



Legislative Assembly
of Ontario

Third Session, 37th Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario

Troisième session, 37^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Tuesday 1 October 2002

Mardi 1^{er} octobre 2002

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

Hansard on the Internet

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

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

Index inquiries

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

Copies of Hansard

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

Le Journal des débats sur Internet

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

Renseignements sur l'index

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

Exemplaires du Journal

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



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO**

Tuesday 1 October 2002

**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO**

Mardi 1^{er} octobre 2002

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

MUBARAK AHMAD ANSARI

Mr Mario Sergio (York West): Today, October 1, has been designated by the United Nations General Assembly as the International Day of Older Persons. The objectives of this day are to address areas of concern for older people, including independence, participation, care, self-fulfillment and dignity.

It is certainly fitting that I rise today to pay tribute to an outstanding senior and hero from the riding of York West. Yesterday Mubarak Ahmad Ansari was the honoured recipient of the Ontario Senior Achievement Award at Queen's Park for his lifelong passion for helping others.

Mubarak Ahmad Ansari is a legend in our community. Wherever he sees a need, he responds with generosity and compassion. After he arrived in Canada from Pakistan in 1991, Mr Ansari immediately offered his services to the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, a charitable organization, where he took charge of planning educational programs. Later he became head of the community's reconciliation board, a counselling service, and has spent countless hours helping families solve their problems.

As a regular visitor to a hospital and a seniors' housing complex in his neighbourhood, Mr Ansari has brightened the lives of many patients and residents alike.

On behalf of the York West community and all members of this House, we take great pride in congratulating and expressing our gratitude to this fine senior who proudly exemplifies the principle for older persons as defined by the United Nations General Assembly.

COMMUNITY LEADERS IN NIPISSING

Mr AL McDonald (Nipissing): I stand before the Legislature today to let everyone know how proud I am of the riding of Nipissing and how the community leaders are making a positive difference in the lives of our future—our children.

Mr Paul Lamont, owner of the Canadian Tire store in North Bay, has developed a Junior Citizenship Award for schoolchildren. Each week one class is awarded the

award for their involvement in voluntary activities, such as shovelling driveways for seniors, helping the humane society, cleaning up local surroundings and so on. This in turn is making our area a better place to live, in addition to showing children the rewards of volunteering.

On September 20, I attended W.J. Fricker school for the special occasion of Mr Burke's grade 8 class of 2002 winning the Junior Citizenship Award for the year. Mr Burke has shown himself to be a community leader, a phenomenal volunteer and one amazing teacher.

I would like to read a letter to the editor of the North Bay Nugget written by Dianne McLeod. It reads:

"Here it is the last day of school. To my surprise my daughter has come home in tears. 'This is the last day of school. You should be happy. No more books or studying. You can sleep in and relax the whole summer before high school in September.'

"She continues to cry. She doesn't want to leave this school. You see, she had Mr Burke as a teacher this year and she enjoyed every minute of school. He was a great teacher. I went to school to pick up some stuff after she arrived home. To my amazement, here were students in his class at 3:45 refusing to leave. They were all crying in this room, boys and girls and Mr Burke.

"I'm writing to tell you how great Mr Burke really is. It's pretty obvious by his students' reaction on the last day of school. This man deserves to be recognized for the love and compassion he has for teaching and his students. He believes he's only as good as his students. Now that's a teacher who is loved and very respected."

HYDRO RATES

Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): The town of Rockland, my hometown, made the front page of the Ottawa Sun yesterday and the phones haven't stopped ringing since.

Rockland is one of the 17 municipalities on grid for another 40% increase on their hydro bills. What an increase. I say to the Minister of Energy, what do you plan to do to help the people of Rockland, who have already seen a commodity rate increase of 275% since May 13?

On that day, May 13, the former Minister of Energy proudly said in the House that the rate was 2.83 cents per kilowatt hour and today at 11 o'clock the IMO reported that the rate was 7.79 cents per kilowatt hour. This is where my 275% increase comes from.

E-mails received today from residents of Rockland say that budgets are already stretched and expectations are that For Sale signs could go up all over town.

Another example of mismanagement of Hydro One is that local contractors in eastern Ontario are faced with an increase of 332% for residential hydro connection charges. Contractors received invoices with this 332% increase without explanation and with no prior notice.

From March to June this year rates went up from \$224 to \$968 for each connection in subdivisions, a 20-minute task. How do you think contractors will recover this increase as they have already provided new homeowners with the final price for their homes?

Is this money needed for large salaries and bonuses for top executives at Hydro One?

HURON-PERTH CENTRE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): I rise in the Legislature today to congratulate the Huron-Perth Centre for Children and Youth on its 25th anniversary. The centre's mission is to help families solve problems, and since 1977 they have been providing extremely beneficial programs and services, particularly in the area of children's mental health services.

I want to take this opportunity to recognize the outstanding efforts of the centre's chief executive officer, Terri Sparling, and her staff in the Stratford, Listowel and Clinton offices. Terri and her staff are to be commended for the passion and commitment they have toward the children and families they help.

I also want to recognize board president Lisa Harper and the board of directors, the Kiwanis Club of Stratford, the Avon Maitland District School Board, the children's aid societies in Perth and Huron, the United Way of Perth, the Zion Lutheran Church and other community partners. They have helped the Huron-Perth centre carry out its programs and services for the past 25 years.

I'm delighted that my colleague the Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services met with staff and board members during a visit to the centre's Clinton office in August.

I would ask all members of this Legislature to join me in congratulating the Huron-Perth Centre for Children and Youth on 25 years of exemplary service to children and families in my riding and the neighbouring area.

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West): In the last session, the Minister of Health denied that there was a problem with waiting lists for common diagnostic testing in this province. Let me tell you what that denial has caused.

Today, 90% of those on waiting lists will wait longer than is medically appropriate. Here are some examples that ought to make all of us astonished.

At Southlake Regional Health Centre in Newmarket, patients wait up to 12 weeks for a barium enema. In Mississauga, patients wait up to 14 weeks for an ultrasound. In Windsor they're waiting eight weeks. In Kitchener, a patient can wait up to 30 weeks for a CT scan. How much longer do people need to wait until we realize there's a problem?

A patient waiting 20 weeks for a mammogram then has to wait even longer for a follow-up CT in order to get a more detailed diagnosis. It's completely unacceptable.

Last week the government quietly announced a CT scan for Lake of the Woods in Kenora. Minister, if you think you can sit and pat yourself on the back, you're sadly mistaken. It still takes 14 weeks for a patient to receive a chest X-ray for potential lung cancer. In that time, there's much potential for that disease to spread.

Making one announcement doesn't even begin to address the problems. There are so many commonly ordered diagnostics that are being ignored. They are taking too long.

You can only stick your head in the sand for so long. In the past seven years, we've watched this government cut away at diagnostic services. These people shouldn't have to wait.

