday's budget, that that approach just doesn't work. It's not being done in other jurisdictions. Although in some ways it's a little late in the game—but better late than never—why wouldn't we, at this time at least, as well as calling for more facility for the Provincial Auditor to move in and audit some of these struggling organizations, also sit down with them and promise that once we do the audit, we will do whatever it takes to give them the capacity they need to live up to the potential we all know they have to deliver first-class programs?

We know, and my caucus in particular knows, that if you're going to have a progressive, civil, energetic, positive and constructive jurisdiction in the world we're moving into today, we have to have at all levels, whether it be federal, provincial or municipal, government vehicles, and that speaks to what we refer to as the MUSH sector—universities, schools, hospitals and other agencies out there—that are well funded, not worrying about their very existence but encouraged by way of the support and resources they get to be all they can be if we're going to stay on the cutting edge and compete and provide the people who call Ontario home with the opportunities we know a jurisdiction as rich as Ontario should have for everybody concerned.

Give municipalities, universities, colleges, hospitals that need to provide health care, and those other vehicles out there, the capacity they need to make sure everybody who calls Ontario home is included in the ongoing, day-to-day life of those communities, so that they can prosper and be as viable and vital as they have in fact been in the past, but have in the last six to seven years lost some of their vitality because we're not doing that investing.

Yes, we're shifting the responsibility and the requirement of a government from the provincial to the municipal, to hospitals, to universities, to schools, to other government agencies out there in communities, to do ever more and more, and at the same time we're not providing them with the resources. We're not providing them with the resources, not because we don't have the money but because the government—I don't include myself in that because it wouldn't have been the choice I would have made—has made the choice to provide tax breaks to corporations and individuals within Ontario who, in some instances—not all—really don't need further tax breaks at the expense of these very valuable services that would in many significant, serious and important ways provide service to more and more people, given that capacity.

In supporting the member for Kingston's very thoughtful and well-reasoned bill this morning to provide the Provincial Auditor with the ability to go in and audit those municipal, university, school and health care sectors and other government agencies, I also stand here and encourage the government, once the auditor has done his work, has reported back and pointed to shortcomings

and difficulties in those sectors, to actually take their responsibility seriously and give the leadership I think everybody expected they would give when they were elected back in 1995 and again in 1999, to work with communities and people struggling in universities and colleges to keep up with the ever-increasing speed of technological change and the need to increase intellectual capacity in our communities, and to provide the resources and leadership to work in partnership, similar to a lot of the activity that we were participating in when we were government from 1990 to 1995, in some very difficult economic times, so that communities such as Sault Ste Marie, Kapuskasing, Thunder Bay and Atikokan—and the list goes on and on—might feel somebody understands their challenges.

I will be supporting this this morning. Our caucus will be supporting it. I will be encouraging the government not only to support it but to provide the resources necessary to back up what they find.

1140

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): I appreciate the opportunity to be able to say a few words on Bill 5, which the member for Kingston and the Islands is bringing forward. It's An Act to amend the Audit Act to insure greater accountability of hospitals, universities and colleges, municipalities and other organizations etc.

I wonder why he left out school boards when naming the others, because a significant number of dollars flow from the province to school boards. I certainly agree with the intent of this bill, but I'm left wondering why school boards were left out of this particular ballot item.

I really support the value-for-money audits. When you look at the MUSH sector—and basically that's what's being referred to here, the MUSH sector plus other organizations. Look at what happens with some of these monopolies. There's no question that school boards are monopolies, that hospitals are monopolies and so on. Look at some of the salaries that end up getting set.

I know we're not transferring money to Hydro One and to the old Ontario Hydro. Nevertheless, it's an example of a monopoly that went awry. I'm told by some of the people in my riding that they're spelling "one" in Hydro One wrong, that it should have been Hydro Won, and indeed it did appear that way, particularly with some of the salaries that came to our attention most recently.

But I also look at some of the salaries flowing in for the CEOs of hospitals. Talk about a value-for-money audit here. It's a step more than just mismanaging the money. I think we have to look more closely at that when we have CEOs approaching a half-million dollars and then they're crying poor. They don't have to look after the medical side. They look after the plant and the running of the building. I really fail to understand why on earth they should be making that kind of money.

I enthusiastically welcome the idea of the value-for-money audit. I think way too many dollars are not being used effectively and efficiently, the hard-earned money of the taxpayers of the province of Ontario. Go out and do any poll of the people here in the province of Ontario

and they'll tell you that they believe there's a lot of money being wasted within our health system. I tend to agree with them. It's awfully easy to just go out and ask for more and more funding. And this may be true in some of the other monopolies that we end up supporting.

We have indeed a very serious responsibility to our taxpayers, I think all the way through to things like our Trillium investments, which are doing a lot of good, especially in small-town Ontario. But I don't want to see that ever evolve into the HRDC fiasco of a few years ago, which the Liberal government handled so poorly going into it and then which Jane Stewart also handled extremely poorly once they were into that mess.

This kind of thing being brought forward by the member from Kingston and the Islands I certainly support. I liked the comment made by the member from Halton about the public's right to know. That's absolutely right.

I draw a comparison between the federal government and what's happening with the provincial. There, people like the auditors and the Integrity Commissioner report to the Prime Minister, not to Parliament. That's not so here. Those people in those kinds of positions report to the Legislature. It gives them a lot more freedom and less risk to their job, of course.

I just want to wind up by commenting on what the member for Sault Ste Marie said, that we should do as the auditor suggests. I would suggest to him that he have a look at the response of this government to what the auditor suggests. We follow it very closely and take it very seriously. I would suggest to him that he look back at what the NDP did when the auditor came in with reports and how they followed up.

I'll leave the rest of my time for my good friend the hard-working member from the great riding of Durham. Thanks very much for the opportunity to speak, and I enthusiastically support Bill 5.

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex): I'm pleased to stand this morning in support of my colleague from Kingston and the Islands and his Bill 5. As a matter of fact, I have in the members' gallery some folks from the Essex County Association for Community Living: Marilyn Briggs, Cory Muise, Tim Wilson, Lee Holling and Nancy Wallace-Gero, who also support this bill, I am sure.

Seriously, though, I do want to say that this bill comes before private members' public business as just good sense. Some 75% of the money our provincial government spends is not under the review of the Provincial Auditor. I think most people would be surprised to know that upwards of \$50 billion of a \$65-billion or \$67-billion budget doesn't come under the review of the Provincial Auditor. I'm certainly a strong supporter of public accountability, and I think this is another step we can take, in that it will provide accountability. It will provide for the Legislature, for that matter, to have a report brought to it that gets into the area of the bulk of provincial spending.

Those agencies, boards and commissions that are being brought under this bill—which, by the way, include school boards—shouldn't be concerned about a

visit from the Provincial Auditor. I spent 22 years of my business life as the financial officer of a company that was audited every year, and I welcomed the audit. It's an opportunity to prove how well your organization runs. And if there are areas that need to be brought up to snuff, they should welcome that advice as well.

In the nine years I've been here, I think finance ministers have supported this kind of legislation. I'm frankly not sure why it hasn't been brought forward in the past. I think the member for Niagara Falls had a bill similar to this in the past. So I doubt there is much disagreement on the principle that my colleague from Kingston and the Islands is trying to bring to the Legislature. It may be that it's a bill that should be discussed. Certainly I would welcome it if it were to come before the public accounts committee. We would have the opportunity to get input on the bill and bring to this Legislature the opportunity for accountability for some 75% of provincial expenditures.

So this morning when the vote is taken, I would encourage all members of the Legislature to support my colleague from Kingston and the Islands' Bill 5, which I think will vastly improve accountability to this Legislature for monies spent.

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): It's my pleasure to share time again with the member from Halton, who is the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance and was kind enough to allow us to make a few remarks with respect to Bill 5.

Bill 5 was introduced by Gerretsen in April 2001, just shortly after Mr Maves from Niagara Falls introduced the government's bill, which was widely accepted. I believe there is no one in this House on either side, perhaps with the exception of the NDP, who would not want to see accountability built into any mechanism of sharing funding—that is, taxpayers' money—with the partners, who have been referred to as the MUSH sector: municipalities, universities, schools and hospitals.

I can only refer to the efforts the government has made in working co-operatively, I might say, with the Provincial Auditor, Erik Peters. I'm a great supporter of our Provincial Auditor. I've come to know him through the public accounts committee and the estimates committee and have a lot of respect for him. I'm not in favour of an activist auditor; that is, one who politicizes the role, and I would not make that accusation of Mr Peters. I think it's a matter of keeping the politics out of it and the accountability in it.

1150

What measures has the government taken? If I refer to the budget that the Honourable Janet Ecker introduced just this week on the 17th—and I commend her for that, the fourth straight balanced budget. That's what the people want: they want accountability and they want us to spend within our means like you and I do in our homes.

I like the plan here on page 8 of the speech. It says, "Effective this year, our business planning process incorporates zero-based budgeting principles. Every min-

istry is now required to review all of its program spending over a four-year cycle to determine program effectiveness, efficiency and value for money." That's what this is about.

If I look locally at my own riding, which is a very good place to start, you have to be very conscious of the fact that the key partners I'm referring to include real people—real people who I have a lot of respect for. I think immediately of the school boards. I think also of the measures at the local college, Durham College, and now, hopefully, the new University of Ontario, with Gary Polonsky and his staff, Don Hargest, who is the vice-president, I believe, in charge of finance. He's a very well educated, qualified person. They have built in mechanisms there that are a good start: the key performance indicators—the KPIs—student satisfaction, employer satisfaction and outcomes. I would caution the post-secondary group, though, that the idea of putting money in—sometimes some of the courses aren't really leading to effective job market skills for our young people, many of whom are here today.

I have a lot of respect for our municipal partners as well. I'd like to mention Mayor Mutton, whom I spoke with today about a measure before regional council yesterday on accountability, on spending taxpayers' money, and to Mayor Moffat as well, from Scugog township, who's also I believe a person who does want to be accountable to the taxpayers. I think there's unanimity here.

So I have great confidence in the auditor. I think they should have a role in making sure that there is wise use of taxpayers' money in the MUSH sectors—the municipalities, universities, schools and hospitals.

No one here, in my estimation, could speak against Bill 5, Mr Gerretsen's bill, as they didn't speak against Mr Maves's bill some time ago. So it's the right thing to do. I call on all members to pay close attention.

I also want to mention that there is a parliamentary committee called a program evaluation which is chaired by Julia Munro, which was mentioned in the budget, and on that committee are Frank Mazzilli, Marilyn Mushinski, Garfield Dunlop and Wayne Wettlaufer, all members who are going to work in partnership with the Provincial Auditor, along with Rob Sampson, the member from Mississauga Centre.

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): It's a pleasure to speak on this bill, the Audit Amendment Act, that has been brought forward by my colleague from Kingston and the Islands.

There is a fundamental responsibility that I believe government must not only talk about but must act on. There has to be a political will to act on the mechanisms that ensure independent accountability. It's one thing to dictate and to suggest that accountability is only based on legislation that allows for—let's say you can't run a deficit. That's one thing. But this bill, in my opinion, deals with the more fundamental issue of allowing an independent audit of the sectors that expend billions of taxpayers' dollars and the whole issue of the public's

right to know how the public dollars are being spent, if they're being spent in a way that you are getting value for money and also if those dollars are being spent to meet the needs that are supposed to be provided by those services. All of those things to me are its fundamental responsibility on spending public dollars.

We talk about best practices. I am really pleased to hear that the members of the government are speaking in favour of this bill, because it is in my opinion what rebuilds credibility, if you want to call it, in the area of government. Because when we talk about the word "efficiency," when we talk about the word "accountability," no one disagrees. It is only through actions and the political will to make sure those actions are pursued that we really understand if there is a true intent to act on accountability.

One of the unfortunate aspects, in my opinion, is what we see in the electricity sector. When we talk about transparency and the right of the public to know, the electricity sector is a perfect example that unfortunately has been blanketed by a cloak of secrecy since 1999. The question is, why does that happen? How does that contribute to this whole notion of what accountability is all about?

It's important, in my opinion, to have the Audit Amendment Act because of the fact that we must have access, that the Provincial Auditor must have access to the financial records of these crown corporations, because they expend billions and billions of taxpayers' dollars.

I commend the member from Kingston and the Islands and support this bill.

Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale): It's a great honour for me to have an opportunity to spend the final three minutes or so celebrating in the reflected glory of the member for Kingston and the Islands. It seems to me that this bill is really a motherhood bill. It is so rare on a Thursday morning that I might have the opportunity not only to share my remarks with this House, but to do so in accord with the member from Durham. It is a pleasure, a real honour, to have a chance for once to be on the same side of an issue as he is. I think this speaks to the fact that the principle of accountability is one that matters a whole lot to all of us regardless of where we might be in terms of our philosophical orientation.

The member for Kingston and the Islands has a well-established reputation in this place for this kind of work. He's one of those folks who does an awfully effective job of making quite certain that the tax dollars that are collected, the hard-won rewards of people for their work that are collected by government are spent effectively, and that's what this bill before us today is designed to do.

I think we also should all take an opportunity to celebrate the role the Provincial Auditor plays in ensuring that those of us who have the responsibility of governing, and especially those who have the responsibility of administering public dollars, do so in a way that is consistent with value for money in the delivery of services to the taxpayer.

As someone who tends to be a little more in support of activist government, it matters a lot to me that, as people in politics, we ensure that the dollars we collect from the taxpayer are spent well. I want to make sure those dollars that we fight for, that we talk about all the time in question period and other forums, are spent as effectively as possible.

We also all need to be honest and say that in the context of a \$65-billion budget, there is room for improvement. Everybody works hard to do an effective job of properly managing the trust the taxpayers provide, but when you're dealing with numbers like that, with the number of human fingerprints that come on \$65 billion worth of expenditures, I think it's easy to see—this bill is designed to ensure that the auditor, who serves us so well, has a broader range of opportunity to lend a little more guidance to us to ensure that the dollars we collect from taxpayers are being spent in the most effective and efficient way possible. I'm very honoured to support this bill.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Kingston and the Islands has two minutes to respond.

1200

Mr Gerretsen: First of all, I'd like to thank the members from Halton, Durham, Northumberland, Scarborough-Agincourt, Essex, Sarnia-Lambton, Toronto Centre-Rosedale and Sault Ste Marie for their kind words about the bill.

If I could say one thing about what the member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale said, and chide and disagree with him just to some extent: this is not about motherhood; this is about real accountability. If it were about motherhood, it would have passed many, many years ago.

The ultimate test, should this bill pass at second reading, is what's going to happen to it next. Over the last 13 years, government after government of all three political stripes has given lip service to it. The ultimate test is, do they really want to put it into action? Of course, the reason for that is quite simple: no government likes to be criticized, and usually the reports from the Provincial Auditor criticize the management of some government services or departments. That's happened to all governments of different political stripes over the years. And let's be realistic about it: the more power you give the Provincial Auditor, the more likely it is to happen.

But ultimately we shouldn't be concerned about that. Ultimately we should be concerned about only one thing: is the money we collect as a government being expended in a wise, prudent and accountable fashion? That's what this speaks to. This speaks to the fact that all those funds—up to 60% or 70% of the money being transferred to our hospitals, universities, colleges, municipalities and all the other recipient agencies—aren't being expended wisely.

They shouldn't feel threatened by this. As a matter of fact, they should welcome it as being the best way to

show the general public that they really want to spend the taxpayers' money in the best way possible.

The Acting Speaker: This completes the time allocated for debate on ballot item number 52.

SKILLS TRAINING

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): We will now deal with ballot item number 51.

Mr Curling has moved private member's notice of motion number 6. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

AUDIT AMENDMENT ACT, 2002 LOI DE 2002 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA VÉRIFICATION DES COMPTES PUBLICS

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): We will now deal with ballot item number 52.

Mr Gerretsen has moved second reading of Bill 5. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Pursuant to standing order 96, this bill will be referred to the committee of the whole House.

Mr Gerretsen: Mr Speaker, I request that the bill be referred to the standing committee on public accounts.

The Acting Speaker: Mr Gerretsen has asked that this bill be sent to the public accounts committee. Is it agreed? Agreed.

All matters relating to private members' public business now being complete, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock.

The House recessed from 1203 to 1330.

WEARING OF PINS

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: In recognition of Community Living Day in Ontario, and in recognition of all those who have joined us today in the Legislature, I would ask that unanimous consent be given to wear the Living Life, Living Proof pin.

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

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

WORKERS' MEMORIAL DAY

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): Today in my city there was a significant community event. The Mine-Mill CAW union held its annual workers' memorial day service. This day is in recognition of the anniversary of the June 20, 1984, mine tragedy at Falconbridge. It's a day we spend remembering workers.

At 10:12 am there is a moment of silence. We not only remember Soolow Korpela, Richard Chenier, Daniel

Lavallee and Wayne St Michel, who died, we also reflect upon the good things in life we have, to plan for a better tomorrow and to remember our families and friends, those of us who have families and friends who have passed away tragically in the workplace.

We value life at this celebration and we remember the health and safety member commitment, which says, "Asking me to overlook a simple safety violation would be asking me to compromise my entire attitude toward the value of your life."

This is a significant community event. I was with them in spirit. This is the first one I have missed. We all know occupational health and safety is of utmost importance.

VOLUNTEERS IN SAULT STE MARIE

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): I stand today to put before the House the wonderful contribution two citizens of my community have made over a number of years. These two people have recently retired and will be missed.

Carmen Borghese and Charlotte Mandolesi are exemplary in their commitment and contribution to their work and to the volunteer sector of Sault Ste Marie. Carmen was the executive director of the United Way, and Charlotte was the executive director of the volunteer bureau connected with the United Way. The very nature of their work should speak to all of us in terms of the commitment, time and energy both these people put into making our community better. Carmen, supported by his wonderful wife, Donna, and Charlotte by her husband, Richard, gave of their time without thought to themselves and contributed in ways that go above and beyond, both of them driven primarily by their faith, by their connection to their church and their belief in a higher purpose to the work we all do.

Today I stand to say to Carmen, Charlotte, Donna and Richard, all the best in your retirement, that you might have good health and fortune. You will be remembered.

Hon John R. Baird (Associate Minister of Francophone Affairs): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'd like to ask for unanimous consent if we could wear, in the House, community living buttons supporting community living.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): We already did that. It's totally acceptable.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): Today I am particularly delighted to say hello to my friends in the gallery from the Ontario Association for Community Living. I also want to express the Ernie Eves government's support for people with developmental disabilities.

This was reflected most recently in Monday's budget, which follows through on the government's five-year, \$197-million plan and commitment to enhance services for people with intellectual disabilities. I'm very proud

that the Ernie Eves government is investing in the success of organizations like the Ontario Association for Community Living.

I am delighted to play a small role in promoting the very admirable goal of ensuring that every person in this province lives with dignity. This is a goal that the Ontario Association for Community Living has embraced and done much to bring about. I congratulate all the volunteers across our province for their inspired work and dedication.

The Ontario Association for Community Living has helped our communities for over 50 years. From their modest beginning, they have grown to more than 12,000 members in 100 local associations across Ontario. Their staff and volunteers have touched the lives of many people in each of our ridings. They deserve the praise of MPPs on all sides of the House.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's): Three cheers for the Toronto public school board, whose trustees unanimously rejected the \$90 million of cuts foisted upon Toronto schools by the Harris-Eves government's broken funding formula and chronic underfunding. I stand four-square behind those courageous trustees and the thousands of families that have supported the Toronto school trustees' defiance of mediocrity.

A resounding boo to the Harris-Eves government for its preposterous funding formula and education policy that has forced the Toronto board into this unprecedented political statement.

To make matters worse, I learned last night at a Humewood school council meeting that Humewood will lose its vice-principal because enrolment at the school on one day last year fell one student short of the 450 students needed to qualify for a vice-principal, notwithstanding that the current enrolment is well above that mark. So the need for a vice-principal is there, but because of inflexible Tory formulae, the need is not met.

I'm told by families in this community that this kind of bizarre and ludicrous inflexibility in government criteria will likely mean the loss of important programs, like the lunchtime milk program, and less attention to disciplinary issues and disruptive behaviour typically handled by a vice-principal.

This led one constituent to write me, asking, "Can't we aim a little higher than the mediocrity that we are headed for? I have the highest standards and expectations for my children."

Well, so you do, say I, and so you should. So should your government, but it does not. So should the people hold this government to account, and so shall we for what they've done to Ontario classrooms and Ontario's working families.

SIBBALD POINT PROVINCIAL PARK

Mrs Julia Munro (York North): I rise today to speak about one of Georgina's popular summer attractions,

Sibbald Point Provincial Park. Last year the park attracted 333,000 people. The park has more than 900 campsites; one of the longest public beaches on Lake Simcoe; picnic areas; boat launch facilities and rentals; hiking trails; docks for mooring, fishing and swimming; a store and restaurant; and the unique Eildon Hall museum. The most recent attraction is the Maidenhair Fern Trail, which opened last year.

The park is also headquarters for the Ministry of Natural Resources Lake Simcoe fisheries unit that studies the lake's fish population.

The park is going to promote more spring and fall use for those who have bigger trailer units. They are also planning to extend the season past Thanksgiving to mid-November. This move would likely attract more retirees who travel around Canada and the United States in the bigger trailer units.

Sibbald Park also hosts many special events. This weekend, the annual fundraising law enforcement ride for the prevention of child abuse will take place on Saturday, June 22. About 200 police officers will take part in the motorcycle ride. Other events include Canada Day celebrations on July 1, a family fishing weekend on July 6-7 and the historical ghost walk at Eildon Hall on July 17.

This provincial park is part of our government's Living Legacy program, where we have added more parkland than any government in this province. This legacy is something that will live on for future generations to enjoy and appreciate the natural beauty of our province.

1340

OCCUPATIONAL DISEASES

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): Last fall I rose in the Legislature to question then Labour Minister Chris Stockwell about the alarming number of cases of silicosis that were occurring in the Hemlo gold mines in my riding. While I much appreciated the minister's response to me and his visit to Marathon to meet with affected workers, I feel compelled to rise once again to call for more serious action by this government related to this disturbing and serious problem.

The fact is we have a clear disagreement between the ministry, represented by the WSIB, and the affected workers, represented by their doctors, as to whether silicosis is the correct diagnosis. As a result, workers are left in a frightening state of limbo, with no real guarantee that they will receive needed and appropriate benefits. Clearly, simple humanity requires that this be resolved. Regardless of the diagnosis, these are people who have clearly contacted an occupational disease as a result of their work in the mines.

In an attempt to resolve this issue, I am calling on Labour Minister Clark today to convene a public inquiry into the situation at Hemlo. We need to get to the truth as to what is happening there, something that I hope the

minister would agree is necessary. It seems to me that an inquiry may be the only way to find that truth, but regardless, these workers should not be left in the lurch. Therefore, I'm also calling on Minister Clark to enact legislation such as recently has been done in Manitoba for firefighters that recognizes the prevalence of specific occupational diseases to which miners may fall prey. Surely, the least we can do is to provide these hard-working people with appropriate benefits if they become ill without asking them to fight the system in order to get that help.

ASSOCIATIONS FOR COMMUNITY LIVING

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): I rise in the House today to introduce my colleagues to the representatives from the Central Seven Association for Community Living who are in attendance. They are participating in Community Living Day here at Queen's Park.

By way of background, the association began in 1967, when a group of parents and friends got together to operate a school on Scugog Island for children with developmental disabilities. Today, some 30-plus years later, Central Seven staff, board and volunteers offer supportive independent living programs, group homes, family programs, day programs, job development and respite services.

Unfortunately, time does not permit me to mention each guest; however, I would like to commend the president of the board, Pam Domingos, and the board executive, including director Glenn Taylor, the staff and volunteers.

I'd also like to pay tribute to the Oshawa/Clarington Association for Community Living. Next year, the association celebrates its 50th year. Like Central Seven, it was started by parents who knew their sons and daughters would live in the community with supports. Their parents and friends worked to make a dream reality. I commend William Carson, president of the board of directors, the board members, executive director Steve Finlay, staff, parents and volunteers responsible for the success of this association. For almost 50 years, Community Living in Oshawa-Clarington has worked to support individuals as they live, learn, work and participate fully in our community.

