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of Ontario
Second Session, 38th Parliament

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

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 12 April 2006

Mercredi 12 avril 2006

Speaker
Honourable Michael A. Brown

Président
L'honorable Michael A. Brown

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

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Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 12 April 2006

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 12 avril 2006

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

MARK JOHNSTON

Ms. Lisa MacLeod (Nepean–Carleton): I'm honoured to stand before you today to offer a tribute for a fallen firefighter in my community. As I speak, hundreds of firefighters and thousands of citizens are mourning Mark Johnston, a respected firefighter, star athlete, community activist and family man from my hometown.

I and other Ottawa residents are heartened that Ottawa firefighters have organized a hero's honour to remember Mark Johnston. This final mark of respect will no doubt give Mark's devoted family, his wife, Rebeccah, and his children, Lahra and Trent, comfort that Mark's work in our community will long be remembered.

Mr. Johnston died on April 7, at the age of 43, after a lengthy battle with colon cancer.

A youthful football player with the Ottawa Sooners and the Gee-Gees, Mr. Johnston had an outstanding career with the Nepean and then Ottawa fire departments. Before passing, Mr. Johnston, along with fellow firefighters Brandon Stewart and Jim Andrews, organized the Quest for a Cure to raise money for the Ottawa Regional Cancer Centre and make cancer history.

It is only fitting that on behalf of residents in Ottawa and the members of this Legislature, I extend our condolences to the Johnston family for their loss. To quote the Bible, Matthew 5:4 says, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted."

SOCIAL SERVICES

Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I again want to raise the case of Sara Anderson of Sudbury, who is now in day 10 of a hunger strike to protest the broken promises of this government with respect to some of Ontario's poorest families.

This government promised to increase social assistance rates annually by the cost of inflation, a promise not met last year when there was no increase in rates at all. This government promised to fully end the clawback of the national child benefit supplement, but has failed to do that. This government has severely restricted access to

the supplementary diet benefit, which means people are going without nutritional needs to ensure good health.

The McGuinty Liberal government has failed Sara Anderson, her daughter, and other families like hers. She experienced a cut in her supplementary diet benefit under this government. Her daughter receives the national child benefit supplement from the federal government, and then the McGuinty Liberal government claws the overwhelming majority of that money back. After rent, Sara and her daughter have a little over \$300 a month to live on. There is no one here who could possibly argue that that is enough.

At a time when the McGuinty Liberal government recently had a \$3-billion windfall, there is no reason why promises like these have not been met. I call on this government to immediately help Sara Anderson and her family by living up to the promises you made to Ontario's poorest families.

SCARBOROUGH YOUTH

Mr. Bas Balkissoon (Scarborough–Rouge River): I am proud to inform the assembly that over the past month there appears to be a renaissance of the young people in my riding of Scarborough–Rouge River.

The youths of Scarborough–Malvern have been making the community proud of their achievements in hockey and basketball. Recently, Dr. Marion Hilliard Senior Public School in Malvern made the first cut and now remains in the top 50 communities competing in the CBC reality series for the title "Canada's Hockeyville." I would like to offer best wishes to them in the next round of competition.

The highest level of high school basketball competition in Ontario is the OFSAA quad A championships. To compete at this level requires commitment, dedication and hard work by both players and coaches. The final game in this year's competition had two Scarborough high schools vying for the crown. Scarborough–Malvern's Mother Teresa Catholic Secondary School Titans basketball team came away victors over the crosstown West Hill Collegiate Warriors.

These achievements show that given the opportunity and guidance, our youths will work hard toward making their lives better not only for themselves but also for their community as a whole.

Earlier today, the Minister of Health Promotion, Mr. Jim Watson, had the opportunity to personally congratulate the Ontario champions. I would like the assembly to join me in recognizing the Mother Teresa Titans, accom-

panied by their principal, coaches and school trustee Mr. Oliver Carroll. They are here with us today in the members' gallery on the east side.

MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE,
FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant):

The ag minister has found a distraction from the farm income crisis: Ping-Pong. She has become an expert in deflecting every ball from her side of the table, and she sees the federal government as her opponent.

Minister Dombrowsky supported the McGuinty cuts to agriculture even as Stephen Webster, Ontario dairy heifer exporters president, camped in his car in front of Queen's Park for the past month. She served up a budget cut of 21% and told farmers to go to Ottawa. So last week, new MPP Lisa MacLeod and I joined 10,000 farmers in Ottawa. The minister wasn't there. Federal ag minister Strahl wants to fix CAIS, but he cannot act unilaterally. The ball is back on Dombrowsky's side of the Ping-Pong table.

The March 28 Ontario Farmer reported that the Minister of Agriculture found it a "slap in the face" when farm leaders demanded more assistance from her. Ping-Pong again: The minister just drilled the ball of blame directly at farmers for daring to make their concerns known. That's out of bounds. This isn't about you, Minister; it's about farmers, your 52% cut to agricultural support and your government's refusal to show leadership on this file or any other file.

Minister, will you acknowledge that you've lost control of your ministry? You've lost control of the Ministry of Agriculture, and we ask you to resign to allow someone to speak up for farmers.

1340

AMATEUR SPORT

Mr. Dave Levac (Brant): I rise today to once again congratulate our many amateur athletes here in the province of Ontario. Amateur athletes train hard to be the best at what they do and represent us on local, regional, provincial, national and, indeed, international stages. Our government created the Quest for Gold lottery to help support these amateur athletes while they train for the Ontario Games, the Commonwealth Games, the Paralympics and, yes, the Olympics. Recipients can receive funding directly or through additional funding for coaches and training opportunities.

In my own riding of Brant, eight outstanding athletes have benefited from this government's investment: Alexander Radoman-Guillemette, Steve Piatek, Terri McNult, Katie Yamamoto, William Morgan, Adam McCabe, Tanya Hunks and Jenna Kayakjuak. These outstanding athletes deserve our recognition and our support. I thank them, their coaches and their families for the dedication,

sacrifice and commitment to each of their respective sports.

To qualify for funding, athletes, among other things, must be based in Ontario, commit to a proper training and competitive program and have a certified coach. Further information can be found on the website of the Ministry of Health Promotion: www.mhp.gov.on.ca.

The Quest for Gold lottery is a government initiative that invests in our youth, and indeed, it is an investment in our future. I thank each and every one of us, including all the members of this House, for supporting our amateur athletes.

HYDRO RATES

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

The hammer came down hard on Ontario residents and businesses today with the announcement of the McGuinty electricity rate hike: an unbelievable 16%. After breaking their promise to maintain rates of 4.3 cents per kilowatt hour, this Liberal gang has whacked Ontarians with a whopping 56% increase in electricity rates since taking office. This latest Liberal hand in your pocket is really going to hurt. People are asking how much more they can take of this tax-and-spend group. Where is the hard-working Ontario family to find the additional money to pay for this government's failed electricity policy? How is the low-income senior to cope?

This latest McGuinty massacre is just another consequence of their complete lack of understanding of the energy file of this province. These hikes are being driven by the irresponsible and foolish promise to shut down 20% of the province's capacity without any reasonable plan to replace it. The government is scrambling to find some way—any way—to fill the gap they have created, and they're willing to pay the providers whatever they want. Sadly, in the end it is the electricity consumer who pays the price for the Liberals' mismanagement.

On top of the effect of the McGuinty government leveling the biggest tax increases in history, the net effect of this latest announcement will come as very discouraging news to industries and business already reeling from the effects of this government's addiction to taxation and spending. It's high time that this government came clean with the people of Ontario and admitted that their energy plan is unworkable and unhealthy for the future of this province.

RENT BANK PROGRAM

PROGRAMME DE BANQUES D'AIDE
AU LOYER

Mr. Phil McNeely (Ottawa–Orléans): I rise in the House today to congratulate the McGuinty government and, in particular, Minister Gerretsen for introducing additional funding to the rent banks. This program is designed to help protect seniors and low-income Ontarians from eviction should they be unable to pay their rent

due to an unforeseen crisis. Last week, the government invested an additional \$4 million in the provincial rent program that will help those vulnerable Ontarians who must struggle to make ends meet or tenants who face temporary financial setbacks resulting from an illness, a job loss or a family emergency.

This announcement was great news for Ottawa. We received \$254,000 for our rent bank program, which will be available to the city immediately. In Orléans, this funding is especially welcome, as students, single-income families and seniors alike find themselves temporarily in need of assistance to avoid losing their homes. This is just another example of how the McGuinty government has put supports in place for people to use to get back on their feet. These supports are so important for Ontarians who are struggling with financial difficulties.

Monsieur le Président, depuis 2004, l'année où le programme était mis sur pied grâce à un investissement initial de 10 000 \$ répartis parmi les municipalités de l'Ontario, 4 177 ménages locataires ont reçu une aide financière et ont évité l'éviction. Maintenant, avec les fonds supplémentaires annoncés la semaine dernière, plusieurs individus vont recevoir de l'aide pour assurer que leur famille ne sera jamais sans logement.

With the additional funds announced last week, we can help even more households receive the help they require to ensure that their families will never be without a home.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Ms. Monique M. Smith (Nipissing): Last Friday I was delighted to welcome the Premier to my community, and while he was there, the Minister of Culture was announcing great news for our small rural and northern libraries. The Ontario government is helping to promote literacy and lifelong learning across the province with a \$6-million investment, and specifically in Nipissing, with an investment of \$84,000 into rural, remote, francophone and First Nation public libraries. That is great news for our smaller communities.

Families in our communities can go to the library for help with basic reading and writing skills. Our libraries recognize the challenges of living in small communities and will use this new funding for programs and services that meet the needs of local learners. The Bonfield Township Public Library received \$10,500, and Mayor Narry McCarthy was delighted. Lise Moore Asselin, at the Mattawa Public Library, told me it was like winning the lottery. Other area libraries that are benefiting from our contributions are the Dokis First Nation Public Library, the East Ferris Township Public Library, the Municipality of Callander Public Library, the Nipissing First Nation Public Library and the Phelps Public Library, as well as the Powassan and District Public Library.

This is great news for our small, rural, northern, francophone and aboriginal communities and great news for Nipissing—another great day.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. David Oraziotti (Sault Ste. Marie): I'd like to express my concern and that of my community with the US passport proposal and its effect on tourism and cross-border travel. The tourism industry is vital to my riding of Sault Ste. Marie and to our entire province. I implore the federal government House leader, Rob Nicholson, who represents the border riding of Niagara Falls, to educate Prime Minister Harper on this issue.

Last October, Mr. Nicholson said that he feared "the chilling effect" of the passport plan and its effect on tourism and the economy of border communities. He stated, "People who don't live along the border don't understand the border," and that "this is a truly Canadian issue, not just a Niagara issue. This can't wait for another summer season to come and go. I'm worried about the tourism we're losing right now."

I completely agree with the 2005 Mr. Nicholson, who has now, in 2006, remained silent on the issue despite the fact that Prime Minister Harper has raised the white flag to President Bush, saying, "It's an American law ... I don't think that there's any prospect of Congress [changing it]."

Premier McGuinty hasn't given up. He's taken over the job that Mr. Harper and Mr. Nicholson are supposed to do. Our Premier has been working with trade, commercial and tourism officials in the US to try to alter this law. He has won the support of the governors in Michigan, New York and Ohio, and he recognizes that the tourism industry is worth \$1.6 billion annually in Canada, even if the federal government does not.

I hope that government House leader Nicholson will regain his 2005 form and urge Prime Minister Harper, as he did Prime Minister Martin, to stand up for Canadian border communities, as Premier McGuinty is doing today.

MOTIONS

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader): I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding the membership of certain committees.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Agreed? Agreed.

Hon. Mr. Bradley: I move that the following substitutions be made to the membership of certain committees:

On the standing committee on justice policy, Christine Elliott replaces Elizabeth Witmer. On the standing committee on public accounts, add Lisa MacLeod.

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

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader): I move that, pursuant to standing order 9(c)(i), the House shall meet from 6:45 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on Wednesday, April 12, 2006, for the purpose of considering government business.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All in favour will say "aye."

All opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1351 to 1356.

The Speaker: Order. Members take their seats, please.

Mr. Bradley has moved government notice of motion 99. All in favour will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arthurs, Wayne	Duncan, Dwight	Patten, Richard
Balkissoon, Bas	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Peters, Steve
Bartolucci, Rick	Gerretsen, John	Peterson, Tim
Bentley, Christopher	Hoy, Pat	Phillips, Gerry
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Jeffrey, Linda	Pupatello, Sandra
Bradley, James J.	Kular, Kuldip	Ramsay, David
Broten, Laurel C.	Kwinter, Monte	Sandals, Liz
Bryant, Michael	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Smith, Monique
Cansfield, Donna H.	Levac, Dave	Smitherman, George
Caplan, David	Mauro, Bill	Sorbara, Gregory S.
Chambers, Mary Anne V.	McGuinty, Dalton	Takhar, Harinder S.
Colle, Mike	McNeely, Phil	Van Bommel, Maria
Crozier, Bruce	Meilleur, Madeleine	Watson, Jim
Delaney, Bob	Milloy, John	Wilkinson, John
Di Cocco, Caroline	Mitchell, Carol	Wong, Tony C.
Dombrowsky, Leona	Oraziotti, David	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Duguid, Brad	Parsons, Ernie	

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

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Kormos, Peter	Prue, Michael
Barrett, Toby	MacLeod, Lisa	Runciman, Robert W.
Bisson, Gilles	Martel, Shelley	Scott, Laurie
Dunlop, Garfield	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tabuns, Peter
Elliott, Christine	Miller, Norm	Tory, John
Hardeman, Ernie	O'Toole, John	Wilson, Jim
Horwath, Andrea	Ouellette, Jerry J.	Yakabuski, John

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 50; the nays are 21.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

WOMEN'S RIGHT TO VOTE

Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I wish to remind the House that the women of Ontario got the right to vote 89 years ago today with the passing of An Act to amend the Ontario Election Act on April 12, 1917.

ORAL QUESTIONS

HYDRO RATES

Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Premier. In the 2003 election campaign, you promised, "The current rate cap will be kept in place until 2006." Why have you permitted hydro rates to go up as much as 55%? You have zapped the people of Ontario with yet another of your broken promises. I don't know how they can believe anything you say. Why have you done that?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): I am pleased to receive the question and pleased to have this opportunity to speak to the House and to Ontarians generally about our electricity policy. I am very confident that we've made the right decision for the right reasons. It's not an easy decision for our government, but I'm convinced that it is the right decision for Ontarians.

We've decided effectively that we should all pay for the actual cost of producing our electricity. We didn't do that in the past and the result of that is visible in our monthly hydro bills, where there is a debt retirement charge where Ontario Hydro ratepayers are now making payments, principal plus interest, because in the past under—in fairness—governments of all political stripes, we did not pay for the actual cost of producing our electricity. I think most Ontarians would understand that that is just not sustainable. In supplementary, I'll speak to more aspects of this.

Mr. Tory: The question, of course, to the Premier was about why you have done, especially in the last three years between 2003 and now, something quite different than you told the people of Ontario you would do. You promised them something very explicit, as you were known to do on many files during the course of the election, to win votes, and then did something quite opposite.

We have your broken promises on hydro rates, we have your broken promises on coal plant shutdowns. The only thing that is well planned about your energy policy is that nothing is firm and nothing is well planned. We have a few windmills operating nowhere near capacity, we have a couple of sod-turning photo ops, but the fact of the matter is that all of the megawatts you remind us about all the time are sitting on paper in some bureaucrat's office in the Ministry of Energy.

The Windsor Star says, "McGuinty's energy plan will cost electricity consumers more money, do little for the environment while severely damaging the economy and create a climate of protracted uncertainty that will scare off investors and lead to devastating job losses." My question is this: When are you going to stop punishing hard-working Ontarians—

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Thank you. Premier?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: To state the obvious, I heartily disagree with the leader of the official opposition's

representation of our policy and its impact on Ontario. The fact of the matter is that we are the first government in a long time—and we would have preferred the other governments got their hands around this in the past—to take this issue on. We have the most aggressive new construction plan for new generation in North America. We have a very aggressive plan as well for renewables and promoting conservation.

I gather that what the leader of the official opposition is saying is that he believes that we should continue to control electricity prices through the government, and I gather he's also saying that we should cap rates. We have rejected that. That cost Ontario taxpayers \$1 billion because of what former Premier Ernie Eves did. We've chosen a better route. We think it's the most responsible route. We believe that we should be paying for the actual cost of our electricity.

Mr. Tory: The electricity consumers and the voters of Ontario certainly didn't hear much about this when you were campaigning for election, but it's fine now. The fact is that the Premier knows that Ontarians cannot trust him to live up to his words or his promises on energy, and they feel you can't be trusted to competently manage the energy file in this province.

You promised you would cap electricity rates and you broke that promise. You promised to close the coal-fired generating plants by 2007 and you've broken that promise, irresponsible as it was to begin with. You promised to take politics out of the energy sector. The major power consumers of Ontario say your plan is going to result in a 25% rate increase every single year. When are you going to start being straight with Ontarians about your electricity policy and stop zapping them with your increases and broken promises?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: Again, I gather from the leader of the official opposition's line of questioning that he would be in favour of capping electricity prices. I think it's important that Ontarians understand that distinction between me and him.

If we were to subsidize electricity rates as Mr. Tory is proposing, there is a cost connected with that. That money would have to come out of our schools, our hospitals, our social programs, our infrastructure; it would have to come from someplace. We have decided to do what we think is right in the circumstances. That's not necessarily an easy thing to do, but we think it's the responsible thing to do. We think that all of us, our generation, should pay for the actual cost of the electricity that we're buying. We think it's wrong to pass that cost down to our children or our grandchildren, as that government did in the past. We are going to live within our means. It's not necessarily an easy thing to do, but I'm confident and comfortable with the notion that Ontarians will support us on this.

The Speaker: New question.

Mr. Tory: My question again is for the Premier. I'll tell you, what this Leader of the Opposition is in favour of is Premiers keeping their word, starting with this

Premier—for the rest of the very short time that you will have available for you to do that.

Premier, what the people of this province—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. The Minister of Natural Resources.

Mr. Tory: My question to the Premier is this: Ontarians have said that they want an electricity plan that is reliable, affordable and responsible. You have promised that conservation is the key to our energy supply success going forward, and despite your minimal efforts, we continue to set new records for demand day after day, month after month, year after year. You have promised that your conservation czar, who is being paid in excess of \$300,000 a year, one of the rapidly increasing number of big-pay bureaucrats you have—we hear from him only once or twice a year. You've all but completely broken your promises on conservation. Mailing out coupons and wheeling this \$300,000 man out once in a while is not going to help Ontarians to deal with the shock of these bills.

Once the first and only cheque for \$125 has been cashed and sent right back to Hydro, what are the Hydro ratepayers going to do?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: In addition to recognizing the importance of having a responsible electricity pricing policy, which means that we all have to pay for the actual cost of production—I think most Ontarians recognize that that's the right thing to do—we as a government have also recognized that there are going to be some low-income earners who are going to need some special supports. I'm pleased that the Minister of Finance, working very hard, has been able to develop a program that we have just announced: It's \$100 million to assist 1.5 million low-income Ontarians with the rising electricity rates.

I want Ontarians to understand that while it is important that we assume responsibility for the actual cost of our electricity production, we recognize at the same time that some Ontarians are going to have a hard time with that. That's why we've put this particular program in place. That's why we're reaching out to low-income Ontarians and telling them, "We understand the nature of your challenges," and that's why we're going to help.

Mr. Tory: Of course, what you've done is provide for a program that will give people a maximum cheque of \$125, which they will then turn around and send straight back to Hydro, and that will cover the first couple of months. What do they do after that?

What you have managed to do—

Interjections.

The Speaker: I need to be able to hear the questions. It's not helpful when we have so much noise.

The Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Tory: What you have managed to do is to raise hydro rates by 55% since you took office, and you have managed at the same time to have a situation in which the CEO of Hydro One gets a bonus of \$500,000 without any justification, any criteria that you know about or that

you're able to share with anybody else. That represents another broken promise on your part to rein in these kinds of things or at least to make sure people understood the basis upon which they have it.

Premier, the \$500,000 cheque has been cashed, the people paying the bill for it still don't know why the cheque was given out in the first place, and you're jacking up their bills by 55%. Why are you doing that?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: The leader of the official opposition is telling us that, were he to earn the privilege of serving Ontarians as their Premier, he would cap their electricity prices. I have a fundamental disagreement with that. I just want to make that clear to him so that the people of Ontario understand that as well.

Let me tell you a bit more about our support program called the Ontario home electricity relief program. It's going to help low-income families, who will receive a rebate of up to \$120, while individuals would receive a rebate of up to \$60. Beyond that, we have also doubled our emergency energy fund to \$4.2 million. Last year, by the way, we helped some 2,700 households, with an average of \$467 in assistance.