1340

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): I just want to let the folks watching this parliamentary channel know that we put together an NDP education vision for the 21st century about three weeks ago or so. What we want to say to the public is that this is our response to the education crisis we are all feeling in the province.

Many of you know the education system is broken. This government has broken the education system in more ways than one. We need an alternative vision to be able to do that. We put that together. We did that by working hard with many of our educational activist teachers, principals and parents on what we believe is a very good, practical, visionary response to the problems we face.

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): How do I get a copy?

Mr Marchese: I'm going to come to that.

It's a response to the fact that the funding formula is broken, and we say we need to re-invest. You can't say it's broken and not put money back into the education system. We're doing that. We're creating two new tax categories for people who earn over \$100,000 or over \$150,000, so that those who earn whatever money over \$100,000 get taxed in one category and those who earn over \$150,000—whatever they earn over that amount—would be taxed as well. We would raise \$1.3 billion to pay for that. That's how we would do it. That's how we would reinvest.

If you want a copy of this paper, please call us at (416) 325-9092.

INA TROLOVE

Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka): It gives me great pleasure to pay tribute to a very important constituent of Parry Sound-Muskoka. Ina Trolove of Burk's Falls paid a visit to Queen's Park yesterday to receive a 2002 Ontario Senior Achievement Award. Ina Trolove is one those very special individuals who spend their lives in the service of others. She is a daughter of the Mnjikaning First Nation and rightfully proud of her heritage.

Now approximately 90 years of age, Ina continues to be involved in many community activities, including the Burk's Falls branch of the Canadian Red Cross, which she joined in 1949. She was recognized with the Order of the Red Cross last year for her more than 50 years of service.

Ina has been an outstanding volunteer in her community of Burk's Falls and has been a key member of the agricultural fair board, the historical society, All Saints Anglican Church, where she maintains beautiful gardens, and the PC riding association, where she volunteered as secretary for 45 years.

Ina is close to the same age as Stan Darling. She ran Stan's constituency office single-handedly until he retired when they were both about 83. In Stan's words, "Ina was so dedicated she never took any holidays in all those 15 years; she said she was too busy."

It is indeed a great honour to receive the senior achievement award. Ina is an outstanding example of the service and dedication to community that the award seeks to recognize.

CHINESE COMMUNITY

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): In the history of mankind an important occasion took place 53 years ago: the founding of the People's Republic of China. Today, helping us to celebrate in this council chamber are the Consul General of the People's Republic of China, Madam Sun, and her staff, Ping Tan and Hueghs Eng, and a whole number of guests.

As we celebrate this historic event, we are mindful of the People's Republic of China's economic achievements: doubled the standard of living; increase in education—one of the most excellent institutions; hospital care improved 60%; and GDP over the last 10 years of more than 9.2%—outstanding achievements.

While we are mindful of these tremendous economic achievements, we are also mindful of what has been established by Canadians of Chinese background in Canada. Since 1850 Chinese Canadians have been here, at first with the gold rush, the Cariboo and the Fraser Valley, and then 17,000 Chinese came to help build the Canadian Pacific Railway.

Today we find their contribution in every aspect of public life in Canada. So I say to them, while we are reminded of your economic contribution, what we seek today is a friendship between our two peoples, Chinese

Canadians as the bridge between China and Canada. Together we will see the future, and the future looks bright between our two countries.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Just before we begin, may I welcome Madam Sun, the Consul General, a very good friend of mine as well.

Also with us today in the Speaker's gallery we have the new Consul General of Russia in Toronto, Mr Nickolay Smirnov, and his wife, Tatiania. Please join me in welcoming our other honoured guests. We welcome all our honoured guests.

ORONO CHILI COOK-OFF

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): I rise in the House today to mention yet another highly successful event in Durham riding. I'm pleased to report that a record crowd attended the Orono fourth annual Chili Cook-Off on September 21. This was another excellent, all around family activity that included participation by business, volunteers of all ages and 23 contestants.

Congratulations also to Evelyn Rozario—no relation to Rosario Marchese—president of the Orono Business Improvement Area, and all of the BIA members who made this event possible. Not to delay the suspense any longer, here are the winning chefs: the Judges Choice Award went to Donna Clement; the People's Choice Award went to Don Brosseau; the team of Evan Moore, Doug Garlick and Chris Moffat took the prize of spiciest chili. Pam Oakes entered the judges' contest with the best vegetarian chili; Gerry and Lorraine Skipwith received the prize for the best booth. I wonder what that means.

The event was so successful that plans are already underway for the 2003 Hot Stuff in Orono contest.

This is but one example of the many outstanding community-based celebrations taking place in my riding of Durham this fall. I encourage everyone to visit the Durham riding and enjoy such events as the Orono Chili Cook-Off. I might add that this weekend, Saturday October 5, Newcastle has the Fall Festival with a spaghetti dinner. I encourage everyone to attend these and other events occurring in my riding of Durham this fall.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

ONTARIO WATER RESOURCES
AMENDMENT ACT, 2002LOI DE 2002 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LES RESSOURCES
EN EAU DE L'ONTARIO

Mrs Marland moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 183, An Act to amend the Ontario Water Resources Act / Projet de loi 183, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les ressources en eau de l'Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

The minister for a short statement?

Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South): It's my pleasure and privilege today to reintroduce the bill that I previously tabled in the 34th session of Parliament, when the Liberals were the government.

Interjection.

Mrs Marland: It did pass second reading but it went into that famous committee of the whole. The subject is one on which now the federal government has decided, after 30 years, to issue a discussion paper. With a multi-billion dollar industry in bottled water, I believe it is time to protect the public with updated standards and regulations now. My bill would address this void. It is very much overdue, and I look forward to the support of the House.

Obviously, it takes a long time for the lottery system to come around and I'm happy that my lottery has now come up. I'm anticipating expeditious passage of my bill, and I anticipate that all members of this chamber will want to protect their constituents and consumers of bottled water.

1350

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Energy, minister responsible for francophone affairs): The people of Ontario want to protect the environment. They know that clean energy will go a long way toward achieving that objective. They continue to express their demand for cleaner, affordable sources of energy.

This government has been listening, and we've acted and will continue to act to help ensure that the people of Ontario have access to the widest possible variety of clean fuels.

In fact, Ontario was already a North American leader in supporting clean fuels and energy sources.

Interjections.

Hon Mr Baird: I know the members opposite are excited.

For example, almost two thirds of Ontario's power is already generated by hydroelectric and nuclear plants, which produce almost no pollution, and that compares quite favourably with many jurisdictions in the United States, which are 85% fossil fuel.

Thanks to changes our government made to Ontario's Environmental Assessment Act, which encourages cleaner energy sources, over 2,000 megawatts of natural gas-fired energy capacity have been approved in Ontario over

the past two years. Furthermore, the Ontario government continues to waive its fuel tax for the ethanol portion of ethanol-blended fuels.