I trust that, in addition to raising awareness, today is also a time to recognize the progress that has been made to ensure Ontario is a place where everyone belongs. We must rededicate ourselves to continuing the advancement of this worthy cause. I thank the staff, the parents and the individuals involved here for making life better for those with developmental disabilities.

WORKPLACE FATALITIES

Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming-Cochrane): Pat Dillon, business manager of the Provincial Building and Construction Trades Council of Ontario, and I are out-

raged that Halton region is considering a bid by North America Construction Ltd to upgrade the Kelso pumping station in Milton. The company was recently convicted of negligence in the death of two construction workers by the Ontario Court for operating unsafe construction equipment.

On May 27, 2002, North America Construction Ltd of Campbellville, Ontario, was found guilty of using defective or hazardous equipment contrary to the regulation for construction projects and section 25 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

Court documents from the trial indicate that the crane being used by North America Construction at the mid-Halton waste water project in June 2000 was "in a defective or hazardous condition."

The \$220,000 fine given to this company last month in the death of Darren Leon and Jose Alves amounted to a slap on the wrist for one of Canada's largest municipal water treatment and sewage plant contractors. The contract for this project alone was worth an estimated \$21 million.

Minister, are we going to allow these companies to get away with murder? Corporate directors of these companies should be forced to take direct responsibility for these workplace deaths. They should not be allowed to plea bargain for reduced sentences and insignificant fines. Fines must be harsh to force companies to comply with the existing health and safety regulations. Fines like the one handed down to North American Construction aren't a deterrent; they simply represent the cost of doing business.

Halton region should look into these deaths and consider whether they award these future contracts.

FEDERAL HEALTH SPENDING

Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls): First, I'd like to extend my congratulations to my son, Spencer, and his classmates, who are graduating tonight from Miss Cara and Miss Jen's Little Peoples Nursery School. I'm sorry I can't be there.

The federal Liberal finance minister, John Manley, delivered an economic statement yesterday reiterating a federal surplus of \$6 billion for last year. Not surprisingly, there was an indication that the surplus this year will be higher, but no indication on how the money will be spent. Unfortunately, one thing we can always count on is the federal Liberal government's consistent disregard for Ontario's health care system.

I'd like to reiterate some facts. In 1993, the Mulroney federal Tory government contributed 18 cents toward every dollar spent on health care in Ontario. The federal Liberals decreased that funding to 11 cents out of every dollar. Only recently have the Liberals started to increase their share. It's now at about 14 cents out of every dollar. Let's remember that health care was once funded 50-50 between the federal government and the provinces.

Despite being shortchanged by the federal Liberal government, Ontario's finance minister, Janet Ecker, in

this year's budget announced an increased investment in health care of \$1.7 billion, for a grand total of \$25.5 billion, the highest in provincial history. Hospital funding is again being increased, as are long-term-care funding and funding for nurse practitioners.

Congratulations, Janet Ecker. Shame on John Manley.

VISITORS

Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough): On a point of order, Mr Speaker, I'd like to introduce the family of page Mackenzie Green: mom Gina Green, dad Tim Green, sister Madison Green, and grandpa Carl Pettifer. Welcome.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): While we are introducing our honoured guests, we have with us today in the Speaker's gallery Mr Jesse Flis, a former member of Parliament for the riding of Parkdale-High Park. Mr Flis is here today with a group from Community Living. Please join me in welcoming our colleague.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): I beg leave to present a report on the operations division, Ministry of the Environment, from the standing committee on public accounts and move the adoption of its recommendations.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

Mr Gerretsen: First of all, I'd like to thank the staff, the researchers, the Clerk's department for being involved in the writing of the report, as well as the auditor's office.

There are eight recommendations in the report. If I could refer to two of them, it states that "The Ministry of the Environment should conduct an assessment at the earliest possible time of the integrated divisional system" in order to determine the system's ability to determine whether or not certificates of approval need to be updated with conditions and requirements.

Another recommendation states that "The Ministry of the Environment should assess its risk, review, and inspection coverage for the period 2001-03" so that corrective action to improve inspection coverage to reduce the range of its environmental risk can be taken.

I should point out one other aspect as well, and that is simply the following statement that's contained in the report, that "the members were in unanimous agreement that the ministry has been less than forthright in responding to certain requests for supplementary information."

With that, I move adjournment of the debate.

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

COMMUNITY LIVING DAY

Hon John R. Baird (Associate Minister of Franco-phone Affairs): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I believe there's unanimous consent for all parties to speak for up to five minutes to help celebrate Community Living Day.

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

Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): It gives me great pleasure to rise today to recognize Community Living Day in the Legislature. I'd particularly like to recognize the representatives from Community Living Tillsonburg for being here to help us celebrate the day and taking time from their most important activities to not only show us what they do and tell us what they do, but to show us the support they need to keep doing it.

1350

This is a day to celebrate the unique abilities of people with developmental disabilities in this province. It's a day to recognize the efforts and commitments of families, volunteers and professionals, all of whom make a difference in the lives of adults and children with developmental disabilities.

I've had the privilege to meet many individuals with these disabilities and their families, and I'm amazed by the challenges they face and conquer on a daily basis. That's why I take very seriously our government's commitment to provide people with developmental disabilities and their families the support they need to live lives of dignity and inclusion.

Our government has recently made the single largest investment in developmental services in our province's history. In May 2001, we introduced a multi-year plan that promised to put an additional \$197 million into the sector by 2006-07 and another \$67 million in capital over five years to create new spaces for these people to live in the community. From this multi-year plan, our government has already spent \$55 million to help people receive the supports they need and an additional \$5 million to create more homes in their communities. We are continuing to build on last year's investment by providing an additional \$48.6 million to further strengthen the system of supports and \$15.4 million to continue to create living accommodations that will help people live independently.

With the increased funding, we are committing over \$1 billion per year in programs and services that support children and adults with developmental disabilities to reach their full potential. Our goal is to help people become as independent as possible, living at home in their own communities and participating as much as possible in the day-to-day life of the community. This is your government's goal, because it's what the people with developmental disabilities and their families have told us they want. We also continue to work with those involved in developmental services to find the best ways to achieve that goal.

Guided by what we've heard from people with developmental disabilities and the people who provide

them with care and support, much of the increased spending in developmental services is being used for services in the community. This includes creating new living spaces in the community as well as expanding community-based services such as daycare programs, special services at home and out-of-home respite care.

Today we recognize that people with developmental disabilities provide significant contributions to their communities, and that they and their families need a wide range of services and supports to do this. Your government has taken many steps to ensure the needed supports continue to be there.

The financial investment this government has made in developmental services is a remarkable demonstration of its commitment to supporting vulnerable people in this province. This government has also demonstrated its sensitivity to the stigma that language can pose for people with disabilities. That is why last year the government proclaimed legislation that changed the wording in more than 30 acts government-wide to remove language that is outdated and offensive to people with these disabilities, their families and the support workers.

Legislation ensuring the health, safety and personal well-being of people has been preserved in the Developmental Services Act, which was proclaimed in 1974. This government is committed to ensuring that people with developmental disabilities are treated with dignity and respect and are able to participate as full members of society.

Community Living Day is the ideal time for us to help raise awareness of how we all benefit when people with developmental disabilities are fully included in the day-to-day life of our communities. I want to again say thank you to all who are here for Community Living Day and to assure them that our government will continue to work with them to further the cause of community living across the province of Ontario. Thank you for all the hard work you do on behalf of citizens in the province and for making life better for all our citizens.

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): It is a great honour for me to rise today on behalf of my leader, Dalton McGuinty, and all the members of the Ontario Liberal caucus to speak to this unanimous consent motion as we proudly recognize June 20 as Community Living Day in Ontario.

We welcome our guests from Community Living Ontario as well as the many representatives from across the province who have dedicated themselves to the belief that independence, inclusion and dignity for all our citizens are rights worth fighting for. I applaud you for your constant commitment to battle for equal treatment for people with intellectual disabilities.

As a member of the Legislature with a brother who lives independently, thanks to the services provided by the Lakehead Association for Community Living, I feel a particular kinship with the front-line staff who work with my brother Mark and all the sons and daughters and brothers and sisters that member agencies all across the province have in their care.

These are very special people. They do indeed provide care and support to people like my brother, but they do so much more. They truly live the mantra of community living by understanding the special needs and aspirations of all those in their care. They encourage and support their development, help them through crises, and they do it with humour, dedication and grace. On behalf of all of us in the Legislature, I take my hat off to them and deeply thank them.

Having said that, I call upon the minister and the government today to recognize that these front-line workers continue to be undervalued by this government. If you truly value the work, then you must value the workers. Unless the government is prepared to properly compensate these dedicated individuals and to bring them into the consultation process, we will sadly continue to see many of them forced to leave the community living sector they love so much.

I would be remiss if I did not also pay special tribute today to the self-advocate councils all across the province. These proud and brave people know what their needs are and they proudly fight for the rights of all those with intellectual and physical disabilities who, quite simply, are justified in demanding full inclusion in our society.

While there are countless individuals across the province who deserve special recognition for their tireless efforts, I trust you'll understand if I pay particular tribute to two people in Thunder Bay who represent the best in self-advocacy: Jenny Pak, who heads up the self-advocates' council in Thunder Bay, and Donald Casgrain, a hard-working member of the board of the Lakehead Association for Community Living. We thank them for their dedication to the cause of community living.

However, while today we celebrate the achievements of many people and acknowledge, as one, the importance of inclusion, independence and dignity under the umbrella of community living, we must also acknowledge that there is much left that we must do if we intend to put real meaning behind our words.

Last week in the Legislature we all had an opportunity to support a cost-of-living adjustment for those living on the Ontario disability support program. The fact is that people with disabilities are facing increasing hardships because of rapidly escalating costs of food, shelter, clothing and utilities, and with no real increase in their benefits since 1987. It is difficult to understand how a cost-of-living adjustment to their benefits could not be justified and strongly supported by this government, yet last week, when the opportunity presented itself, government members rejected this simple request. Quite frankly, I say to the member who spoke, your words today seem quite hollow in light of your continued resistance to this most basic need for support.

There are many other needs that must be met in the developmental services sector. With a waiting list across the province of almost 9,000 people needing services and support, a situation that will only worsen over the next 20

years as the baby boom generation of parents reaches an age when many more families must access community support, we strongly demand that the government acknowledge this by committing to increased investment in this sector. This means funding must be equally allocated to new services, as well as revitalization. It means funding must be distributed so as to ensure equity across the province. It means our workers must not continue to be compensated at a level 25% lower than those employed directly by the government. It means a clear and sensitive policy related to individualized services and funding to those who desire it.

In order to put meaning behind our words today, we must also move more quickly to take the final steps to close all remaining institutions in this province. Once again, it's difficult to tout our belief in the value of community living when we still have over 1,100 people residing in the three remaining institutions in this province. This government must accelerate its plan to close all schedule 1 institutions. As long as they remain open, inclusion, independence and dignity are simply being denied to those people forced to live in these institutions.

There is little doubt that the challenges in the developmental service sector are many and the obstacles are great. For my part, I would like to envision a day when government support to this sector is not defined by political need, but by the actual needs of those in our communities. In the spirit of all that we honour here today, and as part of this celebration of the true meaning of community living, I call on the minister and this government to genuinely commit to working toward that end. The fact is that nothing less than a full commitment to the goal of equal access for all those seeking independence, dignity and full inclusion in our society will do.

1400

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): I am very proud to stand here today to speak in honour of the important contribution community living associations, their staff and volunteers make to our society and the lives of a very special group of Ontario citizens.

When you look back at the treatment of people with developmental disabilities 55 years ago, you can't help but shudder. Almost all were institutionalized, and the idea of their education and potential was not even considered. Most were forced to live very lonely lives shut away from the world.

This all began to change in 1947 in Kirkland Lake, where a teacher pulled together families of six developmentally disabled children, believing that life could offer these children more and that these children could offer the world more. From there, groups began to form across this province. And thanks to these very dedicated people fighting for the rights of the disabled, we have seen great improvements.

People have a right to live a fully integrated life within their community regardless of whether or not they have a disability. People with disabilities have the same right as any of us in this Legislature to live, go to school, work,

enjoy recreation and leisure, and be active in their retirement.

I would like to read a quote from the vision statement for the Community Living Association. Their vision is an Ontario where "all persons live in a state of dignity, share in all elements of living in the community, and have the opportunity to participate effectively." They envision a society where everyone belongs, has equality, respect and acceptance. They believe all people should have access to adequate income and quality health care. This is a vision that makes me proud. It is a vision that made me enter politics. It is exactly these principles that I and the rest of my NDP colleagues come to work every day to fight for.

We have come a long way since 1947 with regard to our treatment of the developmentally disabled. The day of warehouse-style institutions is a thing of the past. Thanks to community living associations and their work, more developmentally disabled people are able to live independently. But the struggle for a fully integrated life is far from over. And the need for more government supports continues to be essential.

There is a crisis in this province when it comes to support for adult children with developmental disabilities. We're facing a serious issue as parents are aging and looking at a future where they will no longer be around to help care for their wonderful children. These parents are facing great fear through what should be their time of rest and retirement not knowing what will happen to their children. We are also facing a serious issue as children reach the age of 21 and are no longer able to attend high school.

Parents are facing horrific decisions because of the lack of government support. Without proper day programs or individualized funding for caregivers, parents are being forced to quit their jobs to take care of their adult children. I've received calls from mothers who have been forced to quit their jobs and go on social assistance because they cannot get the support they need to assist them with the care of their adult children. These are dedicated parents who truly understand their child's right to a full and inclusive life and have spent every day fighting for that. Their children bring such joy to their lives, but they are also tired, and it is our responsibility as government to make sure they have the support they need.

People with developmental disabilities have so much to offer the world. With our support they can rise to full participation in their communities. They can live on their own, they can work, they can teach and they can help make our communities more vibrant places.

We've come a long way since 1947, but we still have a long way to go. And I really hope that everyone in this House today does more than offer nice words. I hope that every one of us offers a real commitment to improving the services that are desperately needed to complement the great work already being done by parents, volunteers, workers and community living associations across this province.

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Is it appropriate that earlier today the member

for St Paul's, who is an elected official and a member of this duly elected assembly, a lawyer and an officer of the court, should have been advocating, indeed encouraging any individual or group to break the statutes of this province—

The Speaker: Order. It's not a point of order. As you know, the Speaker has no control over that area.

ORAL QUESTIONS

INCOME TAX

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): To the Minister of Finance: in the next few days the Legislature will be passing the budget bill, I gather. A major part of that is an amendment to the Taxpayer Protection Act to delay the planned cuts in personal income tax that were due January 1, 2003, to January 1, 2004. On behalf of the taxpayers, I'd like to get some estimate of what the impact of that will be. The calculation we've done is from page 96 of the budget, which indicates that for the taxation year 2003 the total increase in taxes that would be paid to the province would range between \$930 million and \$1 billion as a result of this move. Is that the correct calculation, Minister?

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Finance): I'm sorry I didn't hear the last part of your question, which you could maybe clarify in the supplementary. But what we have done in this budget, as we've said clearly, is take a look at the difficult choices we faced here in Ontario because of the significant economic downturn because of the events of September 11. We took a couple of steps to make sure that at the end of this fiscal year and next year in the forecast we would be able to continue to have balanced budgets, that we would continue to have new investments for health care, education and a safe and clean environment, that we would continue to take steps for future growth and prosperity; for example, the tax cut for small business, which will be continuing as it should. Some of the tax cuts we have delayed for one year, which just helps in the total picture to meet the priorities we felt were the most important for the people of Ontario.

Mr Phillips: Actually, that didn't come close to an answer to the question. The question is quite straightforward and I'm sure you have the calculation. The people of Ontario had been promised a cut in personal income tax. In fact it was in the legislation, the Taxpayer Protection Act. You've decided to delay that for a year so that in the year 2003 the personal income tax will be quite different.

The calculation you've done in the budget shows that for the first three months of the taxation year you will increase your revenue by about \$230 million. That's for the first three months. For the entire year, therefore, the calculation will be somewhere around \$930 million, up to \$1 billion. That is how much more in personal income taxes people in Ontario will pay once you pass this

legislation. Before the legislation it's this; then it's \$1 billion higher. Is that the correct calculation, Minister?

Hon Mrs Ecker: I'm sure the honourable member can calculate things in many different ways. I'd be quite happy to have our staff sit down and go over the numbers again with him, if he'd like. But what I think is important for us to all restate, because it is indeed very true, is that Ontario taxpayers benefit from an \$11-billion tax relief program every year. They continue to benefit from that. They will continue to benefit from future tax decreases, as we promised. Small business taxes are down in this particular budget. Some 50,000 more individuals will be coming off the tax rolls at the modest income level, because we think it's the right thing to do. The mining tax rate is down. The diesel fuel tax exemption is in this budget. So we are continuing with our tax cut agenda, as we know we should, because the record is very clear: it works.

Mr Phillips: Again, I think the Minister of Finance should provide the people of Ontario with a clear answer. We are being asked essentially to throw out the Taxpayer Protection Act. The calculation we've done—if it's incorrect, you give us the right one—says people in Ontario will pay about \$1 billion more in personal income tax in the tax year 2003 if this goes through. Now, it was you who passed the legislation, has given the tax break, and now you want to cancel it. I simply want to know on behalf of the taxpayers of Ontario, Minister of Finance, is it roughly \$1 billion dollars of increased revenue to the province of Ontario as a result of deciding that you are not going to proceed with the tax cut that you promised in the Taxpayer Protection Act?

1410

Hon Mrs Ecker: Well, the honourable member can try to fudge the issue as much as he wants. There is no cancellation of taxes. There is no throwing out, as he says, of the Taxpayer Protection Act; quite the contrary. We are continuing with a tax cut agenda because it is the right thing to do, because it has helped us increase jobs and growth in this province. This budget actually indeed has further tax decreases, and future budgets will have even more tax relief. Right now, Ontarians will continue to benefit from \$11 billion in tax relief that this government supported, and you voted against every single one of those tax cuts. When it came to the crunch, did you care about low-income families, did you care about those people who were working so hard to succeed? No. They voted against every tax cut, and I suspect they're going to continue to vote against every future tax cut that this government continues to bring forward.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale-High Park): I have a question for the Minister of Education. I want to ask you about the way that the budget just passed is failing urban schools and urban students. What I want to ask you about, Minister, is—for example, in Toronto over 1,000 parents attended a meeting of that school board, where

they decided they were obliged to pass a budget that reflected the real needs of those urban students. Thousands more parents have written to you from places like Waterloo, Ottawa, London and Windsor, and they're basically telling you of the needs that have to be met.

In the gallery today is a parent, Andrea Reynolds. She's with Dundas school. At that school, they've got a parenting program, and it brings in the parents, most of whom are from other countries, ahead of time, for their children to do better, for the parents to learn English. Then at noon they are feeding them.

They're saying to you that academic excellence can only exist in the public school system if it's responsive to social needs. Do you agree with that, Minister? Will you change your mind and will you follow our plan and help urban students?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): The member opposite again is confusing fact with fiction. I understand there were not the number of people present last night that he claims there were. I have it on a very reliable source that it was considerably less. I understand that many of the people in the audience were indeed employees of the school board. So I think it's important that we set the record straight. I think it's also very important to remember that our government has moved forward in a way that we want to make sure that all students in this province, whether they live in cities or towns or villages, or north or east or rural, have the same equal opportunity for services. That's why we introduced the funding formula, and that's why we have announced an additional \$557 million since our Premier took over.

Mr Kennedy: Minister, I feel bad that you didn't feel fit to address either the parent who is here, and everyone else, who's going to lose a parenting program that has been important for her kids; they're both here today. They benefited from that. Other children in that school badly need this program. It will be cut, Minister, unless you respond.

You also chose not to respond to the quote about social needs being responded to. Minister, you said that in December 1986. You said that, talking about the needs of your local school board.

We are obviously a long time from the 1980s. There are boards, like yours then, struggling to meet the needs of their students. Either there's monumental arrogance on your part today, and you are saying you can think on behalf of all those school boards, or you will respond to the needs of people with special requirements, the urban requirements that these programs at Dundas school represent, you'll help address some of the cost differentials and you'll help remove some of the anxiety that is there for parents?

At one time you were in favour of it—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Minister.

Hon Mrs Witmer: Our government introduced the student-focused funding model exactly because we were concerned about the social needs of students in this province. We wanted to make sure that all students had

equality of opportunity to receive the same support. Today, we are paying \$1.37 billion.

We also have heard the concerns, and that's why we've set up the Rozanski report, in order that we can make sure the students in this province who do have special needs and need the additional help are receiving the adequate support they need.

Mr Kennedy: I'm glad to be able to give you another chance because it's obvious you lost badly at the cabinet table. You got less money for schools this year than your predecessor got from her predecessor last year.

When you were a school board chair, Minister, and you were facing the same issues that the Toronto, Ottawa and Waterloo boards are—Waterloo cutting 23 special-education assistants—what did you do? You increased taxes. In 1986 you increased them 6.6%, in 1987 7.6%, in 1989 9.3%. But you stand here today and you won't respond.

I want to ask you again, will you take another look at our plan? It will make a down payment on the needs of urban students, on the students at Dundas school, Stephen and Edward, who are here today, and the rest of those students who will have their services and their education cut unless you become responsible, unless you become an advocate on behalf of education. Will you do that today, Minister?

Hon Mrs Witmer: The member opposite is a joke. Do you know what he's pointed out today? He's pointed out very clearly that when the Liberals were in power there were a lot of funding problems.

COAL-FIRED GENERATING PLANTS

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): My question is for the Deputy Premier. Deputy Premier, you've got a bit of a problem here. Tomorrow, the Minister of the Environment will be addressing the smog summit involving all three levels of government, but his outrageous comments yesterday undermined any credibility the government might have hoped to have on this issue. The minister said that OPG coal plants are practically insignificant as a source of smog.

As a former Minister of the Environment, you know that those plants produce about 20% of the smog in Ontario, smog that costs 1,900 lives and \$1 billion a year. I want to ask you, do you agree with the Minister of the Environment that these plants are insignificant?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Environment): Mr Speaker, I'll refer that to the Minister of the Environment.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): In our airshed there are two coal-fired plants operated by the province of Ontario. There are 200 operated in the United States.

The 200 that are operating in the United States—it's not even a question of closing them down. They're continuing to build coal-fired plants. The fact is, I'm not suggesting that the two coal-fired plants in the province of Ontario aren't important; of course they are. But the

reality is that we need a concerted effort, much like the Great Lakes cleanup, in order to negotiate with the federal government of the United States to stop building and stop operating the coal-fired plants, because two against 200, which was the comparison I made, seems slightly insignificant when you're talking about that number of coal-fired plants in the United States.

Ms Churley: You seem to be using that as an excuse to not take care of the people of Ontario, which is your job, to deal with the coal plants in Ontario.

Minister, you should listen here because the NDP's accountable public power plan is a viable plan that would replace coal with natural gas and renewable power. Even your Tory-dominated select committee on alternative fuels says we should phase out coal by 2015. Nanticoke, to take one example, is the biggest polluter in all of Canada and that is within your jurisdiction. But you will not say you'll take action and, outrageously, you continue to allow OPG to crank up power exports on smog days. You're making asthma worse so that Americans can run their air conditioners. Minister, will you at least tell OPG to stop exports on smog days?

1420

Hon Mr Stockwell: First of all, when you and the band of socialists had the levers of power between 1990 and 1995, you didn't close one coal-fired plant. You continued to operate the coal-fired plants.

I put to the member from Vaughan that they also didn't close the coal-fired plants when they were operating the government. I put to the member opposite that if we closed the coal-fired plants, people would be without electricity; it's that simple. Obviously no one in this House would support blackouts for people in this province—they would have no electricity. That would be the result of closing the coal-fired plants.