Again, I repeat, as we move towards a responsible electricity pricing policy in Ontario, we will not forget those who have some particular challenges, and we will help.

1410

Mr. Tory: I think what the people of Ontario will be noticing is that you don't come in here once and be straight with them about the promises that you made and either say it was irresponsible to make those promises during the course of the election and that you had no intention of keeping them or that you've decided to break your promises and be straight with people about that. We've got a broken promise on the—

Interjections.

The Speaker: The Minister of Health will need to come to order.

Mr. Tory: Ontarians have been watching while you broke your promise on rates, they've been watching while you broke your promise on supply mix, they've been watching while you broke your promise to remove politics from the energy file, they've been watching while you broke your promise on conservation, and they've been watching while you broke your promise on perks for hydro executives. Why don't you start being straight with Ontarians and start today by telling them that you made promises that you shouldn't have made, that you made promises you had no intention of keeping, and then start to be straight with them on the rest of this file? People are paying more than ever for energy. It has nothing to do with your broken promises. They're paying at least enough to receive straight answers from you; why won't you give them?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: Again, I want to make it clear for all members of this House that there is a fundamental difference here in electricity policy. The leader of the official opposition is telling us that is part of his platform now. He is going to cap electricity prices in Ontario.

Ontarians are interested to learn of this news today; industry in particular. Those people we invite to invest in the creation of new generation in the province of Ontario will be particularly interested in that kind of approach.

We are moving ahead with a forward-looking, progressive, responsible electricity policy in the province. It means two things in particular: We think it's right for all of us to pay for the actual cost of the production of our electricity, but at the same time, we have an eye on those people who are up against it, who have low incomes and who are going to be particularly challenged by encountering the actual cost of electricity. That is why we put in place a number of programs to help them, and that's in addition to the number of conservation programs that we continue to put in place.

The Speaker: New question, the leader of the third party.

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): My question is for the Premier. Premier, this is a copy of your 2003 election document. It's called Hydro You Can Trust, The Ontario Liberal Plan for a Modern, Public Hydro. In this document, you made some very specific promises about hydro rates and protecting consumers. Do you remember what they were?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: Again, I gather the leader of the NDP is making reference to the same policy, which is supported by some members of his caucus, and I'll be glad to elucidate further for him in the supplementaries. We think we have the right policy in place. We think it's important that we pay for the actual cost of the production of our electricity. I'm mindful of the fact that electricity prices are going up throughout most of North America. We are all beset with rising energy prices, but I think one of those things of which I am most proud by way of distinguishing our government from so many others in North America is the support programs we are putting in place for our low-income households. We have put a couple in place now which I think will be very effective at helping low-income Ontarians manage these new, higher electricity prices.

Mr. Hampton: Well, what a surprise: The Premier wouldn't answer the question about his own election platform. I repeat, this was entitled Hydro You Can Trust, The Ontario Liberal Plan—and in it you say that you are going to cap electricity rates until 2006. You went further on Global Television. You said, "I think the most important thing to do at this particular point in time is to put a cap on those rates through 2006." Hydro You Can Trust. Premier, why should any Ontarian believe anything you say about hydro rates from now on?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: I'd ask the leader of the NDP if he might want to have a conversation with his newly elected representative, Peter Tabuns, who said at the time we lifted the cap, and I quote, "We fully support your proposal that the price cap removal be implemented in such a way"—in fairness to Mr. Tabuns—"as to minimize the impact on lower income Ontarians, and we look forward to the significant clean air benefits that will result from this..." That is exactly what we're doing. I

want to welcome Mr. Tabuns. There are some people who have support for our policy.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. I can wait. Order. Supplementary.

Mr. Hampton: Hydro You Can Trust. I didn't tell people that I believed in a rate cap. I told people the rate cap was very phony. But this is about your statement, Premier. This is about your statement that you were going to freeze hydro rates through 2006, and now you've raised hydro rates over the last three years by 55%. Struggling farmers, hard-pressed small businesses, modest- and lower-income families believed Dalton McGuinty. They believed him when he said, "Hydro You Can Trust." What's your answer to those people today, Premier, who trusted you, who believed you and now you've whacked them with a 55% increase, even though many of them can't afford it?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: I think Ontarians are pretty clear about our direction with respect to energy policy. I can understand why they'd be confused about the leader of the NDP's policy, because he voted against putting a price cap in place and then he voted against taking it off. So it's pretty hard to figure out where he's coming from.

We're putting forward what I believe is a responsible electricity pricing plan. It's mindful of the fact that electricity prices are going up, not just in Ontario but throughout much of North America. We believe we owe it to our children and grandchildren to pay for our own costs as we go along. At the same time, we also have a responsibility to help low-income households, so again we've put in place a couple of programs that will help our low-income earners in Ontario. We think that's the best of all worlds, something that gives us a sustainable program and something that is sustainable for future generations.

The Speaker: New question, leader of the third party.

Mr. Hampton: What I voted against is a Dalton McGuinty who says one thing before the election to get votes and then does something else after the election.

Premier, I want to ask you about the rest of your double standard, because at the same time you're whacking low- and modest-income families with a 55% hydro rate increase, we have people like Tom Parkinson, the CEO of Hydro One, getting a \$500,000 pay increase, courtesy of Dalton McGuinty, that hydro ratepayers will have to pay. Premier, can you tell all those people who are struggling to pay their hydro bill why Tom Parkinson is getting a \$500,000 pay increase and why they have to pay for that?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: We have good news for low-income Ontarians, and it's found within a couple of our new programs. Well, actually one is an older program—we just doubled the amount available through our emergency energy fund to \$4.2 million—and then there's our just-announced \$100-million package to assist 1.5 million low-income Ontarians.

Again, I wonder why the leader of the NDP has now become the champion of low prices because, if you check out page 244 of Public Power, Mr. Hampton says, on the

matter of pricing, "You will notice that I did not include 'low prices' as a defining principle of our future power system. 'Low' is a vague and highly relative term when it comes to power pricing." I want to welcome him now to lend his assistance to our support for low-income Ontarians when it comes to better managing their electricity prices.

1420

Mr. Hampton: Once again, the Premier doesn't want to answer the question, but I will try again. Low-income families, modest-income families, hit with a 55% hydro rate increase: You say you're going to help them. Do you know what your help amounts to? If their hydro bill goes up by \$60, you're going to give them \$10. Many of these people don't have money to pay the rent now. They don't have money to put food on the table now. You're going to take another \$50 out of them on a monthly basis.

At the same time, Tom Parkinson gets a \$500,000 pay increase. In fact, his total pay now is \$1.56 million, more than the CEOs of BC Hydro, Manitoba Hydro and Hydro-Québec all put together. Premier, tell me, why should low- and modest-income people, why should struggling farmers who are having trouble paying their bills now—

The Speaker: The question has been asked.

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: I think it's really important to put this in at least a little bit of perspective so we understand what's happening in North America with respect to electricity prices. Oddly enough, in Alberta they went up by 23% in January. Maryland will see prices going up from 35% to 72%; Massachusetts, 32%; Louisiana, 28%; New Hampshire, 29%; New York, 30%; New Jersey, 14%; Texas, 21%; New Brunswick, 13%; Nunavut, 15%.

We haven't been blessed by Mother Nature like Quebec and Manitoba, for example, so that we have access to plentiful amounts of hydroelectricity. But what we have is—

Interjections.

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: I think I've just discovered the answer to our energy shortage, Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you. You may want to pursue that later. Final supplementary.

Mr. Hampton: Premier, the reality is that Ontario hydro rates, if you compare them to Quebec, if you compare them to Manitoba, if you compare them to neighbouring states immediately to the south of us, are rising incredibly. It's making a huge difference for industry and it's making a huge difference for ordinary people across this province.

But I want to ask you this: a 55% hydro rate hike already in the first three years, and then you plan to put \$40 billion into expensive, unreliable and environmentally risky nuclear plants. Tell us, what is that going to do to hydro rates? What's that going to do to struggling farmers, small businesses, low- and modest-income people? Where is your plan for people, for industry, for jobs? Because you sure don't see it today. You see executive salaries—

The Speaker: The question has been asked. Premier.

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: To better inform the leader of the NDP with respect to rising costs in states that are close by, our competitor states, I repeat: In Maryland, they're going up between 35% and 72% this year; in New York, they're going up by 30%; in New Jersey, by 14%.

When you break this down to a daily rate hike, it ranges somewhere between 15 cents, I believe, up to 60 cents on a daily basis. I'm not trying to minimize that; it can be a real issue in our low-income households. But that's exactly why we have established a new program and we're investing \$100 million in that program. That is a significant investment. It's a real investment. It's there to help our lowest-income earners manage with these new and, yes, rising electricity prices and again, that's grounded in a responsible policy.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): My question today is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. On Monday of this week, you accused our leader, John Tory, of grandstanding in this House when he did his job in a responsible manner and questioned you on what your government is doing to stem the activity of guns and gangs outside of the GTA. Now we know why you were so mean-spirited in your response. Yesterday, the 2006-07 expenditures were released. It's on page 96. Minister, you are cutting a total of \$31.6 million from two key OPP units: investigations and organized crime, and field and traffic services. For your information, Minister, investigations and organized crime include the following: provincial weapons enforcement unit, child pornography section, the drug enforcement section, the anti-racket section and crime prevention.

Minister, how can you expect the Ontario Provincial Police to properly do their job when you continue to slash their budget in these key areas?

Hon. Monte Kwinter (Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services): I thank the member for his question. I just want to tell him that his information is not correct, and I just want to correct the record for him. Here's what we've given the OPP to date: the provincial weapons enforcement unit, \$2.3 million in additional funding announced January 5, 2006. There will be an additional 51 new OPP officers hired as a result of our 1,000 officers program; guns and gangs task force, announced October, 2005, 32 additional crowns and 26 officers; January 5, \$51 million for enhanced anti-gang strategy, including funding for a provincial ops centre to fight guns and gangs; \$5.7 million annually for the biker enforcement unit. We've also enhanced the program of the criminal investigation service of Ontario.

That is hardly cuts. You should understand: The budget of the OPP is determined by the OPP. We have given them more money than they've had in the past, and they determine how they allocate it. I'm just—

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Thank you, Minister. Supplementary.

Mr. Dunlop: Minister, maybe you should reprint page 96 of this book, then. Look at the numbers for yourself. We have witnessed this past weekend the most gruesome bloodshed in the history of our province. It was gang related, gun related and drug related. Minister, will you go back to the cabinet table and properly fund the provincial weapons enforcement unit, the child pornography section, the drug enforcement section, the anti-racket section and the crime prevention division so that the Ontario Provincial Police, that force, can do their job with the best resources possibly available to them?

Hon. Mr. Kwinter: I just listed for the member the enhancements that we've given to the OPP. You should understand that the reason I was so critical on Monday was that the OPP have done an incredible job. I was aware of information. They certainly had the resources that, as soon as they found out about this tragedy that took place, they were able to go in and, the same day after they performed the autopsies, they arrested the five perpetrators. Now, that isn't an indication that they don't have the resources to do it.

I have a great deal of faith in the OPP. They provide a fabulous service to the people of Ontario. We should all be proud of them, and they're getting adequate funding.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East): My question is for the Minister of Finance. Today's Ontario alternative budget says, "The McGuinty government should be embarrassed by its response to child care ... Ontario should be taking the lead on child care, moving forward with its own plan." Minister, the alternative budget shows that you actually have the money to make the right choice on child care. Instead, nine out of 10 families are still without a child care space in the province of Ontario. When are you going to keep your own promise and invest the \$300 million that you promised into child care in Ontario?

Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): To the Minister of Children and Youth Services.

Hon. Mary Anne V. Chambers (Minister of Children and Youth Services): I'm really happy to have the opportunity to address this. I'm still looking forward to the support of the NDP for our child care plan, but even without that support, I'm very pleased that our government has sustained every single space that has been created since the start of this 2005 agreement—every single space. That represents more than 50% of the three-year target that we will have achieved just halfway through that plan.

As evidence of support for what our government has done, Kira Heineck, executive director for the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, said with regards to our budget, "The move to create long-term stability for the development of the Best Start plan in the face of uncertainty of future federal policy is a sound policy goal and demonstrates—"

1430

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Thank you. Sit down, Minister. The member for Beaches–East York.

Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches–East York): Back to the Minister of Finance: We've seen that you're clawing back the money for children. You're also clawing back the national child benefit supplement from our poorest children. But there are also other things you're clawing back. You're clawing back the \$150 million in federal housing money. You're pocketing the money instead of building the affordable housing Ontarians need. On top of that, you're cutting the affordable housing program almost in half in your budget, from \$111 million last year to \$62 million this year.

Minister, how, in all conscience, can you ask the federal government for more money when you won't even spend the money they gave you on families, housing and the people who need it?

Hon. Mrs. Chambers: To the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: This government has an unequalled record in dealing with the vulnerable people of this province, and we're proud of it. We've started today.

When you raised electricity prices 43%, did you do anything for low-income people? No. When you were given choices, as a government, to deal with low-income situations, let's remember what you did: You raised the gas tax 30 times. You cut mental health funding by more than \$65 million. You presided over a doubling of the welfare rolls in this province. Your record is shameful and your question is shameful.

We have invested in increasing the minimum wage. We have raised social assistance benefits. We acknowledge that we want to do more and we're moving to do more. We have made permanent the incremental claw-back monies for the years we've been in power. We acknowledge there's more to do. The people of this province trust this government to deal with the vulnerable and—

The Speaker: Thank you. Sit down, Minister.

ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

Mrs. Liz Sandals (Guelph–Wellington): My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Your ministry put out estimates yesterday that showed that growth in the utilization of drugs is not as high as expected. If that is the case, why is there a need to change the system?

Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): We were pleased yesterday to table our estimates and, alongside those, to table an explanation note with respect to 2005–06. We had projected that our drug costs and utilization might increase by as much as 15%, but at the end of the day it came in around 10%. This, of course, is progress from a financial standpoint.

What we seek to do with the package of reforms that we'll be moving forward with tomorrow is to get the best possible value for the dollar for these important investments, to be able to enhance access for our patients. I think it's important to note that while the utilization rates

are lower than was projected, any growth that is occurring beyond that of economic growth does pose a threat for the sustainability of health care. Accordingly, we have at all times the obligation of doing the best we can with taxpayers' money and, accordingly, it's necessary to try and make sure that we achieve all of the possible benefits that come from the fact that we are a huge volume purchaser.

Mrs. Sandals: The minister has spoken about inefficiencies in the existing system. Could he provide more details on those inefficiencies?

Hon. Mr. Smitherman: As I said at the tail end of the first answer, one of the circumstances that has been challenging for us as we've sought to do this comprehensive review of Ontario's drug system is that there seem to be very many cases where the volumes that we're purchasing are not necessarily being respected. We think it's important to get respect for the taxpayers' dollars. The retail adage applies here: "How do we do it? Volume." But when we look very closely at the costs that we're paying for our drug product, we don't see at all counts a recognition for these extraordinary volumes.

The Ontario taxpayer, the Ontario health care system, is one of the largest purchasers of drug products to be found. We're a very, very good customer. We seek to be in a position to support those products which are truly innovative, and to do it faster and in a more transparent way. But fundamentally, we think it's important on behalf of the taxpayers of Ontario that we achieve all the benefit we can from the extraordinary volumes that we're purchasing. Accordingly, we think that we can gain greater efficiency on this score.

NATIVE LAND DISPUTE

Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant): To the Premier: As you well know, since February 28 a group of people have been occupying a subdivision under development just south of Caledonia and east of Six Nations. I've walked in to this occupation a number of times, and I can assure you that all concerned wish for a peaceful resolution. However, this standoff has been running for well over six weeks now. Premier, where is your leadership on this? What have you done to resolve this dispute?

Interjection.

Mr. Barrett: I ask for some respect for the people down there.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): I'll refer this to the minister responsible for aboriginal affairs.

Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for aboriginal affairs): I very much appreciate the question from the member. This is a very serious situation, as the member knows, and I want to assure him that the Ontario government has been on top of the situation. As we speak now, a meeting is going on with all the parties involved in this. We've had people on the ground over the last few days talking to the various parties in preparation for this meeting. There is a pro-

posal that is being considered today at this meeting among all parties. I have to be very hopeful that we're going to see a peaceful end to this situation.

Mr. Barrett: Premier, you have bounced this over to your minister responsible for aboriginal affairs. I'm assuming that when the minister makes reference to "all parties," he is also referring to the federal government and, I would hope, referring to the people who are right within that site. What I will say, however, is that all people locally see is the OPP. They see the provincial police; they don't see the RCMP or Canadian forces. They clearly have a perception that this is a provincial issue. I'm told by the federal government that this is a provincial issue.

Premier, this is right your own backyard: It's merely 90 minutes from Queen's Park. I can walk you in. I can walk you, Minister, in to the site. My point is, it has now been six weeks of strife and turmoil for all concerned. We've seen six weeks of you turning your back. The question is, when will you step up to the plate, take some responsibility and show—

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): The question has been asked. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Ramsay: First of all, I'd like to assure the member that the province has been taking a lead role in this. In fact, I've been in daily contact with Minister Jim Prentice of the federal government in regard to this. I have been speaking to the municipal official on the ground, Mayor Trainer, after her meeting with Jim Prentice in Ottawa on Friday.

I've also been talking to the developer, the two Henning brothers, the owners of Henco, and understand, and quite frankly I expressed the government's sympathy and concern for the financial situation that they're in, and said to them that we're also there to help them through this as we work to resolve this in a peaceful manner.

FAMILY FARMS

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): My question is for the Premier. In the election, you promised farmers a new generation of farm income supports. Tim Stratichuk and Julien Papineau are grains and oilseeds farmers from Essex county here today with a clear message for you and your government: Quit blaming Ottawa. Grains and oilseeds farmers need an immediate cash infusion and a risk management program.

Young farmers like Tim and Julien are the future of Ontario's food industry, yet your government is allowing them to be pushed off the lands because of punishing American subsidies. Premier, will you immediately implement a long-term, made-in-Ontario risk management program, as Quebec and Alberta have done, or do you subscribe to the view of your assistant deputy minister for agriculture, that the family farm is dead and only large commercial farm operations should survive?

1440

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

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs): I'm very happy that there are representatives from grains and oilseeds here in the Legislature today and that they will be able to hear from me directly with respect to this very important issue.

I have been at the table with your representatives since November and made it very clear that the province of Ontario agrees with your representatives that you deserve a multi-year strategy, in partnership with this government and the federal government. I've made it very clear as well—and I had the opportunity to meet with the federal minister this week—that there is an urgency in your sector that needs to be dealt with right away. Ontario is here. We're at the table, and we have dollars available. We are asking the federal government to come and talk with us so that we can provide the resources, provide the support that this industry needs and deserves today.

Mr. Hampton: Minister, you seem to say one thing here today, but your assistant deputy minister says very loudly and very clearly that he doesn't think there's any room for the family farm in Ontario anymore. And it's clear that, even with the announcements and reannouncements of your government, the \$80 million that went to grain and oilseed farmers didn't do the job. When you lose over \$100 per acre, your \$80 million works out to only \$5 to \$15 an acre, which means farmers are deep in trouble. Farmers need an immediate cash infusion of \$400 million to offset their 2005 farm losses.

My question again, Minister: Do you side with your assistant deputy minister, that there's no room for the family farm in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario, or will you follow leaders like Quebec and Alberta and immediately implement a long-term risk management program?

Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky: First of all, I would say to the honourable member, if you check the public record, you will very clearly see that this government has been there for all farmers, regardless of the size of farm, regardless of the type of farm and regardless of where they are located. Our government has provided \$125 million, because we recognize the immediate hurt in the agriculture sectors. We have been there, and we continue to be there. We have money at the table. We want to work with farmers. We want to accommodate what they've indicated very clearly they need, and that is a multi-year partnership so they don't have to come to the province and to the federal government every year. We want that partnership with the federal government; that's who has to come to the table. We're here.

EDUCATION

Mr. David Oraziotti (Sault Ste. Marie): My question is to the Minister of Education. But before I say anything further, I want to congratulate the minister on her appointment.

We've come a long way in reversing the damage done to the education system by the former Conservative government, but there is still much work to do. Over the past couple of weeks, we've been debating Bill 78, the

student performance bill, in which we're proposing amendments to the Education Act and the Ontario College of Teachers Act. These changes would, if passed, provide the legal support necessary to further support our government's goal of increasing student achievement. Minister, can you please tell me how this act relates to our overall plan to improve education?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Education, minister responsible for women's issues): I want to congratulate this member who, with a long history in the field of education, is known in Sault Ste. Marie as a great teacher. We're pleased to have him here as part of our caucus.