I notice the member for Leeds-Grenville, a big supporter of ethanol, sitting beside me in the House today.

But we know that our work in this area has just begun, and we are committed to do more.

I have in my hand a copy of the final report of the select committee on alternative fuels. This Legislature created an all-party committee in 2001 and equipped it with a mandate to investigate new ways of supporting the development and application of alternative fuels in the province.

On behalf of all members of the House and on behalf of the people of Ontario, I'd like to thank all members of the committee, from all sides of the House, and the good chairman, Doug Galt, for their outstanding effort.

The committee's final report presents a broad range of policy ideas indicating the large variety of options that the government may consider in its continued support of alternative fuels.

In a number of areas the committee's report supports Ontario's existing direction, while other areas require a lot more analysis before programs can be developed.

By the end of the 2002 calendar year, this government will come forward with a progress report on alternative fuel initiatives. I've asked my parliamentary assistant, Steve Gilchrist, to consult with experts, consumer and environmental groups and market participants in the electricity, gas and fuel sectors, with a view to making recommendations for a renewable portfolio standard for Ontario.

The members on all sides of the House will know the commitment that my colleague the hard-working member for Scarborough East has, not just to renewable energy but to the environment. I'm pleased that he'll be able to have the opportunity to continue to advance this direction as an environmental leader in our province, not just in this House.

I'm proud to point out that selected alternative fuel initiatives are well on their way to becoming reality. The Ontario government has already proposed initiatives, guided by the committee's final report, such as creating a tax incentive for consumers to buy products that use these renewable fuel sources. The government committed to an exemption from the 14.3-cents-per-litre fuel tax for biodiesel fuels in June 2002, creating a tax incentive for consumers to buy energy-efficient cars and trucks.

In its June 2002 budget, the government committed to extending the sales tax rebate for hybrid electric automobiles to cover sport-utility vehicles and light-duty trucks.

Together, I believe we can make a tremendous difference to our environment and to the future of Ontario.

I'd like to turn it over to my good colleague the Minister of the Environment.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): The government is committed to doing more, drawing from the final report of the

alternative fuels committee. The government has identified eight key policy areas for future initiatives and will pursue those, which will (1) provide government leadership; (2) establish an alternative energy strategy; (3) encourage renewable electricity generation; (4) reduce dependence on coal for electricity generation; (5) encourage energy efficiency/conservation; (6) encourage biofuels, hydrogen and other alternative transportation fuels—

Interjection: Speak from the heart.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I don't have a mirror, sorry—(7) support technology and innovation; and (8) raise public awareness and participation.

I've asked the ministry to examine the costs and benefits, with the goal of implementing the report's recommendations.

Supporting alternative fuels now and in the future is part of the Ontario government's comprehensive approach to clean air. This approach includes innovative initiatives such as:

(1) improvements to Ontario's air quality index, which were announced on August 23 of this year, when we added fine particulate matter to the index;

(2) consultations with major industrial emitters on introducing stringent emission limits for smog- and acid-rain-causing emissions in Ontario;

(3) strengthening Ontario Smog Patrol for better enforcement of vehicle emission standards on roads throughout the province.

(4) This year we again expanded Drive Clean, a program that now covers—

Interjections.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Are you OK? You're all right? Maybe you want to see the veterinarian?

(4) This year we again expanded Drive Clean, a program that now covers all municipalities, from Windsor to the Quebec border.

(5) We have introduced stringent emission caps for the power sector as part of this government's comprehensive environmental protection framework for Ontario's electricity sector.

(6) We required the Lakeview generating station in Mississauga to cease burning coal by April 2005.

I am looking forward to continuing along this path and making good on the Ontario government's commitment to supporting clean fuels and advancing our clean air approach.

I would now like to take this opportunity to thank that all-party committee that supported this recommendation. I might add that the all-party committee at the time signed on to closing all coal-fired plants by 2015, and I think—

Interjections.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I think we should personally outline those members on the opposition benches who signed on to closing those coal-fired plants by 2015. I want to personally thank them for their support, working on this committee to, again, close coal-fired plants by 2015. Mr Bradley deserves a round of applause. Mrs

Bountrogianni deserves a round of applause. Mr Parsons deserves a round of applause. Ms Churley also deserves a round of applause for endorsing the closing of coal-fired plants by 2015.

By working together as an all-party committee—and I congratulate all the committee members, including the four I just said, that, yes, we can get these coal-fired plants closed by 2015, and I'm glad you three signed your names to that.

SENIOR CITIZENS

Hon Carl DeFaria (Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors): I am pleased to announce that October 1 is the International Day of Older Persons, as designated by the United Nations in 1990.

Today we have an opportunity to recognize and celebrate the tremendous contributions seniors have made, and continue to make, to the quality of life in the province of Ontario. Seniors in Ontario, all 1.5 million of them, deserve our acknowledgement, appreciation and deepest respect.

This government's goal is a province where all seniors can live in safety, with dignity, and have their contributions recognized.

As minister responsible for seniors, I co-hosted the sixth federal-provincial-territorial ministers' meeting this summer, in June. At that meeting, my colleagues and I made a commitment to work together to support our seniors.

In Ontario, we are leading the way with our strategy to combat elder abuse and have committed \$4.3 million to support this strategy. We do not, and we will not, tolerate elder abuse in Ontario.

From November 18 through November 20, our government is sponsoring our first major elder abuse conference, Sharing Solutions: Defining the Future. This conference will focus on elder abuse strategy and will also address healthy aging.

Raising awareness of seniors' issues will reduce negative attitudes and negative behaviours toward seniors. Our conference is the first step in this process. Empowering seniors to make personal choices in all aspects of their lives will provide them with greater independence, pride and dignity.

1400

Earlier this year, I announced the Ontario Seniors' Seminars, on safe medication use, avoiding frauds and scams, safe driving, advanced care planning and other topics important to seniors. Many of my MPP colleagues have already arranged for seminars in their ridings, and I urge each and every member of this House to make these seminars available to the seniors in their ridings.

Yesterday, the province of Ontario honoured 22 outstanding senior citizens at the 16th annual Senior Achievement Awards celebration here in the Assembly. These awards are for individuals who have volunteered their time and talents after the age of 65. They show that regardless of age, we all make our community a better

place to live through acts of volunteerism and continuing contributions to our province.

I ask all members to join me in saluting all older persons of Ontario.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I saw John Baird and Chris Stockwell speaking, but I could hear Ralph Klein's voice. The reason is that this is the most astounding, pathetic response to the alternative fuels report I could ever have contemplated. The government has had this report and its 150 recommendations for a period of five months now, and this is the very best that you could come forward with, some vague promises out there? It is absolutely astounding to see this.