Having said that, what's the solution? We have to increase the capacity, increase the adequacy levels, increase the supply of power in Ontario. This government is doing that. Bruce A is going to come on. We've got one going forward in Sarnia and another one in southwestern Ontario. We've got Pickering coming on stream. The best way to get rid of coal-fired plants is to try alternatives. We're letting green power on the grid. The only government that lets wind power or solar power on the grid is this government: a prudent, planned, natural approach to dealing with the coal-fired plants and pollution. We've done something about it—

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

Ms Churley: Minister, you have not done anything about it; indeed you've made it worse. And with the privatization of Hydro, it will continue to get worse. For heaven's sake, even a NAFTA agency on the environment is now saying that electricity privatization is a recipe for more pollution and smog. That's what's happened in the US.

Your government got rid of the energy efficiency and conservation programs the NDP brought in. Smog has gotten worse under your government. If you sell the coal

plants, they will be run full blast to serve the US market and they'll never be shut down. The exports we make now will look small compared to what will happen then, and our air will continue to get dirtier and dirtier.

Minister, will you stop the privatization of our coal plants so our children's asthma does not continue to get worse? If you don't, it's on your head.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Well, the privatization she talks about—the deregulation of the generating side—what has it produced? It's produced TransAlta in Sarnia, 440 megawatts of power; ATCO Power, 580 megawatts; OPG Pickering, 2,000 megawatts; Toronto Renewable Energy Co-operative, WindShare turbine project; OPG/British Energy, Huron Wind project.

What are you talking about? You didn't provide one—not one—green source of power when you were in government. You studied it, you talked, you did nothing. The government that is good to the greens in this province is this government. We've given them an opportunity to put their power on the grid, we've given them an opportunity to make some money in the system and we've given the people of this province a choice. They can choose coal-fired plants, that we're working hard to get rid of, or they can choose green power, and this government supports green power not just with words but with action.

ONTARIO RENTAL HOUSING TRIBUNAL

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): My question is to the Deputy Premier. Today the Advocacy Centre for Tenants, a legal clinic specializing in tenants' issues, issued a report documenting how the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal has become a literal eviction machine. They want the Ombudsman of this province to investigate, because they say the tribunal fails the most basic standards of justice—not only the tribunal, but the act itself.

Madam Deputy Premier, tenants are being thrown out on the street because your tribunal and the law that gives them the authority do not allow them to have a fair hearing. Will you commit to reforming the tribunal to make it fairer to tenants, and will you do so by July 15 this year?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): I'll refer that to the associate minister.

Hon Tina R. Molinari (Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I'd like to thank the member opposite for my first opposition question.

It needs to be made clear that since the creation of the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal in 1998, our government has dramatically improved the service to tenants and landlords. Under the creation of the Tenant Protection Act four years ago, landlords and tenants have had better service to hear their cases quicker and in a more timely manner. With the previous system, it would take up to nine weeks for a hearing to be heard. With the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal hearings, they are being heard within 23 days. The timelines of having a hearing

are important to ensure that both landlords and tenants are being treated fairly under the Tenant Protection Act.

Mr Prue: Minister, the tribunal's own statistics say that 58% of all applications for eviction are decided without the tribunal having heard from the tenant. Some 118,000 people weren't even heard from. These are default orders. They arise because the tenants, number one, don't get the notices; two, don't understand the notices; and three, can't action within five days. Also they have no faith in the system. Evictions are events that can ruin people's lives. What are you going to do to fix the unfair process so that the tenants actually get the information and can show up to the hearings?

Hon Mrs Molinari: I want to clarify some of the facts, or lack of facts, that were presented here today. Out of 118,000 notices, 89,000 got remediation, and that needs to be made clear. In many cases the ORHT uses mediation to resolve disputes prior to an actual hearing before an adjudicator. The role of the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal adjudicator is to listen to both sides in the tenant and landlord dispute and to come up with resolutions to the matter. It is the responsibility of both the landlord and the tenant to make every effort to be prepared to present at the hearings.

We have increased the service. Our toll-free lines and Web site address landlords' questions and concerns. The toll-free line is 1-888-332-3234. I would encourage the member opposite to access it.

COAL-FIRED GENERATING PLANTS

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have a question for the Deputy Premier. Today many parts of Ontario are in the midst of yet another smog advisory, and I think we can anticipate, with the arrival of hot and humid weather conditions—

Members pounding on desks.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. Take your seat; you'll get your time back.

Don't start that or he'll throw you out. Don't start that. Member for St Catharines.

Mr Bradley: Today many parts of Ontario are in the midst of another smog advisory. I think we can anticipate that, with the hot and humid weather coming, we will get worse situations as the summer progresses. Coal-fired generating plants in Ontario, such as Canada's number one polluter, the Nanticoke plant near Hamilton, make an enormous contribution to smog. Your government has direct control over these sources, these five coal-fired plants in Ontario.

There are two things I think the government can do to make an immense difference to air quality in Ontario. One is to commit today to the conversion of all coal-fired generating stations to natural gas, and the second is to direct Ontario Power Generation to stop its non-emergency coal-fired electricity exports to the USA during smog alerts in Ontario. One is longer term; the second can be done immediately.

Minister, will you take these two specific actions that are completely under the control of the government of Ontario?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): I'll refer it to the Minister of Environment and Energy.

Interjection.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): I appreciate the compliment from the member for Windsor.

Interjection: Windsor West.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Windsor West. Sorry. I don't want to confuse the two.

Interjection.

Hon Mr Stockwell: No, I didn't get it from you; that's for sure.

I want to say to the member opposite, as I said to my friend from Beaches, I believe—

Interjection: Toronto-Danforth.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Toronto-Danforth. We need to go about finding a supply. When you were in government, when they were in government, there were coal-fired plants. The reason the coal-fired plants weren't shut down was because if we shut them down, we would actually put people in a blackout situation in this province. None of us want that. Obviously we can't put people in blackout situations. There are medical reasons, a whole pile of good reasons. So what we have to do is find supply. We've got to put more supply in the system. If we have an oversupply situation, then we can deal with phasing the coal-fired plants out. Until that happens, you can't really deal with coal-fired plants.

Interjection.

1430

Hon Mr Stockwell: That's why it takes a while. The member for Vaughan-King-Aurora is right. But we've got Sarnia up and running with TransAlta, ATCO Power in Windsor, OPG in Pickering, Toronto renewable resources, British Energy. Those are the situations—we've got to get these things on grid, so we can then make a decision based on coal-fired plants.

Mr Bradley: To the Deputy Premier again, you can see from the answer given by the Minister of Energy and Environment that there's a conflict of interest in his two positions. As Minister of Energy, he has an obligation, as he states justifiably in the House, to provide as much power to the people of Ontario as cheaply as possible. As Minister of the Environment, his obligation is to ensure that we have clean, breathable air in Ontario. In my view, the minister does not have an objective opportunity to reduce air pollutants in Ontario—because one is a conflicting interest against the other—despite the fact that the Ontario Medical Association says there are 1,900 premature deaths per year, \$1 billion in health costs and \$10 billion in overall costs from smog in Ontario.

So I ask the Deputy Premier, does she not believe that having the Minister of Energy and the Minister of the Environment be the same person is an inherent conflict of interest and that that should be ended right away?

Hon Mr Stockwell: Inherently, what's the best thing any Minister of the Environment could do? The best thing they could do is this: they could find alternative sources for power. I'm doing that. I'm looking for alternative sources for power. We're the only government that let green power on the grid. My friends on the left didn't do it. My friends on the left—and sometimes right, sometimes middle, sometimes left—they didn't do it either. So the fact remains that the only government that has gone out and attracted renewable, clean, green power is the good Conservatives of the province, not the bad socialists or the bad Liberals. We're the ones who went out and did that.

Furthermore, you're making the suggestion about 20% of responsibility. Pollution Probe and the Ontario Ministry of Environment and Energy have been reporting—

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West): You should use your blue box.

Hon Mr Stockwell: That was a good one—93% of the smog emissions in the province come from sources other than Ontario; 7% come from Ontario.

We've got to get the federal Liberals on side. We've got to start negotiating with the Americans. They've got to shut down those 200 coal-fired plants out there that are polluting our province.

NORTHERN ONTARIO HERITAGE FUND

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): My question today is for the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. I understand that during debate last night in the House, the member for Nickel Belt was assailing our government's handling of the heritage fund. In fact, I understand that over the past week the leader of the third party has also been directing very serious allegations in the same regard.

Having read the excellent news release your office issued yesterday, I can't understand where the member is coming from. I know that the heritage fund remains a vital force for economic development and job creation in northern Ontario. For the benefit of those members who are still confused, can you please clarify what happens to the heritage fund monies that are not disbursed in a given year?

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Northern Development and Mines): I thank my colleague for the question. I want to be very clear, particularly for the member for Nickel Belt, who seems very confused about this issue: actual northern Ontario heritage fund disbursements to northern projects are not the same as the annual provincial contribution of some \$60 million to the fund. Given the large number of projects funded, especially major capital initiatives, there is naturally a time lag between the approval and the completion of projects. Project funding flows once the client has submitted expenditure statements and the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines has verified the eligibility of the claims. This is called due diligence. Ensuring this level of due diligence and accountability for taxpayers' dollars is

precisely why the Provincial Auditor has consistently given the northern Ontario heritage fund his endorsement.

Unspent money in the fund will not be reallocated, as was the case in 1995, when the NDP government took \$60 million from the fund and put it into general government revenues. It was our government, in 1996, that replaced that \$60 million plus \$5 million in interest for the time the NDP had stolen the money out of the fund.

Mr Dunlop: Minister, thank you very much for that clarification. I do hope the two members opposite fully understand the seriousness of their allegations.

You very briefly mentioned the budget. Again, I'm very pleased as a member of this caucus that this is our fourth balanced budget in a row. We're very, very proud of that. Could you expand upon what budget initiatives will benefit rural and northern Ontario?

Hon Mr Wilson: Thank you very much, colleague. The budget was a good news budget for northern Ontario. There are a lot of significant and unique items in the budget specifically for the north and rural parts of the province: an additional \$10 million in annual operating funds to northern and rural colleges; support for northern universities, with an additional \$6 million in annual operating funding. It was announced that consultations would begin regarding the introduction of tax-free opportunity bonds; also, consultations on tax incentive zones to allow smaller and more remote communities like the north to enjoy the advantages of economic growth experienced in larger urban centres.

The budget also reaffirmed the commitment of free tuition for doctors who will practise in under-serviced areas, doubling the number of nurse practitioners, establishing a new medical school in Thunder Bay and Sudbury, the continual reduction of the mining tax, a reduction of the capital tax and a continuation of our record \$1.3 billion on money—

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

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain): My question is for the Attorney General. Today is the second anniversary of the slaying of Gillian Hadley. Gillian is one of the over 40 Ontario women who are murdered each year by a husband or partner. A jury of Ontario citizens deliberated for two weeks on evidence they heard over 42 days and, on February 8, presented this government with 58 recommendations which will help save lives.

Four years ago, the jury from the May-Iles inquest presented similar recommendations. Vulnerable women in Ontario remain unable to gain this government's attention. Six months ago in Hamilton, Tamara Helen MacInnis, 31, a mother of three children, was bludgeoned to death in her home by her husband. In the Premier's own riding, on May 6, Shirley Grace Snow of Orange-

ville was beaten, run down and killed by her husband in a parking lot.

Minister, unfortunately these tragedies are not isolated incidences. We know there is much more we can do to avoid future deaths. When can the people of Ontario expect your government to respond to the Hadley recommendations? When will you act on the jury's first recommendation to create a community-based committee to implement the—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Attorney General.

Hon David Young (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): I said yesterday and I wish to say again today, if I may, that this government will not tolerate violence against women or children anywhere in this province. We must do everything we can as a society, and certainly as a government, to help women and children who find themselves in those situations to break free. It's not always easy. I'm sure the member opposite will accept that.

The recent incidents that have occurred, and frankly the incidents that have occurred over the last number of decades, have only served to strengthen our resolve to do more. But we've already started to act. When the member opposite talks about the May-Iles inquest and the excellent recommendations that came forward from that jury, I say that they were appreciated by this government. That's why we have implemented in excess of 90% of them, including the appointment of 56 new crowns, including the expansion of the domestic violence court projects across this province. Indeed, we very much welcome the work of the Hadley jury and have already started to implement those recommendations as well.

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): To the same minister, on July 5, 2000, Steven Murray tried to kill his wife, Kathy, in front of her two children, hitting her with a baseball bat. He was to be detained another full year but has now been released after two months and will be living on his own in Sarnia. He only has to check into the hospital and abstain from alcohol. The hospital says that, yes, he's still a significant threat. Kathy is still receiving treatment for her injuries and is now living in fear because her estranged husband has been released early and permitted to live in the same community. Minister, why does the system continue to fail women like Kathy Murray?

Hon Mr Young: The member opposite knows that I can't comment on a particular case. Certainly, the facts she has presented to the Legislative Assembly are very compelling. To the victims in that situation, to the families, our hearts, our minds, our thoughts go out. I'm prevented by law from commenting on any given case. I can tell you, though, that as a government, the Mike Harris government and the Ernie Eves government, we have advocated and asked—

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): You made the laws.

1440

Hon Mr Young: With respect to the member, we did not make these laws. With respect, they are federal laws

and they relate to this count and they relate to automatic release from jail in many instances.

It may or may not relate to this particular case, but by and large when you talk about early release you are talking about a matter exclusively within the federal Liberal domain, and you folks on the other side, particularly the Liberal members in this House, are very much able to pick up the phone or to write a letter and to join us and say to the federal Liberal government that enough is enough. If someone gets a sentence of a year, they should stay in jail for a year, not be let out after six months or three months because of overcrowding.

This is an opportunity for the Liberals to actually act—

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

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): My question is for the Minister of Education. First of all, I want to thank you for your great announcement of over half a billion dollars, totalling \$557 million, of increases in funding to the provincial education budget since becoming the Minister of Education. Clearly, Minister, this shows your tremendous commitment to the priorities of this government, which we know is to ensure excellence in education. Can you please let the parents and educators in my riding of Scarborough Centre know what strategies you have initiated to ensure that our students reach their full potential?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): We have made significant announcements in education in recent weeks as the member has indicated. They total approximately \$557 million.

I think it's very important that we again confirm our commitment to the need for new textbooks. The first announcement that was made was \$65 million for new textbooks and also for technology-based learning materials. I think what was particularly significant about that announcement, and I've certainly received very positive feedback from those individuals working with special-needs students, was that that money was targeted particularly for their needs, and it enabled us to buy early math and reading materials.

There was also another \$25 million that was going to the early reading strategy, and we introduced the early math strategy.

Of course, all the boards together received more flexible funding, and we're now contributing \$14.2 billion to education in the province.

Ms Mushinski: It's obvious that the Ontario government, under the leadership of Premier Eves, is leading the way in developing and implementing new strategies that will assist in the academic development of all of Ontario's children. But I wonder, Minister, if you can tell this House how this new money that will be spent in education will directly help the many hard-working teachers in our schools, and how the Ministry of Education will

ensure that these new programs will remain accountable to the parents of my community and of this great province.

Hon Mrs Witmer: In the budget, there was \$10 million set aside to support our teachers and principals. This was for professional learning resources. We value, we appreciate and we respect the hard work that's undertaken by the teachers and principals. This money will go to technical guides; it will go to CD-ROM materials to help with the teaching of mathematics. There will be additional training for teachers, including new instruction techniques for effective teaching, and there's going to be a training program provided for teachers to help them with effectively analyzing the EQAO results and report cards.

When it comes to accountability for parents, parents have told us this is important. There will be additional resources, a parents' handbook to help them help their children learn and also target setting for math and reading.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): New question.

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): My question is to the Minister of Education. Minister, you restructured education governance in a way that it could not work, and we told you so. You have taken the power away from boards to meet local educational needs.

Last night, the Toronto Board of Education, supported by, give or take, 1,000 parents, decided to meet local needs in defiance of your cutbacks.

Minister, will you admit that your restructuring is a total failure?

Hon Mrs Witmer: We have restructured educational funding because we wanted to make sure that all children in this province had equal opportunity. We also wanted to make sure that the money that was going to education was actually being spent on the children in the classroom.

I see how hard trustees throughout this province are working to make sure that the money they are receiving is now going to the students in the classroom. We have given the Toronto board a significant amount of money in transition funding, some \$900 million to help them.

Mr Marchese: Toronto trustee Shelley Laskin says there is no split on the board when it comes to protecting programs and services to students. That includes Conservative, Liberal and NDP trustees.

In Ottawa-Carleton, a recent poll shows that 77% of people want the province to make up the budget shortfall for the 2002-03 school year. According to the same poll, more than half of Ottawa residents want to sue the government for failing to provide adequate resources.

I'm telling you, Minister, that trustees across the province are risking going to jail in order to provide programs their students need. When they do that, what will you do?

Hon Mrs Witmer: I would remind the member opposite that he and I, and others in this House, have a responsibility to uphold the law. I hope he is not encouraging others to break the law, because it's a poor example that you would be setting for our students and for others.

PRIVATE CLINICS

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West): My question is for the Minister of Health. Minister, we know that by now you're prepared to say just about anything, depending on whom you're talking to.

First of all, you denied there were any waiting lists at all in diagnostic testing in Ontario. Then we see a budget which, in the health section, puts an emphasis on diagnostic tests to take care of waiting lists that the week before you said didn't exist.

We said that simply opening private labs won't solve the problem because it will siphon off radiologists, of which we are short 150 in Ontario, from hospitals to work in these so-called private clinics. But yesterday morning, speaking to reporters, Minister, you said, "Do you know what? We actually have some radiologists who are underutilized right now in the system because there's no place for them to spend their hours."

Minister, you and I both know that's not true. There is a shortage of some 150 radiologists in Ontario. Will you reverse yourself today and acknowledge that we have a shortage in this province?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I am not refuting anything that I said yesterday or the day before. We've been quite consistent on this, that it is a goal of this government that we have been pursuing since the throne speech, that we want greater accessibility to diagnostic services. We heard from the people of Ontario after our consultation through the health care questionnaire of last year that accessibility was one of the four areas where the people of this province wished to see some immediate improvement.

This was a theme of our throne speech, this was a theme of the budget and this is something that the people of Ontario care very much about. Yes, we do believe that by tapping the resources of the private sector in a publicly funded, universally accessible service, we can in fact attract and retain more radiologists to be part of our health care system in the province of Ontario, so I don't see any contradiction in that at all.

Mrs Pupatello: Minister, depending on what day it is, is dependent on what kind of an answer you give. First, there's no waiting list; then you want to introduce private labs because there's a waiting list. Yesterday there was no shortage, but today you think you might need radiologists.

Let me give you a list of some communities that are actively seeking radiologists. They include Toronto, Stratford, St Thomas, Pembroke, Peterborough, Ottawa, Sault Ste Marie, Timmins, Windsor and Chatham-Kent. These communities are looking desperately for this, but you, on the other hand, don't choose to introduce anything that actually solves the problem in diagnostic testing. This is the same government that removed \$200 million from the OHIP schedule for radiologists to actually bill for services, and today you're talking about how you underutilize radiologists in some centres.

Minister, your credibility is on the line: waiting lists, no waiting lists; not enough radiologists, now we have enough. I think it's time for you to be clear. We want solutions from this government to improve wait times for diagnostic testing. What will you introduce that will actually solve the problem?

1450

Hon Mr Clement: We have committed in the throne speech and the budget to increase the OHIP-funded portion of hospital diagnostics by 90%. We've also said that we are moving ahead with allowing, for the first time in Ontario, for MRI and CT scans the same kind of clinics that we have for X-rays, the same kind of clinics that we have for other diagnostics, the same kind of clinics that we have for laboratories—that were introduced, allowed into our system by one Elinor Caplan, Minister of Health in a Liberal government. Now we've got 1,000 of them in the system. I'm saying we should have a few more. Now you're opposed to it. At one time, when you were government, you introduced the legislation. Now you're opposed to it. Yesterday your leader said that he's in favour of private sector participation; now you're opposed to it. If there's anyone who has to come clean to the people of Ontario, it's you on the other side of the House.

VETERANS

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): I would like to take a minute first to recognize the mayor of Oshawa, who is in the visitors' gallery, Ms Nancy Diamond. Welcome to a great leader in the region of Durham.

My question is to the minister responsible for citizenship and seniors. I was reviewing the history of Canada Day and noticed that July 1, 2002, marks the 20th anniversary since Dominion Day became Canada Day. I also noticed that the first recognized Dominion Day event included an important dedication to the valour of Canadians fighting in the First World War in Europe. What work is the Ontario government doing to ensure that veterans continue to be honoured for their important contribution to Canadian and Ontario history?

Hon Carl DeFaria (Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors): I thank my colleague for the question. No single group has sacrificed more than our veterans. It is through their sacrifices that we all enjoy our freedom today. It is with sadness that I say we all notice on Remembrance Day the dwindling numbers of these brave souls to whom we owe so much.

Veterans are our living memory. That is why our government has invested \$1 million toward the Memory Project. The goal of this project is to ensure that veterans' contributions are recognized and remembered. Veterans will go into classrooms around the province to share their first-hand accounts of our history. We believe that it is vitally important to pass on an understanding of our heritage to the next generation.

Mr O'Toole: Thank you very much for that very courteous response.

Durham organizations such as the Royal Canadian Legion, serving Clarington and Oshawa and Port Perry, make every effort to ensure that we won't forget the sacrifices that many Ontarians made many years ago. I thank them publicly today for the sacrifice they have made. May we never forget them.

Veterans in my riding are proud to share first-hand experiences with their young people, and it draws to mind Fred Brown, Norm Baker, Jack Meachin, Rae Abernethy and Harvey Jones. They regularly visit schools in my riding. I've been there with them and I'll stand beside them. Fred West, who is now deceased, was over 100 years old and served in the First World War. In Scugog some of the veterans who visit schools include Doug Franks, Bob Healey, Geoff Taylor, Jim Smitherman and the late Vic Sparrow. However, they are concerned that the younger generations be aware of our history and heritage, as important as it is.

Minister, the Memory Project is a worthy endeavour and I commend you for your soldiering on to bring this project—

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

Hon Mr DeFaria: I want to congratulate the member for recognizing some veterans from his riding. I want to tell the member that I and many of our colleagues share those concerns. For many young people today, their only real-life connection is Remembrance Day. It is important that our young people are able to hear through first-hand accounts the history of Dieppe and the battle of Hill 355, to name just a couple.

At present, almost 400 veterans have been recruited to participate in the Memory Project. By the end of next year, another 1,000 veterans will have provided a living history lesson to more than 50,000 students across Ontario. The Memory Project is designed to fit with the revised Ontario curriculum for grade 10 Canadian history. We encourage all schools and veterans to get involved directly, or on-line at www.thememory-project.com.

I want to thank veterans for their incredible contribution to and participation in the Memory Project. They will ensure our youth will never forget.

COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain): My question is for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. In Monday's budget you all but ignored the community colleges of this province. Of the money you gave for the double cohort, less than 7% went to community colleges. The rest went to the universities. While we acknowledge the need at the university level, the colleges are feeling like second-class citizens this week. They've come out with a choice: instead of taking 33,000 students in 2003 as expected, they will either take 10,000 fewer students or cut programs.

Minister, will you, first, admit that you've made a mistake and, second, commit to more funding for colleges across this province?

Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, minister responsible for women's issues): The most important message in the budget was that there will be a place for every qualified and motivated student in both our universities and our colleges. I was hoping I could find the numbers here—the amount of money that went into the college system was not just the \$5 million. There was also \$10 million for an apprenticeship fund; \$10 million to support the colleges that are having a more difficult time in the northern part of our province and of course in rural Ontario; and there was another \$5 million, which was part of the apprenticeship training fund, that actually grows to \$25 million in just three years.

It is an effort to bring the colleges up to where they think they should be. I will say this is a very good budget for the colleges. We have worked together. I'm not a bit surprised to hear questions from the opposition, but don't mislead students. There will be a place for every qualified and motivated—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order, Minister, I'm afraid you can't say "mislead."