I am very pleased to speak about the bill that is in debate in the House now. This bill is about the modernization of education. This House doesn't see many education bills that are intended to move education forward. This bill is specifically related to student success. It is about the modernization of our systems, to be able to drive success for our students. The bill that we're debating in this House is, in fact, about our students. I hope the kids here in the House are Ontario students. The bill that we're talking about is one for you.

Mr. Oraziotti: As a former teacher who was subjected to the NDP's social contract and was continually attacked by the previous government, whose education minister set out to deliberately create a crisis in education, I can tell you that, from the parents, students and teachers I've been speaking with, our government is making huge strides in creating greater stability, with respect for all parties, to ensure that students in Ontario reach their maximum potential.

Minister, I also understand that this bill provides important changes for new teachers since the bill is proposing to eliminate the poorly devised teacher testing program. As we move forward with this legislation, what are we doing to ensure that teachers have the support and resources they need to ensure our students succeed?

Hon. Ms. Pupatello: I am happy to report that much work was done by my colleague who was Minister of Education. Minister Kennedy brought forward some significant improvements for teachers, and in particular for new teachers. What was created was the new teacher induction program. That is meant to replace what was largely seen as an ineffective, pen-and-paper test with real assistance to bring new teachers into the classroom. We are hearing very good reports about this and we look forward to seeing significant differences and improvements, once again as we strive for success for students in our classrooms.

TOURISM

Mr. Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington): My question is for the Premier. The people who work in Ontario's tourism industry are planning ahead for the summer season, but they are facing extraordinary challenges: higher electricity prices announced today because of the provincial government; a massive decline of visitors from the United States, partly because of the provincial

government; and high fuel costs, partly because of the provincial fuel tax—all of these factors under the control of the provincial government. As if this weren't enough, Ontario tourism is also challenged by the strength of the Canadian dollar and the looming prospect that our American visitors may soon need a passport to get back home.

We all know the provincial government is fixated on Toronto and the recent budget was Toronto-centric, and the Premier's response, when I last raised this, clearly illustrated that fact. But what about the rest of the province? Why is the government unwilling to assist the tourism industry outside Toronto?

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

Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader): As the member would understand, the operating budget for the purpose of promoting tourism right across the province has remained relatively the same over the years. He would recognize that substantial investments have been made right across the province. This morning, for instance, I was talking to people in Cornwall on the radio station about an \$80,000 investment being made there for the premier destination program. My parliamentary assistant, Jim Brownell, made the announcement yesterday about that. That's an example you'll see right across the province as strategic investments are being made.

Despite the fact that your leader keeps saying in the House that the government is spending too much money—he calls us spendaholics, that we should be retrenching—we are making strategic investments right across Ontario to ensure tourism continues to thrive. But what we will need is some substantial help from the federal government on the issue of border crossings. I know—

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Thank you. Supplementary.

Mr. Arnott: In recent days there has been a recurring pattern in this House, where the provincial Liberal government blames all its shortcomings on the new federal government. And here they go again.

Ontario's tourism industry is a \$21-billion industry, directly employing more than 213,000 people. It is because of insufficient support from the provincial government for marketing that many of those jobs are now at risk. Instead of pointing fingers at the new, accountable government in Ottawa, when will the provincial government take responsibility for what it can do to promote all of Ontario as a tourism destination of choice?

Hon. Mr. Bradley: First of all, I've got to say to my friend that I'm very much surprised he would spend his time in the House trying to defend the indefensible, that being the position taken by the Prime Minister on an issue, when asked about it after his visit to Washington. I have a friend, Rob Nicholson, who is the government House leader federally. Back in the fall of 2005, Rob Nicholson was saying exactly the same thing I am

saying. I notice that, as a result of this issue being raised in this House, in fact the external affairs minister has now denied the Prime Minister thrice, and is in fact on this occasion now saying that he's going to reopen the issue the Prime Minister was prepared to cast aside.

My advice to your leader is to pick up the phone and get onside of the passport issue, because that would have the most devastating effect on the province of Ontario of any initiative brought forward.

1450

DUFFERIN-PEEL CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity–Spadina): I have a question to the Minister of Education: Minister, last week your ministry ordered the Dufferin-Peel Catholic school board to make a series of cuts to the services they provide students. You demanded a concrete response by the end of the week, which was last Friday. Can you tell the House what, if anything, the trustees have told you?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Education, minister responsible for women's issues): I think we should rephrase and make the information quite accurate in terms of what has happened with the Dufferin-Peel Catholic board.

First of all, there is a longstanding, lively relationship between our ministry and this board as it pertains to their budgeting process. Over the course of the last several months, we have been working with them to speak with them. Ultimately, the former minister did send education experts, people with long legs in the education fields, to be able to walk in there and say, "Here's what we are going to look for," and "Here's what we found." The report was then tabled with the trustees, and this past Friday the trustees met. I am now looking forward to working with this board to resolve their issues.

What we have said publicly and privately, from my perspective from this chair, has been the same: We anticipate working closely together to resolve our issues.

Mr. Marchese: Minister, I know you have received several letters from the trustees. One of them says the following: "We have taken a stand. We have placed children first! It is not our job to make cuts that will result in an inferior, diminished system. By filing a deficit budget, we have said to the ministry, in the strongest way we have at our disposal, that current funding levels are not good enough."

They're saying they need money. The investigator, in his report, is very clear on this matter. When will you mend the Conservative funding formula so that schools and boards don't have to cut valuable education programs? When will you do that?

Hon. Ms. Pupatello: I want to say that what's very good about this board and our ministry is that we agree on one thing: that we are here for the kids in those classrooms and we are here for students' success, from JK right through to high school and beyond. That's what we're here for. We're dealing with a school board right

now that in the last year had a 3% increase in enrolment and a 19% increase in funding.

As a new minister for this portfolio, I look at this and I say, why are they in deficit? Let's have a closer look. We did that, and we do have questions, as do the parents who have children in this school board. I have said very clearly, as late as yesterday, they can choose to have a very public discussion, or they cannot waste that kind of time; they can roll up their sleeves and get to work, as I am in this ministry, because we are here for the kids. We're going to fix the problems with Dufferin-Peel Catholic board, both sides, working collaboratively—

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Thank you.

FISH STOCKING PROGRAM

Mr. Bill Mauro (Thunder Bay–Atikokan): I'd like to ask the Minister of Natural Resources if he could explain a press release from the member from Oshawa about chinook salmon.

I was in the House and heard the minister's answer to the member's question. Having read the member from Oshawa's press release, I'm wondering if the member from Oshawa was in the House to hear the answer.

What is the position of the government of Ontario on chinook salmon stocking, and is the member from Oshawa's press release inaccurate?

Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for aboriginal affairs): I'm very pleased to have this question to clarify the very erroneous press release that was put out by the member from Oshawa. I don't know why he is assuming what government policy is, but he certainly caused a lot of concern in the angling community by just inventing facts that aren't true. I'd like to clear it up by saying and assuring the member—

Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader): It may be an honest mistake.

Hon. Mr. Ramsay: I'm sure it was an honest mistake—that we are continuing to stock—

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): I'd ask you to withdraw the "not true" remark.

Hon. Mr. Ramsay: I withdraw. I would like to say that we are going to continue, as he would know as the previous Minister of Natural Resources, to stock chinook salmon in Ontario.

Mr. Mauro: I'm happy to know that the ministry is continuing to develop fish management plans that ensure ecological sustainability while at the same time enabling Ontarians to maintain fishing traditions.

Minister, can you please inform the Legislature how the ministry determines stocking levels for salmon or any stock species?

Hon. Mr. Ramsay: I know, as our member knows and as the ex-minister should know, that all fish rehabilitation, whether it be stocking or habitat improvement, is based on science. You also look at the factor of the number of prey fish that are in that water body. You want

to make sure, in this case, that the salmon, the top predator that it is, has enough food to sustain itself. That's why the levels of stocking are adjusted from year to year.

The member knows that. He should maybe check with us before he sends out these press releases.

PROPERTY TAXATION

Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie—Lincoln): I have a question to the Premier. In addition to the 56% increase in hydro prices of the McGuinty government and new taxes and user fees, residents across the province of Ontario are experiencing skyrocketing property assessment increases. Brian Maguire, who is the chair of CORRA—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Stop the clock. We have only about five minutes left. Let's keep it calm. The member for Erie—Lincoln.

Mr. Hudak: Brian Maguire, the chair of CORRA, the Confederation of Resident and Ratepayers Associations, representing taxpayers here in the city of Toronto, has joined us in the gallery here today. He would like to know if the Premier will support the Homestead Act, Bill 75, which will cap property assessment increases at 5% per year.

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

Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): First he starts the fire, and now he wants to try to put it out. That's what this is all about. You should listen carefully to what he's saying, because this is a gang that in eight attempts—not one, not two, not three, not four, not five, not six, not seven, but eight attempts—you did nothing.

Now the member proposes to cap assessments. Let me tell you what that could mean. That could mean that low-growth areas will be paying a higher relative portion of property taxes than high-growth areas. That's why you and your government rejected it not once, not twice, not three times, not four times, not five times, not six times, not seven times, but eight times. You were wise to do that, because this system is like that old carnival game where you hit something down here and something pops up over there. Things popped up eight times for them. We're going to get it right.

The Speaker: Thank you. Supplementary.

Interjection.

The Speaker: Minister, sit down. Supplementary.

Mr. Hudak: That was a disappointing but sadly unsurprising response from the Minister of Finance, a Minister of Finance who, as energy minister, presided over massive spikes in energy prices, was a member of a cabinet that increased taxes substantially on working families, seniors and young people, and who is obviously out of touch with the challenges faced by seniors and working families in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario.

Minister, you know it's not just CORRA but other ratepayer groups, including the Federation of North Toronto Residents Associations, the Federation of Urban

Neighbourhoods—Ontario, the Canadian Snowbird Association, CARP, among other organizations, which have come fully behind the Homestead Act, which would put a cap on assessments at 5% a year and finally bring some relief.

I know the minister supports higher taxes and higher fees. Surely, Minister, you'll have some mercy for Ontario taxpayers and dare to back this act—

The Speaker: The Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: We increased the seniors' property tax credit, and what did he do? He voted against it. In this budget, we have an enhancement to the seniors' property tax credit, and what did you and your leader do? You voted against it. That gang made a mess of the assessment system in this province.

1500

We had a thoughtful report from the Ombudsman, with 22 recommendations that we're working on. We're not going to make the mistakes that they made. We're not going to try to pretend that you can fix this easily. What we're going to do is make the right decisions. We're going to make decisions that will serve the interests of all ratepayers across this province. In the words of your own local newspaper, "Hudak acknowledged ... the problem is an unexpected result of the legislation" he and "his fellow Conservatives pushed through."

Our commitment—

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister. Stop the clock.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. I can wait. New question.

GAMING CONTROL

Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches—East York): My question is for the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal. Minister, on September 16, 2005—some six months ago—I wrote to your office seeking assurances that you would honour a commitment that there would be no additional racetrack slots beyond those that had been promised for Picov Downs and Quinte Exhibition, and I also sought your assurance that there would be no further commercial or charity slots anywhere else in Toronto.

To date, six months have gone by, and you have never written me back. So I am asking you here in this House today: Will you honour the commitment that was made by your predecessor, the now minister of economic renewal? Will you honour what he had to say from January 20, 2005, and ensure that there will be no further gaming available in east Toronto? The people of my riding want to know that—

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): The question has been asked. Minister?

Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy Government House Leader): I want to thank the member for the question. My colleague Minister Cordiano announced on January 20, 2005, the government's policy around gaming expansion. That remains the government policy.

I find it somewhat passing strange that it was he and his party which introduced casino gambling into the

province of Ontario and that he now rails against this particular move. Our government isn't only satisfied with that; we've taken a significant responsible gaming message and a responsible gaming program to make sure that we are achieving the revenues for the people of Ontario to invest in health care, education and infrastructure, but we're also ensuring that we are there to help, to support, to research, and to provide the necessary services to those who find themselves in some crisis, working with my colleagues in health and in health promotion. We've taken a balanced approach—

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister. This completes the time allocated for oral questions.

PETITIONS

FREDERICK BANTING HOMESTEAD

Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe–Grey): “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Sir Frederick Banting was the man who discovered insulin and was Canada’s first Nobel Prize recipient; and

“Whereas this great Canadian’s original homestead, located in the town of New Tecumseth, is deteriorating and in danger of destruction because of the inaction of the Ontario Historical Society; and

“Whereas the town of New Tecumseth has been unsuccessful in reaching an agreement with the Ontario Historical Society to use part of the land to educate the public about the historical significance of the work of Sir Frederick Banting;

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

“That the Minister of Culture endorse Simcoe–Grey MPP Jim Wilson’s private member’s bill entitled the Frederick Banting Homestead Preservation Act so that the homestead is kept in good repair and preserved for generations to come.”

Obviously, I agree with the petition, and I’ve signed it.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity–Spadina): “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

I support this petition.

TUITION

Mr. Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario Liberal government has announced it will increase tuition fees in September 2006;

“Whereas the additional funding announced last year will be phased in over five years and will barely bring Ontario post-secondary education funding to the national average;

“Whereas this reality will mean that the climate of underfunding will persist for at least another four years and will consequently undermine efforts to improve the quality of education;

“Whereas tuition fees have already increased significantly over the past 15 years...”

It goes on to identify some other areas. It says:

“We, the undersigned”—all students—“support the Canadian Federation of Students’ call to extend the tuition fee freeze and petition the Legislative Assembly to:

—freeze or reduce tuition fees for all students studying in Ontario, effective September 2006; and

—expand access to Ontario’s new up-front grant program for all students in need, including continuing education, part-time, full-time, college, undergraduate and graduate students.”

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge): I have a petition provided to me by the Stirling Heights long-term-care centre of 200 Stirling Macgregor Drive in Cambridge, Ontario, with hundreds of signatures of good citizens of Cambridge, and directed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

I agree with the contents of the petition and sign my name thereon.

TUITION

Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity–Spadina): I have thousands of names on these petitions, and they read as follows:

“Whereas the Ontario Liberal government has announced it will increase tuition fees in September 2006;

“Whereas the additional funding announced last year will be phased in over five years and will barely bring Ontario post-secondary education funding to the national average;

“Whereas this reality will mean that the climate of underfunding will persist for at least another four years and will consequently undermine efforts to improve the quality of education;

“Whereas tuition fees have already increased significantly over the past 15 years while the quality of education has declined;

“Whereas some have argued that rising tuition fees are acceptable because the government has increased student aid funding, but this new investment will be clawed back through tuition fee increases; and

“Whereas the vast majority of Ontario families will not qualify for the new Ontario grant program and will have to rely on debt to pay the higher fees; and

“Whereas giving Ontario families more access to debt to pay higher tuition fees is not a long-term solution to the funding crisis in Ontario’s colleges and universities;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, support the Canadian Federation of Students’ call to extend the tuition fee freeze and petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to:

“—freeze or reduce tuition fees for all students studying in Ontario, effective September 2006; and

“—expand access to Ontario’s new upfront grant program for all students in need, including continuing education, part-time, full-time, college, undergraduate and graduate students.”

I support this petition.

1510

LONG-TERM CARE

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel (Lambton–Kent–Middlesex): This is a petition sent by my constituents at Bab-

cock Community Care Centre in Wardsville, and their families.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

I’m pleased to present this to the page from my riding, Jenna Zwambag, who lives about 10 minutes away from Wardsville. Thank you, Jenna.

Mr. John O’Toole (Durham): In the last few weeks, I, like many other members, have visited many nursing homes: Community Nursing Home in Port Perry, Fosterbrooke Long Term Care Facility, Strathaven and Marnwood. On their behalf, I’m reading a petition into the record, and I’m going to shorten up the petition.

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

I’m pleased to support that in respect of the constituents of the riding of Durham.

CANCER TREATMENT

Mrs. Carol Mitchell (Huron–Bruce): I have 116 signatures on this petition.

“Whereas Ontario has an inconsistent policy for access to new cancer treatments while these drugs are under review for funding; and

“Whereas cancer patients taking oral chemotherapy may apply for a section 8 exception under the Ontario drug benefit plan, with no such exception policy in place for intravenous cancer drugs administered in hospital; and

“Whereas this is an inequitable, inconsistent and unfair policy, creating two classes of cancer patients with further inequities on the basis of personal wealth and the

willingness of hospitals to risk budgetary deficits to provide new intravenous chemotherapy treatments; and

“Whereas cancer patients have the right to the most effective care recommended by their doctors;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to provide immediate access to Velcade and other intravenous chemotherapy while these new cancer drugs are under review and provide a consistent policy for access to new cancer treatments that enables oncologists to apply for exceptions to meet the needs of patients.”

I affix my signature to this petition.

LONG-TERM CARE

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

I am pleased to present this petition on behalf of long-term-care centres in my riding. I was pleased to meet with the administrators of those centres last week. This particular one comes from Valley Manor in Barry’s Bay.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): We need to remember that we are just to read petitions, not editorialize about them. I want to tell all members at this point that it’s not necessary to read the entire petition. You can paraphrase it. We have a lot of members who want to put petitions in every day, and if we do that, we get more petitions in. So thank you very much.

Mr. Yakabuski: Thank you very much.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

I support this petition. I affix my name to it, and I will send it down to the table with Leah.

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay): I have a petition here in regard to the skyrocketing price of gas. It reads as follows:

“Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

“Whereas high gas prices are causing great hardship” to Ontario “motorists, small business owners and industry;

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

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

“We petition the Ontario government to immediately pass Bill 74, the Keep Your Promises at the Pump Act, which would make the Liberals keep their promise to freeze gas prices for 90 days ... the Keep Your Promise on the Gas Price Watchdog Act, which would force the Liberals to keep their promise to establish a gas price watchdog to protect consumers....”

I have signed that petition, and I know Mr. Bartolucci will do the same.

COMMUNITY MEDIATION

Mr. Mario G. Racco (Thornhill): “Support Community Mediation

“Whereas many types of civil disputes may be resolved through community mediation delivered by trained mediators, who are volunteers who work with the parties in the dispute; and

“Whereas Inter-Cultural Neighbourhood Social Services established the Peel Community Mediation Service in 1999 with support from the government of Ontario through the Trillium Foundation, the Rotary Club of Mississauga West and the United Way of Peel, and has proven the viability and success of community mediation; and

“Whereas the city of Mississauga and the town of Caledon have endorsed the Peel Community Mediation Service, and law enforcement bodies refer many cases to the Peel Community Mediation Service as an alternative to a court dispute; and

“Whereas court facilities and court time are both scarce and expensive, the cost of community mediation is very small and the extra expense incurred for lack of community mediation in Peel region would be much greater than the small annual cost of funding community mediation;

“Be it therefore resolved that the government of Ontario, through the Ministry of the Attorney General, support and fund the ongoing service delivery of the Peel Community Mediation Service through Inter-Cultural Neighbourhood Social Services.”

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): I have a petition signed by a great number of residents in Oxford county. It’s to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario government already fully funds 93% of faith-based schools in Ontario, but the remaining 7% receive no funding, solely because they are not Catholic;

“Whereas the United Nations Human Rights Committee ruled in 1999 and again in 2005 that this arrangement is discriminatory and violates basic international human rights law that Ontario formally agreed to uphold;

“Whereas all three parties represented in the Legislature support Catholic separate school funding, as guaranteed by the Constitution of Canada, so that the only fair and viable solution to the discrimination is to extend funding to the small religious minorities that are currently excluded;

“Whereas the Supreme Court of Canada has ruled that Ontario has the constitutional power to provide funding to non-Catholic faith-based schools;

“Whereas Ontario is the only western democracy that fully funds faith-based schools of one religion to the total exclusion of all other religions, while all other provinces except the Atlantic provinces fund faith-based schools and have thriving public school systems;

“Whereas the cultural survival of the affected minority groups is at stake; and

“Whereas faith-based schools produce responsible and productive citizens; and

“Whereas the Multi-Faith Coalition for Equal Funding of Religious Schools in December 2004 submitted to the Minister of Education a detailed proposal for the funding of non-Catholic faith-based schools in a manner that is fair and accountable and protects and enhances the public interest;

“We call on the Ontario Legislature to pass legislation to provide equitable funding in respect of all faith-based schools in Ontario without religious discrimination and without any reduction in funding for public education, with accountability requirements and standards in place to ensure that the public interest is safeguarded.”

I present this petition on their behalf.

1520

ORDERS OF THE DAY

CLEAN WATER ACT, 2006

LOI DE 2006 SUR L'EAU SAINE

Ms. Broten moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 43, An Act to protect existing and future sources of drinking water and to make complementary and other amendments to other Acts / Projet de loi 43, Loi visant à protéger les sources existantes et futures d'eau potable et à apporter des modifications complémentaires et autres à d'autres lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Minister?