The government obviously does not want to close its coal-fired plants. We have the Minister of Energy talking about some target of the year 2015; he refuses to commit. We have the member for Haldimand saying the government has no commitment to close the plants by 2015, and I think most people in this province recognize that can be bettered by several years, that all the plants can be closed by the end of the year 2007. I know the Minister of Health, who is very prominent on this issue, would agree with me that these plants can be closed by 2007, and I urge him to make sure he speaks up with his colleagues in this regard.

There is no commitment of any size, of any magnitude, to an investment in public transportation. There is no meaningful reference to conservation. You have to approach the demand side. Everybody is doing this. We're behind everybody else. Even some of the states in the United States that we consider to be somewhat neanderthal in the field of the environment are moving quickly. Minister, your parliamentary assistants would be able to list all the states that are way ahead of Ontario.

We have virtually no commitments out of this government, nothing emerging from this report, more stalling tactics taking place and a government deeply divided over closing coal-fired plants. They even want to leave the old dirty boilers in one of the significant coal-fired plants that is scheduled to close. So they will not even achieve the kind of air quality improvements they could have. There is no commitment to investment in alternative fuels or tax incentives to make sure we use much cleaner fuels. This is totally unacceptable. It is, I must say, extremely surprising to me that we have such a pathetic response to a very comprehensive report.

Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's): The government is setting a target of 2015. By 2015 there will be nothing but coal-fired condos that can afford their hydro bills in the province of Ontario. People can't wait until 2015 for the promised hydro heaven to arrive. They need action now. Besides the McGuinty clean air plan, we need the government to move forward on its promised rebates now. We've heard the Premier, we've heard the parliamentary assistant, I think yesterday, to the energy minister talking about rebates for Herculean hydro prices. But

now we're hearing that these aren't going to come until August of next year. To make matters worse, everybody on a fixed-price contract, except for a few who bothered to read the fine print—no thanks to the government's lax regulation—is going to get no rebate.

So our message to the government is, we need relief for Ontario consumers now. We need you to roll out this rebate now—the full rebate, all the rebate and nothing but the rebate now. The time has come for the government to recognize that its actions have directly driven up hydro rates to a level that they would not have reached but for mistakes made by the government on the supply side, mistakes made by the government on the regulation side, and enormous incompetence undertaken by the government when it comes to hydroelectricity transmission and the future of Hydro One.

So now it's time for you to provide this rebate, to provide relief to Ontarians. So I say to you, roll out the rebate to compensate for Herculean hydro hikes. Roulez le rabais pour gagner maintenant. Do it for Ontario consumers. Bring in the rebate. They cannot survive until August. They won't wait until your election-goody budget. Bring out the rebate. Bring it out now.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): There's hardly enough time to comment on this report that the minister has commented on today. It's fluff. There's no meat to the bones on this thing.

I have another report here from the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario.

Interjection.

Ms Churley: Yes, I did sign it. Just because you sign a report and you compromise all along so everybody can sign on, doesn't mean that we can't raise our standards very high. I made that clear during the committee when I signed on.

But look at the Environmental Commissioner's report of Ontario: weak support for energy conservation, cleaner fuels. Look at a report that came out from the Commission for Environmental Cooperation, a Montreal-based agency created under the North American free trade arrangement. The CEC's report said that the introduction of electricity competition in the US has increased power from cheap but dirty coal plants while expenditures on energy-efficiency measures were cut by 42% between 1995 and 1999.

What's happening here is this government is bringing us headlong into privatization and deregulation of the generation plants, and still Hydro One, and it's going to produce more pollution. The government talks about its commitment today to energy conservation and efficiency. They cut all the programs that the NDP put in when we were in power. No commitment there whatsoever. There should have been an announcement today of things they were going to do right away.

Furthermore, we are still waiting for clarification on when Nanticoke is going to be shut down. We've got two different ministers saying two different things. It produces more smog and air pollution in this province than any other industry or production and you're still not com-

mitting to closing it down. We need all of the five plants closed down, and we should be doing all of these things now, not waiting until there are more studies, more information.

This was an inadequate response to a very important report that was done by a select committee of this whole Legislature. I also will charge the government to not get caught up in saying that because I signed on to something, that means that I cannot try to raise the standards even higher here. I want to say to you that I will continue to do that and I will be focusing on this government taking a lead on the Kyoto accord and not waiting for the Liberals in Ottawa to come through.

1410

SENIOR CITIZENS

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): In response to the statement made by the minister for seniors, I want to say that I'm pleased on behalf of the NDP to acknowledge today, October 1, as International Day of Older Persons. We salute the 22 individuals who received awards yesterday, and we thank the thousands and thousands of other seniors who daily make important contributions to our communities.

With respect to the conference on elder abuse that the government wants to host this November, I wonder if the minister is actually prepared to deal with the most significant examples of elder abuse that are perpetrated by his government. Let me give you some of those examples.

This is a government that as of yet, today, still has not passed the regulations that would give effect to the Patient Restraints Minimization Act that was passed unanimously in this House in June 2001. That was an effort to make sure that elderly people were not restrained by the hospital because there wasn't enough staff. This government has yet to even pass the regulations to make sure that goes into effect.

This is a government that on July 1 cancelled the minimum standards for bathing for seniors in our long-term-care facilities, standards that used to set out daily and weekly baths. Now there's not even a mention of the word "bath" in the new regulation.

This is a government that delisted hearing aid evaluations and re-evaluations from OHIP, so that now seniors on fixed incomes have to pay for those evaluations themselves.

This is a government that because of its hydro privatization and deregulation scheme is forcing seniors to pay huge increases in their hydro bills right now. Our office has been flooded by seniors who don't know how they're going to cope with that.

This is a government that has allowed huge rent increases because of their scheme to decontrol rent. Again, seniors on a fixed income are worried about how they're going to pay. No wonder there's an increase of seniors at the food banks in this province.

This is a government that has frozen the budget for home care and made changes to home care policies that are directly forcing seniors into long-term-care facilities.

You want to deal with elder abuse? You should start dealing with some of your own policies that abuse elders.

CHILD PROTECTION

Hon Brenda Elliott (Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I believe we have unanimous consent for all three parties to speak for up to five minutes on child abuse prevention month.

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

Hon Mrs Elliott: The Ernie Eves government believes all of Ontario's children have the right to be protected from abuse and neglect. In a society that views child abuse and neglect as inexcusable, child protection stands as a key function to support the needs of children.

The first day of October marks the beginning of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month. The Ministry of Community, Family and Children's Services places a high priority on protecting Ontario's children through a strong child welfare system. We care deeply about the well-being of our children and have made fundamental improvements to some key areas of child protection, including tough new amendments to the Child and Family Services Act that add neglect as a factor in determining if a child is in need of protection.

Since 1995 we've increased spending on child protection by 139%, to a budget now of over \$860 million in 2002-03. This includes hiring 1,700 more child protection workers, a 77% increase since 1995.