Hon Mrs Cunningham: I apologize, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: I know you did it inadvertently.

Mrs Bountrogianni: Be that as it may, it wasn't I who misled anyone. The head of the association of colleges has said 10,000 fewer students will be admitted in 2003, or programs will be cut at a time of a skilled worker shortage.

I ask you again, Minister: why are you treating community colleges as second-class citizens? They educate 40% of our post-secondary students. We have a skilled worker crisis now. You can't wait three years. We need to start training skilled workers now. Will you commit to giving additional monies to community colleges to address the double cohort and to begin to solve the amazing crisis we are having in the skilled worker shortage?

Hon Mrs Cunningham: The operating grants to colleges will total \$788.4 million in 2002-03, an increase of \$42.5 million, the best we've been able to do, over 2001-02 levels. That is a 5.7% increase, and compares to a projected 3.2% increase with the new students added on for enrolment in 2002-03.

The challenge we have as a government and as elected representatives is to make sure this next generation of young people is as enthusiastic about going to our colleges and universities and into our apprenticeship training systems as they can ever be. If the leaders in this province, people who actually know what's happening and know we have 25 new buildings for colleges, 25 for universities, nine for universities and colleges to share, and now we have the operating dollars and research and student assistance—

The Speaker: And the member for Perth-Middlesex.

1500

LABOUR DISPUTE

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): My question is for the Minister of Labour, the hard-working Brad Clark from Stoney Creek. Minister, an attempt by a company named Navistar, which operates a heavy truck assembly plant in Chatham, a part of the province not unlike Perth-Middlesex, to use replacement workers during a strike has led to an incident of picket line violence. Why do employers use replacement workers during strikes?

Hon Brad Clark (Minister of Labour): I thank the honourable member for the question. First, I'd like to state that our government recognizes that harmonious labour relations are key to a successful economy. To have harmonious labour relations means there has to be a balance in labour relations. In a strike or lockout situation, for example, there must be a balance to encourage both parties to negotiate and end a labour dispute.

To create that balance, the Labour Relations Act provides that a union has the right to remove the services of its members but, conversely, an employer has the right to carry on his or her business. It's the responsibility of parties affected by a work stoppage to respect each others' rights and obey the law.

It's important to note that 95% of all collective agreements in Ontario were settled without strike or lockout during the year 2001.

Mr Johnson: Minister, I respect the need for balance in labour disputes. In many such disputes, both sides have exhausted civil remedies and are therefore somewhat desperate. Are you personally involved in helping to diffuse this situation, and, if so, how?

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): What are you doing about it?

Hon Mr Clark: To the member for Hamilton East also, yes, I am personally involved. While it is the responsibility of the parties to resolve their differences at the bargaining table, ministry mediators are available to assist at the parties' request. The mediators are always available to assist the parties in resolving labour disputes.

I have personally spoken this morning with Buzz Hargrove, the leader of the CAW, about resolving the situation. I've also placed a call to Navistar's head office and I'm scheduled to speak with a Navistar official this evening from Chicago. We are encouraging both the company and the union to get back to the bargaining table and bargain under a media blackout to resolve this situation quickly.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): New question.

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): Deputy Premier, it seems the Chatham-Kent police force understands something your Minister of Labour doesn't. For two days now, the Chatham-Kent police force has been turning back busloads of scabs from the Navistar International plant. The police in Chatham-Kent know that scabs prolong labour disputes, that scabs steal union workers' jobs, and thirdly, that scabs create confrontation

and a volatility that's dangerous to all involved. Why aren't you going to understand the scenario as the Chatham-Kent police do and restore anti-scab legislation in this province?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): I'm going to refer that to the Minister of Labour.

Hon Mr Clark: To the honourable member for Niagara Centre, I can understand how he wouldn't understand a balanced approach to labour. They never understood a balanced approach to labour in that party.

It's important to recognize the fact that we on this side of the House recognize that in labour relations, in order to make it harmonious, both sides have to have a balanced approach. On this particular point, the union has the right to withdraw the services, and under the Labour Relations Act the company also has the right to continue working and operating. The member doesn't understand this. He's never recognized as yet in this House that the reality is that 95% of the collective agreements in the province of Ontario have been settled without strike or lockout, and this is since these amendments to the Labour Relations Act were put in place. So his hue and cry about labour relations falling apart in Ontario doesn't hold water. We're doing our job. We are involved.

Mr Kormos: You see, it's the minister and his Conservative government that rolled out the red carpet for scabs in this province, that sanctioned scabs and, quite frankly, by virtue of doing that, sanction the confrontations that result from companies like Navistar International busing scabs into workplaces, or trying to, were it not for the intervention of Chatham-Kent police, who have been turning back busloads of scabs. Scabs prolong labour disputes; scabs make labour disputes more hostile, more volatile. The Chatham-Kent Police understand this.

Minister, why won't you take a role of leadership in ensuring that labour disputes are resolved more quickly, that they're resolved with less acrimony? Why won't you restore anti-scab legislation here in the province of Ontario?

Hon Mr Clark: I'm stunned by the member's question. He's accusing me of not taking leadership here. I spoke with Buzz Hargrove this morning. I called him personally to talk about the situation. I also spoke to Navistar this morning, and I have another telephone call tonight with them.

We're encouraging both parties to get back to the table to do collective bargaining. What is it? You have something against collective bargaining? You don't want me encouraging these two parties to sit down and communicate? Give me a break. You can't have it both ways. You're either on the side of collective bargaining or you're not. We're encouraging both parties to sit down and talk. I don't know what your problem is, but we want these people back to work.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): Pursuant to

standing order 55, I have news of next week for the House.

On Monday afternoon we will debate government notice of motion number 30. On Monday evening we will continue debate on Bill 109, the budget bill.

On Tuesday afternoon we will debate Bill 109. Tuesday evening's business is yet to be determined.

On Wednesday afternoon we will debate Bill 109. On Wednesday evening we will call Bill 80, Bill 86 and Bill 81.

On Thursday morning, during private members' public business, we will discuss ballot item 53 standing in the name of Mr Duncan, and ballot item 54 standing in the name of Mr Bradley. On Thursday afternoon we will debate a motion for interim supply, and on Thursday evening we will call Bills 58, 109 and 80. We will also deal with private bills, and it is likely we will deal with other business that, my friends, as House leader to the other party, we have yet to settle.

PETITIONS

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): This petition concerns the double cohort and quality, and it's from the College Student Alliance: Partners in Learning. It's to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario from the Cambrian College students' administrative council.

"Whereas by eliminating the fifth year of high school the government of Ontario has created a double cohort of students; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario has promised that there will be a space at a university or college for every willing and qualified student; and

"Whereas Ontario's universities and colleges have not received sufficient funding from the government of Ontario to accommodate these double cohort students; and

"Whereas the quality of education at Ontario's universities and colleges has been declining in recent years; and

"Whereas the double cohort students will add an additional strain on an already fragile university and college system;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to: provide full funding for every new student entering Ontario's universities and colleges; provide additional funding to increase quality at Ontario's universities and colleges; provide targeted funding to colleges for skills and innovation; and increase the per student funding to the national average over the next five years."

Of course I affix my signature to this petition and give it to Holly to bring to the table.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): I have a petition that reads as follows:

“To the provincial Legislature of Ontario:

“Whereas the education funding formula will force the Toronto District School Board to cut \$123.5 million in programs and services which students and their families need;

“We, the undersigned, petition the provincial Legislature of Ontario to join the Toronto District School Board in requesting that the government of Ontario begin an immediate review of the funding formula; maintain current funding levels of 2001-02 until the review is completed; put our children first by providing the level of funding for the public school system that our children need and deserve.

“We call upon the government of Ontario to work in co-operation with school boards across Ontario so that everyone charged with delivering education can ensure that students will succeed in school.”

It’s signed by more than 300 people and I affix my signature hereto.

FOREST MANAGEMENT

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke): I have a petition to present on behalf of several of my constituents which reads in part:

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

“To halt the Ontario government’s proposed 20-year forest management plan to be implemented on crown land in Renfrew county by the Ministry of Natural Resources; and

“To request the Ministry of the Environment” for Ontario “to reconsider the decision to manage our forests in this manner and to allow natural growth to provide an unspoiled inheritance for future generations.”

1510

SCHOOL SAFETY

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): My petition, signed by hundreds of people in my riding, reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario

“Whereas guaranteeing the safety and security of our children is universally recognized as absolutely essential by all people in the province of Ontario; and

“Whereas the ability of Ontario’s schools to provide adequate levels of safety and security for Ontario’s children has been called into question by recent incidents in which children have been attacked by individuals who have gained illegal entry to schools; and

“Whereas parents and school officials want to make physical changes to make our schools safer; and

“Whereas parents and school officials are concerned about the loss of educational assistants, custodians,

lunchroom supervisors, librarians, physical education teachers, computer lab instructors, music instructors, vice-principals and other supports staff, who are the eyes and ears of our schools; and

“Whereas the lack of money for staffing and capital repairs is a direct result of the disastrous education funding formula adopted by the Conservative government;

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

“(1) That the government of Ontario immediately institute a school safety fund that will provide schools with adequate funding to make necessary renovations that are required for school safety.

“(2) That the new education minister immediately amend the Conservative education funding formula to allow for adequate education funding that will provide funds for adequate staffing, building repairs and quality education.”

I totally agree with this petition and will affix my signature to it.

DOCTOR SHORTAGE

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the residents of Centre Hastings are facing an immediate and critical situation in accessing physician services; and

“Whereas a retiring family physician has been unsuccessful in procuring a replacement physician, potentially leaving 5,000 patients without a doctor; and

“Whereas accessibility to already overcrowded hospital emergency departments and walk-in clinics is limited because of distance and availability to transportation; and

“Whereas Centre Hastings has been designated as an underserved area in need of five physicians;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to act immediately to establish a community health centre in Centre Hastings.”

I will very happily affix my signature to this petition, because I am in full agreement with it.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): I have a petition which reads:

“Parents in support of the TDSB Need to Succeed budget.

“In 1998 the provincial government took over control of funding for public education. Since that time there have been many calls for the government to review the funding formula used to determine the amount of money received by each school board.

“The Toronto District School Board has chosen to create a budget based on the needs of students, not on the

funding formula. This budget has been called the Need to Succeed budget.

“As parents, teachers and community members involved in education in Toronto we support the process of funding education based on need rather than on formula.

“We call on: the provincial government to accept the Toronto District School Board’s Need to Succeed budget when it is presented, and to amend the funding formula as necessary to provide adequate needs-based funding to all boards in Ontario; the Toronto District School Board to accept and pass the Need to Succeed budget and send it to the provincial government.”

AUDIOLOGY SERVICES

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it’s entitled:

“Listen: Our Hearing is Important!

“Whereas services delisted by the Eves-Harris government now exceed \$100 million in total; and

“Whereas Ontarians depend on audiologists for the provision of qualified hearing assessments and hearing aid prescriptions; and

“Whereas the Harris-Eves government policy will virtually eliminate access to publicly funded audiology assessments across vast regions of Ontario; and

“Whereas this new Harris-Eves government policy is virtually impossible to implement in underserved areas across Ontario; and

“Whereas this policy will lengthen waiting lists for patients and therefore have a detrimental effect on the health of these Ontarians;

“Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature to demand that the Harris-Eves government move immediately to permanently fund audiologists directly for the provision of audiology services.”

I, of course, agree with this petition. I affix my signature and give it to Samantha to bring to the table.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas many high school students in Ontario outraged at the harshness of the new curriculum choose to leave school on May 15, 2002;

“Inadequate funding made difficult the implementation of the new curriculum;

“High school students should not be used as forced labour in addition to the extra hours required for the new curriculum;

“There is inadequate funding for the double cohort year. Universities and colleges will have trouble providing room for all those students;

“Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

“We demand that a committee with government, teachers, trustees, parents and high school students establish a funding model to correct the shortcomings in the system;

“Further be it resolved that a committee with government, teachers, trustees, parents and high school students make recommendations to help those students who have had to change their career paths due to the harshness of the new system;

“Further be it resolved that students are no longer to do compulsory volunteer work;

“Further be it resolved that adequate funding be given for the double cohort year.”

Hundreds of students have signed that. I have affixed my signature as well. Page Andrew from Kenora-Rainy River will be delivering this to the Clerk’s table.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): This petition concerns the double cohort and quality in education. It was garnered by the College Student Alliance, Partners in Learning.

It’s to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It’s from the Canadore Students Representative Council.

“Whereas by eliminating the fifth year of high school, the government of Ontario has created a double cohort of students; and

“Whereas the government of Ontario has promised that there will be a space at a university or college for every willing and qualified student; and

“Whereas Ontario’s universities and colleges have not received sufficient funding from the government of Ontario to accommodate these double cohort students; and

“Whereas the quality of education at Ontario’s universities and colleges has been declining in recent years; and

“Whereas the double cohort students will add an additional strain on an already fragile university and college system;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to: provide full funding for every new student entering Ontario’s universities and colleges; provide additional funding to increase quality at Ontario’s universities and colleges; provide targeted funding to colleges for skills and innovation; and increase the per student funding to the national average over the next five years.”

I affix my signature to this petition and give it to Jordan and ask him to bring it to the table.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): The petitions on school funding are coming in thick and fast. I have yet another one here. It’s a lengthy one, so I’m going to summarize it.

It’s a petition from citizens of Ontario, calling on the provincial government to revise the funding formula for

public education. It says that the provincial government's funding formula for public schools is inadequate to meet the needs of Ontario's schools and that the formula does not work for small schools, urban schools and rural schools.

It goes on to focus on full funding for kindergarten education assistants. Education assistants are integral to the kindergarten program because it is widely recognized that education and nurturing between the ages of zero and six is key to children's overall success in school and life, and education assistants in JK and SK classes provide support to children that allows the kindergarten teachers to use their teaching expertise to the full.

The importance of small student-to-adult ratios is embedded in the provincial Day Nurseries Act through the legislated 8.1 ratio for children of kindergarten age.

There are obvious safety concerns if kindergarten teachers do not have help in their classroom, in the gym and in the playground. Yet the provincial funding formula only covers \$1 million of more than \$22 million the Toronto District School Board currently spends on education assistants.

"Therefore, as part of needs-based funding and in accordance with the provincial government's stated commitment to quality education for children in their early years, we demand that the provincial government provide full funding for at least one education assistant in every kindergarten classroom."

I will affix my signature because I agree with this petition.

1520

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Ernie Eves 2002 budget proves he'll say anything to hold on to power and is trying to run away from his own record;

"Whereas Ernie Eves's budget fails to deliver what Ontario families need, like a moratorium on school closures and a real cap on class sizes in the early years;

"Whereas the private school tax voucher should be cancelled, not delayed, and that money put into public classrooms;

"Whereas the \$2.2 billion corporate tax giveaway should be cancelled, not delayed;

"Whereas Ontario families are looking for real, positive change and only Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberal Party represent that change;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to tell Ernie Eves to put Ontario working families first, cancel the corporate tax cut and cancel the private school tax voucher."

Of course, I affix my signature to this petition as I'm in agreement. I give it to Stephanie and ask her to bring it to the table.

OPTOMETRISTS

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): I have a petition to the Ontario Legislature.

"Whereas the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario will be considering a private member's bill that aims to amend the Optometry Act to give optometrists the authority to prescribe therapeutic pharmaceutical agents for the treatment of certain eye diseases; and

"Whereas optometrists are highly trained and equipped with the knowledge and specialized instrumentation needed to effectively diagnose and treat certain eye problems; and

"Whereas extending the authority to prescribe TPAs to optometrists will help relieve the demands on ophthalmologists and physicians who currently have the exclusive domain for prescribing TPAs to optometry patients; and

"Whereas the bill introduced by New Democrat Peter Kormos (MPP—Niagara Centre) will ensure that patients receive prompt, timely, one-stop care where appropriate;

"Therefore I do support the bill proposing an amendment to the Optometry Act to give optometrists the authority to prescribe therapeutic pharmaceutical agents for the treatment of certain eye diseases and I urge the government of Ontario to ensure speedy passage of the bill."

I've affixed my signature as well.

AUDIOLOGY SERVICES

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Listen: Our Hearing is Important!

"Whereas services delisted by the Harris-Eves government now exceed \$100 million in total; and

"Whereas Ontarians depend on audiologists for the provision of qualified hearing assessments and hearing aid prescriptions; and

"Whereas the new Harris and Eves government policy will virtually eliminate access to publicly funded audiology assessments across vast regions of Ontario; and

"Whereas this new Harris-Eves government policy is virtually impossible to implement in underserved areas across Ontario; and

"Whereas this policy will lengthen waiting lists for patients and therefore have a detrimental effect on the health of these Ontarians;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature to demand the Harris-Eves government move immediately to permanently fund audiologists directly for the provision of audiology services."

I affix my signature to this petition and give it to Andrei to bring to the table.

The Acting Speaker: The time for petitions has ended.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Pursuant to standing order 37(a) the member for Trinity-Spadina has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of Education concerning the loss of music teachers. This matter will be debated today at 6 pm.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

ATTRIBUTION DE TEMPS

The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): The Chair recognizes the Minister of Energy, the Minister of the Environment, the government House leader.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): Thank you for reminding everyone. Government notice of motion 29.

I move that, pursuant to standing order 46 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 81, An Act to provide standards with respect to the management of materials containing nutrients used on lands, to provide for the making of regulations with respect to farm animals and lands to which nutrients are applied, and to make related amendments to other Acts, when Bill 81 is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the third reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That the vote on third reading may, pursuant to standing order 28(h), be deferred until the next sessional day during the routine proceeding “deferred votes”; and

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

I've agreed to split my time today with the Minister of Agriculture and the member for Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant. I'm going to kick off the debate here, because I think this is the kind of bill that needs ministers speaking to it who are affected by it. Obviously, the Ministry of the Environment is affected by it. Maybe more so, the Minister and the Ministry of Agriculture have a lot to do with this bill as well. I'm not going to take a lot of time. We've got 45 or 46 minutes per caucus. I know there are a lot of things the Minister of Agriculture and the member want to get on the record.

I just want to say I think this is the kind of bill that should be supported by all sides of the House. I can't believe there is anyone in this House who will fundamentally disagree with the process we are putting in place with this bill. It's protection, it's water protection and it's nutrient management. The agricultural community, having built a good relationship with this government and given an undertaking to help us draft regs and move forward on the regulations, has worked hard to

make the bill work. I think the affected parties and groups have done a good job of analyzing the bill and giving their input to the government. In a timely way, this government listened and came up with what I think is a very good piece of legislation that will satisfy the needs and concerns of constituents as well as deal with those people who work in the agriculture community.

I want to tip my hat to the Minister of Agriculture and as well to the previous Minister of Agriculture, Mr Coburn, who did a lot of work on that.

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): And Mr Hardeman, the one before him.

Hon Mr Stockwell: And to Mr Hardeman. I tip my hat to him as well.

Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton): As long as you don't eat your hat.

Hon Mr Stockwell: That's right. We don't want to talk about hats too much this week. But I will tip my hat to him as well.

I just want to go on the record as the Minister of the Environment to tell the people of this province that this piece of legislation will be another building block in the protection of their drinking water, their environment and the good way of life we've developed in Ontario. I think it's important that this piece of legislation stop being dragged out.

I know they're going to talk about a time allocation motion today, and it's somewhat frustrating for me to deal with a time allocation motion on a bill such as this. I don't think there's a fundamental difference of opinion on this bill. It's a shame it's been tied up for the length of time it has. Maybe you could have talked about amendments—they'd be accepted or not accepted—but I think everyone believes on balance that the bill, if passed, is going to make for a better place to live than if we didn't pass this bill.

But we have to do a time allocation motion. This seems to be the nature of the beast we have in this place. Every bill, regardless of how innocuous or supported by all three parties, somehow needs to be debated for three days and a time allocation motion passed by the government in order to get it through the House, which is difficult and frustrating.

Some of us would like to debate other bills for a greater length of time. I think of Bill 58: we would have had great opportunity to have two or three weeks' debate on Bill 58 if we didn't have to debate bills we agree with. I don't think the spirit of this House is meant to work that way, but that seems to be the way we're moving. I am frustrated, but hopefully, with the good leadership of all three parties and the bright, thoughtful House leaders for the two opposition parties, maybe we can get together to figure out a process whereby we can actually bring some more meaningful debate to this place on bills we have a difference of opinion on and move bills we agree with through faster so that time is available for us to use.

I thank you for your time. I look forward to members on this side of the House speaking to the bill and, of course, hearing from members opposite. Everyone's

voice needs to be heard, and I'll be interested in hearing their concerns.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Peters: The only comment I will make on time allocation is, "Here we go again." Introducing time allocation bills seems to be a precedent this government likes to put forward. I do want to take this opportunity to speak to Bill 81 and some of the issues that have come out of it but, more importantly, the items that have not been included in this legislation.

I don't think there is anyone in this House who doesn't agree on the need for a comprehensive, province-wide piece of legislation and accompanying regulations that would enforce nutrient management in this province. But the problem with the piece of legislation we have in front of us is that it's an empty shell. It's an enabling piece of legislation and, as we know, the devil is in the details of the regulations.

What I'd like to do over the next few minutes is just point out some of the areas where I believe this bill doesn't go far enough and I feel that it's going to have some serious ramifications for the agricultural community.

1530

I just want to put on the record from the Simcoe County Federation of Agriculture that they wrote to Minister Johns on May 28 expressing a number of concerns. They understood the need for comprehensive, province-wide legislation and regulations, but they also had a number of issues that they felt needed to be addressed. So there is even concern within the agricultural community out there.

The Simcoe County Federation of Agriculture writes, "This legislation and regulations have the potential to destroy the agriculture industry and that is why our list of recipients is so extensive." They are concerned too that the long-term view will show that Bill 81 has the potential to destroy livestock agriculture in its present form and that the requirements of Bill 81, due to the cost of compliance, will force some farmers out of business.

So there is concern out there in the agricultural community, but I think there is concern as well from municipalities and from rural residents. One only needs to pick up the paper and look at the issues, be it in the Dunnville area or in the minister's own backyard in Huron county or in the former minister's own backyard outside of Ottawa. There are a lot of concerns out there. This legislation does need to be put in place, but it needs to have some teeth to it, and there are a lot of areas where those teeth do not exist.

It has been a long process. It's interesting: here we are on June 20. This legislation was introduced in this House one year and seven days ago. It's been a long time in coming. There have been a lot of delays. This bill has probably had more committee time than many other bills. I think it was a good thing that the parliamentary assistant to the minister led a province-wide discussion on the bill. We visited nine municipalities, and it was a very good opportunity to get input from municipalities,

from residents and, most importantly, from the agricultural community. So there has been extensive consultation on this bill and we do need to get on with it, but unfortunately, what we're getting on with isn't necessarily the right thing.

I want to point out a few areas of concern and some amendments that we put forward, and I will come to those.

This is not being used as a prop, Mr Speaker. This is part two of the Report of the Walkerton Inquiry, and I want to talk about some of the issues that Justice O'Connor raised in his report.

"Agriculture represents one of the most intimate relationships that exists between humans and the rest of the natural world, and it is impossible to expect that it can be carried out without creating changes in the environment. But agriculture is also a source of contaminants that sometimes appear in drinking water, and those must be controlled."

We do need to control them, and that's certainly what the intent of this legislation is, but there are a lot of other threats to the water in this province. I think we need to recognize that we all have to accept a collective responsibility for the contamination of water sources in this province, be it in faulty septic systems, as Justice O'Connor pointed out. An alarming statistic that was often quoted to him is that approximately one third of the septic systems in this province are in compliance with the building code, a third are simply out of compliance, and a third could be characterized as a public health nuisance. Septic systems have nothing to do with agriculture. They are out there in the rural communities, and it's another issue that needs to be addressed.

Part of the problem in this bill is that they are going to ban the spreading of septage on the lands. It's going to take five years. But what this government hasn't thought through is, how do we deal with that septage? Are you going to help support municipalities so they can accept the local honeybee truck to deal with the septage at a pollution control plant? The government hasn't addressed that issue.