Hon. Laurel C. Broten (Minister of the Environment): I'm very pleased to rise today to begin the debate

on second reading of Bill 43, the proposed Clean Water Act. I'll be sharing my time with my parliamentary assistant, John Wilkinson, the member for Perth–Middlesex.

Our government is breaking new ground in safeguarding our drinking water with our proposed bill. This unprecedented piece of legislation sets prevention above all else as the fundamental principle.

As the honourable members know, water is the most critical element in supporting life. Millions of people around the world struggle to find and bring home safe, clean drinking water for their families, and it's one of the toughest challenges that they meet in their everyday life. In the developing world, some 80% of all diseases are related to water, and each and every year, millions of people die either from dehydration or poor sanitation. Most are young children under the age of five.

Water quality may well be the single most pressing environmental issue in the world today. Yet, as a society, we have not always invested the attention and level of respect that this life-sustaining resource deserves. Here in Ontario, with more than a quarter of a million lakes, rivers and streams, we are blessed with a great abundance of water. We all share a responsibility to protect these resources and to ensure that people everywhere, all across our province, have drinking water that is safe, clean and reliable; our health and well-being depend on it.

We need to be confident that the water coming out of our taps is safe to drink and that the water sources we rely on are clean and free from contamination. Unfortunately, we've seen what happens when that public confidence is lost. No one can or should ever forget Walkerton and those terrible events in May 2000, when the town's water source became contaminated. Seven people died and thousands became seriously ill. Some may suffer lifelong health problems, particularly kidney problems, as a result.

Sadly, although the water contamination in Walkerton was clearly one of the worst situations in modern Ontario history, it was not an isolated incident. People from the township of Beckwith and the city of Kitchener have also witnessed first hand what happens when their drinking water sources become contaminated. We must be vigilant in protecting people against these kind of threats, just as we must carefully monitor new and emerging threats, such as lower water levels related to global warming.

People in communities large and small throughout this province have told us loudly and clearly that preventing contamination and ensuring clean, safe drinking water is critical. This bill, the proposed Clean Water Act, answers their call.

If Bill 43 is passed by this Legislature, the people of Ontario will have some of the best-protected drinking water in the world.

Si le projet de loi 43 est adopté par l'Assemblée législative, les résidents de l'Ontario auront l'une des eaux potables les mieux protégées au monde.

I'm proud to point out that it is with the wholehearted support of environmental and health experts that I bring

forward this bill for second reading. In the words of Dr. Greg Flynn, president of the Ontario Medical Association, who endorses this bill:

“Clean water is a fundamental determinant of public health. The Walkerton tragedy showed us that Ontario’s drinking water sources needed better protection from pathogens and other contaminants. The Clean Water Act is good preventative medicine for Ontario.”

The proposed Clean Water Act focuses on prevention. Preventing a problem from happening in the first place is far better than attempting to fix it after the fact. It would empower local communities to take steps to prevent potential threats to local drinking water from becoming serious problems. It would do this by requiring a source protection plan for each watershed in Ontario.

The proposed Clean Water Act is locally driven. We believe that local authorities are in the best position to determine the protection measures that are needed, how these measures should be carried out and who should take responsibility for leading them.

The proposed act will be based on the best available science. If we are going to effectively protect our drinking water, we need to know how much we have in reserve, how it replenishes itself and what threats exist to our supply.

I want to highlight section 13 of the proposed act, where we indicate that local source protection committees will have to prepare assessment reports that provide unprecedented detail on the local water supply. I invite members to review subsection 13(2), which sets out the requirement for water budgets, clear identification of vulnerable areas, intake protection zones, and lists of activities that could be seen as threats. This would be the first time in Ontario’s history that watershed protection would be based on comprehensive, scientifically sound information. What’s more, section 98 of the bill would give my ministry rule-making authority to ensure that a high level of detail is provided in assessment reports. Our government has committed over \$67 million to fund source water protection research by conservation authorities and municipalities.

We also want to encourage voluntary action to resolve threats to drinking water. We believe that the vast majority of identified threats should be able to be resolved by local officials and landowners. Our government has consulted widely across the province on the issues of water quality and water quantity, and we have heard broad community-based agreement that we need to do a better job of protecting our water resources, from the source to the tap.

Over the past two months, I have travelled throughout the province talking to people about our proposed Clean Water Act. I’ve met with mayors, farmers and conservation authorities as well as health authorities, water experts and, of course, citizens, and I have absorbed what they have had to say about the protection of their drinking water. My ministry officials have also consulted widely with community leaders and local associations to gather additional input on water quality and water quantity issues. Based on all of the good and thoughtful

advice we have gathered, I am confident that we are taking the right steps to protect Ontario’s drinking water with the proposed Clean Water Act.

Throughout my discussions over the past couple of months, local stakeholders have consistently expressed support for the principles enshrined in the proposed bill. People right across Ontario agree that water protection must be viewed as a shared responsibility and that local action is the most effective means of ensuring our water quality and supply.

Les Ontariens et les Ontariennes conviennent que la protection de l’eau est une responsabilité qui doit être partagée et que les mesures prises à l’échelle régionale constituent de la meilleure façon d’assurer la qualité de l’eau et son approvisionnement constant.

Perhaps most importantly, everyone I spoke to agreed that we need an approach that is both practical and workable and one that makes sense in all areas of the province in both rural and urban communities. I’ve had the opportunity to meet with a number of farmers and people who live in smaller towns, and I’ve learned that they’re still somewhat uncertain about what the Clean Water Act would mean for their land and their communities. We’ve heard their concerns, and we take them very seriously. We know that some of the very best stewards of our land and water are our farmers. We need to ensure that the legislation we propose supports the viability and prosperity of farms and small towns right across rural Ontario.

I want to say what a tremendous privilege it was for me to meet so many community leaders from Sudbury to Windsor and many points in between, and I want to assure them and the members of this House that we have listened carefully to what they have told us. I’d like to tell this Legislature about a few of the people I met during my travels and what they told me.

In Windsor, I met with Tom Wilson and representatives from Essex region and I heard that because of a spill upstream, Windsor had to close its water intakes, and the whole community came very close to using up its water reserves. In Sudbury, I met with Deputy Mayor Ron Bradley and heard about the detailed studies they’ve undertaken there to protect their main water resource, Ramsey Lake, against municipal and industrial pollution. In North Bay, Mayor Victor Fedeli told me about the excellent collaboration to protect and monitor Trout Lake. I learned from Marc Charron, the chair of the local conservation authority, about the challenges of protecting a watershed that runs from Lake Nipissing all the way to the Ottawa River. In Guelph and Hamilton, I met with students and researchers who will shape our next generation of public policy around water protection. It was a wonderful opportunity to hear their insights and feel their enthusiasm. In fact, it was a powerful reminder that our actions must be based on sound science.

1530

In the Kitchener area, I spoke with Peter Krause and the Grand River Conservation Authority, along with regional chair Ken Seiling, about the unique challenges

they face. In their region, they are working to find a balance when rapidly growing communities and industries are located close to wellheads. I look forward to visiting Walkerton and Ottawa in the weeks ahead, and hearing from their local officials and water experts with respect to their views of the legislation.

Staff from my ministry had the opportunity to meet with Ontarians in communities such as Woodstock, Ottawa, Orillia, Thunder Bay and Schreiber, and they have relayed back to me what they have heard. Everywhere we went, the message came through clearly: Clean water is a priority for the people of Ontario. Clean, safe drinking water is not only vital to the health and well-being of Ontarians; it is vitally important to Ontario's economic health and prosperity.

In essence, the proposed Clean Water Act is good for Ontario, and it is especially important for smaller rural communities. Bill 43 will give local communities the authority to make the decisions that affect their local water resources, and to take action to protect the sources of their water from contamination. It is important to highlight that local water protection plans would be developed through an open and transparent process and would include input from local residents, businesses and stakeholders.

Section 7 of the proposed Clean Water Act requires that each source protection authority would establish a drinking water source protection committee for their area. Section 7 also clarifies that it's my responsibility to appoint committee chairs, after considering the local authority's recommendations. This means that both the committees and their chairs will be the best, most knowledgeable and most representative group we can bring together with the common goal of ensuring safe, clean drinking water for their community.

Section 99 of the bill also requires that we would have the ability to make regulations governing the appointment of source protection committees. This is extra added assurance that each community will be fairly represented. Most importantly, it will help us replace the old piecemeal approach to water protection with something broad and inclusive. Where threats to local water sources are identified, the proposed Bill 43 would ensure the development of practical local solutions. Those solutions would give all the residents peace of mind and greater confidence in their water supplies.

However, I think it is important to point out that the proposed Clean Water Act is just part of our government's larger commitment to protecting the environment. That commitment rests on the belief that a clean environment is essential to a healthy and prosperous Ontario. Protecting our water resources includes safeguarding our Great Lakes and other inland waters, as well as preventing pollution and contamination from seeping into our lakes, rivers and aquifers.

All Ontarians deserve to have safe, clean, affordable water, and that requires protecting the natural sources of our drinking water and upgrading the essential infrastructure that delivers clean water to our taps. That is

why our government is putting into action a comprehensive water plan based on the belief that we must defend our resources now to protect them for the future.

We are strengthening protection for the Great Lakes through the Great Lakes Charter annex, a historic agreement that our government signed with the governments of Quebec and of our US neighbours, which bans water diversions and promotes conservation of water on both sides of the border.

We are also addressing the need to develop a water investment strategy for upgrading and replacing our province's essential water infrastructure to make sure that the water coming from our taps is clean, plentiful and affordable.

Our water plan is comprehensive and encourages good water practices by supporting our shared responsibility to protect and conserve our critical water supplies. Ontario's water plan to safeguard our water resources depends on the commitment and support of our many partners. Specifically, I want to recognize my colleagues, the Ministers of Public Infrastructure Renewal, of Natural Resources, of Northern Development and Mines, of Municipal Affairs and Housing, of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, of Finance and of Economic Development and Trade. Each minister and each ministry is working in support of a progressive, strategic and comprehensive approach to preserving Ontario's water. Together we are working on an integrated water strategy, a plan to invest in Ontario's aging infrastructure and respond to the needs of all Ontarians for safe, sustainable and affordable drinking water.

Our commitment also involves working with municipal leaders and conservation authorities to protect and conserve drinking water for people in every community across Ontario.

Our government recognizes that in order to protect water, we need to have strong standards, clearly defined roles and responsibilities and the appropriate resources to do the job right. We need to both protect our water resources and deliver safe, clean, affordable drinking water. The proposed Clean Water Act will protect the quality and quantity of our natural water. We will ensure that lakes, rivers and aquifers are protected against contamination and depletion.

La loi proposée protégera la qualité et la quantité de notre eau naturelle. Nous nous assurons ainsi que nos lacs, nos rivières et nos aquifères sont protégés contre la contamination et le tarissement.

With our proposed Clean Water Act, I am convinced that we are taking the right steps for protecting and sustaining the quality of Ontario's water. We're taking action on the priorities and concerns of the people of Ontario. Whether you're a property owner, a parent, a farmer, a small business person, the mayor of a big city or a small village, we all want the same thing: clean, safe drinking water.

I call on all members to join me in supporting second reading of Bill 43. The House has a tremendous opportunity, starting today, to protect the future well-being of

millions of Ontarians. Surely that is one of the fundamental reasons that we are all here.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Michael Prue): Further debate.

Mr. John Wilkinson (Perth–Middlesex): I want to join my friend the Minister of the Environment and thank her for allowing me to share with the leadoff today on second reading debate and to have this opportunity to outline for honourable members some of the highlights of Bill 43, the proposed Clean Water Act.

If passed, this legislation would play a major role in fulfilling our government's commitment to ensuring that all Ontarians have access to safe drinking water. We believe, along with Justice O'Connor, that protecting water at its source is the first vital step in providing safe drinking water, and to ensure that protection we need to prevent pollution from contaminating the lakes, rivers and aquifers that supply the water that comes out of our taps.

We also recognize that the best way to plan and carry out water protection measures is by viewing the entire watershed as a single, coherent entity. Moreover, the science of watershed protection has come a long way over the years. We are committed to capturing the benefits of that new knowledge by ensuring that Ontario's source water protection efforts are planned and implemented on a sound scientific basis.

We believe that everyone in Ontario has a right to safe, clean drinking water. We also believe that protecting our water resources is very much a shared responsibility. But because each community and indeed each watershed is unique, we are convinced that local authorities are in the very best position to plan and implement the protection measures that will ensure the safety of our drinking water. These fundamental principles are at the heart of Bill 43, the proposed Clean Water Act. Under the provisions of this groundbreaking legislation, local communities for the first time would be required to work together to create and implement plans that protect the sources of their drinking water.

If passed, Bill 43 would accomplish three key objectives: First, it would require local communities to look at any activities that could threaten their water quality and water quantity and to take action to reduce or remove the threat. Second, it would give local authorities the power to take preventive measures before a threat to the local water supply can develop. This means that municipalities would be able to take action on both existing and potential threats to local water sources. Third, the proposed legislation would allow the whole community an opportunity to participate in the process of developing practical and effective solutions through full and public consultation on every source protection plan.

1540

Under Bill 43, public consultation will be a critical component of the source protection framework.

I said that local water source protection plans must be based on sound scientific principles. To ensure that communities have the resources that they need to complete

the required studies, we, our government, recently committed a total of \$67.5 million to support this work. This money will flow to municipalities and conservation authorities over the next five years, with \$51 million devoted to technical studies by local communities, and \$16.5 million targeted to conservation authorities. This is to ensure that they have the staff and resources needed to carry out their new responsibilities under the proposed bill.

Members should also be aware that Bill 43 provides guidelines on the process that communities would follow as they prepare their local source water protection plans. This process has a total of five steps.

In step one, conservation authorities and municipalities would map out local drinking water sources that need special protection. This would include areas immediately around wellheads and water intakes, recharge areas and vulnerable aquifers.

In step two, local authorities would use a science-based approach to measure and to assess the threats to water quality and quantity. These threats would then be ranked according to their relative importance. Local authorities would make decisions on threats that require immediate action, threats that simply need to be monitored to ensure that they don't become more serious, and threats that can simply be managed over time through voluntary action.

In step three of the process, local partners would be brought together to deal with threats identified. Municipalities would work with conservation authorities, farmers and other property owners, industry, community groups and the public to develop workable, effective plans to deal with each threat.

In step four, the local water source protection plans would be put into action. Implementation would be accomplished through official plans, zoning bylaws, provincial approval schemes, municipally issued permits, negotiated responses and, of course, voluntary actions. Under the proposed bill's provisions, local municipalities would receive special authority to take action on significant threats to their most vulnerable drinking water supplies. The province will also bear responsibility to take action where necessary.

Finally, step five involves careful and continuous monitoring of each source protection plan. This would be done to measure the effectiveness of the actions taken to protect drinking water sources and to ensure that local drinking water supplies continue to be adequately protected into the future.

As members can see, municipalities and conservation authorities right across this province will have key roles to play in the process proposed under Bill 43. Municipalities would generally be responsible for developing and implementing risk management strategies for local supply wells and intakes. They would also have the authority to require local businesses, farmers and other property owners to take steps to remove any significant threats to local drinking water that were identified. Conservation authorities would play a broader coordinating

role. They would generally be responsible for source protection planning across the entire watershed, and for supporting local municipalities by gathering information, assessing and ranking threats to the water supply, consulting, and integrating municipal strategies into larger watershed plans.

I think it's important to point out that the source protection planning process anticipated by Bill 43 would involve not just local governments and conservation authorities, but all other members of the community as well. For example, industry, businesses, farmers, rate-payer groups and other property owners, public health units, environmental and community groups, along with members of the public, would all be actively involved in helping to finding solutions early on in the process through representation on local source protection committees.

The proposed Clean Water Act would also help protect the Great Lakes, the source of drinking water for the majority of Ontarians. In addition to local authorities preparing source protection plans around the Great Lakes, they will have to consider existing agreements related to the Great Lakes basin, such as the Great Lakes Charter Annex and the Great Lakes water quality agreement. The minister would also have the authority to set specific source protection targets for the Great Lakes to ensure that plans met the goals of these agreements. Moreover, the proposed bill would also allow the Minister of the Environment to create committees to provide advice on matters affecting the Great Lakes, as needed.

Our government's approach to safeguarding Ontario's drinking water involves better protection of water resources, better water treatment measures and better overall program delivery. The Clean Water Act is the most recent action we are proposing in this regard. But we have also implemented a broad range of other important measures, including tough new rules for managing nutrients and for permits to take water; major new investments in scientific studies needed to support local source protection efforts; significant improvements to the regulation of drinking water systems; strong new standards for drinking water quality and testing; and a range of measures to improve the operation of municipal water systems.

As the minister has pointed out, Bill 43 is part of our government's commitment to implement all of the recommendations of the Walkerton inquiry. The proposed legislation will support the 22 recommendations on drinking water source protection from the part two report. I distinctly recall that each and every one of the three political parties represented in this House campaigned as one in the 2003 election on the combined promise to implement all of the recommendations of His Honour Justice O'Connor.

We're at a crossroads. The question is not whether we should have a multi-barrier approach to protect our most valuable sources of drinking water; the question is not whether we should do this; the question is: How? This debate is about the implementation. This debate culminates over a year's worth of consultation, perhaps even

years of consultation, within the affected sectors about what the best way is for our government to proceed. We've listened to those comments, and they're all incorporated in this bill.

I want to say to our friends on the other side, particularly the critic for the official opposition, the member for Haliburton–Victoria–Brock, and to one of our newest members, Mr. Tabuns, the new member for Toronto–Danforth—we welcome you here, sir—that we as a government look forward to working with all interested parties in Ontario and in this House to come up with the very best piece of legislation so that we leave, collectively, a legacy that says that when a problem was presented to us and we all agreed to take action, we got down to work and worked collegially and effectively to have the very best protection. I believe that the people of Walkerton demand no less from us.

In conclusion, I believe that this is important legislation and that it will have many benefits for people and communities throughout Ontario today and into the future. It is something that our children and grandchildren will be proud that we all worked on together in this Legislature. If passed, Bill 43 would give the people of Ontario some of the very best-protected drinking water in the world. So I'd like to call upon all members of the House to join me and the minister in supporting this very necessary legislation.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments? The member from Victoria–Haliburton–Brock.

Applause.

Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton–Victoria–Brock): Oh, a round of applause from the opposition.

I'm pleased to speak today, and I will speak at length, about the Clean Water Act, Bill 43. We certainly all are in agreement that clean water is essential. Having a nursing background, I know the minister mentioned that it is essential for health in Ontario. So I think all of Ontario as a province, and all citizens want to see clean water brought forward.

1550

It's been over two years that the government has had to bring in some type of clean water protection act. It was to be source water protection, but it's called the Clean Water Act. That's fine. There have been consultations, and we appreciate some that have gone on. I appreciate the minister telling us where her next travels will take her, because it is important to consult. I think everybody agrees with the general purpose of clean water.

We've met and discussed a lot with municipalities, farmers and landowners, and there's a lot of concern with the bill. This is part of our parliamentary process, to have discussion, and there is a lot of discussion going on. I have a lot of papers with feedback on the bill, and I will be going into that in detail later.

There are questions with the conservation authorities and questions with the municipalities as to what roles they will have. There are questions about who's going to identify, where the science is directly going to come from, source protection authorities that are in place, areas

that don't have conservation authorities, the source protection committees, what composition they will be made up of, and will all the stakeholders be able to be represented equally? These are large areas of the province.

So we have a lot of concerns, a lot of feedback. We're glad to hear the government's going to be responsive, because we're going to be counting on it. We want them to go out on committee and have a lot of public hearings, because this bill is not going to work if we don't have the full co-operation of everybody in Ontario.

Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West): As always, it's a pleasure to follow my colleague and friend the member for Perth–Middlesex, and also the Minister of the Environment, both of whom I've had the pleasure of knowing for quite a few years.

Bill 43 does three things. It focuses on three simple things: placing the impetus on local communities for source water protection; very importantly, allowing municipalities to take action before a problem happens; finally, ensuring there's a component of public consultation in source water protection.

Bill 43 makes it essential that communities take proactive steps not merely to fix problems when they happen, but to identify threats and to address issues before they inevitably turn into problems, which is as it should be.

Here in the GTA, we're home to about one in every six Canadians. Our population density is now about the same as that of Chicago. Our margin for error, therefore, with about six million people within an hour's drive of where I'm now standing, is not as wide as it is in other parts of Canada. So, too, our risk of harm to our source water and to the Great Lakes is also greater.

The minister understands that when it comes to safe water, the buck stops at her desk, and she has moved not merely to do the right thing but to do it in the right way. That's why the measures in Bill 43 are locally driven. That's why they're consultative and flexible.