We remain committed to further skills development of those who work in child protection. We have boosted support to child protection workers by improving training through the Ontario child protection training program to assist them to help children. Over 6,000 workers and ministry staff have been trained in our tough new standards.

We have also provided children's aid societies with new technology, such as a database program that allows them to track high-risk families across Ontario.

Our commitment to children is demonstrated by the important reforms this government has made. We will continue to build on the progress we have made to better protect all.

While we have made many accomplishments in the past few years, we know there is more ahead of us. Ensuring the protection of children is an important task and we cannot do this work alone. It is important that we ask the people of Ontario to share this challenge with us. Ontarians know that if they have reasonable grounds to suspect a child is being neglected or abused, they should promptly report these concerns to the child welfare agency or the local community police force.

We value our ongoing partnerships with Ontario's children's aid societies. Over the past summer, I had the

opportunity to travel throughout the province and meet with some of these very special people, to visit a number of children's aid societies and take the opportunity to talk to the people who make it their number one responsibility to support vulnerable children, who are fostering more and more interest in foster homes and looking to help young children and those in need find homes in adoption.

Children's aid societies carry out crucial and stressful work. They are the front line in circumstances that, more often than not, are extremely painful for children. They see in their daily work more family upheaval than most professionals in the human service field.

As the Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services, I have great respect for the work they do and for the significant demands that are placed upon them both professionally and emotionally. On behalf of my colleagues on this side of the House, may I take this time to sincerely thank all who work for the protection of children in our province. Their role is vital and their commitment greatly appreciated.

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): On behalf of the Ontario Liberal Party and my leader, Dalton McGuinty, I take this opportunity to make some remarks around this, the 10th anniversary of Child Protection Month. It is with some sadness that we recognize that we have to stand in this Legislature and talk about the fact that we ask people during this month to wear a purple ribbon as a reminder that our most vulnerable, our most valuable resource in this province, are at risk, are in jeopardy. The wearing of this ribbon also should suggest to individuals that we all have a responsibility as members of society to do what we can to advocate, to ensure that we have laws that truly do protect our most vulnerable citizens: our children.

I say in this Legislature today that it does strike me as strange that in these very prosperous times, these times of great economic prosperity, the numbers of children who are taken into custody for their own safety have increased 70% since 1996. That's a very startling figure to me. I think there's a very clear message in those numbers that we have a responsibility to examine what the cost is of the increase in those numbers.

Like the minister, I do recognize the people who work so very hard in the child protection field. Certainly the burden they carry as they go to work every day is a difficult one, and their way is not easy. I speak with individuals who work in child protection on a regular basis and they share with me their sadness, the challenges they have and the ever-increasing demands in their workplace. I do congratulate them, compliment them, encourage them to continue their very good work on behalf of our children.

But we have much to do. I could not help but note that when the minister made her remarks, she talked about child protection. I think the people who are working in that field are doing all they can with the resources that the government is making available to them. But what I didn't hear in the remarks was suggestions on child abuse prevention, and that is what the month is dedicated to:

what can we do to prevent children from being abused? Very obviously, we have a responsibility, when children are abused, to take them out of that situation, to protect them, to make them safe. But we also have a responsibility as lawmakers to look at our laws to see what we can do to prevent children from being in these circumstances.

I did read an article not so very long ago that pointed out that in Ontario, when police officers come into a situation of domestic violence, for example, they have the power to remove an individual from that situation whether the individual wants to be removed or not. Perhaps that's something we need to consider, as a province, for our children. Whether the children say, "Yes, I have been struck by this caregiver," or not, that child should be removed if there is any question, any doubt as to the reason why a child might have an injury.

We have to invest in assisting parents to understand how to be good parents. We know in this province that it can regularly happen that children from abusive relationships will grow up to be abusers. That's what they know in their own experience.

We have a lot of work to do to establish across Ontario, in all our communities, more access to parents to understand appropriate parenting and anger management skills so that they understand it's not appropriate to strike their children and to punish their children in ways that impact their health and well-being.

It is my sincere hope, as I believe it would be for all members in this Legislature, that one day we won't have to stand in the month of October and talk about Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month.

1420

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): It's very sad that we stand here today to speak in honour of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month. The fact that such a month needs to exist is devastating, but the sad reality is that it does indeed need to exist.

The old adage, "It takes a community to raise a child," is never more true than when it comes to the issue of child abuse. It is the responsibility of every member of society to ensure that our children grow and flourish in a safe environment, free from fear. It's an even greater responsibility for every one of us as members of this Legislature charged with leadership to build communities where children are nurtured. Sadly, we are doing a dismal job of standing up to this responsibility.

Since this Conservative government was elected, it has systematically gutted programs that protected our children by concentrating on prevention. Who most suffer from the 22% cut this government made to social assistance? Children. Who most suffer from this government's refusal to invest in affordable housing? Children. Who most suffer from cuts to regulated child care? Children. Who has suffered dramatically from this government's sweeping reforms to the Child and Family Services Act? Children. Over the last five years, the number of children taken into care by the children's aid society has increased by 40%.

Poverty is getting deeper and deeper in this province. This government continues to slash supports for poor families. Through downloading, it continues to force municipalities to cut programs designed to help families on the edge.

Sweeping reforms to the children's aid society have resulted in caseworkers spending 70% of their time filling out paperwork instead of working with families. Workers are in a horrible Catch-22. Though they want to spend more time helping children, they can't. If their paperwork isn't filled out, they lose the funding they need to help children.

There is a reason why workers are burning out and leaving the job at an alarming rate. They got into this line of work to help children. With caseloads as much as four times what they should be, helping children is something that has become exceedingly difficult for them to do.

I call on this government today to do more than offer worthless rhetoric when it comes to the prevention of abuse of children. I call on this government to stop its Bay Street agenda and get back to its real responsibility of building strong communities and investing in real programs that do more than just pull children out of their homes.

What children need are investments in programs that prevent abuse from ever happening in the first place. I challenge you today to begin with a very small but important first step: stop the clawback of the national child tax benefit supplement. Give our most vulnerable children the money their families need to feed themselves so that they can focus on building a brighter future.

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): On Sunday night I was at the Queen Street Baptist Church down in St Catharines, where the Niagara community male chorus was putting on a concert. Why? To raise funds for the family of young Sarah Toner, a four-year-old, beautiful, bright child with her bright eyes, but a child, like so many others, with autism whom this government has abandoned and ignored.

The Toner family, hard-working working people who can ill afford the tens of thousands of dollars to provide adequate treatment and therapy for their little four-year-old Sarah, have to rely upon the charity and goodwill of their church community, family, friends and neighbours.

This government wants to talk about getting tough on child abuse? Well, by God, then this government should, here and now, declare its commitment to full funding of treatment and therapies for the best possible autism responses that we know are available. You should stop forcing working families into a scenario where they're putting second and third mortgages on their houses and where they're entering a world of economic despair. Because they care about their kids and they love their children, those communities and those families are prepared to sacrifice for their children, but this government has abandoned them and those kids.