We can talk about some other things out of Justice O'Connor's report.

"Farmers' Commitment to the Environment

"Ontario's farmers have generally demonstrated a strong commitment to the environment. Many have been certified under the environmental farm plan." But he goes on to say, "The Ontario Federation of Agriculture and other farmers' organizations suggested that the EFP may be threatened by funding cuts at the provincial level. I think such cuts would be most unfortunate." That environmental farm plan is incumbent; it's one of the main tools we need to ensure is in place with this legislation.

I'd like to go into some of the amendments that we put forward. It's really interesting that after Justice O'Connor released this report, there was a quick commitment made by the Premier of this province that all the recommendations in this report would be implemented. So I'm going

to read some of the recommendations from Justice O'Connor's report and then I'm going to make reference to them in the amendments that we put forward and I'll tell you how the government voted on these recommendations.

Let's talk about recommendation 11: "The Ministry of the Environment should take the lead role in regulating the potential impacts of farm activities on drinking water sources. The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs should provide technical support to the Ministry of the Environment and should continue to advise farmers about the protection of drinking water sources."

Again, the government said they are committed to everything in this book. We put forth an amendment to the legislation. We moved that "Minister" means the Minister of Environment and Energy," the lead ministry, "unless the context requires otherwise." That's straight out of recommendation 11, and the government turned it down.

Let's look at some other recommendations that were in Justice O'Connor's report.

I think this is one of the keys, and this is one of the key reasons why we can't support this legislation. Recommendation 16 talked about economic initiatives: "The provincial government, through the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs in collaboration with the Ministry of the Environment, should establish a system of cost-share incentives for water protection projects on farms," ie, helping farmers with money to make these capital improvements.

I'm going to read you the amendment we put forward. We put forward an amendment that talked about economic incentives: "In enforcing this act, the minister shall at all times consider the desirability of using economic incentives to encourage compliance." The government voted that recommendation down.

That's two recommendations in Justice O'Connor's report that the government voted down. What kind of commitment is that to implementing what is in this report? We felt these amendments needed to be not talked about in regulations; they needed to be in the bill, upfront, so that farmers, residents and municipalities could see very clearly the commitment and the support. But those amendments were voted down, and I find that extremely disconcerting.

I think what's disconcerting as well is that when you look at the budget that was just introduced this past week, there was no talk in that budget of providing financial support for compliance, for any upgrades that are going to have to be made to farms in this province as a result of Bill 81.

I want to talk about another area. We'll talk about a few other things in here from Justice O'Connor, but let's talk a little bit about the bill itself.

This is an important aspect of this legislation and one that I agree has to be in place in this legislation, because if we don't have this in place—and one of my colleagues has introduced a private member's bill, and it's private

members' business, but it flies in the face of what the intent is of this legislation.

1540

Unlike what we have right now, a hodgepodge of municipal bylaws across this province regulating nutrients, the intent of this legislation is to develop province-wide standards and regulations. That's section 60 of the bill, and we supported that because it's important that we not allow a municipality to set a standard that is lower or higher than what's intended in the legislation. It is incumbent on us that we support section 60 to ensure that we have those province-wide standards. That comes right out of recommendation number 14. It goes on to say in recommendation 14 that "municipalities should not have the authority to require that farm to meet a higher standard of protection of drinking water sources than that which is laid out in the farm's water protection plan." So it's incumbent on us that we maintain a level playing field across this province.

We talked about some other things. Another reason why we can't support this bill, and I made reference to it already, is the question of the regulations, because the devil is in the detail. We have not had the ability to see those regulations, and I know that there's some question about the appropriateness of when you can bring regulations forward. I can tell you, I would have worked to get a draft set of regulations out there so that we could have had some consultation with the agricultural community, the residents and the municipalities. But that didn't happen.

As Justice O'Connor points out very clearly on page 137, "These points suggest that the Nutrient Management Act as it is proposed may not be sufficient in itself to protect the sources of Ontario's drinking water from potential agricultural contaminants. The act's effectiveness will depend on the development of appropriate regulations." So how can we vote for a bill that even Justice O'Connor says is insufficient? We need to have the regulations in place, and we do not have those regulations in place.

Something else that we need to be concerned about with this piece of legislation that's in front of us, and it's one that really bothers me, is this whole question of, as the government likes to term them, alternative service delivery agents; ie, privatization. I have some real concern. We've seen the track record of this government in its desire to privatize everything it possibly can and we've see the fallout of some of the privatization. The worst example of that fallout is contained in Justice O'Connor's two reports. This is another reason we can't support this bill, because we attempted to have clearly defined who could enforce this legislation. We put forth an amendment that the minister designate in writing as provincial officers persons or classes of persons—Ministry of Energy and Environment employees, Ministry of Agriculture and Food employees with specialized expertise making it desirable for them to have the powers of provincial officers, and employees of conservation authorities. The government turned it down. The

government wants to allow for privatization in the areas of inspection and enforcement, and I think that's a really serious oversight on the part of this government. Again, they voted it down. This was straight out of O'Connor as well. It talked about the protection of all sources of water. Unfortunately, this amendment was ruled out of order.

I think another area that we really believed needed to be looked at was the whole area of the spreading of nutrients on golf courses. We know the majority of golf courses in this province are located in rural areas. Golf courses are located generally very near watercourses, but golf courses as well are major users of nutrients to help keep those greens green. We attempted to have an amendment put in that would regulate golf courses as well.

Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale): Did they accept it?

Mr Peters: It was turned down by this government. We know why: they've got so many friends out on the golf course that they didn't want to speak against them.

The Simcoe County Federation of Agriculture passed a resolution: "Be it resolved that the Simcoe federation of agriculture take a stand of non-support for the proposed Nutrient Management Act and so inform the Ontario Federation of Agriculture until all farmers are assured"—and I think the Simcoe federation of agriculture lays it out so clearly—"all sources of nutrients in our environment are viewed identically; livestock farms are not the subject of increased scrutiny that differs from that given to other animals or to other sources of nutrients; sizes of livestock enterprises be limited only by the area of land available to receive manure by these livestock; land-lease arrangements for manure application are equal to land ownership; any and all enforcement personnel will have significant agricultural training and expertise; programs are in place to train and certify those who would offer services of nutrient management plan development; farmers should have the right to prepare their nutrient management plan; and that OMAFRA provide the training and opportunities for such farmers."

There's a lot of concern out there. I don't believe the government has fully heard all that concern. They haven't used the opportunity to include some of these issues of concern in this legislation.

Justice O'Connor goes to great lengths talking about recommendations, issues of agriculture and their potential impact on the environment and puts forth a number of good recommendations that, quite frankly, should have been included in this bill. But the government didn't listen.

I want to go back to the point of the lead ministry. Again, I stress, in recommendation 11—the government turned down Justice O'Connor's recommendation that it be the Ministry of the Environment. I quote from Justice O'Connor: "It is essential that a single ministry in the provincial government be responsible for developing and enforcing regulations." "I prefer the Ministry of the Environment," says Justice O'Connor.

He goes on to explain why. I think people understand why. I don't understand where the government is coming from.

"I am wary of the perception of a conflict of interest within OMAFRA, which could be seen to be simultaneously promoting the needs of the agriculture community and regulating that community. The possibility of such a perception has increased in the past few years, during which time OMAFRA has focused strongly on rural economic development and provided less attention to environmental protection. This development is reflected in the removal in 1998 of the statements concerning environmental protection from the ministry's statement of environmental values under the Environmental Bill of Rights." That was noted by the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario.

There are a lot of things that are lacking in this bill, and that's why we can't support it when it comes up for third reading. I'm going to summarize. First, the lack of a clearly designated lead ministry: Justice O'Connor says the Ministry of the Environment; we don't know what the government says. Second, the lack of regulations: not having those regulations in front of us, and knowing that's where the details are, makes it impossible to support the bill. Third, the lack of financial commitment to ensure any capital improvements that have to be made aren't going to be on the backs of the farmers: we haven't seen that commitment to capital improvements. Fourth, alternative service delivery models, ie privatization. We've seen where privatization got us, and I don't like where it took us. I would hope the government would recognize that they need to re-evaluate this and ensure that in this legislation it's clearly defined and that there are public servants doing the job. But we don't have that in this bill.

After two and a half years we're finally at this point, but we still have the regulations to be discussed. I hope the government moves quickly on getting those regulations out and undertakes a thorough consultation of those regulations, as thorough a consultation as took place surrounding the introduction of Bill 81.

1550

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): I believe we're here debating yet again another motion to close debate. I understand that the government is anxious to get on and get this Nutrient Management Act passed. May I say from the outset that I take responsibility for holding the bill up on December 13, when the government was trying to get unanimous consents to get many, many bills passed without proper debate. I held it up. The NDP caucus agreed with me because we knew that Judge O'Connor would be releasing his part two report from the Walkerton inquiry some time in the intersession, and we wanted to make sure that before we passed this bill we would have an opportunity to look at Justice O'Connor's recommendations to see if we could then persuade the government to make amendments, to reflect amendments

that I made on behalf of our caucus previously, which were turned down.

We were hopeful that after the report came to the public's attention the government would be more agreeable to sending it back to committee and taking the time to get it right. Indeed, since Premier Eves promised to implement every single recommendation within the Walkerton report, that would have suggested that our amendments—I'm surprised in fact that the government didn't bring forward amendments of their own to reflect those recommendations.

What happened? We negotiated, if you can call it that, with the House leader, Mr Stockwell. After we came back, after the leadership convention, we wanted to have the opportunity to have more hearings and to put forward our amendments once again and some new ones based on the recommendations from Justice O'Connor.

What did we get? Negotiation led us to get half a day of public hearings, the day after the decision was made to have more public hearings. So we had to scramble. I was on the phone half the afternoon and night calling people across the province who I knew had an interest to get in here the following afternoon. I have to congratulate and thank all of those who actually did manage—that's how important it was to them—to get here to be able to submit their recommendations and concerns and, in some cases, support for the bill. They were here to do that, and we got written submissions as well.

I am happy that the NDP did make sure that this bill had the opportunity to go through that process once again, and I don't think anybody would disagree that, given the circumstance that we were waiting for this report, we should have indeed had further hearings and should have had further amendments to reflect those recommendations.

The NDP believes that we need a strong Nutrient Management Act in this province and we need to have it in place as soon as possible to ensure that we never have a tragedy like Walkerton again in this province. For a number of other reasons too, we've always supported the concept and the idea. After the release of the second Walkerton report, we felt strongly that some important amendments were required.

However, the government refused to accept any of the amendments from the Liberal caucus or any of my amendments. Many of our amendments were similar. I had some that the Liberals didn't support, but on the whole they supported most of my amendments and I supported theirs.

The government, as usual, came to that committee when we were doing clause-by-clause a few days later and had written material that had clearly been provided to them by the ministry, by ministry officials perhaps within the minister's office, explaining why they couldn't support each and every amendment that was made.

What happens now is that we have a bill that leaves many important details to regulations. We've said all along that we don't know what's going to be in those regulations. Many of the things we're concerned about

we're told may show up in regulations—we don't know—but I would have preferred they show up in the legislation itself. We may not know if they'll see the light of day ever.

We argued very strongly in both of the committee hearings that took place, as short as the second one was, that the bill as it stands now doesn't provide additional resources for enforcement. I travelled with the committee and listened to people in the first round talk about the need—you would know this, Mr Speaker; you come from a rural area of Ontario—and even those who were in support of the bill said that they could not do it, they couldn't commit to being able to meet the requirements of the bill without additional regulations.

We fought very hard to get such an amendment made, or a promise from the government that those resources would be available to the actual farmers themselves, but not only that, additional resources for enforcement. Right now we know that the ministries are already cut to the bone, don't have enough money, don't have enough resources to fulfill their obligations under many acts, as it stands now, and a lot of our environmental regulations and laws are not being followed.

The bill also doesn't use a common sense approach, and that is the precautionary principle to prevent future disasters. It doesn't include golf courses, which are another huge potential source of pollution. It doesn't provide for publication of nutrient plans under the EBR, which some people asked for. It doesn't hold the government liable for keeping our water clean and safe. It flies in the face of a recent Supreme Court decision, and it actually replaces the even tougher rules that local citizens may pass in their own municipalities.

This bill could be critically important if it actually accomplishes the things we need accomplished here. Keeping unwanted nutrients from getting into our drinking water and protecting our food, water and soil from pollutants are all very important goals.

However, if the purpose of this bill is to prevent another tragedy like Walkerton, then it fails utterly. If the purpose of this bill is to shift the blame and deny accountability, then it succeeds. If the purpose of the bill is to keep our water clean and safe, then the bill falls far too short of that. If the purpose of the bill is to yet again privatize the protection of an enormously important public good, then it will do so nicely, because that's what it's doing.

This bill is far from what it should be and far from what is needed. I want to make it clear right now for those who would argue and say that this bill would prevent another Walkerton or would go a long way in terms of preventing another Walkerton that report number two, should you take the time to read it, makes starkly clear that the bill as it is now written will not do that.

There are many parts of the second Walkerton inquiry report that the bill does not address and indeed contradicts. Not only does this bill do absolutely nothing to ensure there will be no more tragedies like the one we saw in Walkerton, but the government is not taking full

responsibility for keeping pollutants from the application of nutrients to soil out of our water. I want to explain to you why this is so and express again my disappointment that the government didn't recognize this and accept the amendments. I'm going to outline briefly to you what the NDP recommended to give the bill some actual teeth.

We introduced a bill to restore public confidence, as you know, in the drinking water in Ontario, Bill 3, the Safe Drinking Water Act, which takes concrete and practical steps to protect our water. This is an important bill and part of the recommendation from the Walkerton inquiry report, part two, that a Safe Drinking Water Act be passed in Ontario.

1600

I'm pleased at this time to say that finally, after almost two years of the government saying no to that bill—in fact, a former minister, when I asked him a question about it, referred to it as “more red tape,” which has generally been this government's attitude toward environmental protection. In fact, when the Red Tape Commission was set up, the Ministry of the Environment was the ministry that was picked on most. That tells the tale of this government's attitude toward the protection of the environment.

But I'm happy to say we'll see what happens. I am working with the Minister of the Environment to amend my bill, because certainly I concur that my bill was written based on American legislation, along with some new ideas of my own, to protect Ontario's drinking water. Judge O'Connor recommended four separate pieces of legislation to encompass all of his recommendations—98 in part two, I believe, and I think it's 24 in part one. It does change to some extent the focus of the Safe Drinking Water Act that I've proposed. I have been promised that the integrity of my bill will not be destroyed when the government makes new amendments, although it could be changed substantively. We will see.

I appreciate the government's offer to bring forward my bill and have it passed, and as long as it does what the safe drinking water bill should do and protect the drinking water of Ontario, and it actually enhances the bill, then I will be very pleased to go forward with it.

I want to talk to you about the bill, directly relating it to the recommendations from Justice O'Connor and why the bill doesn't fulfill the recommendations from him. As it stands right now, Bill 81 says that the ministry responsible for overseeing and regulating the nutrient management plan is the Ministry of Agriculture. The minister and I have had discussions about this and we disagree, and she'll probably speak later and say why. But Justice O'Connor's recommendation 11 from the second Walkerton report states that, “The Ministry of the Environment should take the lead role in regulating the potential impacts of farm activities on drinking water sources.”

Justice O'Connor did take a lot of time to listen to many, many people who came to speak to him about the need for this kind of bill, and certainly it was recommended to him by various groups that the Ministry of the

Environment should be the ministry—an enhanced ministry, I should say. The minister is perhaps going to speak about the fact that they haven't done a very good job of regulating various farm difficulties in the past. I would say to the minister that's largely because their government cut the Ministry of the Environment to the bone, and she knows that.

We know that across the province all kinds of environmental laws and regulations are not being fulfilled. From the government's own draft cabinet document—as you know, I was leaked a copy of that document and it was used in the House to show the government that even officials within the Ministry of the Environment were saying that less than 10% of all sources of pollution in this province were being dealt with. That's a pretty scary number. They did recommend more staff, and that is one of the problems. Certainly we are saying the resources have to be increased, and we tried to get that inserted into the bill, but to no avail.

Justice O'Connor is wary—and he made this very clear—of a potential conflict of interest in having nutrient management under the jurisdiction of the agricultural ministry. The Ministry of the Environment has the regulatory lead for all other aspects of drinking water management, and he said very clearly that the Ministry of the Environment should be in charge of all of the aspects of protecting our drinking water.

He also expressed concern about allowing the fragmentation of responsibility of water protection, leading to a lack of clarity about roles and accountability, and that could indeed reduce the effectiveness of water protection enforcement.

That's something I say quite candidly. It's something I noticed when we were in government as I became concerned about safe drinking water then and saw the need for legislation to bring it all together, and we had started to do that. Over the years, protecting our water was built up in a piecemeal fashion with a lot of guidelines and regulations, but not with a very clear, cohesive body to take care of all the water issues, which are very complex, as we are finding out.

I'm going to talk to you about another concern, and I want to put on the record that it is no doubt controversial. This is where the Minister of Agriculture, under this bill, will privatize all aspects of approval, monitoring and enforcement of the nutrient management plans. That's in section 55. We all saw, particularly when it happened so quickly without enough notice for municipalities, what privatized monitoring did in Walkerton.

To be fair here, it's important for me to point out that Justice O'Connor does not give a definitive view around the issue of privatization, but he does point out the disaster privatization caused in the UK. The NDP submitted an amendment to section 55 that replaced this section with a statement that the MOE is responsible for all the aspects of approval, monitoring and enforcement of the nutrient management plans, with no power to delegate these responsibilities to anyone who is not an employee of the ministry. This was also voted down.

We also stated that the legislation, and we're very concerned about this, can supersede any stronger bylaws. Justice O'Connor stated that he feels that once the regulations are in place and a farm has a ministry-approved individual water protection plan in place—I'm quoting him here—"municipalities should not have the authority to require that farm to meet a higher standard of protection."

As I understand it, Justice O'Connor's concern is based on the fact that he feels farmers are feeling they're being attacked on all sides and was trying, I think very hard, to take their concerns and issues into account. But what it is important to recognize here in the context of this bill is everything else he said about it. He recognizes in the report that when it comes to source protection plans, those should be developed as much as possible at the local watershed level by those who will be most directly affected. Those are municipalities and other affected groups.

So this is a different approach to nutrient management plans, because each local watershed faces its own unique ecological and geological issues, and therefore one size fits all doesn't work. Indeed, there's a Supreme Court precedent in favour of the municipalities' ability to pass stronger bylaws with the Hudson, Quebec, case, where the judge ruled in favour of a bylaw that superseded federal and provincial laws to protect the health and well-being of its citizens. That was the pesticide bylaw.

We proposed to amend section 60 to stop this legislation from superseding stronger municipal bylaws, allowing a municipality to develop bylaws with higher standards, and this was voted down as well. We heard from the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, which also had trouble with this particular clause. To have all their powers for land use planning in rural areas taken away is, to put it mildly, a big problem for them, because each area has individual issues and problems they have to deal with and which cannot be dealt with—

1610

Hon Helen Johns (Minister of Agriculture and Food): They can do that through watershed regulation.

Ms Churley: Well, it's not going to happen. There's nothing in that bill that suggests it is. What's happening here is that we have a bill that is mostly going to be written by regulation. The province can supersede bylaws, but those watershed plans have not been done and the bill is about to be passed.

Judge O'Connor is concerned that the Nutrient Management Act does not deal with other aspects of agriculture that could threaten our drinking water, such as the handling of pesticides and fuels. Again, he suggests changing the purpose of this act to regulate any potential impacts of agriculture on drinking water sources. Now, the NDP did submit two amendments to deal with that specific recommendation from Judge O'Connor. There were two amendments: one to add his suggestion to the purpose clause and one to add pesticides and fuels to the list of materials to be included in nutrient management plans. The amendment to the purpose clause expands the

purpose of the legislation to deal with regulating all potential impacts of agriculture on drinking water sources, and expands it not just to protect the natural environment but human health. This was voted down as well. We proposed an amendment to section 6.1 which would have added fuels and pesticides to the list of agricultural materials to be included in the nutrient management plan. This was also voted down.

Another concern from Justice O'Connor: he recommends a two-tiered system for regulating nutrient management plans—the standard plan, and a more stringent plan for farms that pose a higher risk to drinking water because of farm size, intensity or location. Here's what Justice O'Connor had to say about that: "All large or intensive farms, and all farms in areas designated as sensitive or high-risk by the applicable source protection plan, should be required to develop binding individual water protection plans consistent with the source protection plan."

He goes on to recommend that those plans be filed with the MOE. The NDP introduced an amendment that requires the NMPs for large and intensive farms, and for all farms in high-risk areas, to be approved by and filed with the MOEE. That too was voted down.

People across Ontario have worked incredibly hard in some areas, including the minister's own area, to fight intensive farming in their communities for fear of environmental impacts, and particularly for fear of their water. In fact, Huron county is a prime example. I suggest that every member in this Legislature has received some correspondence from residents in the Huron county area who have been fighting the large increase in what are called intensive farms in their area for some time. In fact, residents of the municipality of Ashfield successfully fought to get an interim control bylaw to regulate the spreading of manure in June 2000. This was challenged, but in court the bylaw was held up.

Surrounding communities around Huron county were facing similar issues, so that county took on a comprehensive study and struck a committee that developed a county model bylaw that they encouraged all municipalities within Huron county to implement. There are other areas as well that did the same thing and after all their efforts and years of hard work to protect their community, they're now very concerned, and quite rightly so, that it will have been for nothing if Bill 81 passes in its current form, which seems to be what we're about to do here today.

There are many concerns that I stated here today, and others, which unfortunately make it necessary for the New Democratic caucus to vote against this bill, a bill that we have been struggling to try to improve and make amendments to for some time, to no avail, so that we could—all of us—support the bill. We do believe that it should be brought in, but it's not going to do what we need to have such a bill do, particularly after Walkerton.

I've outlined many of our concerns. I did want to talk about one other area before I close, and that is that we don't know when the regulations are going to be drafted.

There was an amendment put forward I believe by the Liberals on putting in real time constraints so that we know the government will be coming forward in a timely fashion with those regulations. As we know, it has taken a very long time for this bill to come before us. It's now two years, and the clock is ticking. When we look at how much of it is really dependent on the development of regulations, we wonder when these regulations are ever going to see the light of day. The NDP did in fact place an amendment to ensure that those regulations must be in place within six months to protect our surface water and our groundwater, and the government said no to that.

The problem here is that although I support the goal that the government brought forward some time ago, this idea for a nutrient management bill, what we're left with here is a bill that stands far short of fulfilling its promised goal, that is, protecting our soil and waters from pollution from the application of nutrients, and it falls far short of fulfilling the recommendations of the Walkerton two report, recommendations that the Premier of this province said his government would implement every one of.

Already the government has broken its promise. I just want everybody to know that Ernie Eves's promise on implementing every single one of Justice O'Connor's recommendations is already broken, because the first opportunity came when we made those amendments to the nutrient management bill to encompass the recommendations from Justice O'Connor, and the government turned them all down. So there's a promise broken on those recommendations.

The bill indeed leaves all the important details to regulations. It doesn't provide additional resources for enforcement. It doesn't use the precautionary principle, which is absolutely critical in terms of preventing future disasters. It doesn't include golf courses, another potential source of pollution. It doesn't provide for the publication of nutrient plans on the EBR. It doesn't hold the government liable for keeping our water clean and safe. And it flies in the face of a recent Supreme Court decision and actually replaces, in some cases, even tougher rules that local citizens may pass in their own municipality.

I want to, before I end, talk about why some of those amendments were so incredibly important after the tragedy in Walkerton. If you read through the mounds of transcripts that were provided by experts at the Walkerton inquiry, what some experts talked about in terms of bacteria in wells across the province was truly frightening. When you understand and know what is happening in those wells, in our water supply, it underscores how inadequate this bill is in terms of dealing with it.