Bill 43 lays out very clearly who is accountable for source water protection. Its provisions are transparent and fair. They'll be phased in over time, and they're based on science. In the event of a conflict between a municipal regulation and this bill, it resolves the conflict in the provision that best protects source water protection, and that's one of the reasons I support Bill 43.

Mr. John O'Toole (Durham): I look forward to the member from Victoria–Haliburton–Brock, our critic on this file. I know the work she's done both out of caucus and in caucus, trying to keep us abreast of this long-awaited debate on this bill. But listening to the minister, I believe that you have been slow to respond to the work done from the Walkerton inquiry, the O'Connor report. During our time, there were 50 recommendations that were implemented, and it seems that, after two and a half years, you have barely moved the measuring stick up to 60.

I think the people of Ontario need to see this as an important debate that needs to have full disclosure. It's a very complex, very technical bill. If you look at it, I

believe there are five general sections, each broken into about 15 subsections. A lot of it is through regulation.

I want to put something on the record here. Today we saw in Ontario the Ministry of the Environment—in fact, the Premier—trying to justify switching the focus on the energy file. If you look at the energy file and you look at the water file—water source, water protection—these are eminently critical resources to the health of both the persons and the economy of the province. If you look closely at this bill, you can see that you are going to pay through the nose. It will become clear during the debate how much more they are going to impose on the people of Ontario.

I think that doing the right thing—all members of the House will support the importance of safe, clean drinking water. That discussion is not debatable. But some of the implementation measures and the imposition of property rights issues need to be examined clearly and well understood, because they're going to be paid for by the people of Ontario. In many cases, they're going to say, "Source water protection means that in the middle of my farm they're going to map out an area that I'm no longer able to farm. How are they going to compensate?" This needs to be carefully watched. I'm sure the public will be kept well aware of what the impending disaster is on this file.

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel (Lambton–Kent–Middlesex): I'm certainly interested in this bill. As a farmer, I hear very often from the farm community about some of the concerns. I certainly remember very clearly what happened after Walkerton. There were a lot of tragic deaths. There were families whose lives changed completely, and there was a farm community that was also threatened. There was a farmer who immediately had the finger pointed at him, and he needed to have a defence. His defence was that he had taken all the proper precautions. He had done the right work. He had recorded his actions, and he was able to prove that his actions were not directly responsible for what happened. But every farmer in that area and across the province learned a very valuable lesson that day. They learned that they need to be protected from those kinds of accusations. They learned that they need regulations and they need to be able to work with the communities to protect the water source. So farmers now have an opportunity to work with the government, to work with the ministry, to work among themselves to protect their local communities.

Everyone wants safe drinking water. I want safe drinking water on my farm. I have a well. I take all kinds of precautions to make sure that it's protected. I know that a municipal well needs to have the same protection. This bill will take care of that. It will also allow farmers the opportunity to take the proper steps and to be able to defend themselves from any accusation that they may have done something that would contaminate the water source.

We certainly have a lot of things that need to be discussed, and that I know the minister will continue to discuss with the farm community. The farm community is justifiably concerned; we always are. Farmers naturally

expect that changes will impact them negatively, but I want to assure them that this minister is listening and that will not happen.

The Acting Speaker: In reply, the Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Ms. Broten: I want to thank the members for Victoria–Haliburton–Brock, Mississauga West, Durham and Lambton–Kent–Middlesex for joining me in the debate today. I want to just spend a few minutes talking about what we have done to get ourselves to this place. I would have to say, and I think there's some agreement around the House, that it is a complex piece of legislation. The Ministry of the Environment wanted to ensure that all key stakeholders participating in source protection had an opportunity to have their say.

We considered the recommendations of Justice O'Connor. We released a white paper to describe the proposed planning components. We undertook province-wide consultations. We posted the draft source water protection legislation, followed by a public comment period. We established two expert committees—the technical experts' committee and the implementation committees—and we received advice with respect to the implementation of source water protection.

We undertook a series of round tables to solicit feedback on the white paper, the draft planning legislation and, most recently, on the proposed Clean Water Act. We heard from the OFA, from OFAC, from stakeholders in many sectors. Between December 5, 2005, and February 3, 2006, Bill 43 was posted on the environmental registry for public comment, and over 90 submissions were received. Perhaps that gives this House a bit of a flavour of what we have been doing over three years. We have taken consultation very seriously. We know that there are questions that remain to be answered. I look forward to answering those questions in this debate.

I also want to talk just a little bit about how important this is. I want to tell Ontarians that since we took office, 60 of 121 recommendations from Justice O'Connor have been implemented. So we are moving forward in that regard.

We look forward to this debate. We all, collectively, need to protect clean, safe drinking water and deliver it into Ontarians' homes right across the province. This will be a good debate, and it's important for the next generation.

1600

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Ms. Scott: I am pleased to rise today to speak on Bill 43. I will be sharing my time with the member from Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant, who is just coming into the Legislature now. I appreciate his contribution. He was the environment critic for a year and a half or so, and then I picked up the portfolio. He has done a lot of work in regard to the preparation of this Clean Water Act and following it along with the people in Ontario.

It was mentioned that a lot of the initiatives brought forward by this government were built on some of the groundwork that was put in place by the previous

government in response to the O'Connor report. The previous government implemented 50 of its recommendations through the Safe Drinking Water Act. Two and a half years later, the current government has increased that number, but only by 10.

In the second part of his report, Justice O'Connor made 22 recommendations to address source water protection. This bill, the Clean Water Act, is intended to address those recommendations. Unfortunately, it's not clear that this bill or this government is going to succeed in fulfilling those recommendations, and the structures and processes contemplated by this bill point to some very real problems in the implementation.

I heard the minister mention some of the groups she has met with, and those are the people I'm going to speak about this afternoon too. They have some genuine concerns that we need to address. We, as the PC Party here, are hoping that this is going to go out to extensive consultations, because we have to get it right.

To bring people up to date, I know there has been talk about it, for those just tuning in at home. I'll say welcome to my mom, who just got the legislative channel.

Hon. Ms. Broten: My dad and your mom.

Ms. Scott: Okay, the Minister of the Environment's dad and my mom are watching, so we have to behave correctly, because we do get reprimanded if we are out of line as we are watched daily.

To turn to the debate, the Clean Water Act has three main purposes: It will require municipalities and conservation authorities to map the sources of municipal drinking water supplies; it will direct local communities to monitor any activity that could potentially threaten water quantity or quality and take action to reduce or remove that threat; and it will give local authorities the power to take preventative measures before a threat to water can cause harm.

When this bill went out, there was a lot of concern; it has been on the environmental review—I can't think of—

Interjection.

Ms. Scott: The environmental registry. Thank you.

The role of the conservation authorities: They have been given money from the MNR so that they will take assessment and work with municipalities. For the people at home, I think that conservation authorities—they have a lot of great members; I have family members who are on conservation authorities—could be more accountable. I think that accountability would ensure that the conservation authorities look at the big picture and support provincial land use objectives, not just conservation.

This is a quote from the Role of Conservation Authorities:

“Conservation authorities' board members should be elected at large by the public. Electing board members would ensure conservation authorities operate in an open and transparent manner with the objective to enhance the quality of life for Ontarians.”

The Ontario Home Builders' Association had some input on this in September 2005:

“The OHBA recommends that the Ministry of Natural Resource and conservation authorities have a mandate to protect the environment and to support balanced growth. OHBA further recommends conservation authorities be more accountable to the public through the election of board members. Conservation authorities should be subject to provincial land use objectives and not just conservation.”

Certainly the municipalities are genuinely in support of the good intentions about the sources of water. They believe they have substantive issues. The municipalities are key to this, because they are going to take all this over. This is a five-year process, and they are going to take over implementation of this. They want more of a role in the areas of policy development and implementation, and having a substantive, but apparently unfunded, mandate. They’re concerned that this is going to proceed with the development of a new, complicated layer of decision-making to deal primarily with a land use matter, whereas the municipality has plans in its area under the Planning Act.

What complicates matters more is the apparent desire by the provincial government to take over source water protection plans as local instruments of local creation. There’s very limited representation on the source protection committees. They want to ensure that they’re going to have representation, that they’re going to work together, because they control the Planning Act; they have the official plans in their riding. So there are a lot of things.

We’ve talked about this legislation being brought forward in regulations—a lot of it we’re not sure of yet. Municipalities are concerned about what their role is going to be. They feel that they don’t have any real decision-making powers on the source water protection committees, and it’s directly affecting them. So they just want to be consulted. I think that’s what they’re saying. There is a consultant role, and they need to be more empowered in the decision-making process.

From this, the minister has the powers, and they’re concerned that it’s all just going to be from the top down. I know there has been talk about municipalities’ involvement, but they’re not really having the hammer to deal with it. So the municipalities are concerned.

Source water protection around the wellheads and intake areas, which is critical for municipal responsibility: “The proposed legislation does not read that way and is therefore an issue of serious concern.” This is AMO that’s saying this. It says, “The province, by virtue of its decision-making in all aspects of the source water protection plan development, has the full ‘ownership’ of the source water protection plan.

“While municipalities have no ... role in decision-making at the front end of the process, they are required to take on new and substantive responsibilities of implementation.” As a minimum, if they’re requiring municipalities to be the implementers, “then surely they should be given every opportunity to endorse or approve requirements at every opportunity in the process.”

With integration with the existing legislative and regulatory framework, they’ve got concerns about “a clear, clean slate” upon which a new regime can still remain. “The specific work leading up to the development of the SWPP”—the source water protection plan—“and the approval of the plan are all responsibilities of the province, and as such, the logical conclusion is that the ownership ... is apparently that of the province.” But again, “when dealing with land uses, municipalities have the land use planning authority.” They’re saying it’s another erosion of their authority.

I talked to many municipalities, and they’ve passed motions—the city of Kawartha Lakes, my municipality—with respect to the Clean Water Act, 2005, that the financial costs of required studies be funded by the province within funds announced by the province in December 2005; that an appeal mechanism be established for MOE decisions on source protection plans; that financial assistance be provided to municipalities to implement and enforce source protection plans; and that the act provide immunity to municipalities for any financial loss to landowners caused by the enforcement of source protection plans.

I think that goes back to the \$67.5 million that was transferred to the conservation authorities to undertake the studies and hire the staff. So there are lots of dollars for bureaucrats to assess this, but there aren’t dollars for stewardship and implementation, on which the municipalities, and some landowners to a certain extent, are acting.

There’s a lot of grey area in the assessment, and nervousness and concerns. I know the member from Perth–Middlesex is over there, and he has a rural riding. I’m sure he has heard very similar concerns.

The municipalities are going to be asked to take on more of a role. And they’re asking, “Where are the funds to do this?”

Official plans are going to have to be amended to comply with source protection plans. They cannot undertake any work or undertaking that would conflict with the source protection plan. They cannot pass any law that would conflict with the source protection plan. So they’ve got some really good concerns, and I know that when we go to committee and we have the chance for clause-by-clause amendments, we’re going to have the ear of the government on that.

1610

The Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario made a submission. Overall, as we all do, they support the stated objective of Bill 43. “We note, however, the magnitude of the task that Bill 43 proposes to assign to municipalities.” They’re concerned about “participating in multi-stakeholder drinking water source protection committees; contributing to the preparation of assessment reports; contributing to the preparation of source protection plans; negotiating amendments to source protection plans where requested by the ministry; participating in hearings on source protection plans”—the list is quite extensive—and “the financial

and staff resources required to deliver on these responsibilities.” That’s what they’re saying.

“The government has not provided estimates of the total cost of implementation and has only committed \$120 million over five years to pay for the planning phase.... We do not believe that the bill should proceed until the government has undertaken a full costing and made a commitment to provide municipalities”—this is third-party; this is the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario. “Municipalities need to have a clearer idea of the framework in which they will be operating....”

The region of Waterloo on Bill 43: While it “provides the legislative basis for protecting local drinking water supplies, it needs to: provide additional information on land uses and activities that will be considered significant drinking water threats and on the risk decision-making process; develop procedures to resolve conflicts between source protection plans and areas of provincial jurisdiction; and allow greater flexibility for municipalities to assess, develop plans, and apply for timing extensions for their municipal drinking water intakes. The region will request that the province provide funding....”

I think it’s a pretty consistent message out there from municipalities. They’re being asked to take on a lot.

Barrie Councillor Barry Ward, an executive member with the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority, some questions still need to be addressed in this matter. “The provincial government ... has made it clear that conservation authorities will be at the fore.” I know that we’ve asked. In the city of Kawartha Lakes, the municipality wanted some more information before they apply for the funding, and for the conservation authorities to do the assessment. Again, it just shows that municipalities are really nervous, and I want to highlight to the government, how is all this going to shake out, shall we say. It is over a five-year process.

Interjection.

Ms. Scott: It’s okay. You can do a two-minute hit later to do that.

A lot of municipalities have concerns here, as do a lot of the agricultural and industrial communities. The Durham, York, Victoria Landowners Association feels it’s going to have “devastating economic and social consequences for rural landowners.”

It “gives enormous powers to the conservation authorities,” which are unelected and hence “unaccountable to the public.

“The authority of the source protection committee to prohibit activities which have heretofore been lawful activities, without a meaningful appeal mechanism....”

The thing is, it is the appeal mechanism that is of concern, because they are going to be notified of their assessment. This is what I hear, and I hope it comes through that when land is being assessed, people will be notified.

But we’re saying that you’ve got to have some more hearings. People have got to have an appeal process and plan. They can have limitations on their land use where

the plan is not in place but the assessment is there. The agricultural community has had many struggles, a lot of government regulation has been brought in and consultation hasn’t been done to the extent it should have been to impact how it’s going to affect their lives. We need a strong rural Ontario for a strong Ontario.

For the assessment to be done—this is just the way it is; they don’t have enough of an appeal mechanism. It goes to the minister. The minister has the control. In land use planning, where is the OMB’s role? There was an appeal to the OMB. Is there going to be a farm tribunal? Are members of the board involved?

They just want to have fair hearings. Farmers and rural people are all good stewards of the land, but they need the resources and the tools to keep the environment as good as they want it to be and as good as we all want it to be. They do not need more regulations without consultation and without resources. They’re very upset with this bill and their interpretation of it. That’s why we need to go out and hear from as many people as we possibly can so we can get it right.

I want to read from the Ontario Farmer article. The title is “Clean Water Act a Big Challenge for Farmers and Landowners.”

The new “Clean Water Act is likely to pose serious financial consequences for farmers and landowners who happen to own land in sensitive” areas.

Chris Attema did a presentation to delegates of the annual meeting of the Ontario Cattlemen’s Association and said it could create “a problematic nightmare scenario” for landowners in the province.

“Wellhead production zones would require farmers in those zones to have a permit to farm. Pathogen and chemical management zones would be established as well as two-hour time-of-travel zones in sensitive watershed areas. The bottom line is that a whole swath of farmland could potentially be covered under these zones.

“Anyone with land in these ... zones could find themselves with a new raft of rules that could permanently change the way they farm or use their land. Making matters worse is that the legislation provides no evidence that the province would offer compensation to landowners who could potentially lose their livelihoods in some cases.”

That is it: They’re going to lose the use of a lot of their land and there’s no compensation for that.

“Attema quoted legal advice given to the” Ontario Cattlemen’s Association “on the implications of the Clean Water Act. The act the advice said “will have serious consequences for landowners operating to effectively expropriate lands without any apparent compensation.”” We see confrontation and uncertainty.

I hope that the Liberal government is not creating more of a divide in Ontario. Is it going to pit rural against urban? We don’t want that to happen. I can’t imagine the members opposite really want that to happen.

Interjection.

Ms. Scott: I’m quoting from concerned citizens, John. We don’t want that to happen because we need to work together collectively.

The Ontario Farm Environmental Coalition, whom the minister mentioned, has consulted with her. They represent the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario, AGCare and the Ontario Farm Animal Council. They have some real concerns with the bill. They have a lot of concerns with definitions that are within the bill, and rightly so. They feel that "Several items need to be specifically defined in the legislation rather than in the regulations. Terms like 'highly vulnerable aquifer,' 'risk assessment,' 'wellhead protection area,' 'drinking water threat,' 'adverse effects,' etc."

They've already come up with amendments. They're getting ready to go to committee. "Rather than using the term 'significant drinking water threat,' they would advocate using language that recognizes threats that are managed versus those that are not. They would like the bill to include a definition of 'risk' that is contained in the technical experts committee's report," on which I know they had a member. We're not going to get into technicalities today, but they have researched. They are prepared to offer amendments and solutions.

They also have concerns with the source protection committees in the legislation because the committees, after the plans are brought up, may disappear. "They would like to see the role of the committee increased and to have the source protection authority provide technical support" to the source protection committees and for the source protection committee "to submit materials to the minister or director.... The source protection committee should be allowed to have the work completed by the SPA reviewed by a third party if necessary." Again, reasonable things that are brought forward that should be looked at.

"Consultation: There is no provision to require consultation with landowners that are impacted by the legislation. The provisions for consultation and submissions of concerns to the minister or director must also be extended to landowners impacted by the act." They will get their assessment, but where's the appeal mechanism? Is it going to be that the committee allows them to come and say, "I don't think that assessment is correct," or "I have some more input there"? So again, it's the appeal mechanism that needs to be—I'm sure we all want a fair process, but the bill, in its present form, is not providing a fair process for assessment.

1620

"Source protection plans: Copies should be distributed directly to impacted landowners with information on how to provide comments." The points that are raised in oral presentations—I hope there are many public information sessions—should be sent to the minister. In a farm community, they're workers; they're working all the time. The meetings have to be so that they are able to go to them, or the hearings that they are going to appear before have to be at reasonable times so they can attend. I'm sure there will be farm representation on the source protection committees.

They believe the wording should reflect the goal of protecting municipal drinking water and human health in

section 35(4), and that's ecological health and all water everywhere.

Permit officials: If we can go to the permit officials, this is creating a lot of angst among agricultural and rural landowners. They're concerned about the permit officials. The Ontario Farm Environmental Coalition believes that "a permit system will not work" in addressing the problem. They feel they should "support risk management as an alternative approach and would recommend replacing the permit official with a risk management official."

We're trying to do this as in we don't want it to be enforcement. We want co-operation so that they could work with the agricultural community, develop a risk management plan that they work on together. A risk management official would not issue permits. So as opposed to a permit official, they're looking more at a risk management official who comes out and works with them on plans that they need to accomplish to achieve the work on their land if there is a risk there.

"Provisions of the act should not supersede the Freedom of Information...." There are a lot of concerns about that. "Farmers' information should ... remain private—the inspection provisions should be bound by the existing agreement (memorandum of understanding) that environmental farm plans" should remain "confidential documents of the farmer."

We bring these things up because they are concerns. They want written notice of the tribunal's—longer periods of time they want in.

They're concerned about the too broad attempt, I think, of the "multi-barrier approach to drinking water protection. They recommend actually listing those barriers (source protection, treatment, secure distribution system, monitoring programs, established and practised response to adverse conditions) and the statutes that address these barriers." I know they've made a submission to the minister on that, and I am hopeful the minister will follow some of their recommendations.

The Christian Farmers Federation, who have a great mission statement, have worked really hard at policy development. I have to say that over the years I've been involved they really are taking the good of the agricultural community and working within society. They do not support the proposed bill in its present form.

They bring a lot of good points forward, and I know they worked with the environmental farm coalition on that: that they're not required by legislation to consult with landowners—again the consultation program—prohibited activities—land uses require permit; they require a notice while they are preparing the SPP. Again, the topic of the assessment is done, but enforcement is done before the official plan, the SPP, is actually finalized. "It does not guarantee formal public hearings. We all want to be good stewards, but we want to be consulted and give feedback before official enforcement is done."

"For protected areas and zones in the SPP, the draft will authorize municipalities to prohibit certain activities, require permits, activities and land uses, and require

notices for certain activities that are now normal farm practices without reimbursing farmers for the cost of changing their farm practices.”

That’s a lot of the concern: the inability of farmers to do actual farming and have the tools to be environmental stewards of the land.

It’s also the industry, and the Ontario Mining Association has brought a lot of good concerns about the bill to the forefront. They think the bill needs a stronger business case. There’s no commitment of resources to carry out the activities called for. The Ontario Mining Association even called for a possible trial project. We’ve heard today about the increased hydro rates, how they’re going to drive out business. We’re saying this has a lot to do with industry and businesses. I’ve heard stories of dry cleaners, for example, that may have to move their entire business because of what is all of a sudden in the source protection plan. Where’s the compensation for that? We all want to be good stewards, but there has to be an equal balance, and I think a lot of what we are saying today is that there’s got to be a balance between the province and the municipalities on this.

When the bill gives power to the MOE to override existing land uses—there already are rules and regulations with the MOE. Is this Clean Water Act going to supersede existing regulations that are in place for industry? It’s a reasonable thing. It affects other areas—MNR and MMAH etc. There’s the need for co-operation and a clear distinction of how they’re all going to work together.