ORAL QUESTIONS

MFP FINANCIAL SERVICES

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): I have a question for the Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet. Since the Harris-Eves government came to office in Ontario, taxpayers in the province have paid out more than \$425 million to MFP Financial and MFP Technologies. These payments are part of long-term leasing computer contracts which appear to be very similar to those contracts in Toronto and Windsor that go out 20 to 30 years into the future at a potential cost of billions of dollars.

Minister, the public inquiry into the city of Toronto's dealing with MFP Financial was halted yesterday on news that a criminal investigation is now underway. Given these facts, will you release your government's contracts with MFP to this House today?

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Culture): Of course, as we well know, the city of Toronto is under investigation so I can't comment on that, but it does give me an opportunity to tell a very positive story here.

We've acted on the recommendations of the Provincial Auditor, who came out with recommendations in the 2000 annual report that we undertake a new competitive process for lease financing agreements. This process was completed in February 2002.

The government has taken action to ensure consistency in leasing practices and asset management. It's kind of a boring answer but it's technical.

Interjections.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: If the member over there would like to listen, all the vendors have signed the Management Board Secretariat master contract, which replaces all existing contracts. In addition to all this, Management Board will continue to work with the ministries to ensure that we keep on reviewing these things through regular training sessions for our staff, but also through random audits of specific leases and regular means to review vendors' reports and ministry management.

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): What are you hiding?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: Hiding? We've had the report from the auditor. We've acted on the report of the auditor. I believe that's the right thing to do.

Mr Duncan: Minister, you did not answer my question. We have asked you to release the MFP contracts on repeated occasions. When my colleague from Essex, Mr Crozier, filed a freedom of information request, you refused to release them, blaming the company's desire to keep them secret. The company has filed a third party objection. When Mr Crozier attempted to get an independent audit, your members, the Tory members of the public accounts committee, used their motion to defeat our motion.

Minister, all of our attempts to bring some light on your government's dealings with MFP have been met with stonewalling by you and that company. Given the very serious allegations that have surfaced in Windsor, Toronto and Waterloo, will you release those contracts? If you're proud of these contracts with MFP, why do you refuse to make them public and subject to scrutiny? What are you hiding?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: Clearly the answer is we're hiding nothing. In fact, once again this becomes a good-news story as a result of the auditor's recommendations. In a letter to the clerk of the standing committee on public accounts—and this predates the time we actually implemented all this. It's dated September 25, 2001, and is dealing with the auditor's report and recommendations on movable assets. By the way, this was copied to Mr Gerretsen, who at the time was the Chair of the standing committee on public accounts. So clearly he understands that this is an issue about procurement.

The competitive process, as established through Management Board, indicates:

"All mandatory and desirable requirements that will apply to the evaluation of proposed equipment products/services; and

"The evaluation process and criteria that will be used to assess proposed hardware products, including the weights allocated to various desirable requirements and any testing that will be conducted."

This just brings up a number of factors that we've brought into the competitive process to ensure it's fair, open and accountable to government. These are steps that we've taken and certainly a recommendation by the auditor, which I believe brings the procurement process to the highest level it has ever been in government.

1430

Mr Duncan: The auditor's recommendations have nothing to do with the contracts you have signed. Those contracts are signed and outstanding. According to your own estimates, in the last year you paid \$88,714,838 to MFP through various ministries including, I might add, the Solicitor General's ministry, the OPP, who are now investigating these contracts.

Toronto and Windsor appear to have contracts that in both cases, on the face of it, seem very similar to the contracts that the province has signed with MFP. In the city of Windsor's case, there are civil actions undertaken in order to recover what they believe will be the excessive interest charges that were hidden in those contracts.

Minister, table those contracts today. Let us see them. Let the police have them. We in the official opposition call on you to refer those contracts to the Ontario Provincial Police today. Will you do it, so that these contracts can be taken into consideration with the other investigation going on involving the city of Toronto right now?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: That's just a complete load of you-know-what.

First of all, this is all about procurement. It's all about having the right process. That's absolutely what this is all about. It's the fact that we're taking steps to do this.

I'm going to point out to the Liberals over there, who are right now carping at me, that if we refer once again to the Provincial Auditor's report of 1989—they don't like the Provincial Auditor; I'm going to refer to him—he referred to the government at the time by saying, "For the most part, ministries were following government policies and procedures for purchasing consulting services. However, instances were noted where ministries went through the motions of competitively tendering for assignments, but the process was really not open or fair to all bidders."

We go on to talk about the specific contracts, the auditor's report on page 20 that said, "12 of the 13 contracts were awarded to consultants who had worked for the ministry continuously since at least 1986 as programmers and systems analysts. Given the situation, one must question the competitiveness of the tendering process."

It's all about accountability. That's what this is all about.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Mr Ted McMeekin (Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot): My question is for the Minister of Education.

After a very long, painful and tear-stained trek—I'm referring of course to the two-year ministry-mandated school closure procedure, to be precise—the parents of students at Lynden, Sheffield and Dundana community-based rural schools were informed by the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board that their schools would remain open. Last week, however, your interim board supervisor, Jim Murray, informed them that their schools would be closed. In fact, Mr Murray suggested privately that the closures might not even wait until the end of the school year but take place mid-term.

We have now been put into education purgatory. Parents don't care whose fault it is any more. They just want your government do to what's right. Despite the school board's clear recommendation to keep these rural schools open, you refuse to listen to these community-elected trustees.

Last week in the House, Madam Minister, you responded to a question by saying, "The decision to build new schools and close other schools remained the prerogative of the local school boards." Minister, will you stand in your place today and guarantee my constituents that you will accept the recommendations of the school board and not close these—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. The member's time is well over a minute.

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): I will repeat what I said last week: the decisions regarding school accommodation, the decision about which schools are going to close and which new schools are going to be built to accommodate growth in different parts of a school board catchment area, are decisions that will be made by school trustees. The role

of the supervisor, however, is to develop a plan that will allow for those boards to balance their budgets.

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): I find it interesting that the minister sits here and says the decision is to be made by school trustees. Minister, you have stripped those trustees of any power. You and Ernie Eves are now running the school board in Hamilton through your hand-picked supervisor. It's clear. Forget the school board in this equation.

Applause.

Mr Agostino: Your backbenchers are applauding that.

The supervisor you hand-picked first said school closures are off the table. He's now had a change of heart. There are two schools in my riding, Parkview and Lloyd George, that went through a two-year process. It was clearly determined by the board that they would not be closed. Now your hand-picked supervisor has put them on his hit list.

Minister, there's no escaping this. It is your decision. You're now allowing the supervisor to break the Education Act by not following the process you put in place for school closures. Minister, you're not going to get away with this. You can run but you can't hide. Any school closed in Hamilton is your responsibility, is Ernie Eves's responsibility.