Studies submitted to the inquiry, and I've read many of them, establish that over 150,000 wells in Ontario may be contaminated by bacteria in excess of the maximum levels from the Ontario drinking water objectives. These studies indicate that contamination results twice as frequently in fields where manure is regularly applied. There are studies that show that. The evidence at the inquiry also indicated that the pathogens contained in the

manure can survive in soil for months or years and may travel through the soil, entering underground aquifers kilometres away from their point of origin. Nutrient management plans, as now defined, will not prevent manure contamination of our drinking water, because they focus on the nutrient requirements for growing crops primarily but they fail to address the pathogens in the manure. That is one of the biggest problems, and it's something that Justice O'Connor addressed.

The nutrient management plan, as proposed by this government, is proposing by regulation to, basically, simply make mandatory nutrient management planning, agricultural best management practices and environmental farm plans.

1620

This is a limited regulatory approach and may be no more successful than the present system. What we need is a risk-based approach to water resource management, which will require things like aquifer mapping and vulnerability assessment programs with continuing monitoring. Those are the things we need in place in this bill to prevent another Walkerton from happening. The amendments that were made to provide for some of these things to be in this bill were turned down.

So I'm disappointed and sad to say that the NDP has no choice but to vote against this bill. I'm sure it's in vain, but I would call upon the government to recognize that it is already breaking promises made about implementing all the recommendations from the O'Connor inquiry—

Hon Mrs Johns: How?

Ms Churley: Because he's recommended things that you should change in this bill, and you're not doing it. So there are promises broken already. The government not accepting some of these recommendations put forward by the NDP means that, already, certain recommendations will not be implemented.

The Acting Speaker: I don't see Lisa here, but Lisa wanted me to point out that her mom, Judy, and her aunt, Sheelagh, are in the visitors' gallery. I told her I can't do that. Lisa, of course, is a page here from Owen Sound.

Welcome. We're glad you're with us today.

Further debate? The Chair recognizes the hard-working minister from Huron-Bruce.

Hon Mrs Johns: Welcome to the fine people of Bruce or Grey.

I want to talk for a minute about the nutrient management bill, and I have to say, before I get too far into the discussion, how disappointed I am at how long this has taken to come to fruition. I am saddened because rural municipalities all across this province needed to have this bill in place. We needed to be working on regulations much earlier. When they hear the timeline that has gone on over the last year and a half to two years in this House, I think people who are listening will be amazed by just how long it has taken. It's probably sorrow, anger, some of those emotions, I am expressing today about that time.

This is a good piece of legislation, let me say first of all. It's legislation that the people of the province wanted. It's supported by the agricultural community, municipalities and environmentalists—not all sides of it. There are things that need to happen that we will look at as we proceed through regulations, but everybody believes this is a bill that is needed in the province of Ontario. In fact, all across North America, we see jurisdictions starting to bring in nutrient management legislation.

From looking at the timeline, you can recognize that we introduced the bill in June 2001. I wasn't the minister at that point. I believe it was Ernie Hardeman, the member from Oxford. In an effort to try to co-operate he suggested that we put this bill out right after first reading so that we would have time to garner issues, hear concerns and talk to the community, because it's a technical bill. Although some jurisdictions have moved forward, there were new things we were trying to do in the province, so we tried to co-operate.

When everyone went out for consultations, it was a pretty co-operative process. I was at one in my riding in Holmesville, and the Liberals and NDP were there. We were sussing out information, we were hearing things that we hadn't heard before, and we made some amendments to the bill after first reading—maybe not amendments everybody wanted, but we certainly came together and agreed on a few amendments. In some cases we said, "We really need to consider that when we get to the regulations side of this because we can accommodate that concern in the regulations."

We spent a lot of time out there in consultations. We had hundreds of submissions that the ministry received and we had many days of hearings. Clearly the public favoured the bill. I say quite clearly that they're antsy a bit at what will happen as a result of the regulations, but they know it's important to harmony in rural Ontario. They understand that this needs to become law, and the government wanted to see that it became law.

Unanimous consent would have seen this bill passed on one of the last days of the previous session, but that wasn't to be. I have to say the opposition Liberal Party asked for unanimous consent, and I was actually very grateful to them. This is a pretty hot issue in my riding, and I was very grateful that they called for unanimous consent for second and third reading of this bill. In fact, I am very grateful that they have moved along with us. They also have a lot of rural members. All of us who represent rural ridings know we need to have this bill done.

When the Liberals called for unanimous consent, Conservatives gave unanimous consent, but we weren't able to get unanimous consent from the third party. So we salvaged it, if you will, over that time. We pulled it forward from first reading. The Liberals agreed with us at that time and we brought this bill forward into the new session.

Again we sought the co-operation of the opposition and the third party for quick passage. Again it was denied and we once again did what the opposition wanted us to

do. If you can believe it, we went out to committee a second time. In the spirit of compromise we scheduled two more days of hearings. One was to hear from delegations and the second was to go through, clause by clause, the amendments one more time. In exchange the opposition agreed to unanimous consent.

I'm going to put this on the record. It's in Hansard. I'm going to quote from Steve Gilchrist in committee. It appeared on May 29, 2002, and it's in the record of proceedings: "The government House leader had made an offer to the two opposition parties, and we all agreed not to delay the passage of the bill, but to allow one more opportunity for input at this final stage, the trade-off being more time in committee hearings and one hour of third reading debate." No opposition member challenged Gilchrist at that time, said, "That wasn't the agreement we made." No one entered any dissenting opinions about that.

Then the two days of hearings were held. I was fortunate enough to be able to go and hear the people talk about things they would like to see, sometimes in the bill, sometimes in the amendments. We heard those issues, we thought about them and how about we might be able to do some of those things. In the Walkerton inquiry that everybody's talking about today, Justice O'Connor said this nutrient management bill, Bill 81, was a good format for us to be able to proceed forward. Is it perfect? He said no, he'd like to have fuel discussed in it and pesticides discussed in it. We had a discussion about that and how we might link the bills and decided we'd best leave that for the water safety act that should be coming forward. But he said this was a good format to commence talking about farm nutrients and how we would best deal with them.

So on June 12 John Baird asked for unanimous consent to fulfill the last part of this agreement, and that was one hour of debate on third reading. Once again, let me say that as I understand it the Liberals agreed to this and once again the third party said no. Once again—we're now at over a year of this being in the House—the nutrient management bill was derailed. It really makes one wonder whether they ever had any real intent of supporting this legislation. They say they are so concerned about the environment and they say they are the stewards of the land, yet when we bring forward a bill that talks about the agricultural community being stewards of the land, the NDP decides that they're not prepared to go there.

1630

I have been frustrated. I do speak with sorrow about how long this has taken. We're coming to the end this time, thank heavens, but it's only because we had to do time allocation. What that means is we have to put a halt to the debate, after all of the debate that has gone on, on this bill. You will hear no one tonight talk about how horrible this bill is. You will hear no one talk about things that can't be fixed through regulations in this bill. That's just not what is going to happen. This is just us being political and not working for the best interests of

our communities, and in this case, unfortunately, it's the communities I represent, which are rural Ontario.

Let me tell you about the consultations that have gone on. I can't talk enough about them. After all, last December the Liberals agreed that there had been good consultation on the bill. That's why they called for unanimous consent. They believed there were good consultations on the bill too.

Let me tell you about the consultations. The member for Elgin-Middlesex-London is the Liberal agricultural critic and he's on the record as saying, "There is no doubt that every one of us has called for this legislation; that there is a need for province-wide standards; that we can't allow municipalities to have a hodgepodge of standards across the province." His colleague from Chatham-Kent Essex said, "Municipalities like Chatham-Kent need Bill 81 now, and not in the distant future." That's how I feel too, representing the riding of Huron-Bruce. Yet when we called to bring it forward again this year, back we were to committee.

I am saddened by that, but I have to tell you that a number of groups on the outside have been very supportive of us trying to move this process forward. Once the process was derailed a couple of weeks ago, when we called for unanimous consent and didn't receive it for the one hour of third reading debate, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture wrote what I considered a nasty letter to the NDP urging them to stick to the deal of May 29. They played games with this, and even though the Ontario Farm Environmental Coalition wanted the legislation passed, it has still been held up for a year in the House. So people who have really needed it—and I think of the Ontario Pork association in my riding, which has been calling for this, because we've had this hodgepodge of things going on across the province. People don't know about the regulations. They need to have regulations so that people begin to feel comfortable that they're doing the right things in the province. They called for it and, once again, it fell on deaf ears.

That's why we're in time allocation. I don't like time allocation probably any more than the next person, but I have to tell you, I don't think I ever would have got this bill out of this House. I think I would be 102 and this bill would still be in the House if it wasn't for time allocation.

I have to tell you today that this is the right thing to do. It's the right time to get time allocation. It's the right thing to get this bill out and get some consultation done on the regulations. It's the right thing to do because the rural community needs this bill.

I talked about the process that went on in the House, but there was also consultation that went on outside of the normal House proceedings. I know the member from Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant, Toby Barrett, is going to talk about some of the extensive consultations that happened when he was there. But I need you to know that Mr Barrett and Mr Galt went out and had discussions before any of this happened, too, before we even got into the House. So there has been a lot of work done on this bill.

As someone suggested earlier, there have been a lot of ministers tied to this bill too. There's no question that it was brought forward by Minister Hardeman at the time. He had done a lot of work on that. It was also worked on through the House by Minister Coburn, and Doug Galt, who was his parliamentary assistant, contributed to bringing Bill 81 to the Legislature. So you can see in the context I'm talking about today that we have really spent a lot of time on this bill. And I don't think it's all well spent. I think what we should have done was put the bill through and then spent a lot of time on the regulations. That's where the tough part is going to come, and we didn't do that. We spent our time here.

When we are in this House it's a privilege that we are granted. The privilege that we have is to protect our communities, both my community as the member who represents but also the community of Ontario. We all have that responsibility. We are blessed with countless lakes and rivers. We are blessed with fertile, productive soil in this province and with hard-working, committed people. It's a privilege and it's a responsibility and here in Ontario each and every one of us has a role to protect our environment—our water, our land and our air. This government knows this and that's why it acted on this specific bill, Bill 81.

That's also why we launched Operation Clean Water in August 2000. Operation Clean Water calls for a province-wide effort to improve water quality and delivery and it does it through a number of different methods: through the introduction of exacting but clear standards, through effective inspection and enforcement and through tough penalties for non-compliance and strategic problems. Because our water and our land are important and they're connected so closely, we must bring this same approach when it comes to managing the land and the nutrients we apply to the land. Bill 81 is an integral part of that process as we move forward to manage our water in the future and to bring in the recommendations of the Justice O'Connor report. He says very clearly in this report that nutrient management, Bill 81, is a good first step.

Interjection.

Hon Mrs Johns: Let me say to the member opposite that what's important about this is it maintains a balance in rural communities between the economic viability of the farm and our ability to have strong environmental protection of that land so we can be good stewards of the land. It's a very important bill and if you came to rural Ontario and to my riding, you would see how important it is as we try to find harmony in our communities, as we try to find a way to live together so that the agricultural community coexists with the rest of us who live in urban settings in rural Ontario.

We know we have a lot of work to do on this bill in the future. We know that we have to look at land applications of materials containing nutrients, including livestock manure, chemical fertilizers, biosolids, septage and pulp and paper sludge. We are very committed to making sure that we have the legislative and the regulatory provi-

sions to be able to do that. What I mean by that is that we have to develop over the next few months guidelines and best practices and we have to get rid of this patchwork of municipal bylaws we have all across the province, which wasn't working for everyone. We have to be in a better system that controls what happens to our land, because it is so important to us. We have to realize that there's a really critical role for municipalities in rural Ontario. They have been consulted as we have gone around the province to ensure that their role coexists with the role of the province and coexists with the role of agricultural member. It's that partnership between all of us that is going to make the nutrient management bill work.

1640

One of the things I've been very clear about as I've spoken across the province as Minister of Agriculture and Food is that we in the agricultural community need to have this bill work. We need to be able to stop the discord that is happening in rural Ontario. Nobody in the agricultural community wants to be at fault for in any way polluting our environment. This bill calls for us to work together. Justice O'Connor talks about how the Ministry of Environment, in consultation with OMAF, should work together to ensure we get the right mix.

We need to be talking about education, we need to be talking about training and we need to be talking about enforcement. Justice O'Connor says there's a role for everybody there, that we need to work together, that OMAF needs to be talking about how they can educate and train the people in rural Ontario so that they understand what the best standards and the best practices are today, and how, when there is a bad apple out there, we make sure we enforce these regulations.

I'm a firm believer that 99.9% of my agricultural community, which I am so privileged to represent, does the right thing, because they're stewards of their land. What we have to do for the sake of all the agricultural community is to get rid of the few bad apples across the province who aren't doing the right thing. This bill will allow us to do that.

We will spend the time, we will educate, we will train and then we will enforce. We will make sure we have the authority to be able to do each of those three important tenets that are discussed in Bill 81.

I know there's been a lot of talk happening about this bill. I know people probably are a little tired of hearing about this bill. But I have to say that today is a great day for rural Ontario, for municipalities, farmers, environmentalists, tourists and people in the small urban centres in rural Ontario, because finally we're going to be able to get the framework process started, because after today we have to call the bill and then of course it will then be called for the vote.

Over the summer we can start to work on standards and regulations we can enforce; we can work on standards and regulations that will protect the water and the environment; we can work on standards and regulations that will ensure our agricultural communities and our

rural communities can continue to work in harmony and thrive in the important things they do in the community.

One of the things that will be important about this bill, I believe, when we look back on this bill in 20 years and see how the regulations have evolved over that time, is that this will be one of the pinnacles or lynchpins when we talk about how food in Ontario has evolved. We know we have safe, high-quality food in Ontario, but we know—Mr Speaker, you and I because we represent large agricultural ridings in the province—that it's continually changing and evolving.

I believe that as we deliver this Bill 81 and the regulations that go with it, and we educate, train and enforce, what will happen is that we'll get more harmony in rural Ontario. We will find that balance that is so necessary to find between the economic viability of the agricultural community and the ability for us to be good stewards of the land, to ensure that land is there for this generation and for generations to come, whether it stays as agricultural land or whether it be land surrounding that that may be tourist land or may be a factory.

We all need to work together in partnership because we have lots to gain by passing this piece of legislation. We have lots to gain by putting this framework in place so we can ensure that we are all working toward common goals. We have lots to gain because we'll all understand where we are today and where we're going in the future.

Clear, consistent standards, regular audit and inspection, orders of compliance issued as required and authority to enforce the regulations, will bring about harmony in rural Ontario, will ensure that in years to come rural Ontario provides the quality of living that we all moved to rural Ontario to make sure we have.

From that perspective, I do want to say that a great deal of thanks is owed to the people who did a lot of work on this. There's a lot left to be done on this, and I expect to have help from all the groups who are interested in this as we proceed through the regulation stage this summer and fall. I have every intention of bringing all of the groups together as I do that.

I also want to say that along with consulting with the public on the regulations, I need people to understand and to know that the Ministry of Environment, OMAF and health, of course, are working internally to make sure we're doing the right things, are bringing the regulatory minds of the Ministry of Environment together with the comprehension of the agricultural community through the Ministry of Agriculture and Food. And we're bringing the medical model from health together to be able to compile regulations that are important.

I guess I should also say that we're bringing this report with us too as we go to prepare regulations, because this presents a good guideline of things we need to think about, places we need to go. I believe it will lead us, with all the other groups I have mentioned, to bring a very comprehensive bill together that I think the people of the province will be very proud of.

I know that my parliamentary assistant, Toby Barrett, wants to speak to this bill, so I will close by saying that,

as much as this has been a long time coming and I know we've had our differences, I know that everybody in the House agrees that this is an important step to ensuring that we have a strong framework in place in the province. I ask all to vote for this bill when it comes before us the next time we talk about nutrient management. I also thank them for their behind-the-scenes commitment to maintaining rural Ontario as the wonderful place it is to live, work and raise wonderful families such as mine.

Mr Joseph Cordiano (York South-Weston): Let me begin by commending our critic for agriculture, the member for Elgin-Middlesex-London. He's done a marvellous job for our caucus and I believe for the people of this province. He's been a contributor in many, many ways to this piece of legislation.

Let me refer back to the remarks made earlier by the Minister of Environment and Energy and the House leader for the government. He was very critical of the opposition parties. He was lamenting the fact that we were not going to pass this piece of legislation as quickly as he would like and as quickly as his cabinet colleagues would like, to get it through the House in a very hasty fashion. He was lamenting all of this as though it was the worst thing possible that could happen.

There are very legitimate reasons why we in the opposition wanted to have the opportunity to debate this legislation properly. Most of what's contained in this bill—and by the way, this is not even a total bill yet because it lacks so much substance. So much of what's going to impact nutrient management remains to be passed by way of regulation. Frankly, we're not going to see those regulations before this bill is passed, so we're not going to know if these are effective regulations that are going to be passed. In fact, this government has done that so often in this House, have completely disregarded the assembly and the meaningful contribution members can make to a piece of legislation.

1650

Hon Mr Stockwell: When do you see regulations before the bill is passed?

Mr Cordiano: You don't, but so much of what's in the bill is left to regulation that this isn't even going to constitute a total bill. That's what I said.

The fact of the matter is, and I just want to point out, that a number of recommendations that were made by Justice O'Connor in his report aren't in this bill. That is a very reasonable thing to bring forward by way of making remarks, by suggesting amendments to this bill. That's what the opposition has done in recommending that Justice O'Connor's report be implemented. It was the Premier of the province who said he would ensure that every single recommendation of the O'Connor report would be implemented in this bill, would be part of this bill. That's not the case.

As has been pointed out by my colleague earlier, Justice O'Connor called for the Ministry of Environment to take the lead on this bill, and that is not part of this legislation. There is an ambivalence as to which ministry will lead in terms of this piece of legislation. That is

certainly not what we can support. We want the Ministry of the Environment to be the lead ministry to make sure that there is proper enforcement of this bill.

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): Can we count on the Ministry of Environment?

Mr Cordiano: That's another problem, I think, with the devastation that we've seen wreaked on the Ministry of the Environment by this government. This government says, "Trust us. Leave everything to regulations because you can trust us on the environment. You can trust us when it comes to safe drinking water. You can trust us when it comes to all of these matters that pertain to public health and safety." Well, the record just doesn't prove that. How can any of us trust this government with respect to safe drinking water, with respect to the environment?

When it comes to the Ministry of the Environment there is, as my colleague the critic for the environment pointed out this afternoon, an inherent conflict between the minister wearing two hats: the Minister of the Environment and the Minister of Energy. There is a conflict right then and there.

As well, there are a number of reasons why we oppose the manner in which this bill is being brought forward, and with good justification. Look at what's left out of this bill, that will be left to regulations. We don't even know what constitutes a nutrient. That hasn't been defined. It's going to be left up to regulations. What can and cannot be spread on fields? That's going to be left to regulations as well. What is required as part of a nutrient management plan or strategy? Should there be different strategies for different sized farms? What size, how many different categories? Should small farms be exempt? When should these farms in these categories have to meet the requirements of Bill 81? What kind of storage will be required? How should that storage be built? Where should the storage be built? How much manure can be spread? When can it be spread? What kinds of soils? How far back from waterways, municipal wells, neighbouring properties and homes?

These are all very, very legitimate reasons why we have opposition to this bill, because so much is left to regulation, so much is left for the government to decide unilaterally by regulation. That's precisely what it means, isn't it, that the government will decide by way of regulatory changes the definitions that will be put in place to define this bill? I say it's just simply not good enough.

That's been the approach and the attitude of this government with respect to so many pieces of legislation since this government has been elected, going back to its first administration, when it rammed bills through this House with incredible speed and without any kind of consideration for whether they got it right. In fact, they had to reintroduce the property tax bill seven times because they couldn't get it right—seven times.

Mr Smitherman: Whose bill was that?

Mr Cordiano: It was the Minister of Finance, if I recall correctly.

Mr Smitherman: What was his name?

Mr Cordiano: The current Premier, Ernie Eves. He couldn't get that bill right and he had to reintroduce it seven times—technical difficulties.

Now we're talking about safety to human beings. Our drinking water is at stake. The food we eat is at stake. Is it any wonder that we want to make certain this bill is done properly and includes the solid recommendations of Justice O'Connor?

There are four reasons why we oppose this bill, and I just want to highlight those. I pointed out earlier that there is a lack of a lead ministry, and we want the Ministry of the Environment to lead with respect to this bill. The lack of regulations, as I've been talking about, is very critical. There is a lack of appropriate funding. Then of course there is alternative service delivery which the government has put in this bill and is nothing other than the opportunity to privatize down the road, which we oppose, because we believe the enforcement of this bill should be left within the public sector.

There are a number of good reasons why we have opposed this bill and why it is important for us to debate this thoroughly and, yes, bring it to committee to bring forward more of these amendments we've proposed which would rectify some of these problems, and not leave it to regulations, which will be done unilaterally by this government at some future date with no opportunity for debate—sometime in the future. That's just unjustifiable by this government, when it comes to this matter of crucial importance. We're not talking about something insignificant here; we're talking about safe drinking water and the land we need in terms of producing the food we eat.

We've seen time and again that this government has failed the people of this province when it comes to safety and the protection of what is important and in the public interest. Public safety should be the primary concern, and that's what we're referring to when we say we should take the right amount of time to ensure that this bill protects the public. That's what we're asking for. It's not unreasonable, contrary to what this government would have people believe. It's not unreasonable at all.

In conclusion, we support the concept of this bill but we do not support the manner in which it's being brought forward and how so much is being left to regulation. I will leave the rest of the time to my colleague the critic for the environment.

Mr Kormos: I'm glad Mr Cordiano left Mr Bradley some time. Mr Bradley was demonstrating some anxiety. I encouraged and exhorted Mr Cordiano to please leave the member for St Catharines some time, because the member for St Catharines has as important a set of comments, certainly, as Mr Cordiano.

This is a time allocation motion. New Democrats don't support time allocation motions. I certainly don't support time allocation motions. This is what it's all about. It's all about the government using its, yes, acknowledged power to cut short debate. Look, it ain't the opposition's fault that this took over a year to get passed. Well, it isn't. Anybody who suggests that is

being less than accurate. Anybody who suggests it's because of the opposition that this took a year to pass would qualify as the title of a recent and popular Jim Carrey movie—frequently, as a bald-faced title of a recent Jim Carrey movie.

1700

Acknowledged, this legislation went to a committee before second reading. You know, it's a good thing New Democrats sent it back to committee, because then came the O'Connor Walkerton report. The opposition was incredibly concerned about the adequacy of Bill 81 in the context of the recommendations of Judge O'Connor, and our environment critic produced a plethora of amendments, all of which addressed the O'Connor recommendations, the O'Connor requirements from the Walkerton inquiry, but not one of those amendments was considered in any meaningful way by the Conservatives. So they've come back to the House saying, "Oh, come on, guys, let's pass this." They're very sorry.

You see, it doesn't take that long to get legislation moved through the House. I see the bill as it currently stands, as it's printed, is in the name of the Honourable Brian Coburn. I trust that'll be changed to Helen Johns. Before that it was Mr Hardeman. Three successive Ministers of Agriculture clearly didn't have the clout or the interest—important—sufficient to get this bill dealt with. It's a simple matter of setting aside enough days for adequate debate. Will the bill pass? Of course it will. Could it have passed much sooner? Of course it could have. It was a simple matter of the government calling it. This government is no stranger to time allocation motions and has never shown any hesitation about using them. This bill required but three sessional days for second reading and, bingo, it would, as it did, qualify for a time allocation motion like today.

Would New Democrats have wished it was referred to committee of the whole? Of course, because that would have been an opportunity, and a very legitimate opportunity, for us to have made this bill more effective, especially in the context of Walkerton and Judge O'Connor's consideration.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): What is committee of the whole? Haven't seen that in a while.

Mr Kormos: Has committee of the whole taken place here in the last seven years?

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): Once.

Mr Kormos: But once, Messieurs Bradley and Bisson advise me, but once. How long was that for? Help me, Mr Bradley. Help me, Mr Bisson. Committee of the whole.