The source protection committees—again, is industry going to be represented? Every area is going to be different. Hopefully this is not going to be a cookie-cutter approach, but there is a need to have equality—municipal, industry, consumers etc.—from various groups so that it’s consistent throughout the province.

Sound science—again, we need to ensure that sound science is going to be in the forefront of this. It is over a five-year period, which we appreciate, but we want to be assured by the government that they’re going to work with the public, industry and all concerned stakeholders in general so that we get this right.

I know that I’m coming close to my time that I’m sharing with the member from Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant.

The minister did mention some key Walkerton inquiry recommendations. There is concern that this actually disconnects with the recommendations from O’Connor. That should be a concern.

I know that large or intensive farms, and all farms in designated and sensitive high-risk areas, should be required to develop individual FWPPs and have provincial MOE approval, binding and consistent with the source protection plan.

Number 14: Once a farm has an approved FWPP, municipalities should not have authority to require that farm to meet a higher standard.

Number 15: The province should work with stakeholders to create a provincial FWPP framework.

Number 16: The province should establish a system of cost-share incentives for farm water protection projects.

These are areas we mention because these are the key Walkerton inquiry recommendations. It seems to be doing the opposite here, because it’s giving the authority to municipalities through the permit official and reports to the municipality, not the province. That’s not what the Walkerton recommendations have asked for.

I think there’s a lot of grey area when the government says they’re following the full Walkerton recommendations, which was an election promise by the Liberal government, and one that we’ll be watching closely that they keep.

I’m pleased to now share my time with the member from Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant.

Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant): I certainly appreciate the opportunity to address Bill 43, the Clean Water Act. Many of us think of it as the source water protection act. I know many farmers refer to it as that. I’d like to begin by pointing out that I unequivocally support measures that will promote keeping our water clean and drinkable. Obviously our environment critic, the member for Haldimand–Victoria–Brock, is of a like mind, as she’s indicated this afternoon. The kind of measures that I support with respect to keeping water clean actually go far beyond legislation. I think of education programs, information programs, tax incentives, grants, low-interest loans. There are so many measures that can be considered in addition to passing a law.

1630

Unfortunately, we as legislators have been given the hammer on so many occasions that any problem that comes along starts to look like a nail. In many cases, when we pound that nail in, we are ignoring other tools or measures to address the issue at hand. Does that mean that Bill 43 is the answer? In my view, I would say no, certainly in its current form as drafted.

When analyzing any new piece of legislation, we do have to develop and use a few litmus tests, a standardized way, if you will, of determining whether or not a bill is the best solution for the problem at hand. We have to ask ourselves two questions. Number one: Will this legislation adequately accomplish its stated intentions? Second question: Is this legislation the fairest approach for all stakeholders? If we answer no to either of those questions, the legislation must be defeated or, at minimum, corrected. Bearing in mind the importance of consultation—I know consultation has been talked about a bit this afternoon, and consultation is key with key stakeholders when one either launches into this or has an about-turn and decides to go back to the drawing board.

I’ve asked myself the two questions that I’ve articulated. My answer to the number one question is maybe; maybe it will achieve its stated goals. The answer to number two, in my view, is no. That will be much of the presentation I wish to make this afternoon. I’ve certainly had a fair bit of input from those affected, to realize that a number of oxen are being gored with this particular piece of legislation, if it were ever to see the light of day. I

therefore feel we need to fix this legislation before allowing it to become law, and certainly before there is any thought of drawing up regulations.

In order to create the fairest and most effective approach possible, it is necessary to consult with experts. Experts, in my view, are individuals who have managed land, served as stewards of land, oftentimes as farmers, certainly as landowners; people who know what's out there. We need, and these people need, assurances from this government that stakeholders will be given a meaningful chance to participate and provide input into this legislation. Not everybody goes on an EBR website, and in fact, the input that comes in there can be very significantly skewed.

The legislation makes it clear that there will be consultations as this bill is implemented. That's really not what I'm talking about here. I want assurances from this government that it will consult with concerned stakeholders, those people I described previously, before this legislation is passed. I would ask those present, and especially those who were elected before this last session, to think back to the nutrient management days. For that piece of legislation, it took a number of years to develop the regulations. It took a significant amount of time. That was first launched—I guess it would be late 1999 or the year 2000—in response at that time to some major hog operation spills in Huron county, as I recall.

Both myself as parliamentary assistant to the Ministry of the Environment and former MPP Doug Galt—Doug was the PA to agriculture at the time—commenced a series of town hall meetings from one side of the province to another. I know we kicked off in Burford in my riding. We went on to Glencoe and Clinton, down in Huron county, where a lot of the hotspots were. In fact, the Clinton hearings went on morning, afternoon and into the evening. We travelled up to Orangeville, Chesterville in eastern Ontario, and to Hastings.

That was not the end of the town hall meetings for nutrient management. When the legislation was drafted, it went before the justice committee. It happened that at that time I chaired justice. We travelled initially to Caledonia in my riding, on to St. Thomas. As I recall, that was the day the twin towers came tumbling down in Manhattan. From St. Thomas on to Chatham and Holmesville—not everyone may know where Holmesville is; it's in Huron county—up to Owen Sound, hosted by Bill Murdoch, and then, in the east, Kemptville and Peterborough. We went up to North Bay, and also held hearings in Toronto.

I listed those towns just to indicate to this government the importance of getting out there to have public hearings in very small communities like Holmesville. I'm not sure if the area Women's Institute provided our meals in Holmesville. I think it's very important with legislation like this, which affects landowners and affects farmers, that we get out into the farm towns in Ontario.

This was not the end of the public meetings, the town hall meetings. We received regulation from staff. We conducted hearings in Mississauga. I recall travelling to

Grimsby, certainly down to Leamington to meet with the greenhouse growers. I held meetings in Delhi. Quite honestly, I just can't remember all the other towns that we visited as we spent our time crisscrossing back and forth across rural Ontario. Granted, there were EBR websites and other things like that, but we felt that, in the true spirit of consultation, in the true spirit of citizen participation, it was important to actually be there, to have hearings, no matter how long it took—as I mentioned, we ran into the evening in Clinton, for example—to entertain those delegations and those presentations, and to ensure that the hearings were chaired by elected MPPs. As I mentioned, at the latter hearings—by then I think I was parliamentary assistant to agriculture, and the initial hearings were kicked off with both myself and MPP Doug Galt. So our track record on consultation is evident.

I raise the question, where is the track record as far as this government travelling the towns and the byways of this province? We do put out a request: When will you go out and rent the halls and put on the coffee and put your PA on the road? When will these town halls begin?

These consultations also must be timed so as not to conflict with busy periods of the farming season. The Ontario Farm Environmental Coalition, also known as OFEC, suggests that committee hearings should take place after the busy planting season. I'd take it one step further. I regret that town hall meetings weren't held over the past six months, in the fall and winter, when rural people had more time. I go a step further and feel that hearings—I hope this government is going to have hearings—should be held after harvest, thus ensuring that no farmer is silenced by his or her schedule.

If you add it up, I'm aware of personally chairing at least 18 town hall meetings or committee hearings on nutrient management. That's the piece of legislation that will be superseded by the legislation that we are debating today. All those meetings that we had were in the off season, and many of them, as I recall, were in the winter.

As far as this proposed Clean Water Act is concerned, and according to Brampton consultant Jim White, "It certainly won't protect anyone against incompetence and dishonest employees." I suspect he's thinking of the Koebel brothers of Walkerton fame. He goes on to say, "What it will do is create a lot of studies, more municipal employees and many frustrated landowners who will spend money, much of it needlessly, while reducing the workable area of farms and reducing their market value."

That comes from Jim White. I've known Jim for many, many years. He's an agrologist, a regular contributor to the Ontario Farmer, and he is someone who knows of what he speaks.

1640

One of my primary concerns with this legislation stems from the second litmus test I made mention of earlier, and I'll just repeat that question: Is this legislation the fairest it can be for all stakeholders? Number one, in my view, this legislation poses an extreme financial burden on municipalities. It has the potential to pose an

extreme financial burden on private landowners. It's a piece of legislation that potentially creates a tangled mess of red tape for landowners and municipalities. The legislation gives bureaucrats virtually uninhibited power to interfere on private dwellings without sufficient judicial oversight.

Mr. Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): How about clean, healthy water?

Mr. Barrett: I will indicate that we all support clean, healthy water. I don't need to repeat myself on that one, but I will point out to the government members opposite that your piece of legislation is being met with skepticism. Your piece of legislation is being met with a modicum of hostility, and obviously there's opposition from a very diverse range of stakeholders.

Interjections.

Mr. Barrett: If I could soldier on over some of the interjections, I would like to present what some of these stakeholders have communicated to me.

Now, I'm referring primarily to what in many cases appears to be this government's public enemy number one, and that's landowners and farmers. As parliamentary assistant to agriculture, it's my job to be an advocate for agriculture in the province of Ontario, and it is incumbent on me to stand up for their interests when the Ontario government refuses, if you will, any thought of a cease-fire in this war on the agricultural community, and not only on farmers: on rural Ontario and small-town Ontario.

For Ontario farmers, the context of this legislation is particularly grim. We're all aware of the carnage associated with this year's 21% cut to agricultural spending in Ontario. We've seen the 52% reduction in support for grains and oilseeds/livestock, that package that was mentioned and initiated just before the budget. I think many of us have read about OMAFRA staff making remarks about cash crop agriculture in this province receiving more subsidies per acre than their US counterparts. Again, that's something that hurts when farmers hear that, especially when there are 10,000 of them showing up in Ottawa for the very purpose of striving to achieve equity with US farmers. And we're told by staff that if we can't compete in producing certain food items—apples, for example—we should get out of the business of growing that particular food. Again, we are a northern country. There are many countries we cannot compete with, either their climate or their government coffers. Hence, it is important in the province of Ontario to offer that modicum of assistance to allow us to continue to be self-sufficient in food.

You add all this up, and you can see there's an agenda being advanced by the McGuinty government, and I'm concerned that there is a vision, and much of that is a vision of Ontario without agriculture, and hence, without farmers. There is a 416 mentality, and I am very concerned with the impact that this has—and this piece of legislation in particular—on independent, to-date prosperous, private landowners and agriculturalists.

One of the tools the McGuinty government will be using that has the potential to destroy much of agriculture

in small-town Ontario can be found within Bill 43, and I will explain that in a minute. I would like to use the words again of consultant Jim White:

“This bill is as close to a declaration of war on landowners as I expect to ever see. The Niagara Escarpment plan, the Oak Ridges moraine legislation and the green belt acts ... removed ... landowners' rights and reduced the value of the lands without compensation for people in a part of the province, but this bill establishes a system for creating a series of potentially severe, unilateral regulations and”—to use his words—“an army of spies to enforce them in all the province. The worst thing is we won't know what the rules are for several years. It appears every drop of water in southern Ontario can be preregulated, even if it never comes close to being consumed by a human.” Those are the words of Jim White.

I'll take a few minutes to outline how a number of other stakeholders have reacted. Ontario pork producers: We worked very closely with the pork producers, as well as the cattlemen and other livestock groups, in the development of the enabling legislation for nutrient management. The pork producers point out four major flaws in this government's approach to source water protection:

(1) “Impacted landowners are not provided an opportunity to provide meaningful input into the terms of reference, assessment report and the final source water protection plan approval.”

(2) This legislation “is inconsistent with Justice O'Connor's Walkerton inquiry recommendations—the proposed act includes broad powers for permit officials without appropriate technical, political or fiscal accountability.”

(3) Again from the pork producers: “Contradicting Justice O'Connor's Walkerton inquiry recommendations, permit officials have interim authority to order landowners to complete a risk management plan before the completion of an approved watershed source water protection plan.”

(4) “The proposed act will enable municipalities to infringe on normal farm practices and order farmers and landowners to prohibit their use of land or prohibit certain uses of land without compensation.” Again, this is from the pork producers and raises that spectre of, yet again, a government that has very little respect for property rights in the province of Ontario.

If we link these four criticisms back to the two litmus tests, the questions that I outlined earlier in my remarks, we can see that there is no guarantee that this legislation will accomplish its stated goals, let alone be fair to the stakeholders—certainly, in this case, the pork producers.

If permit officials are allowed to operate without appropriate technical, political and fiscal accountability, we have no assurances that they will effectively conduct their assigned tasks. We can see that the pork producers see this legislation as unfair to concerned stakeholders. Impacted landowners are given no meaningful input, and they risk bearing significant costs without compensation.

I would like to reference a document from the Durham, York, Victoria Landowners Association. They point out:

“The Clean Water Act is a dream come true for conservation authorities who will be given enormous powers under this law. As ‘source protection authorities,’ the CAs will appoint unelected and unaccountable ‘source protection committees’ which will write ‘source protection plans.’ These plans will have the legal authority to override any decisions made by municipal councils, planning boards—even the Ontario Municipal Board. If a municipality’s official plan or zoning bylaws don’t suit the source protection commissars, they will be overruled.”

The landowners continue, pointing out, “Once the source protection plan is in effect, the committee will tell residents which activities will be prohibited unless carried out in accordance with the bureaucrat’s weapon of choice,” and in this case that’s the permit.

The landowners are concerned about permit inspectors who will enter on private property without consent of the owner to prevent unauthorized activities and also enter on one’s property and go into one’s house to search for documents that relate to these activities. The landowners are concerned that the permit inspector can use whatever force he deems necessary and can rely on the police for backup.

1650

Moving on to another well-respected farm organization, of which I am a member; I refer to the Ontario Federation of Agriculture. I’m a member in our local county, the Norfolk federation. The OFA is concerned about the composition of the source protection board. The federation points out: “Given the direct and important role and influence of these individuals over the source water protection process, there is a need to revisit how these members are chosen and who appoints them.” Furthermore, the OFA “demands that this legislation be clear that the source protection board must not be granted the power to change or amend the terms of reference and the assessment report.” The OFA continues, pointing out that the source protection committee must include “adequate representation from knowledgeable people who own land in the watershed, as these are the individuals who will be charged with the authority and the responsibility to effect change. These are also the individuals who will bear the potential negative economic consequences of source water protection.” The OFA goes on: “The consultative process must ensure meaningful participation and consideration of landowners’ input.”

From these criticisms, we can see that the OFA is skeptical about the effectiveness of this particular bill, and I would say they’re skeptical and very concerned about the fairness of this legislation, if it were to pass, with respect to its impact on landowners and, in their case, Ontario Federation of Agriculture members in Ontario.

A question: How can the source protection committee be effective if it is comprised of people who lack know-

ledge or experience with respect to the watershed they are protecting? How can this legislation be fair if farmers are not given the opportunity for meaningful input? The OFA insists that any public comment and consultation period, again, must be timed conveniently for farmers. Don’t have it while we’re working up ground or bringing in hay in the summer or combining soybeans or corn. Do it in the winter, after harvest and before spring. A consultative strategy timed to coincide with the busiest days of the agriculture cycle would clearly be unfair and would skew the input.

Another question: What about privacy of individual farmers and landowners? The OFA is very concerned that an employee or agent of the source protection board would be permitted to enter private land, demand documents and take samples, all without the permission of the impacted farmer. Clearly, this is not the fairest approach. These legislated power relationships really do not give any sense or appearance of a partnership. For a government with such an abysmal record with respect to agriculture, it would be wise in this legislation to attempt to lighten the heavy burden already imposed on our farmers across the great province of Ontario.

If we link the OFA’s concerns back to the litmus test I outlined earlier, I feel there are major flaws in this legislation. Clearly, the primary stakeholders will endure unnecessary hardships under the current proposal, and the eventual effectiveness of this legislation would remain in doubt. There’s nothing worse or harder than to enforce a poor law. In my assessment, the OFA’s criticisms represent the fundamental failure of this government’s approach to source water.

I want to refer to another article in the Ontario Farmer, again from Mr. White: “Other provisions provide the power of expropriation but the Statutory Powers Procedure Act does not apply to anything done under this act other than a proceeding before the Environmental Review Tribunal.” So the bill protects the minister, it protects the ministry employees and other employees from responsibility for their actions, but there are no remedies available for those impacted.

As we know, this bill takes precedence over other pieces of legislation, and the most important one probably would be the Nutrient Management Act. Mr. White raises the issue of quantity in addition to the quality issue of water. There is a concern that this may mean the right to use 50,000 litres a day for either crop irrigation—I think of potatoes or tobacco, for example—or livestock water may be lost. That is a serious concern. I’m still not sure: In some of my readings of the white paper and some of the discussion documents, when we’re talking about source water protection I’m a little suspicious of how much of this discussion seems to revolve around the permit-to-take-water issue. Down my way on the Norfolk sand plain, if you can’t irrigate, if you can’t get a permit to draw water, you’re not farming anymore.

I want to make mention of information the opposition received from another stakeholder organization. This is from OFEC, the Ontario Farm Environmental Coalition:

“As indicated in a recent letter to Minister Broten, OFEC supports the concept of source water protection, but Bill 43 as presented at first reading cannot be supported by the agricultural community.” OFEC, as a coalition, has representation from a number of farm organizations. Speaking on behalf of a number of organizations, they indicate, and I repeat, that the legislation “cannot be supported by the agricultural community.” So we have a problem here.

“Indeed, the preference of OFEC is that the bill be withdrawn and redrafted. This process would enable and provide the time necessary to craft enabling legislation that would set out clear and achievable objectives along with a framework indicating how those objectives” could “be met in a reasonable time frame, with minimal social, cultural and economic impacts.” Again, “If the province does proceed with second reading”—which we commenced two hours ago—“it must be prepared to make substantial revisions to the bill.” That’s coming from OFEC.

One of their foremost concerns as well revolves around that “funding” word. OFEC points out that farmers are willing to modify production practices in order to minimize environmental impacts. We know this. I see the transition in cash crop country. Certainly down in my area, part of my income comes from soybeans, corn and winter wheat. We’ve all switched from fall plowing to no till, with the attendant lessened impact on silting our ponds and our grassed waterways. Farmers are willing to do that; there’s no question. It’s oftentimes much more expensive to put in wildlife habitat and tree cover. On our land, we’ve put a couple of hundred acres into trees, at that time partly with the assistance of the Ministry of Natural Resources and primarily at our own expense. Farmers are willing.

Again, I’m suggesting measures like education, information, government assistance, planned grants, conservation grants, subsidized-interest loans and other measures beyond just bringing down the hammer of rules, regulations and laws.

1700

OFEC, the Ontario Farm Environmental Coalition, echoes Justice O’Connor’s remarks, saying that there is an expectation of public funding to support such endeavours, and making public funding available to farmers for environmental improvements is good public policy. For example, since April 2005, over \$45 million has been committed by federal Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the provincial OMAF to support almost 6,000 on-farm projects to address so-called action items identified using the environmental farm plan process.

The Acting Speaker: Time is up. Questions and comments?

Mr. Wilkinson: I appreciate the comments made by the opposition critic, my friend for Haliburton–Victoria–Brock. In particular, I want to talk about the comments by the member from Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant. He went to great pains to talk about the Nutrient Management Act. I can think of no bill other than the Nutrient Management

Act, passed by the previous government, that did not have the basis of science and consultation, that had this kind of top-down idea that 300 animal units are a threat, but 299—no, it isn’t. That wasn’t based on science at all. That was based on political expediency. It was as top-down as you can come, as the government struggled with trying to react with their own legacy. This process, in comparison, is consultative. That’s exactly what this government has said. I say it isn’t from the ground up; it’s from the groundwater up.

I was speaking to the Maitland Valley Conservation Authority. They have a wonderful website, and I’d say to all the members, go to this website. My property, our water: That resonates in rural Ontario: “Yes, I have my property, but water is a shared resource.” You do not have the right to taint your well and affect your neighbours. You do not. You don’t have some God-given right to threaten and be a significant threat to the municipal source of drinking water of your neighbours. If there is anyone in this province who feels that somehow they have an unlimited ability to threaten a municipal source of drinking water, I say to them, you’re wrong. I say to them, you must be a good neighbour. We as a community, through this process of consultation, will work together to reduce those significant threats. Unlike the Gestapo-like theories espoused by the member from Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant about a bureaucrat around every tree, this process will be consultative.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker: Yes, I believe that that statement should be withdrawn.

Mr. Wilkinson: I withdraw it.

The Acting Speaker: It’s been withdrawn. Questions and comments?

Mr. Ted Arnott (Waterloo–Wellington): I’m glad the member for Perth–Middlesex withdrew that unfortunate and regrettable comment.