I ask you, will you now allow your hand-picked supervisor to break the Education Act unilaterally, on his own decide to close schools in Hamilton by breaking the law you put in place and trying to hide behind the fact that it's trustees? Will you allow the supervisor this power to break the Education Act and close schools in Hamilton?

Hon Mrs Witmer: Mr Speaker, I mean, really. Some of what's being said is rather unfortunate in that it—

Interjection.

The Speaker: The member for Hamilton East, come to order. You've asked the question, and the minister is trying to reply. Order. Sorry to the minister. The Minister of Education has the floor.

Hon Mrs Witmer: I recognize that perhaps the member has a close affiliation with someone who may be involved with the school board, but I think it's really, really important for us to get the facts right. The facts are as follows: the supervisor had meetings and is having meetings with parents and staff and trustees in the community, and he has not made any decisions whatsoever. So what you're saying today is simply fearmongering. I would suggest you stop until any decisions may or may not be made.

The Speaker: Final supplementary.

Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain): Minister, it is unconscionable that you would attribute my colleague's question to an affiliation within his riding. That's distracting of the question.

This government may have forgotten, but Hamilton taxpayers certainly haven't. Your supervisor is the same person you hired to make the cutbacks to Hamilton's CCAC. Your government was so pleased with Mr Murray's work in cutting home care services for seniors

and the disabled that you invited him back to do the same for our students. As anyone conducting a job interview would tell you, future behaviour is predicted by past behaviour. Given that Mr Murray weighted your government's objectives over and above the needs of my community, can Hamilton students expect a similar fate? Minister, you made a promise to parents and students in Hamilton that not one single school will close this year. Now your hand-picked supervisor may be breaking that promise. Why should parents and students trust anything you say?

Hon Mrs Witmer: We have here a situation where the opposition is jumping to conclusions prematurely. There have been no decisions made. I suggest that you keep in mind that at the end of the day it is the school board that is going to be making any final decisions.

HYDRO DAM SAFETY

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Deputy Premier. This past summer, Cindy Cadieux and her seven-year-old son were killed by a torrent of high water released at the Barrett Chute generating station on the Madawaska River. Last weekend the Ottawa Citizen revealed disturbing facts about those deaths. The Ottawa Citizen says that hydro deregulation has changed Ontario Power Generation's operating procedures such that considerations of public safety have been sacrificed. The Ottawa Citizen says a new computer system designed to react immediately to price and demand changes of the deregulated hydro market, a process called rubber stamping, resulted in a torrential water flow from the Barrett Chute generating station that killed Cindy Cadieux and her son Aaron, without any warning whatsoever to them.

Minister, is the Ottawa Citizen right?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): I will refer the question to the Minister of Energy.

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Energy, minister responsible for francophone affairs): This is an incredibly important issue. There was a real tragedy that occurred this past spring involving the loss of life of a young woman and her young son. Our sympathies go out to the families involved. It was a tragedy.

There is an investigation, properly so, being conducted by the relevant authorities. I don't think it would be advisable or appropriate for a member of the government to get up and comment on the case while such an investigation is ongoing. I want to see justice done. I want to see a proper investigation conducted and completed, and for that reason it would be inappropriate to further discuss the issue.

1440

Mr Hampton: I appreciate there is a police investigation now, but the Ottawa Citizen is merely alleging a couple of factual issues. One, they're alleging that a new computer system was installed and that this new computer system results in a process called rubber stamping,

where an electronic signal is sent from Etobicoke and can result in the opening of a hydro dam with torrents of water being sent down, and someone on site cannot overrule that signal. Someone on site cannot overrule, for example, in the interests of public health and safety if there should be boaters below the hydro dam or swimmers below the hydro dam or someone else.

Minister, has Ontario Power Generation been ordered to end the process called rubber stamping? Can you tell us that?

Hon Mr Baird: On June 27 my predecessor announced and shared with this House a copy of a letter he had received from Ron Osborne, the president of Ontario Power Generation, in which he outlined the steps the company was taking to increase public safety at that generating station and at all generating stations across the province, particularly those that are used on the Madawaska River.

In addition, Ontario Power Generation is reviewing public safety more generally at all its plants to ensure public safety is protected.

Mr Hampton: The specific question was, have you ended this process that is called rubber stamping? We know from examples around Sault Ste Marie that under the now deregulated power market, generating stations think nothing of literally emptying a lake if it means generating more power and more profit. So I'm asking that specific question: has your government ordered Ontario Power Generation and private hydro generators to end this process of rubber stamping? Because there doesn't seem to be any room in this process to protect public safety. Have you ended or ordered the end of the process called rubber stamping? Have you required all hydro dams to sound sirens or loud horns before they increase torrential water flows? Two simple questions—have you done either of them?

Hon Mr Baird: Yes, we have.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My second question is for the Deputy Premier. Domestic violence is a very serious security problem in Ontario today, yet your government seems to have done very little. For example, in the year 2001 the number of women who were killed as a result of domestic violence was 25% higher than in 2000.

Meanwhile we know that you have been sitting on the results of a pioneering safety audit done in Windsor that could have saved lives across Ontario. This safety audit brought together police and front-line workers to identify where women were falling through the cracks and where their safety was at risk. Communities across the province are clamouring for an audit of their own. They are anxious to make changes that will protect women and their children. Will you release the Windsor safety audit? Why haven't you released it already?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): I am going to refer that to the Attorney General.

Hon David Young (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): I appreciate the member opposite raising this very important issue. Let me commence by saying that our thoughts and prayers are with the families of those who have been affected by these terrible tragedies.

Certainly when I saw the statistics, the figures that came out, I paused to think about the fact that each and every one of those individuals left people who miss them each and every day. These tragedies indeed strengthen our resolve to do more. We must do more to help victims of domestic violence and to ensure that this cycle of violence ends.

We as a government have done a great deal to date. We appreciate there is more to be done and we give you our commitment that we will continue to do so. Indeed, we have introduced programs, including the domestic violence courts that are being spread across this province, we have expanded the shelter beds that are available, we have 57 victim/witness assistance programs in place and we are committed to do even more.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Supplementary.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): Your thoughts and prayers are very much appreciated but they don't save lives. You've shelved the blueprint for action provided by two inquests, Minister. Instead of acting, you review fatalities. Counting bodies after the fact will not save these women's lives. In one year, 25% more women were killed by their spouses or ex-spouses. Communities across the province want to do safety audits to prevent more women from dying. That's what this is all about. It is really a matter of life and death.

I'm going to ask you again the question my leader asked you—very simple, very clear: will you announce that every community across this province that is prepared to do a safety audit can get to work so that more women don't have to die needlessly?

Hon Mr Young: At the commencement of the member's supplementary question she referenced the fact that there have been two inquests of late, the May-Iles inquest and the Hadley inquest. We have a special appreciation of the work that was done by the members of the juries at those two coroner's inquests and indeed we have implemented many of the recommendations that have come forward from each.