Mr Bisson: I think it was 1996-97.

Mr Kormos: Back in 1996-1997. Committee of the whole is a way for legislators to fine-tune a piece of legislation, to have the minister and his or her staff right there on the floor to respond to questions, put them on the record. New Democrats would have loved to have seen this bill go to committee of the whole, but no. This government is not interested solely in ramming legislation through, it's interested, more so, in determining

how few days it can sit rather than sitting sufficient days for its legislative agenda to be proceeded with, and in a manner which shortchanges the people of this province.

The environment critic for the New Democratic Party had amendments that made this bill responsive to Walkerton. The government chose to reject those amendments. I suppose the government will live with the consequences of that.

It remains, however, that this is a time allocation motion today. I do not support time allocation motions. I consider them an abuse of power on the part of the government, an illustration and an expression of disdain for the role of the opposition, and in fact an impediment to the appropriate operation of this or any other Parliament.

I want to make it clear: New Democrats aren't going to be supporting this time allocation motion—never have with this government; never will.

Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant): I just want it on record that only this party has advocated fast-tracking into law this important bill for environmental improvement, Bill 81, the Nutrient Management Act. The opposition have fought so long and so hard for the last—it's been 13 months now—that you'd think they were against clean water and against environmental protection.

We know that Bill 81 is the proper vehicle to legislate best practices for the protection of our natural environment in general and, more specifically, the safety and quality of our water. It's also the best means to provide a sustainable future for agricultural operations and, by extension, rural development. Now is the time for us to work together to make such praiseworthy goals a reality, and I ask those present to pass Bill 81. We've certainly had enough discussion.

Before this legislation was drafted, this government—myself and the member for Northumberland—consulted extensively with farmers, municipal politicians, municipal officials, rural residents and environmental organizations. Since January 2002—in fact Dr Galt and I were involved in late 1999—we've been asking questions of many groups and individuals who are interested in this legislation, and also groups that may well be affected by this legislation. In keeping with this government, we have listened very closely to the responses.

We posted a discussion paper on intensive agricultural operations on the Environmental Bill of Rights registry for a 30-day period. We followed that up with seven public meetings. I co-chaired these meetings with Dr Galt. They were attended by 700 people. We started in Burford in my riding and went on to Glencoe, Clinton, Orangeville, Chesterville and Hastings. In addition, we received 200 written submissions and 420 completed questionnaires.

Over the summer of the year 2000, following a request from the Minister of Agriculture, we received another 125 submissions. That was followed up by 30 presentations made to senior ministry staff.

On into September of the year 2000, the Minister of Municipal Affairs, the Minister of the Environment and the Minister of Agriculture and Food—these are the ministries most closely involved with this proposed legislation—held group discussions in Guelph and they met with representatives of 65 different organizations.

In the year 2001, we continued our consultations. For the second year in a row, we spoke with participants at the Rural Ontario Municipal Association, ROMA, at their annual conference, and for a second year in a row we received delegations from municipalities.

Then the bill received first reading. We posted the proposed Nutrient Management Act on the Environmental Bill of Rights registry. It was posted for 60 days. This time 22 submissions were made during that period, and then after first reading, Bill 81 was sent to the standing committee on justice and social policy, which I chair. Nine public hearings were held across the province and 500 people attended those hearings. More than a third of those people attending, 37%, represented farm groups, 17% of those who participated spoke for municipalities and environmental groups were 12%. Also in attendance were various conservation authorities, private companies and individuals.

We travelled, as the standing committee, first to Caledonia and then on to St Thomas, Chatham, Holmesville, as the Minister of Agriculture has mentioned, Owen Sound, Kemptville, Peterborough and North Bay. We also held hearings in Toronto. In addition, the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food staff conducted numerous information sessions, both on intensive agricultural operations and on nutrient management. Again, as is characteristic of this government, we listened. We took all of the input, all of the concerns and suggestions into consideration when this legislation was drafted.

Then the standing committee on justice and social policy made its amendments. We also took into consideration concerns of the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario. These concerns were expressed in the July 2000 special report, *The Protection of Ontario's Groundwater and Intensive Farming*. The result we have is very specific protection for groundwater.

At this point I wish to quote and make specific reference to clause 5(2)(r) in Bill 81: "... that studies be conducted in relation to the use of materials containing nutrients on lands, including topographical studies and studies to determine soil types on those lands and studies to determine the depth, volume, direction of flow and risk of contamination of water located on, in and under those lands."

I feel this is very important because this legislation is all about clean water. By the way, these studies would also be consistent with Associate Chief Justice O'Connor's recommended watershed approach to protecting the quality and safety of Ontario's drinking water.

1710

We were also guided by the recommendations contained in the January 2001 *Managing the Environment* report. This is a report that shows that managing the

environment responsibly requires a new, concerted approach, drawing on the expertise and resources of many partners. To work together effectively, however, the roles and responsibilities of each of those partners need to be clearly defined. That's why this proposed Nutrient Management Act ensures that municipalities continue to be responsible for land use planning and approving building permits. It's also why this proposed law makes provisions for the creation of local advisory committees to provide advice, assistance and, if required, mediation. Working under the guidance of clear, consistent, province-wide standards, municipalities and, by extension, local citizens, would be able to ensure sustainable growth, safeguard the natural environment and make rural Ontario attractive for economic investment.

Regulations have yet to be drafted, as we know, but they could include, for example, making nutrient management plans mandatory. They could also set distance requirements for manure and other biosolids, distance requirements with respect to the application near wells and waterways. They could establish minimum quality standards and application standards for land-applied materials containing nutrients.

We want to ensure that possible regulations further our progress toward our goals of protecting the environment and sustaining the agricultural industry. Therefore we will develop them through not only discussion but also dialogue with farm leaders, environmental organizations, municipal officials and rural residents, both farm and non-farm. We have already begun a dialogue with those interested. We have mailed a questionnaire to 1,200 individuals across the province who represent farmers, environmental groups and individuals who perhaps participated in our first round of consultations regarding the proposed Nutrient Management Act.

Why would we do this? Again, several reasons. We want to know what these people want. People who will be most affected by the regulations to be drafted under this legislation believe that what is appropriate are standards that are effective and enforceable. The answers we receive from this questionnaire will give us a better understanding of a number of issues. For example, should the regulations be phased in over time? Should the regulations vary according to the size of agricultural operations? Should the regulations reference nutrient management plans as a whole or should they address specific elements of nutrient management plans?

The goal of distributing this questionnaire is, again, to stimulate ideas and dialogue. It puts forward options, it puts forward delivery models and it seeks input on all the various permutations and accommodations and all of the possibilities that may come under this set of regulations.

It is time to go on and take the next steps, to move Bill 81 forward and develop the appropriate regulations and standards, in concert with people across rural Ontario. But to do that, we need to pass this bill.

This bill had its first reading last June. This government tried very hard to secure passage of this proposed legislation late last year. More recently, in the speech

from the throne, the government reaffirmed its commitment to this proposed legislation: "Like Ontario's farmers, your government understands that protecting the environment is vital to the future of the family farm. It remains committed to the nutrient management bill, which would protect the environment by setting and enforcing clear, consistent standards for nutrient management on farms."

Now we are into another June. We must move on. It's something we must do for future generations. It's something we must do for the present generation as well. Taking action now, today, means that every one of us who lives in this great province of Ontario will reap the benefits, obviously, of a healthier environment, a stronger agrifood industry and more vibrant communities.

Mr Bradley: I always wish I were not debating a time allocation motion in the House. That's often how I have to start my remarks, saying I wish I were not debating it, but I am debating a time allocation motion. I find that most unfortunate.

I would rather be dealing with such things as the problems being confronted by children who have autism. Their parents have brought to my attention and the attention of other members of the House some available treatments and services that could help these children very much, especially if there's an early intervention. Yet that funding isn't available. There aren't enough staff people to be able to do it. There aren't enough spaces available in such places as the Niagara Peninsula Children's Centre in our area, and as a result some of these children are missing out or their parents have to incur huge debt to be able to have the kind of service they believe is necessary to meet the needs of their children.

Or I would rather be dealing with the issue of Visudyne. After months and months of persistent questioning and pressure from this side of the House, the government finally capitulated. It was almost the last province to provide some funding for the Visudyne treatment, which is for people with a form of macular degeneration. But they cut it off in April.

I remember the great commotion that was created by the Premier of this province after he decided he was going to cover hepatitis C people, even though earlier in the discussions with the federal government, behind closed doors, the Conservative government of Mike Harris was opposing giving funding to hep C patients outside of a certain time parameter. The reason I mention that is that with Visudyne treatments they're going to pay only back to the end of the last fiscal year, in other words, starting April 1. A lot of people have already incurred the \$2,500 per treatment and have mortgaged their houses, sold their houses, cashed in RSPs and so on. I think the government has an obligation to pay right back to the time that Health Canada approved it as a treatment for macular degeneration. I hope the government will reconsider and do that. I'd rather be debating that today than a time allocation motion.

I would rather be debating the issue of pensions for disabled people and increased payments for them. I think

it's been since perhaps even the early 1990s that people with disabilities, people on a disability pension, have had an increase. Others in society have. These people struggle along having to meet the needs of increased utility costs and other costs, yet unless there's a specific change in personal circumstances, there's not been a general increase in those disability payments. They won't be going for holidays in Aruba; this will be going for basic needs if they receive those increases.

I want to as well deal with this particular bill—even though we're not on the bill itself, we're on the time allocation—Bill 81, known as the nutrient management bill. I always found the word “nutrient” to be rather amusing because we usually think of nutrients as something—

Interjection.

Mr Bradley: Well, most people think of it as something we consume, we eat, and it's nutritious to us. Nutrients in this case are something else. They're sewage sludge and things of that nature.

The concept of this bill is a reasonable concept. We're not here to slow down in any particular way, or at least block, this bill from passing, but we do believe the bill is deficient in many ways. Again, the concept is good. This problem has to be addressed. There are some good parts of the bill that are certainly supportable.

What was most disappointing was that when the bill came back to committee again for amendments, the government defeated all the amendments. My colleague Steve Peters, who is the Liberal critic in the field of agriculture, proposed several amendments which came directly from part two of the Report of the Walkerton Inquiry, where Justice O'Connor—by the way, I thought Justice O'Connor did an excellent job. He was a good choice. When the government chose Justice O'Connor, I think some of our members particularly noted that they thought he would be a very good choice. If I'm not wrong, his brother was one of your predecessors—you're the member for Oakville—as Speaker. His brother was a member of this Legislature, whom I remember very well as well.

1720

I thought Justice O'Connor did a good job. He made some recommendations. He had a chapter on agriculture. What Steve Peters, the member from Elgin—who is, of course, the former mayor of St Thomas—did as Liberal agricultural critic was, he advanced and put on the table a number of amendments that would have improved this legislation. Unfortunately, the government members had instructions to defeat every one of the amendments. There were other amendments of a nature which required the expenditure of money. Opposition members, individual members, know we cannot advance amendments in committee which would obligate the government to spend money, but the government can do so. So Mr Peters recommended a number of amendments that would have strengthened the bill. Unfortunately, on all occasions, every one of the amendments was turned down, defeated, blocked by the government.

If we were truly looking for consensus in this House, if we really felt there were good ideas coming from outside, particularly from Justice Dennis O'Connor, if we really felt we should be implementing his recommendations, as the Premier has promised, then the committee and the government members on the committee would not have defeated the amendments that were advanced by the Liberal caucus.

So our main reason for opposing this bill in its present state is that there's too much left to chance—too much left to regulation. I would rather see as much as possible spelled out in the bill, so when it passes this Legislature we know exactly what's going to happen. Instead, this is what you would call almost enabling legislation. I know it has some provisions in it that are specific, but largely it allows the government to make regulations. Frankly, much of Ontario doesn't trust this government to make the kinds of regulations that would be helpful.

One of the other areas I want to address in this bill is that I believe, despite the Minister of the Environment having to wear three hats and be both the Minister of Energy and the Minister of the Environment—that's very difficult, and I've certainly stated that today. I had a wonderful exchange with the minister who—

Hon Mr Stockwell: The Deputy Premier.

Mr Bradley: Well, I tried, for instance, to get the Deputy Premier to answer, who I thought would have given a more environmentally sensitive answer than the Minister of Environment and Energy—who is mostly the Minister of Energy.

I want to see the Ministry of the Environment as the lead ministry. Again, I go back to the fact that whether people like it or not—and I know there are some polluters out there who don't—the Ministry of the Environment is a regulatory ministry. It is a ministry that goes out to see that people are adhering to the laws of Ontario, particularly the investigations and enforcement branch. As such, with its commitment entirely to protecting the environment and with this being an environmental problem, it should clearly be the lead ministry. Should there be input from the Ministry of Agriculture and Food? Of course there should. Those people who work for the Ministry of Agriculture and Food are familiar with agricultural practices. It's helpful to have their input. Nevertheless, the Ministry of the Environment should have the lead.

The Ministry of the Environment will also require staff to be able to enforce these regulations once they're in place—these mysterious regulations we will not see until after this legislation is passed. It will be up to the Ministry of the Environment to enforce it. I will tell you now that there are not nearly enough employees in the Ministry of the Environment with that specific expertise to be able to deal with that issue, so it will require a significant commitment of staff and funding to administer that part of the bill.

Some of the farmers will have a challenge to meet with this. I think it's reasonable for the Ministry of Agriculture and Food or the government, through one of

its ministries, to offer assistance to farmers to be able to implement these plans and meet the regulatory regime which will be in place, particularly the smaller farmers.

One of the concerns we have is with the growth in the size of farms. We have huge farms out there today, factory farms, as they're called in some cases. Jean-Marc Lalonde, the member for Prescott-Russell, has raised the issue, for instance, of pig farms in Ontario and the fact that in Quebec now they're banning further pig farms, I understand, these huge pig farms, at least, that you see out there. There's a fear that we'll see it more in Ontario because we know that they have the biggest challenges to meet. We want to be able to help the agricultural community to meet those challenges.

I wish we could introduce amendments that would allow for the expenditure of funds, in other words to help out in implementation of this bill, but we do not have that power and did not have in committee, which, as I said, is why Steve Peters was only able to recommend those to the government.

We had many questions, and one of my colleagues, Joe Cordiano, when he was speaking, asked a number of the questions that are unanswered. But, you see, with any legislation—when you're in opposition particularly, but I think even in government if you're not part of the cabinet—you want to see things spelled out. You don't want to leave it to somebody else to put the regulations in place, because the regulations are very specific. There are many communities in this province who are afraid that what the province puts into place will be much weaker than what they would have put into place as municipalities. This bill calls for a uniform approach across Ontario. That would be fine if the uniform approach were a tough approach, were an environmentally sensitive approach.

It reminds me, Mr Speaker, of federal-provincial conferences. I remember one person asking me on the radio—this person had run for the federal Alliance, so he perhaps had a reason to ask me this; he wanted to direct it to the federal government. He said, "Don't you think the federal government should have these rules for water?" I said, "You know what? The problem with that is that if you're a provincial Minister of the Environment, you don't want to have watered-down water rules. You may want to have very tough rules. Another province may want those rules not to be nearly so tough. So you want to have the toughest rules possible." So I often thought that while it's good to have a strong federal regulatory regime in place, often the provincial government wants, of its own volition, to make its very tough rules.

It's similar with the municipalities. Some municipalities are saying, "Look, there's a real problem with some of these huge farms that are coming close to residential areas." People will say, "You know, some of these farmers are responsible for polluting." It should be pointed out and people should remember that it's farmers themselves who are going to feel the effect of water pollution, because very often they don't have city water pipes out to the farming areas. They in fact have wells; they're rely-

ing on groundwater. That's a significant problem for farmers, so people need not think that the farmers are the perpetrators of the problem and are not victims of the consequences of those problems.

Last, this does not deal with human waste being spread on fields, from what you would call Johnny-on-the-spots—or Johnnies-on-the-spot; I can't think of the grammar of that for a moment—or what we used to call outhouses, where somebody came around and collected the material and then it got spread on fields. Well, that's a problem. The sludge from sewage treatment plants spread on fields often contains not only bacteriological contamination but also heavy metals and other things. You can't spread it on a frosted field, a field with three or four inches of frost on it, because it'll simply run off, and you can't spread it when it's been raining for 19 days.

So there are a lot of rules and regulations that have to be put in place not only for farming practices but particularly for those of us in the urban centres who decide that we're going to send our sewage sludge out to the farmland to be spread on farms across the province.

The bill itself offers some hope, but it is so deficient, so vague in specific areas, that I as an opposition member couldn't in all good conscience vote for the bill. Would I block the bill from passing? I would not block the bill from passing, but I would certainly urge the government, because the government would not accept those amendments to its legislation, to make those regulations as environmentally sensitive as possible, to have the necessary staff and rules in place to ensure that the tragedy of Walkerton, seven people dying and thousands becoming ill, does not recur in this province.

1730

M. Bisson: Merci, monsieur le Président. C'est un plaisir ici encore aujourd'hui sur une autre allocation du temps. Je peux vous dire, c'est l'habitude ici, hein ? Au moins deux fois par semaine, on a l'habitude de venir à cette Assemblée et d'avoir encore le débat sur une motion de clôture. C'est devenu l'habitude. Ça fait combien de fois ? Je regarde mes amis. Ça fait au moins quoi, 30, 35 fois qu'on a eu des motions de clôture ici à l'Assemblée ? Je me dis que c'est l'habitude, et c'est très triste. On aimerait beaucoup qu'on pourrait avoir un vrai débat faisant affaire avec les projets de loi pour être capables de regarder les projets de loi et dire ce qu'on a besoin de faire de positif à la loi, comment on peut la changer pour vraiment s'assurer que chacun des députés ici a une opportunité de faire les changements à la loi afin de représenter les citoyens qu'ils sont élus pour représenter.

Mais c'est devenu l'habitude, parce que ce qui s'est passé avec les changements au Règlement avec les années et aussi, je pense, la manière dont l'Assemblée elle-même a changé, c'est que le gouvernement se méfie plus de l'opposition en introduisant un projet de loi où qu'on n'a eu que trois jours de débat à la deuxième lecture et qu'on arrive à la quatrième journée avec une motion de clôture. Je pense que c'est triste.

Franchement, j'aimerais mieux avoir une Assemblée, monsieur le Président, comme vous l'aimeriez aussi, j'imagine, où il y a possiblement plus d'efforts de la part de l'opposition et du gouvernement de trouver des accommodations qui diraient, « Oui, le gouvernement, à la fin de la journée, est capable, et a le droit aussi, de passer leur loi parce que, après tout, ce sont eux qui ont eu la majorité dans les élections générales », mais l'opposition a aussi une responsabilité de faire ralentir le gouvernement sur certains projets de loi quand c'est une question importante pour l'opposition.

Je vous donne un exemple. Dans cette session, il va y avoir la grosse controverse, j'imagine, sur deux questions : le budget et la question de la privatisation de Hydro One. Sur ces deux projets de loi, quant à moi, il fait du bon sens que l'opposition a l'opportunité de faire ralentir le gouvernement pour être capable de faire des modifications qui sont plus acceptables au public qu'on représente. Mais sur un autre projet de loi, où c'est moins controversé, on peut avoir des accommodations, qu'on dit, « Oui, deux jours, une journée, trois jours de débat sur un projet de loi pour le passer, l'envoyer au comité, faire de bonnes audiences publiques, avoir le temps nécessaire pour faire notre devoir comme législateurs et législatrices » pour modifier la loi en comité et la ramener et avoir plus d'accord.

Mais je pense que ce qui est arrivé avec le temps—et ce n'est pas seulement ce gouvernement, franchement. Les trois partis ont tous la main noire quand ça vient aux changements à la réglementation, mais le Règlement ici à l'Assemblée a tellement changé qu'il est devenu parfaitement normal pour un gouvernement à cette heure, à ce point-ci, sur chaque loi, de passer une motion de clôture. Je pense, franchement, que c'est très triste.

J'espère que ce qui a eu lieu aujourd'hui à nos « meetings » des chefs parlementaires qu'on a eus avec les whips—que possiblement on peut commencer à regarder comment on s'organise à cette Assemblée pour que le gouvernement reconnaisse et respecte le rôle de l'opposition et que l'opposition respecte qu'un gouvernement a le droit de passer sa législation.

I was just saying it's really a sad thing that over the years we've seen this place deteriorate to the point of now seeing, almost as the norm, bills passing into this House by way of closure motions. We're time-allocating virtually all bills through this Legislature. There's hardly a bill in this session or the previous sessions that has not been accompanied by a time allocation motion.

I think that's really sad because I think it reflects on all of us, not just the government members but the opposition members, on how this place has deteriorated to such a point that we're not able, as honourable members, to come to a degree of understanding about how we order business in this House.

This morning I thought it was rather an interesting House leaders' meeting that I attended, as the whip for my party. House leaders and whips get together every Thursday. We had a real donnybrook. We had one heck of a meeting where some frank discussions happened

among all three parties about how this place does not function any more. I'm hoping the meeting we had this morning may be the beginning of something positive, where we're able to say, "All right, let's recognize, as an opposition, that a government has the right by election to pass legislation. They won a majority; they've got that right."

But the government has to recognize that an opposition also has a right on key issues that are important to it to have an opportunity and an ability, and the correctness, to be able to slow legislation down sufficiently to try to effect some change.

I propose the following: we have in this Parliament basically only two issues that are real issues to the opposition. The two are the budget debate—there are some issues in the budget that I'm sure both opposition parties have some problems with—and the Hydro debate. Those are two big issues that are going on in this Parliament. I suggest a very simple thing. I would wish that for the opposition and the government, in the process of the House leaders' meetings, we would be able to order business into the House in an orderly fashion and when there are bills of substance, ones the opposition has legitimate grievance with, we're able to use our powers in opposition to be able to slow the legislation down to effect the changes we want.

We're all honourable members on this side of the House, as on the government side of the House. We were elected like everybody else. Frankly, the opposition made up almost 60% of the popular vote in the last election. So certainly there's a legitimacy to my point, that the opposition has to have an ability to have some effect on the government's agenda. On the other hand, where there are bills that are less controversial, there's an ability to make agreements that those bills pass quicker with less opposition, with a quicker passage as far as how we allow things to go through the House is concerned.

I would say to members on the government side who have never been in opposition, and the only time they have ever come to this place has been in government, that it takes some time on the opposition side and then being on the government side to understand that the way this place can really function is to have some rules that balance off the power the government has by virtue of its majority in the House.

We have had upwards of 30 closure motions in this House in the last couple of years. Almost every bill that has come into this Legislature has seen a closure motion. It's a reflection on this Legislature, and I don't think it's a very good one. I would hope that what we started this morning at the House leaders' meeting, by way of a pretty frank and heated discussion, was a process that hopefully will be able to come to some sort of agreement about how we order business in this House and the need not to introduce closure motions to deal with bills.

If we learned anything through the whole process this morning, hopefully that will come out of it. In the end, it would better serve the constituents we represent to be able to do that.

The other thing I want to say on the question of closure motions is that we need to reflect on how this Legislature needs to change the way it's organized, by way of the standing orders, and also by the way we elect people. I'm a firm believer that the issue here is that we need to change the way we elect people, to go to a system of proportional representation. It doesn't matter who the government is. If it's a majority government of any stripe, there's a really large temptation, because you hold all the power, to just ram your agenda through the house. It doesn't matter if it's New Democrats, Liberals or Conservatives; we've all had a hand in that. We've all equally pushed our agendas through to the utmost ability we had with the rules given of the day, and every government has changed the rules.

The only way I know we're able to change the rules effectively is by way of a minority Parliament. I'm hoping that at least that happens in the next election so we can get some balanced rules back into the House. But over the longer term, we really need electoral reform to say that the problem we have is that when you have government members, and I don't care what the stripe is, with 40% of the popular vote controlling better than 50% of the seats in the House, it's a really unhealthy thing.

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): But if people don't pressure the government, they're not going to change the rules.