I would I like to respond briefly to the members for Haliburton–Victoria–Brock and Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant, who have shared the leadoff time for our party on this important Bill 43, the Clean Water Act. I think it’s symbolic of how our caucus is approaching this bill. The member for Haliburton–Victoria–Brock is our critic for the environment and does a superb job on behalf of our caucus, challenging the government to do better to protect our land, our air and our water resources. Our critic for agriculture and food, of course, is the member for Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant, who has done an extraordinary job as well standing up for farmers as they have faced this spring of crisis and the inattentive response from the government that has compelled them to take rather drastic action to promote their needs and to underline their concerns. Toby Barrett has stood with them every step of the way.

In my constituency of Waterloo–Wellington, I have always had a good working relationship with the conservation authorities that have the responsibility for the area that covers Waterloo–Wellington, including the Grand River Conservation Authority. I can certainly attest to

their high standards of professionalism as an organization, as well as those of the Maitland Valley Conservation Authority and the Saugeen Valley Conservation Authority and others. I have a great deal of confidence that if they're going to be undertaking new responsibilities, they will do so with a high standard of professionalism and expertise.

But I would come back to the concern that I'm hearing from my farmers in Waterloo–Wellington and have heard over the years, that if society expects them to shoulder the full responsibility and the cost of water protection efforts, that's not fair. Society should be prepared to assist them in those costs. I think there needs to be a fair sharing of that so that the farm families aren't expected to carry yet another financial burden that they right now can't afford.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn (Oakville): It's a pleasure to join the debate today. I come from an urban riding, the riding of Oakville, which has experienced a tremendous amount of growth over the past decade or more. I find that people in my own riding are starting to get smarter. They're starting to ask questions they didn't ask before relating to the impact that growth has on the environment. I think it's tremendous to see this type of progressive legislation being proposed by the minister, which would allow some of the people in my riding to be confident that we are looking at some of the things that are important to them, things like air quality, effluent quality and drinking water quality.

What these people in my riding have realized over the years is that Mother Nature does not respect municipal boundaries; Mother Nature respects watersheds. When you look at the tremendous work that has been done by the conservation authorities over the years on our behalf, despite the funding cutbacks and challenges they had under previous governments, you realize that these are organizations that are up to the task. These are organizations that, if given the opportunity and the legislation to protect our drinking water source, have more than the skills and the expertise to do that.

In fact, in Halton region, in the last regional official plan that I was involved in, around 2000-01—it was our official plan review—we started to look at the official plan in a very traditional way. We looked at the creeks and the streams, the road systems, population growth. We looked at all the traditional things you would look at in a planning exercise. Somebody said, "What about Lake Ontario?" It seems to me that in this legislation, the minister has gone out of her way to make sure that she has the power, she has the control, she has the ability to protect that great resource that's in the southern part of my riding, that being one of the Great Lakes, Lake Ontario.

Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East): Although I couldn't be in the House when the opposition was raising their comments on this bill, I was able to listen to some of the comments in my office as I was doing other work. The members did a good job of describing some of the issues that they thought were important around this particular bill.

But I have to say I did tear myself away from my work on behalf of the constituents of Hamilton East to come into the House right now because the next speaker on this bill is none other than Peter Tabuns, our new member for Toronto–Danforth, with his maiden speech. I came into this Legislature because I know that Peter not only is a wonderful representative for the constituents of Toronto–Danforth but also already has quite a significant grip on environmental issues, particularly the issues that are outlined in this bill. I look forward to his wisdom, because I know that the bill speaks to issues of water preservation, issues of development.

The Acting Speaker: I would remind the member, you are commenting on the previous speakers, not on the future ones.

Ms. Horwath: I thank you for that, Mr. Speaker. I know that the members who spoke on the issue spoke of water issues from the perspective of rural communities. I heard some of that very clearly in the speech. I know that the member for Toronto–Danforth also has some concerns about the effects that this bill will have and whether or not this bill goes far enough, as some of the previous speakers did mention, with regard to protecting source water, which is what this bill is all about.

So I do appreciate the comments of the two opposition members in their critique of this bill, but I look forward to the comments of Peter Tabuns, the member for Toronto–Danforth, who will be speaking on behalf of New Democrats in regard to this bill.

The Acting Speaker: Reply?

Ms. Scott: I'd like to thank the members for their comments. I thank the member from Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant, who is our agriculture critic and previous environment critic. He spoke eloquently about the concerns that we have.

1710

To the member from Perth–Middlesex, I just want to comment that the member for Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant's father was the last to see his cousin who was killed in the Second World War, and whom the Legion in my hometown of Kinmount is named after: the John McGrath Memorial Branch; so a tribute to the member and his family for the contribution they made to Canada.

I thank the members from Oakville, Hamilton East and Waterloo–Wellington. We've had a good discussion here this afternoon about the Clean Water Act. We've spent a lot of time with the feedback we received from third parties, and that's what this is about. There was one comment that I heard about the legislation, which was "right objective, wrong approach."

There have been a lot of questions raised: the municipalities, the amount of stuff in the regulations, and will municipalities have to amend official plans and zoning bylaws conforming with the bill? They want more of a say in the source protection committees and source protection authorities.

Compensation has been brought up, and it's a concern for all farmers. I know there was an expert panel report in January 2006 called Water Well Sustainability in Ontario

on the EBR. The quote in there was, "Land users need to be assured that any alteration in land use beyond due diligence will be compensated as the alterations are done in the interest of the public good." I know that another member opposite had made that generality.

We've all got to work together. There has to be proper compensation and consultation.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Applause.

Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto–Danforth): Yes, my inaugural speech. Thank you, colleagues. It's only an hour. I know that tender mercy may not be repeated in the future, so I'll take advantage of it now.

Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie–Lincoln): Robert Duvall.

Mr. Tabuns: Robert Duvall. I understand from the Speaker that there's some latitude given in a member's inaugural speech. With permission of the House, I will take some latitude.

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay): Go after Dalton now.

Mr. Tabuns: I've had conflicting advice on that.

First of all I want to thank the voters of Toronto–Danforth, who showed their confidence in me. God, was it only a week ago? That's extraordinary—two weeks ago.

Interjection: Time flies.

Mr. Tabuns: Time really flies.

For those who are not familiar with the riding, it's a riding with a long history of environmental battles. It has a population that's very conscious about environmental issues, and I'm very pleased to have received their confidence recently.

I find it extraordinary, the democracy we experience here in Canada. When I was a councillor on Toronto city council, I thought it was a fabulous thing that mayors and councillors would talk with people on streetcars, buses and the subway about the issues of the day, that people had the familiarity and comfort that they could speak to people and hold them to account on a day-to-day basis.

Mr. Bisson: Do you have streetcars and buses in your riding? I don't have roads in mine.

Mr. Tabuns: Some ridings do better than others.

In any event, I have to say that in the years that I was not on city council, when I was head of Greenpeace Canada, I had an opportunity to travel around the world. I travelled to countries where democracy was far more fragile than anything I had ever experienced in Canada. Previously I had great respect for and great appreciation of our democracy, which was only deepened when I had a chance to see the conditions other people laboured under in trying to protect the environment and trying to protect human rights.

I'd like to thank my family for their support and patience: my mother, who is a fabulous campaigner, whom I thanked on election night, and my partner, Shawn.

Ms. Horwath: Is she from Hamilton?

Mr. Tabuns: Yes, my mother is from Hamilton Mountain; another plug for Hamilton.

Interjection.

Mr. Tabuns: Soon—and also my partner for her great patience in the campaigns that I've gone through in the last few years.

I'd like to thank all of those who worked on my campaign. They did tremendous work. I'd like to express respect for those who worked for my opponents. They too worked hard: Georgina Blanas, Ben Chin, Paul Charbonneau, people who were out there. They worked hard. They believed in democracy. They did what they could.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for that indulgence.

Water is a precious substance. Everyone in this House would agree with that. Our water supply—not just our drinking water supply but our whole water supply—faces profound challenges. The most profound of those challenges is climate change. Climate change is affecting our province yearly, monthly, daily, and will change it profoundly in the years to come.

In the late 1990s, the federal government did a study of the impact of climate change on every region of Canada, the Canada Country Study. That study, using far more conservative assumptions that were prevalent in the late 1990s, concluded that there would be substantial shrinkage of the Great Lakes, substantial reduction in the availability of rain water in Ontario—in southern Ontario in particular—substantial impact in terms of greater flooding. We will see Lake Erie become much smaller, Lake Ontario become smaller, the St. Lawrence River drop in volume. We will see profound challenges to the water we need for irrigation, for farming, for recreation and for drinking. The cost to our province, the cost to our cities and the cost to our communities of adaptation to climate change is going to be profound, in terms of both dollars and risk to human health.

The risk to supply is the most profound challenge, but the other challenge is the threat to the quality of water. Water contamination from industrial chemicals, from sewage, from manure threatens our economy, threatens our health and, as we know, can threaten our very lives. We have to deal with water in a very serious way that goes beyond the normal partisan rhetoric that is simply our bread and butter here. We will have to go beyond that if we're going to deal with the issues before us.

We know that Ontario is blessed with extraordinary water resources. Those of us in this city, those of us who live on the shores of the Great Lakes, know how wonderful that resource is. But it is not a renewable resource in the way we think of a renewable resource. Most of the Great Lakes water comes from the water left behind by the glaciers receding at the end of the last ice age. Only about 1% to 2% of the water in the Great Lakes is changed each year. If we lose the Great Lakes, we lose them.

We have a resource that's crucial to our economy, to our lives, to our well-being; a resource that's at risk; and a resource that is limited. That's the context within which I approach this bill and the context within which our party approaches this bill.

I should say from the beginning that we are pleased to see the introduction of this bill. We believe it's overdue,

but it's here, and now we can begin debate of the bill, its content and its direction.

I want to say this to the minister and to those involved in bringing this bill forward: A bill can be passed in this House by a simple majority. You have a majority. You could pass this bill with no amendments. This side of the House could slow you down, but in the end you could pass it in the form you presented it in, if you want to. Having said that—

Interjections.

Mr. Tabuns: I'll take those as friendly interjections.

Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): Build it into your speech.

Mr. Tabuns: Build it into my speech.

Mr. Wilkinson: If these are friendly, you should see what nasty is.

Mr. Tabuns: I know what nasty is. Bring in a smoking ban and bring in all your friends from the restaurant industry, and you'll find out what nasty is.

Mr. Marchese: There's a good one. That is a good one.

Mr. Tabuns: I know. In any event, battles passed and friendships re-established.

You, the government, are going to have to establish political capital not only in this House but out in the community at large. We've heard from colleagues speaking from the viewpoint of the official opposition, but you will also have to rally those people who feel that this bill must be very strong and has to take account of the larger context of the water situation in Ontario and in Canada. At this point, this government is engaged in activities and directions that undermine that capital.

1720

I believe that we need to move quickly on this bill, because every day, every week, every month, there are things happening that impact the quality of water in this province. When Justice O'Connor recognized the importance of source protection plans for watershed planning, he talked about the watershed, "as an ecologically practical unit for managing water. This is the level at which impacts to water resources are integrated, and individual impacts that might not be significant in and of themselves combine to create cumulative stresses that may become evident...." We need to deal with those cumulative impacts—the government has to deal with those cumulative impacts—on source waters and on watersheds so that we can avoid future tragedies as this province experienced in Walkerton.

To ensure that tragedy is never repeated, we need strong, clear and properly funded legislation. We need a regulatory regime that makes protection of our source waters the top priority instead of, in some ways in this bill at this point, a secondary consideration. It's against the recommendations of Justice O'Connor, as well as the concerns of environmental groups, citizens, farmers and municipalities—all their concerns about protecting this resource—that this bill will be measured.

At present, we find the legislation ambiguous, vague and lacking numerous key definitions. So we will be

seeking amendments at committee to strengthen the Clean Water Act to ensure that source waters have a high degree of integrated protection, that human health is properly safeguarded and that long-term funding is provided to ensure the proper administration and renewal of source water protection planning over time.

Before I move on to talk about the specific elements of the bill, I want to talk about some of the actions and some of the events going on in this province that affect the quality of our water that could be addressed by this government and aren't being, but should be. I go back again to this question of political capital. If this government does not have credibility in a broader context than just this bill, they will not have the support of the citizenry and of communities when they try to implement it.

The Oak Ridges moraine is a crucial part of the water system in the greater Toronto area. It contains the headwaters of 65 river systems, 35 of them in the GTA—a wide diversity of streams, lakes and rivers. The moraine is this giant sponge made of gravel and sand, holding the water that feeds the rivers and creeks that flow through our region and flow into Lake Ontario, the source of drinking water for a quarter-million residents in the GTA. The greatest threat to the moraine is inappropriate land use. Those headwaters have to be protected. Immediately after this government was elected, it did not act on a promise to stop the development of 6,600 houses slated for the Oak Ridges moraine. That was a mistake. It undermines the credibility of the government in going forward with this legislation.

Unfortunately, it wasn't isolated. The big pipe: Last week, this government said it would allow York region's big pipe trunk sewer to cut across the Oak Ridges moraine, which now forms part of the government's greenbelt. There were alternative routes for this big pipe, and the spirit of the act has been contravened. Developers may be happy, but the big pipe running through the moraine does not protect source waters. It's a business-as-usual approach that contravenes the spirit of the legislation brought by the minister. I think this government should be acting not solely through the wording of this legislation, but should be thinking about the bigger picture and making sure all its actions are consistent with protection of source water. This big pipe should have had a full environmental assessment. It was called for by the city of Toronto. It was called for by the Environmental Commissioner. It didn't happen, and so developers and urban sprawl have taken precedence over protecting our source waters.

When a government fails to protect a vital part of the water system in this region and in this province, it loses political capital; it undermines its credibility. To give you a sense of the magnitude of the dewatering that takes place because of this big pipe, you should know that this pipe is resulting in the loss of an amount of water equal to a large swimming pool every minute between now and 2007. That's a lot of water. On the ground in the region, streams and wells have dried up—120 wells to date. That is not protection. The water table in the area surrounding

the big pipe has dropped from 5 metres to 55 metres over 65 square miles during phase 1 of construction. Robinson Creek, known as a very healthy body of water, is reduced to a trickle. Those actions that contravene the direction this legislation is purporting to take undermine the credibility of the government. Those sorts of actions need to be reversed.

We have north Leslie. The government is allowing the north Leslie lands to be paved over with 7,800 houses, plus commercial and industrial development. An urban sprawl community the size of Stouffville is going to go forward in the Oak Ridges moraine and the Rouge River headwaters wetland complex. Right now, the north Leslie development is being fought by environmental groups at the OMB. Even the government's own scientists have stated that the majority of the site is too environmentally sensitive to develop, and that this development threatens regionally significant wildlife. This is a development that should not be proceeding; this is a development the government that should be vigorously opposing.

The government is not acting. It is standing by while environmental groups with very little cash are trying to defend our source waters. That is a mistake on the part of the government. It should be changing its tack. It should be acting in a way consistent with the act they brought forward to protect groundwater source water in this province.

Waste management and water are significant intertwined issues. The Premier had promised to divert 60% of waste from Ontario landfills by 2008. This inability, or lack of will, lack of determination to actually follow through on that promise, puts us in a very difficult position. We know that because that change, that investment and diversion, has not happened, there will be more and larger landfills, that there will be a push for incineration.

Concerned citizens living up and around proposed site 41 and concerned citizens in the Napanee area including the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte face expansion of Waste Management's Richmond Landfill—this is not good for source waters in those regions. The diversion rate has to go up to 60%. There has to be investment on the part of the provincial government to expand diversion, to invest in reduction, reuse and recycle so that we can dramatically shrink the amount of waste we generate in this society.

1730

The proposed landfill in Simcoe county, known as site 41, is to be located on top of several aquifers, beside the headwaters of McDonald Creek, which runs into the Wye Marsh and Georgian Bay. The proposed site 41 has so much groundwater that artesian wells are common. The Allison aquifer is located under the site and supplies many communities with their drinking water.

Last week, the Toronto Star reported that water from site 41 was tested in Germany and found to be among the purest water in the world, with lead levels below those found in Arctic ice, but perhaps not for long, because if we don't take action on waste diversion, reduction, reuse and recycling, we are going to have landfills built in sites

like this and we will be contaminating the water in this province. Site 41 and many other landfills will be needed to hold waste that could have been diverted, could have been avoided, had this government chosen to act. It can still act. It should act now.

The same can be said for the proposed expansion of the Richmond landfill near Napanee. Failure to act on waste diversion threatens groundwater and surface water of the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte, Tyendinaga township and greater Napanee, and makes a mockery of the idea that this government is concerned about protecting source waters. This government needs to act on issues that impact on water, not just on this bill.

The Milton quarry is one final example of action that should be taken to protect our water beyond the terms of this bill that we're discussing today. There's a proposal to expand the Dufferin Aggregates quarry in Milton, a quarry that operates within the Niagara Escarpment, which is now part of the government's greenbelt. The Milton quarry lies within a significant headwaters region that includes several tributaries of Sixteen Mile Creek. Since mining would take place below the groundwater table, the quarry expansion would create three permanent artificial lakes to depths of up to 100 feet. To prevent these lakes from sucking the surrounding creeks and wetlands dry, Dufferin Aggregates proposes to construct an elaborate system of 126 recharge wells that would have to operate in perpetuity, using technologies untried at this scale. Having to run recharged wells to maintain water levels in surrounding creeks and wetlands forever is not source protection; it's a profound mistake.

The joint panel decision to allow Dufferin Aggregates' expansion to go ahead was appealed to the McGuinty cabinet by the Coalition on the Niagara Escarpment and the Protect Our Water and Environmental Resources group, POWER—two environmental organizations with stellar records for protecting the very beautiful Niagara Escarpment. Right now, this government has the opportunity to stop the Dufferin quarry expansion and do something meaningful outside the terms of this act to protect source waters. I would urge the government to announce that the Dufferin quarry will not be going forward because of the very serious short- and long-term implications for our water.

Before I go into detail about the bill itself, again I would urge the government to look at its track record over the last few years, to look at the issues before it today and take action to protect groundwater so that it will have the support out in the community when it goes forward with this bill. Consistently acting in a way that is contrary to the stated intention of the bill and the stated intention of the government means that when the crunch comes to stand up for source water protection, the government may well not have people standing behind it.

Bill-specific issues: The bill lacks important detail. There are a number of definitions, key terms, that have been left to regulation rather than being defined in the bill: "groundwater recharge area," "highly vulnerable aquifer," "surface water intake protection zone," "well-

head protection area” and “vulnerable area.” All of these terms that have significant impact on how the bill will be interpreted and applied are not going to be the subject of debate or of definition in committee but left to cabinet, and frankly that does not make sense. Those definitions should be sorted through in this House, in committee and in law so that whatever future government comes forward cannot simply undermine this definition through an order in council.

Mr. Marchese: Why are there no definitions? What do you think? Why are they doing it? Why don't you guys define it so we know?

Interjection.

Mr. Tabuns: I appreciate the clarification.

What constitutes a “significant risk,” an “adverse effect” to source water, is left to regulation. That's not strong enough protection. Definitions have to be in the act; they should be there for the public to comment on now and for the legislators here to have impact on. Without those definitions, it makes it very difficult to assess the real impact of this act—to assess its ability to have real effect in the outside world. The minister needs to supply us with the details; the minister needs to amend the act so that those definitions are there for us, the legislators, and for us in the broader sense—the public—to really have control over where this is going.

The next question is the time frame for implementation. We needed protection of source water yesterday. We know from what happened at Walkerton that the impact of not acting can be profound, yet we are looking at a five-year implementation phase. That's far too long. Source waters are impacted daily. We need these protection plans developed and implemented within three years at the outside. The work that has been going on for years on the part of conservation authorities to develop substantial information on water supply and on affected watersheds can be built upon quickly. We can't wait five years. We have a situation now that a few years ago we all recognized was dire and had to be moved on quickly. Five years is far too long to wait for this bill to come into effect and to have the desired impact.

One glaring omission needs to be corrected. In 2003, the Premier promised to make those companies that benefit from exploiting our water resources—bottled water companies like Omya—to pay a royalty on the resource as occurs in other resource sectors. It's not in this legislation. I think that's a profound omission that has to be corrected. Municipalities and farm communities have raised concerns about the lack of long-term funding for implementation and administration of responsibilities associated with source water protection plans. We have to correct that lack of income by charging for the extraction of a natural resource that is the property of all the people of this province.

In 2003, Dalton McGuinty said:

“We will stop allowing companies to raid our precious water supplies.

“Companies that want to take oil from the ground or trees from the forest have to pay for that privilege. The quantity of resource they can extract or harvest is reg-

ulated in line with provincial needs and environmental protection.”

Ms. Horwath: That's not in Bill 43, is it?

Mr. Tabuns: No. That's my point.

“But when companies want to bottle our water or export it as part of other products, the Harris-Eves government gives it to them free and without any consideration of the impact on local aquifers.

“One company alone wants to ship more water out of Ontario annually in the form of industrial slurry than the entire country exports in all beverages.

“We will end this reckless giveaway. Before we issue a single new water-taking permit, we will review Ontario's groundwater supplies. Once we are sure we have enough for ourselves, we will make water-bottling companies and others who mix water with their exports pay for this precious resource.”

Well, he was right. That's the right approach, and that's the approach that should be reflected in this legislation. Those who wrote the legislation, those who are carrying forward the legislation in this House, know they need the financial resources to carry forward the steps that have to be taken, and that has got to be a key part of the source. The legislation is silent on this promise. The legislation needs to be amended.

1740

The legislation states that where there's a conflict between a provision in a source protection plan and a provincial policy statement or another act, the provision providing the greatest protection to the quality and quantity of water should prevail. However, all the conflict provisions are subject to regulation by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. Consequently, whether source water protection is actually paramount is at the discretion of cabinet. As I've noted previously in reference to the big pipe or the Dufferin quarry expansion, the north Leslie lands and the development of new dumps, there's a question of confidence here that has to be addressed by other actions on the part of the government. To the extent that those other actions aren't consistent with the act, then there will be a lack of confidence in the ability of cabinet to act in a way that will actually protect source water in this province.

Next question: Is the protection of source waters going to be given priority in provincial infrastructure funding? Is that going to be reflected in the budgeting in this province, or is that simply going to be a side issue, and this act is to be the only action taken by the government to protect source waters, with its other actions not consistent with the act?

The question of a source water protection committee's 16 members: How are they to be selected? This is left to regulation. Again, it should be addressed in legislation, because we all know that the people who are selected, the people who will sit on this committee, will have a profound impact on the quality of the work that's done, the quality of the political will that's available to push forward through controversy, and ultimately have impact on the water quality within the watershed.

There's no requirement that source protection plans be updated every three years, or after some specified period of time. This is not good policy; in fact, it's bad policy. Municipalities have to review their official plans on a regular basis. They have to go out to the citizenry. They have to have open debate. They have to see whether or not their official plans are in keeping with the times and the needs of their communities. Failure to have a similar provision in this Clean Water Act will mean that the plans will fall farther and farther behind the immediate needs of communities. I don't know if that was intended, but as it is written, it is not the right approach. It is an approach that will not give us the results the people of this province want.

In addition, not only should the individual authorities review their plans, but across the whole province we need a review on a regular basis—five years seems a reasonable time—of how source protection planning is working and whether the objectives that were set in the legislation in the first place, whether the objectives that were set by the local authorities, are actually being met. We need to know if they're effective over time, if they're effective in the north, if they're effective in the south. There are different conditions prevailing in different parts of this province.

I'm very concerned—I referred to this before in terms of timelines—that until the source protection plans are put in place, and that's five years from the time this act is passed, we're pretty much in a business-as-usual situation. That means we have five years, a half-decade, when the problems we're all concerned about will continue to simply work themselves through. We will not have the protection in this province that people deserve, and we will not have the protection that our environment needs over the long run. So I ask the government to address this question: How, over the next five years, are we going to ensure that protection is in place to the extent that it's legally possible for our water sources? Who has the authority to act over the next five years if there's an imminent threat to our water supply? Is it the director at the Ministry of the Environment? There needs to be clarity on that.

In terms of the Great Lakes, mandatory protection of the Great Lakes has to be fully integrated into the legislation. Right now, what we have is enabling legislation that's weak. We need to have the legislation in there now, we need to be in a position to debate it and we need to know whether or not it's actually going to do the job that people want done. We need mandatory targets for water quality and water quantity in watersheds and how they're going to be achieved and incorporated into source protection plans.

On the question of public participation, the legislation needs to allow any member of the public who wants to participate in source protection committees to be able to apply through an open and transparent process. Those who are chosen need to receive some level of remuneration to support their further participation. Further, mandatory public participation provisions should be extended

throughout the act. Terms of reference, assessment reports and source protection plans all must be prescribed for notice on the Environmental Bill of Rights prior to approval.

This bill has a number of other measures that need to be addressed as well, but I've already given you a list of substantial issues that need to be addressed before this legislation can do what it's intended to do, before this legislation will have the power to actually protect source waters.

When it comes to First Nations, their traditional environmental knowledge needs to be recognized in the protection of source waters and the development of source protection plans. First Nations membership on source protection committees needs to be mandatory in watersheds with First Nations traditional lands.

Before this bill is fully in place, we need interim measures. We need to have provision for mandatory action by the ministry or the source protection authority upon discovery of an imminent drinking water health hazard. There is no reason not to have that requirement. We understand the impact of not having that kind of provision. We need to make sure that authorities have full power and direction to take action to protect our water quality.

As of the day the legislation is passed, no approval by any agency of instruments—for instance, development approvals, certificates of approval, permits to take water—with the potential to cause significant or irreversible harm to drinking water sources should go forward. The ministry should prepare itself in a very broad way to take on those issues so that we're not waiting five years to deal with profound threats to our water supply. The ministry should be doing that inventory now. They should be taking action.

Precautionary principle: The precautionary approach should be adopted into the purpose section of this act, and the act should require its use in the development of source protection plans.

Everyone in this Legislature is familiar with the impact of the tainted blood scandal. Many, many people were profoundly hurt and their health destroyed; people died. In the inquiry that followed those events, Mr. Justice Krever looked at the approach that was taken by those who had authority at the time. Mr. Justice Krever said that the precautionary principle had to be incorporated into the thinking, into the planning of those responsible for the health of the populace, because the downside, the risk, if you were wrong, was far too great. The same is true when it comes to the protection of our source waters. This precautionary principle, which has been established as absolutely necessary in the public health sphere, should be established in the sphere of protection of our environment and the protection of our source waters. This bill should be amended to make that possible.

1750

Financing: As I mentioned earlier, there has to be an expediting of the introduction of water-taking charges

and allocation of the revenue toward source water protection implementation. There is tremendous reluctance on the part of people in rural areas and on the part of municipalities to go along with what's proposed, precisely because of fears that they will not be able to afford the cost of doing what has to be done. Some municipalities may have a stronger case than others. But the reality is that throughout Ontario, at every level from the smallest village to the largest city, there needs to be an assurance that the resources will be available to protect the water supply, and implementation of water-taking charges will allow for that provision of revenue so that we can have that protection uniformly throughout the province, so that First Nations reserves, small villages and large cities all enjoy the same protection of their water supply.

To my surprise, I've gone through my remarks.

Mr. Hudak: No.

Mr. Tabuns: I know there's some disappointment.

Interjections.

Mr. Tabuns: I know. Gilles can talk about many things. I realize that.

Interjection.

Mr. Tabuns: Thank you, colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, when this issue—

Mr. Bisson: "Oh, I forgot," is always a good one.

Mr. Tabuns: Oh, I forgot. Thank you very much. I appreciate the coaching from my colleagues.

Mr. Bisson: That came from the chief government whip.

Mr. Tabuns: I see. Thank you, Mr. Whip.

Mr. Speaker, when our society first became aware of public health problems, our society was faced with profound challenges. As you probably know, the first incidence of taking action to deal with a public health threat was taken in England in the 1800s when it was discovered that a particular well in London was contaminated, causing illness and death in a community in London. A local doctor had the courage, notwithstanding the criticism that was levelled at him, to take away the handle from the local well pump so people couldn't access that water. That doctor saved many lives. That doctor was right to take action that he could be criticized for. He didn't just speak about the issue. He didn't make a speech. He didn't stand up, and say, "Gee, I feel badly about these people who are having a hard time." No, he actually took action. Action on water and action on health threats arising from water have been a part of our history and part of our culture.

People are well aware of Ibsen's play, *An Enemy of the People*, the story of a person who discovered that the local source of water, which was vital to the economic well-being of the town, was contaminated. That doctor spoke out and was attacked for speaking out, because of course others did not want tourists and guests to be frightened and driven away.

We are faced with a situation where we will encounter two profound problems: those people who don't want to act on cleaning up our water, who want business as usual

to continue, and with people who want to be seen to be acting but who take action that does not deal with the problem at hand. That is the problem we face in this Legislature, between those two poles. We need to press forward to fully funded changes, to changes that are swift, that will ensure that we don't face another tragedy like we faced at Walkerton a number of years ago.

When we deal with environmental problems, we know that we're dealing not just with a small, isolated issue; we're dealing with problems that cut to the quick, to the core of this society. When we want to change those things, we can't do it simply. We are changing established habits, we're dealing with entrenched interests that want things to go on the way they've gone on before. I look at the Oak Ridges moraine, I look at the pressure for development there, the pressure on the part of development companies to follow through, to build and pave over as much as possible, and that pressure will continue, will be relentless. The fact that the big pipe is going ahead and dewatering a big chunk of that area, the fact that construction is going ahead, that is an indication of the kind of pressure that we will be facing as this bill goes forward.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker: Before I recognize the point of order, since it is the member's maiden speech, you will have 15-plus minutes on the next occasion to finish.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I seek unanimous consent to move a motion respecting the consideration of business this afternoon.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Michael Prue): Agreed? Agreed.

Hon. Mr. Bradley: I move that notwithstanding any standing order or the order of the House of earlier today, the House continue to meet beyond 6 p.m. for the purpose of completing consideration of the motion for second reading of Bill 78, An Act to amend the Education Act, the Ontario College of Teachers Act, 1996 and certain other statutes relating to education, and that following completion of the motion for second reading of Bill 78, the Speaker shall adjourn the House until Thursday, April 13, 2006, at 10 a.m., and that this afternoon's debate shall be considered one full sessional day of debate on the motion for second reading of Bill 43, An Act to protect existing and future sources of drinking water and to make complementary and other amendments to other Acts, which debate shall be adjourned by the Speaker at 6 p.m.

The Acting Speaker: Shall the motion carry? Carried.

It being nearly 6 o'clock, we will call for a suspension of today and will recognize the government House leader for orders of the day.

EDUCATION STATUTE LAW
AMENDMENT ACT
(STUDENT PERFORMANCE), 2006
LOI DE 2006 MODIFIANT DES LOIS
EN CE QUI CONCERNE L'ÉDUCATION
(RENDEMENT DES ÉLÈVES)

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 11, 2006, on the motion for second reading of Bill 78, An Act to amend the Education Act, the Ontario College of Teachers Act, 1996 and certain other statutes relating to education / Projet de loi 78, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation, la Loi de 1996 sur l'Ordre des enseignantes et des enseignants de l'Ontario et certaines autres lois se rapportant à l'éducation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Michael Prue): I'm given to understand that on that last day of debate Mr. Tascona had the floor. But he is not here. Is there any further debate?

It is my understanding that Mr. Bradley moved second reading of the debate. Would you wish to close? Do you wish to make a statement?

Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader): No.

The Acting Speaker: Mr. Bradley has moved second reading of Bill 78, An Act to amend the Education Act. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. I declare the motion carried.

Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): No.

The Acting Speaker: I definitely heard a no.

To which committee shall the bill be referred?

Hon. Mr. Bradley: I ask that the bill be referred to the social policy committee.

The Acting Speaker: The bill is referred to the social policy committee.

It now being after 6 of the clock, and in agreement with the motion just carried, this House stands adjourned until 10 o'clock tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 1800.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. James K. Bartleman

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. Brown

Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers

Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffière: 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, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (L) Speaker / Président	Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant	Barrett, Toby (PC)
Ancaster-Dundas- Flamborough-Aldershot	McMeekin, Ted (L)	Haliburton-Victoria-Brock	Scott, Laurie (PC)
Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford	Tascona, Joseph N. (PC) Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative	Halton	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)
Beaches-East York / Beaches-York-Est	Prue, Michael (ND)	Hamilton East / Hamilton-Est	Horwath, Andrea (ND)
Bramalea-Gore-Malton- Springdale	Kular, Kuldip (L)	Hamilton Mountain	Bountrogianni, Hon. / L'hon. Marie (L) Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, ministre responsable du Renouveau démocratique
Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Jeffrey, Linda (L)	Hamilton West / Hamilton-Ouest	Marsales, Judy (L)
Brampton West-Mississauga / Brampton-Ouest-Mississauga	Dhillon, Vic (L)	Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington	Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (L) Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Brant	Levac, Dave (L)	Huron-Bruce	Mitchell, Carol (L)
Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Kenora-Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Burlington	Jackson, Cameron (PC)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (L) Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Milloy, John (L)
Chatham-Kent Essex	Hoy, Pat (L)	Kitchener-Waterloo	Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)
Davenport	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	Van Bommel, Maria (L)
Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Caplan, Hon. / L'hon. David (L) Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy government House leader / ministre du Renouvellement de l'infrastructure publique, leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement t	Lanark-Carleton	Sterling, Norman W. (PC)
Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Wynne, Kathleen O. (L)	Leeds-Grenville	Runciman, Robert W. (PC)
Dufferin-Peel- Wellington-Grey	Tory, John (PC) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Matthews, Deborah (L)
Durham	O'Toole, John (PC)	London West / London-Ouest	Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (L) Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Eglington-Lawrence	Colle, Hon. / L'hon. Mike (L) Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration	London-Fanshawe	Ramal, Khalil (L)
Elgin-Middlesex-London	Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (L) Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail	Markham	Wong, Tony C. (L)
Erie-Lincoln Essex	Hudak, Tim (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (L) Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Crozier, Bruce (L) Deputy Speaker, Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-Président, Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative	Mississauga East / Mississauga-Est	Fonseca, Peter (L)
Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Cansfield, Hon. / L'hon. Donna H. (L) Minister of Energy / ministre de l'Énergie	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Peterson, Tim (L)
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Qaadri, Shafiq (L)	Mississauga West / Mississauga-Ouest	Delaney, Bob (L)
Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	Broten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (L) Minister of the Environment / ministre de l'Environnement	Nepean-Carleton	MacLeod, Lisa (PC)
Guelph-Wellington	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	Kormos, Peter (ND)
	Sandals, Liz (L)	Niagara Falls	Craiton, Kim (L)

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Nickel Belt	Martel, Shelley (ND)	St. Paul's	Bryant, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (L) Attorney General / procureur général
Nipissing	Smith, Monique M. (L)	Stoney Creek	Mossop, Jennifer F. (L)
Northumberland	Rinaldi, Lou (L)	Stormont–Dundas– Charlottenburgh	Brownell, Jim (L)
Oak Ridges	Klees, Frank (PC)	Sudbury	Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (L) Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Oakville	Flynn, Kevin Daniel (L)	Thornhill	Racco, Mario G. (L)
Oshawa	Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Mauro, Bill (L)
Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Patten, Richard (L)	Thunder Bay–Superior	Gravelle, Michael (L)
Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (L) Premier and President of the Executive Council, Minister of Research and Innovation / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif, ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation	North / Thunder Bay–Superior- Nord	
Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Watson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim (L) Minister of Health Promotion / ministre de la Promotion de la santé	Timiskaming–Cochrane	Ramsay, Hon. / L'hon. David (L) Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs / ministre des Richesses naturelles, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Ottawa–Orléans	McNeely, Phil (L)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	Bisson, Gilles (ND)
Ottawa–Vanier	Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (L) Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones	Toronto Centre–Rosedale / Toronto-Centre–Rosedale	Smitherman, Hon. / L'hon. George (L) Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Oxford	Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Toronto–Danforth	Tabuns, Peter (ND)
Parkdale–High Park	Kennedy, Gerard (L)	Trinity–Spadina	Marchese, Rosario (ND)
Parry Sound–Muskoka	Miller, Norm (PC)	Vaughan–King–Aurora	Sorbara, Greg (L)
Perth–Middlesex	Wilkinson, John (L)	Waterloo–Wellington	Arnott, Ted (PC) First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Peterborough	Leal, Jeff (L)	Whitby–Ajax	Elliott, Christine (PC)
Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge	Arthurs, Wayne (L)	Willowdale	Zimmer, David (L)
Prince Edward–Hastings	Parsons, Ernie (L)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (L) Minister of Education, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre de l'Éducation, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	Yakabuski, John (PC)	Windsor–St. Clair	Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (L) Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / ministre des Finances, président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement
Sarnia–Lambton	Di Cocco, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (L) Minister of Culture / ministre de la Culture	York Centre / York-Centre	Kwinter, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (L) Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Sault Ste. Marie	Oraziotti, David (L)	York North / York-Nord	Munro, Julia (PC)
Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Duguid, Brad (L)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	Cordiano, Hon. / L'hon. Joseph (L) Minister of Economic Development and Trade / ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Scarborough East / Scarborough-Est	Chambers, Hon. / L'hon. Mary Anne V. (L) Minister of Children and Youth Services / ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse	York West / York-Ouest	Sergio, Mario (L)
Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	Berardinetti, Lorenzo (L)		
Scarborough–Agincourt	Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (L) Minister of Government Services / ministre des Services gouvernementaux		
Scarborough–Rouge River	Balkissoon, Bas (L)		
Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Dunlop, Garfield (PC)		
Simcoe–Grey	Wilson, Jim (PC)		
St. Catharines	Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (L) Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader / ministre du Tourisme, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées, leader parlementaire du gouvernement		

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

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

CONTENTS

Wednesday 12 April 2006

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Mark Johnston	
Ms. MacLeod.....	2903
Social services	
Ms. Martel	2903
Scarborough youth	
Mr. Balkissoon.....	2903
Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs	
Mr. Barrett	2904
Amateur sport	
Mr. Levac.....	2904
Hydro rates	
Mr. Yakabuski	2904
Rent bank program	
Mr. McNeely	2904
Public libraries	
Ms. Smith.....	2905
Border security	
Mr. Oraziotti	2905

MOTIONS

Committee membership	
Mr. Bradley.....	2905
Agreed to	2905
House sittings	
Mr. Bradley.....	2906
Agreed to	2906

ORAL QUESTIONS

Hydro rates	
Mr. Tory.....	2906, 2907
Mr. McGuinty	2906, 2907, 2908, 2909
Mr. Hampton	2908, 2909
Community safety	
Mr. Dunlop	2910
Mr. Kwinter	2910
Ontario budget	
Ms. Horwath	2910
Mrs. Chambers.....	2910
Mr. Prue	2911
Mr. Duncan.....	2911
Ontario drug benefit program	
Mrs. Sandals	2911
Mr. Smitherman.....	2911
Native land dispute	
Mr. Barrett	2911
Mr. Ramsay	2911
Family farms	
Mr. Hampton	2912
Mrs. Dombrowsky	2912
Education	
Mr. Oraziotti	2912
Ms. Papatello.....	2913

Tourism

Mr. Arnott	2913
Mr. Bradley	2913

Dufferin-Peel Catholic District

School Board	
Mr. Marchese	2914
Ms. Papatello.....	2914

Fish stocking program

Mr. Mauro	2914
Mr. Ramsay	2914

Property taxation

Mr. Hudak	2915
Mr. Duncan	2915

Gaming control

Mr. Prue	2915
Mr. Caplan	2915

PETITIONS

Frederick Banting homestead

Mr. Wilson	2916
------------------	------

Long-term care

Mr. Marchese	2916
Mr. Martiniuk.....	2916
Mrs. Van Bommel.....	2917
Mr. O'Toole	2917
Mr. Yakabuski.....	2918

Tuition

Mr. Patten.....	2916
Mr. Marchese	2917

Cancer treatment

Mrs. Mitchell.....	2917
--------------------	------

Gasoline prices

Mr. Bisson.....	2918
-----------------	------

Community mediation

Mr. Racco.....	2918
----------------	------

Education funding

Mr. Hardeman	2918
--------------------	------

SECOND READINGS

Clean Water Act, 2006, Bill 43,

<i>Ms. Broten</i>	
Ms. Broten.....	2919, 2925
Mr. Wilkinson	2922, 2933
Ms. Scott	2923, 2925, 2934
Mr. Delaney.....	2924
Mr. O'Toole	2924
Mrs. Van Bommel.....	2924
Mr. Barrett.....	2929
Mr. Arnott	2933
Mr. Flynn	2934
Ms. Horwath.....	2934
Mr. Tabuns	2935
Debate deemed adjourned	2940

Education Statute Law Amendment Act (Student Performance), 2006,

Bill 78, <i>Ms. Papatello</i>	
Agreed to	2941

OTHER BUSINESS

Women's right to vote

Ms. Horwath	2906
-------------------	------

Order of business

Mr. Bradley.....	2940
------------------	------

TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Mercredi 12 avril 2006

DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS

Programme de banques d'aide au loyer

M. McNeely.....	2904
-----------------	------

DEUXIÈME LECTURE

Loi de 2006 sur l'eau saine,

projet de loi 43, <i>M^{me} Broten</i>	
<i>M^{me} Broten</i>	2919
Débat présumé ajourné	2940

Loi de 2006 modifiant des lois en ce qui concerne l'éducation (rendement des élèves),

projet de loi 78, <i>M^{me} Papatello</i>	
Adoptée.....	2941