Mr Bisson: I agree. What I would propose, and this is one of the proposals we have as New Democrats and in fact we're having our provincial convention, our bi-annual convention, starting tomorrow in London, and one of the motions we're pushing through our convention is to adopt a position and a model of how we would do electoral reform if elected as a government so that we do move to proportional representation, because at the end of the day your vote counts. At the end of the day, when you vote in your riding, it doesn't matter whom you elect—it could be an independent or a representative of a party—that person has an equal amount of power, once they come here as an honourable member, to represent their constituency, and their vote is just as important as everybody else's, and conversely, the people who vote actually have a say. I think that is so important in modernizing our democracy.

I don't expect government members who first got here as a government to understand, because quite frankly I didn't get it when I got here as a government either. It took me some time in opposition to finally figure out that governments' excessive use of power is really not a healthy thing for the democracy we hold so true and dear to our hearts.

I look forward to fewer closure motions in this House and to the day we actually have some rules in here that balance off the need of the government to pass legislation and also the ability of the opposition to do its job.

1740

Hon John R. Baird (Associate Minister of Francophone Affairs): I had hoped to speak longer to this bill, but the government House leader shortened my speech

considerably. I say to the government House leader, who's sitting across the aisle in the Liberal benches, I don't know if every member of this House has been down to see the new portrait of the government House leader, which is now open for public display. What a fine photo. If you watch the eyes, they follow you wherever you go in the hallway. We had trouble keeping a quorum in this place today and in the three committees because member after member wanted to see the photo. I have not seen such lineups in this place since Princess Diana died and people were lining up to sign the book of condolences. The schoolchildren were looking up with awe at the member for Etobicoke Centre, the government House leader. It is a lovely picture.

On his desk, on his credenza, there was a picture, and I thought, "Oh, there's a picture of Mike Harris on his credenza." I thought, "Wow!" I was surprised.

Mr Bradley: That was on his dartboard.

Hon Mr Baird: The member says it was on his dartboard.

As I approached closer, I found it was not Mike Harris; it was his family. It was his wife and two children. But for those of you here at Queen's Park, Will watching on TV and others—

Mr Marchese: Where is Will?

Hon Mr Baird: Will is in his office looking at me right now. He should go down and see the portrait.

Hon Tim Hudak (Minister of Consumer and Business Services): Is The Shadow still after him?

Hon Mr Baird: The Shadow is still after him, I say to the Minister of Consumer and Business Services, so he's cowering in his office.

I'm pleased to have the opportunity to speak on this motion this afternoon about an issue which I think is pretty important. Nutrient management is important for agriculture and the quality of water.

Interjection.

Hon Mr Baird: I want to say the Minister of Agriculture, like her predecessor, has fought so hard for this bill. In fact, when I was appointed, when I received the call to take on this position, someone said, "What is your priority?" I said, "One of my first priorities is to see the Nutrient Management Act passed." I'll tell you, this Minister of Agriculture has been all over the House leader, the deputy House leader and our caucus to ensure that this important piece of legislation is passed.

I believe, as most farmers in my constituency of Nepean-Carleton believe, in reasonable and responsible farming practices. In my experience, the operators of a family farm and operations of a small or medium-sized nature are always pretty good stewards of our environment. There is the odd exception, the odd bad apple, but most do a pretty good job. The odd bad apple does need attention, and I think this bill looks to establish some best practices. We want to ensure that we deal with nutrient management in a responsible way. We want to be mindful of the effects of the watershed, of aquifers and of our environment when we're undertaking farming practices.

We have a lot of cash crops in my constituency of Nepean-Carleton, not just soybean producers and corn producers, but also a good number of dairy operations, so this is certainly an important issue. As concerned as people are about the issue, they're also concerned that the Legislature pass this bill and that we get on to consulting with the many stakeholders about the regulations under this bill. I know the Minister of Agriculture is keen to begin that process once the Legislature passes this bill. When we have the opportunity to vote we can do just that, because we want to ensure that we sustain our environment and we want to ensure that we promote the best practices that are reasonable in farming, like the overwhelming number of farm operators in the province of Ontario currently do.

Hon Mr Hudak: The chicken farmers in Erie-Lincoln.

Hon Mr Baird: The chicken farmers in Erie-Lincoln—I know that's a big issue. As I am always talking about dairy producers and corn producers, the member for Erie-Lincoln talks about both tender fruit, the grape growers and the poultry industry. I suspect he's going to want to join me in supporting this important resolution because he's a big promoter of agriculture in the province of Ontario. He's an unabashed supporter of the wine industry in Ontario. The member has some interesting ways of helping to support that in all of his cabinet responsibilities, I understand, as has been reported on some occasion. Mine have been over-reported in that regard.

Bill 81 has been eagerly awaited. We've had a terrific amount of consultation. It's been posted on the environmental registry to get public input. The ministry has been out there listening. We've had a substantial amount of committee hearings on this. We debated this bill a lot in this Legislature.

One of the important parts about debate, as the Minister of Agriculture always says, is that you make a decision and you vote and that's part of the process. I think it's the opportunity, I think it's time and I think it's important that we do move to vote on this. That's what the resolution we're debating today is all about. It's about moving to the next stage of this long-delayed and eagerly awaited bill.

We know that Bill 81 is a proper vehicle to legislate best practices for the protection of the environment in general and the safety and quality of our water in the province of Ontario. We know that it's the best means of providing a sustainable future for agricultural operations. Even more than that, it's about rural development in the province of Ontario, because the agricultural industry remains one of the four cornerstones of the Ontario economy and as legislators we want to address what is an incredibly important issue for that sector, whether we represent ridings which are half suburban and half rural, such as mine, or are members whose ridings are more rural. I will be voting for the motion.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Further debate?
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. This will be a 10-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1748 to 1758.

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

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Hodgson, Chris	O'Toole, John
Baird, John R.	Hudak, Tim	Sampson, Rob
Barrett, Toby	Jackson, Cameron	Snobelen, John
Chudleigh, Ted	Johns, Helen	Spina, Joseph
Clark, Brad	Klees, Frank	Sterling, Norman W.
Cunningham, Dianne	Marland, Margaret	Stewart, R. Gary
DeFaria, Carl	Martiniuk, Gerry	Stockwell, Chris
Dunlop, Garfield	Maves, Bart	Tascona, Joseph N.
Ecker, Janet	Mazzilli, Frank	Tsubouchi, David H.
Elliott, Brenda	Miller, Norm	Turnbull, David
Gilchrist, Steve	Molinari, Tina R.	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Guzzo, Garry J.	Munro, Julia	Wilson, Jim
Hardeman, Ernie	Mushinski, Marilyn	Witmer, Elizabeth
Hastings, John	Newman, Dan	

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

Nays

Bisson, Gilles	Di Cocco, Caroline	Marchese, Rosario
Bradley, James J.	Dombrowsky, Leona	Phillips, Gerry
Bryant, Michael	Duncan, Dwight	Smitherman, George
Conway, Sean G.	Kennedy, Gerard	

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 41; the nays are 11.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Pursuant to standing order 37, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made. The member for Trinity-Spadina has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given by the Minister of Education. The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter, and the minister or parliamentary assistant may reply for up to five minutes.

We'll just wait for a quick moment.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): Speaker, they're all leaving. I thought they would be excited to listen to this five-minute discussion on education. Mr Guzzo stayed behind. I appreciate that. Ted, from Waterloo-Wellington, is staying behind; I understand he's doing the response. He's doing the minister's response today.

I want to let the public know what the nature of this dissatisfaction is with respect to issues of education, with

respect to the answer the Minister of Education gave, and I want to read it for the record, so people know. Here's the question I asked the minister a couple of days ago:

"The Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario retained Lang Research to conduct its third annual school-based survey. This research shows, among many other things, a 7% drop in music teachers in the year 2001-02. Several scientific reports conducted all over the world to study the links between music and learning have shown that the study of music enhances math and science skills, and as well contributes positively to a child's social development. Students who study music also tend to have lower drop-out rates. Given this, Minister, how could you, as a former teacher, permit such a loss of music teachers in the system?"

She said, "I'd be happy to respond to the member from the third party, who I understand made an interesting presentation on Saturday"—that was in Sault Ste Marie. Her assistant was there—a good guy. She continues, "In regard to the issue you have raised, I think you are well aware of the fact that this year, in response to the messages we heard from the people of Ontario and the educational community, since Premier Eves took over we have already invested an additional \$350 million in the boards of education in Ontario. We also increased the amount of flexible funding."

Marchese goes on by saying, "It's an interesting response.... We have seen program reductions in special education of 31%," and on and on I go.

I want to say a couple of things with respect to that, because once I said to her that there have been program reductions in so many fields, she then answered—because my question was, "Which programs do you want the boards to cut some more in order to be able to fund music?" She said, "I'd like to know what data you're using. You're using all sorts of figures, and I guess I can pull all sorts of figures out of a hat, or I can talk about real numbers." Then she said, "It's very difficult to respond to you when you're using some facts. I don't know what you're basing your information on." That's the answer she gave.

So the first problem is that she says boards have flexibility. I am saying, based on studies done by People for Education—this is the elementary school tracking report, which I presume the minister says is not scientifically done, and the study that I referred to was by Lang Research, conducted by the Elementary Teachers' Federation. She says, based on these studies, they are not studies—Ted, I hope you'll address this—they're not real figures, they're not real facts. She's got some facts, she says. My point to her is, where are your facts?

I'm assuming Ted from Waterloo-Wellington is going to bring forth today the facts the minister has, because presumably to say we don't have the facts means that she does. I'm looking forward to hearing them, if you have them; I hope. Then the minister says that she's given so much money to the boards that they have flexibility. I say to her, with all this wonderful flexibility the boards have, how come they're cutting, there are program reductions?

This is the Elementary Teachers' Federation study, where 33% of all the elementary schools of the 2,500 answered this survey. You extrapolate and you get a good sense of what's happening in our system. The program reductions are: special education program reductions, 31%; library reductions, 30%; ESL, 11% I believe; music, 11%; design and technology, 7%; physical education, a 6% drop; family studies, a 5% drop. The list goes on and on.

What flexibility do boards have except to cut some more? There is no flexibility. There is inadequate funding. Unless the government addresses the issue of funding and addresses it today, people and boards like the Toronto Board of Education will have to cut another \$90 million, and that's unacceptable to the people of Ontario, and to the people of Toronto in particular.

Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington): I want to thank the member for Trinity-Spadina for requesting this late show because it gives me an opportunity to respond to some of the issues he's raised, which I know are of concern to him and perhaps to some other members of this House.

The government understands very well that music education is an important part of a student's overall educational experience. It is well documented and researched, as the member opposite has indicated, that the intellectual and emotional development of children is enhanced through the study of music, as is also the case through the study of a second or third language.

The government is committed to these programs in arts and languages that enrich minds and our culture. The new elementary arts curriculum sets high standards of achievement for every student in the province. It's designed to ensure all students acquire essential knowledge and skills in the arts through music, visual arts, drama and dance in grades 1 through 8. The music curriculum, in particular, even includes composition so as to inspire students to become future musicians and, possibly, future composers.

The curriculum creates an expectation that our excellent teachers will develop meaningful programs that enable their students to achieve the expectations for music in each grade. It's clear that our music curriculum gets results and teaches students the fundamentals of music appreciation, understanding of composition and how to read music.

I think it's also important to note that school boards and schools are responsible for determining how they will offer music, such as instrumental or vocal music, and other arts programs. The choice to hire arts specialists, such as music teachers, at the elementary level is indeed a local decision.

With that said, we acknowledge the importance of giving school boards additional flexibility when it comes to choosing the programs that best fit the communities they serve. That's why we have done just that. In the 1999 budget, we announced we would be providing support for the Royal Conservatory of Music's Learning through the Arts program in schools. As a result of this

beneficial announcement and wonderful partnership, we're providing \$3.65 million over six years to the Royal Conservatory, a world-class institution, to expand this very successful program from the greater Toronto area to other regions of the province.

Ontario's new secondary school program ensures that high school students also have exposure to the arts. The new program outlines that students are required to earn one compulsory credit in the arts. They may take an arts course to fulfill a second compulsory credit requirement. They have a broad array of arts disciplines from which to choose: comprehensive arts, dance, dramatic arts, media arts, music and visual arts. Again the courses offered in a particular secondary school program are a local decision.

I'm delighted to see that in last week's provincial budget we have again clearly shown that education is a key priority of the government.

Within two days of forming the new government, the new Premier announced that there would be \$65 million more available for new textbooks and technology-based learning materials. Less than two weeks later, the Premier and our new Minister of Education announced that \$25 million would go to expanding the early reading strategy and introducing a new early math strategy. Two weeks after that, the Minister of Education announced that education funding in Ontario for 2002-03 would increase by \$350 million to over \$14.2 billion. All

totalled, \$440 million was announced in additional funding for Ontario's publicly funded school system.

With that budget announcement, our government has added to this figure with a further \$117 million in funding for publicly funded schools. The funding for 2002-03 includes \$490 million in flexible funding. The May 10 funding announcement included \$200 million for boards to address local priorities, including music teachers. This increases the local priorities amount from \$100 per student to \$200 for every student in Ontario's public schools. In other words, since forming the new government in April and with my honourable friend, the member for Kitchener-Waterloo as Deputy Premier and Minister of Education, we have announced almost \$560 million in funding for Ontario students and Ontario school boards.

Under her direction and leadership, I am absolutely confident that the government will continue to consult with its stakeholders and do everything within our power to put students first and ensure that our schools have the resources they need to give every student the quality educational opportunity that they deserve as a right.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): There being no further matter to debate, I deem the motion to adjourn to be carried. This House stands adjourned until 6:45 pm this evening.

The House adjourned at 1812.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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

Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Gary Carr

Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers

Clerk Assistant / Greffière adjointe: Deborah Deller

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

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

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

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Mississauga Centre / -Centre	Sampson, Rob (PC)	Scarborough Southwest / -Sud-Ouest	Newman, Hon / L'hon Dan (PC) Associate Minister of Health and Long- Term Care / ministre associé de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mississauga East / -Est	DeFaria, Hon / L'hon Carl (PC) Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors / ministre des Affaires civiques, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées	Scarborough-Agincourt	Phillips, Gerry (L)
Mississauga South / -Sud	Marland, Margaret (PC)	Scarborough-Rouge River	Curling, Alvin (L)
Mississauga West / -Ouest	Snobelen, John (PC)	Simcoe North / -Nord	Dunlop, Garfield (PC)
Nepean-Carleton	Baird, Hon / L'hon John R. (PC) Associate Minister of Francophone Affairs, chief government whip, deputy House leader / ministre associé des Affaires francophones, whip en chef du gouvernement, leader parlementaire adjoint	Simcoe-Grey	Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC) Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Niagara Centre / -Centre	Kormos, Peter (ND)	St Catharines	Bradley, James J. (L)
Niagara Falls	Maves, Bart (PC)	St Paul's	Bryant, Michael (L)
Nickel Belt	Martel, Shelley (ND)	Stoney Creek	Clark, Hon / L'hon Brad (PC) Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
Nipissing	McDonald, AL (PC)	Stormont-Dundas- Charlottenburgh	Cleary, John C. (L)
Northumberland	Galt, Doug (PC)	Sudbury	Bartolucci, Rick (L)
Oak Ridges	Klees, Frank (PC)	Thornhill	Molinari, Hon / L'hon Tina R. (PC) Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre associée des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Oakville	Carr, Hon / L'hon Gary (PC) Speaker / Président	Thunder Bay-Atikokan	McLeod, Lyn (L)
Oshawa	Ouellette, Hon / L'hon Jerry J. (PC) Minister of Natural Resources / ministre des Richesses naturelles	Thunder Bay- Superior North / -Nord	Gravelle, Michael (L)
Ottawa Centre / -Centre	Patten, Richard (L)	Timiskaming-Cochrane	Ramsay, David (L)
Ottawa-Orléans	Coburn, Hon / L'hon Brian (PC) Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre associé des Affaires municipales et du Logement	Timmins-James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	Bisson, Gilles (ND)
Ottawa South / -Sud	McGuinty, Dalton (L) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition	Toronto Centre-Rosedale / Toronto-Centre-Rosedale	Smitherman, George (L)
Ottawa West-Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest-Nepean	Guzzo, Garry J. (PC)	Toronto-Danforth	Churley, Marilyn (ND)
Ottawa-Vanier	Boyer, Claudette (Ind)	Trinity-Spadina	Marchese, Rosario (ND)
Oxford	Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Vaughan-King-Aurora	Sorbara, Greg (L)
Parkdale-High Park	Kennedy, Gerard (L)	Waterloo-Wellington	Arnott, Ted (PC)
Parry Sound-Muskoka	Miller, Norm (PC)	Whitby-Ajax	Flaherty, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC) Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation / ministre de l'Entreprise, des Débouchés et de l'Innovation
Perth-Middlesex	Johnson, Bert (PC)	Willowdale	Young, Hon / L'hon David (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Peterborough	Stewart, R. Gary (PC)	Windsor West / -Ouest	Pupatello, Sandra (L)
Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge	Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet (PC) Minister of Finance / ministre des Finances	Windsor-St Clair	Duncan, Dwight (L)
Prince Edward-Hastings	Parsons, Ernie (L)	York Centre / -Centre	Kwinter, Monte (L)
Renfrew-Nipissing- Pembroke	Conway, Sean G. (L)	York North / -Nord	Munro, Julia (PC)
Sarnia-Lambton	Di Cocco, Caroline (L)	York South-Weston / York-Sud-Weston	Cordiano, Joseph (L)
Sault Ste Marie	Martin, Tony (ND)	York West / -Ouest	Sergio, Mario (L)
Scarborough Centre / -Centre	Mushinski, Marilyn (PC)		
Scarborough East / -Est	Gilchrist, Steve (PC)		

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

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

STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE

Estimates / Budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Gerard Kennedy
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Alvin Curling
Gilles Bisson, Ted Chudleigh, Alvin Curling,
Gerard Kennedy, Frank Mazzilli, Norm Miller,
John R. O'Toole, Steve Peters
Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

**Finance and economic affairs /
Finances et affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Marcel Beaubien
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Doug Galt
Marcel Beaubien, David Christopherson,
Doug Galt, Monte Kwinter, John O'Toole,
Gerry Phillips, Rob Sampson, Joseph Spina
Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

General government / Affaires gouvernementales

Chair / Président: Steve Gilchrist
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Norm Miller
Marilyn Churley, Mike Colle, Garfield Dunlop,
Steve Gilchrist, Dave Levac, Al McDonald,
Norm Miller, R. Gary Stewart
Clerk / Greffière: Anne Stokes

Government agencies / Organismes gouvernementaux

Chair / Président: James J. Bradley
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Michael Gravelle
James J. Bradley, Leona Dombrowsky, Michael Gravelle,
Bert Johnson, Tony Martin, Frank Mazzilli,
Wayne Wettlaufer, Bob Wood
Clerk / Greffière: Donna Bryce

Justice and Social Policy / Justice et affaires sociales

Chair / Présidente: Toby Barrett
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Al McDonald
Toby Barrett, Marcel Beaubien, Michael Bryant,
Garry J. Guzzo, Ernie Hardeman,
Peter Kormos, Al McDonald, Lyn McLeod
Clerk / Greffier: Tom Prins

Legislative Assembly / Assemblée législative

Chair / Présidente: Margaret Marland
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Julia Munro
Ted Arnott, Caroline Di Cocco, Jean-Marc Lalonde,
Margaret Marland, Julia Munro, Marilyn Mushinski,
Michael Prue, Joseph N. Tascona
Clerk / Greffière: Donna Bryce

Public accounts / Comptes publics

Chair / Président: John Gerretsen
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Bruce Crozier
Bruce Crozier, John Gerretsen, John Hastings,
Shelley Martel, Bart Maves, Julia Munro,
Richard Patten, R. Gary Stewart
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

**Regulations and private bills /
Règlements et projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Rosario Marchese
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Garfield Dunlop
Gilles Bisson, Claudette Boyer, Garfield Dunlop,
Raminder Gill, Pat Hoy, Morley Kells, Rosario Marchese, Ted
McMeekin, Bill Murdoch, Wayne Wettlaufer
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

CONTENTS

Thursday 20 June 2002

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Skills training	
Mr Curling	1139, 1147
Mrs Cunningham	1140
Mr Kwinter	1142
Mr Martin	1142
Mr Tascona	1144
Mrs Bountrogianni	1144
Mr Bisson	1145
Mr Galt	1146
Mr Kennedy	1146
Mr Ramsay	1147
Agreed to	1156
Audit Amendment Act, 2002, Bill 5, <i>Mr Gerretsen</i>	
Mr Gerretsen	1148, 1155
Mr Chudleigh	1149
Mr Phillips	1150
Mr Martin	1151
Mr Galt	1153
Mr Crozier	1153
Mr O'Toole	1154
Ms Di Cocco	1154
Mr Smitherman	1155
Agreed to	1156

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Workers' Memorial Day	
Mr Bartolucci	1156
Volunteers in Sault Ste Marie	
Mr Martin	1156
Services for the developmentally disabled	
Ms Mushinski	1156
Education funding	
Mr Bryant	1157
Sibbald Point Provincial Park	
Mrs Munro	1157
Occupational diseases	
Mr Gravelle	1157
Associations for community living	
Mr O'Toole	1158
Workplace fatalities	
Mr Ramsay	1158
Federal health spending	
Mr Maves	1158

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

Standing committee on public accounts	
Mr Gerretsen	1159
Debate adjourned	1159

ORAL QUESTIONS

Income tax	
Mr Phillips	1162
Mrs Ecker	1162
Education funding	
Mr Kennedy	1162
Mrs Witmer	1163, 1167, 1168
Ms Mushinski	1167
Mr Marchese	1168
Coal-fired generating plants	
Ms Churley	1163
Mr Stockwell	1163, 1165
Mr Bradley	1165
Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal	
Mr Prue	1164
Mrs Molinari	1164
Northern Ontario heritage fund	
Mr Dunlop	1166
Mr Wilson	1166
Violence against women	
Mrs Bountrogianni	1166
Mr Young	1167
Ms Di Cocco	1167
Private clinics	
Mrs Pupatello	1168
Mr Clement	1168
Veterans	
Mr O'Toole	1169
Mr DeFaria	1169
Community colleges	
Mrs Bountrogianni	1169
Mrs Cunningham	1170
Labour dispute	
Mr Johnson	1170
Mr Clark	1170, 1171
Mr Kormos	1170

PETITIONS

Post-secondary education funding	
Mr Bartolucci	1171, 1173
Education funding	
Mr Prue	1172
Ms Churley	1172, 1173
Mr Kormos	1173
Forest management	
Mr Conway	1172
School safety	
Ms Churley	1172
Doctor shortage	
Mrs Dombrowsky	1172
Audiology services	
Mr Bartolucci	1173, 1174
Ontario budget	
Mr Bartolucci	1174
Optometrists	
Mr Kormos	1174

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Time allocation, government notice of motion number 29, Mr Stockwell	
Mr Stockwell	1175
Mr Peters	1176
Ms Churley	1178
Mrs Johns	1182
Mr Cordiano	1186
Mr Kormos	1187
Mr Barrett	1188
Mr Bradley	1189
Mr Bisson	1192
Mr Baird	1193
Agreed to	1194

OTHER BUSINESS

Wearing of pins	
Mr Crozier	1156
Visitors	
Mr Stewart	1159
The Speaker	1159
Community Living Day	
Mr Hardeman	1159
Mr Gravelle	1160
Mr Martin	1161
Business of the House	
Mr Stockwell	1171
Notice of dissatisfaction	
The Acting Speaker	1175

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

Education funding	
Mr Marchese	1194
Mr Arnott	1195

TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Jeudi 20 juin 2002

AFFAIRES D'INTÉRÊT PUBLIC ÉMANANT DES DÉPUTÉS

Loi de 2002 modifiant la Loi sur la vérification des comptes publics, projet de loi 5, M. Gerretsen Adoptée	1156
---	------

MOTIONS ÉMANANT DU GOUVERNEMENT

Attribution de temps, avis de motion numéro 29 émanant du gouvernement, M. Stockwell M. Bisson	1191
Adoptée	1194