In the case of the May-Iles inquest, we are proud to say this government has implemented or is in the process of implementing in excess of 90% of the recommendations from that inquest. It includes the province-wide expansion of domestic violence courts and victim/witness assistance programs. There are 56 new crown attorneys and there are new programs in place to train crown attorneys. There is a new domestic violence police response model that we are very proud of, and as I indicated before, we are committed to doing even more.

SLOT MACHINES

Mr Monte Kwinter (York Centre): My question is for the Attorney General. Mr Minister, yesterday I pointed out that Dresden, Clinton and Hanover, the smallest standardbred tracks in Ontario, have been allocated 100 machines each and they are all many times greater in size and economic activity than Picov Downs.

I also asked you if you could assure us that allocation of slot machines to Picov Downs will be based on the same criteria as other tracks in Ontario and that the process will not be perverted by political influence or campaign contributions. You replied with an unequivocal yes. That's all you said, "Yes," and you sat down. Given your response, will you end this charade and announce here and now that Picov Downs will be allocated no more than 100 slot machines?

Hon David Young (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): What I am prepared to say is what I have said consistently, that Picov Downs will go through the same impartial, independent process as all the other tracks. Right now, the Picov application is in front of the Ontario Racing Commission. They will make a decision about the number of race days that are appropriate. I'm not to interfere in that, nor will I interfere in the decision and the process that will follow from the Ontario lottery and gaming commission, another independent, impartial process.

1450

Sir, you stood in this House last week and said one and a half slots was the right number. Today you're saying it's a hundred slots. The horse racing association has come forward and said 200 slots. I say with respect, this isn't the way to decide this very important issue. What we will do is allow for the same impartial process to take place, and in due course an appropriate decision will be made.

Mr Kwinter: Mr Minister, just so there's no misunderstanding, Picov Downs does \$280,000 in betting in one year. At Woodbine track they do that in one race. The point I'm making is this: you're right, they are entitled by their volume to one and a half slot machines. Notwithstanding that, there are three very small tracks in Ontario that get a hundred.

All I'm saying is, let's give them the benefit of the doubt. They're not entitled to it, but let's have a level playing field. There are none that have less than a hundred. Give that to them. Why can't you make that decision? Because if you don't, you are then saying to yourself—yesterday you said you would have a level playing field, that you would not pervert the process. Now it leaves the question that you haven't quite decided, and it raises the other question: do political contributions influence what your decision is going to be?

Hon Mr Young: This government has taken a responsible approach to gaming from day one, and we will continue to do so, sir. We are still in the early stages of this process. To do what you have suggested, to insert a number that you think is accurate today as opposed to the

one you thought was accurate last week or the one you may think is accurate and appropriate next week, would be wrong. That would be political influence. We're not going to engage in that sort of activity. What we are going to do is allow for Picov Downs to go through the same impartial, independent process as all the other tracks; 16 of 18 have already gone through it. The result of that is that there are in excess of 3,000 new jobs in this province and \$2 billion coming in annually, going to communities and hospitals in your riding and in Windsor and in Sarnia and throughout this province.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): My question is for the Associate Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation. We all know that Ontario is home to many world-class researchers. In fact, Ontario's universities, colleges, hospitals and many private companies have become world leaders in the research and development of new technologies. That being said, we know it's vitally important that our researchers possess the state-of-the-art equipment and facilities required to undertake their research. I'm wondering if you can tell this House what the Ontario government is doing to ensure that our researchers remain the leaders that they are in our increasingly competitive global economy.

Hon David Turnbull (Associate Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation): First of all, I'd like to thank the member for Scarborough Centre for this excellent question. Our government offers a variety of programs to stimulate scientific and technological innovation in Ontario. With more than \$1 billion in endowment, the province, through the Ontario Innovation Trust, supports capital costs of research for universities, community colleges, hospitals and research institutions. It's designed to complement the work of the Ontario research and development challenge fund, with primary support for human resources and operational requirements of research.

Just last week, I was in Ottawa to present the University of Ottawa with \$40.7 million to invest in supporting 41 research initiatives at that university. That figure is levered to more than \$119.8 million, with additional funding from the private sector, other research institutions and the federal government.

Ms Mushinski: Thank you for that response, Minister—interesting information. My concern is that we've seen, I guess since September 11, a huge global slowdown in the high-tech area that affects companies not only worldwide, but some major companies right here in our own backyard in Ontario. You've mentioned the Ontario Innovation Trust and Ontario research and development challenge fund announcements, but I'm wondering what else you've done to support research and development in Ontario in an attempt to help these high-tech companies recover.

Hon Mr Turnbull: We've announced a whole series of major investments, in our strategy to drive Ontario's

economic growth through innovation. In June the Premier's first Platinum Medal for Research Excellence was awarded to two Ontario researchers for their outstanding work. These \$1-million platinum awards celebrate the tremendous accomplishments of Ontario researchers. They also highlight our government's commitment to quickly make Ontario a worldwide centre of research excellence.

The Premier also announced the new \$51-million biotechnology strategy, and in our budget we allocated a \$161-million renewal for the Ontario centres of excellence, which play a critical role in moving innovations from the lab to the marketplace.

HYDRO RATES

Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's): My question is for the Minister of Energy. The Premier and the parliamentary assistant to the energy minister have as of late been lauding the panacea of a rebate that we know is supposed to be coming, according to the Ontario Energy Board, in August. We've now learned that you have gone to the Ontario Energy Board to have that consumer rebate slashed by some 20%. That's \$200 million rightfully owed to consumers. That's not your money to play with. Even worse, you're doing it to bail out your own incompetence in running the electricity marketplace.

We say over here that every Ontarian deserves this rebate now. What we want to know is, will you end this betrayal of ratepayers and stop this effort to slash the rebate now?

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Energy, minister responsible for francophone affairs): The member opposite raises a number of issues in his question. The rebate is based on Ontario Power Generation's market share. That's the way it was designed. There is no change in that whatsoever. It's an average annual generation price on 105 terawatt hours.

Let me explain "average annual" to the member opposite. "Annual": one year; 12 months. If the power is above or below, it will create an average. You kind of need 12 months to have an annual average, and that's going to be moved forward. That's appropriate, and on 105 terawatt hours. What was discussed is exactly what's going forward.

Mr Bryant: This is from the Electricity Distributors Association. It says, "Ontario Power Generation (OPG)"—that's you—"has applied to the Ontario Energy Board for a ruling to cut consumer rebates by approximately 20%." OK? Average, smaverage. That's 200 million bucks that is owed to consumers and you're trying to take it away from them. It's disgusting. Now you're trying to blame it on the fact that, oh, it's Ontario Power Generation. You're the boss of Ontario Power Generation.

Will you pick up the phone and order Ontario Power Generation to end this disgusting effort to deprive ratepayers of the rebate they deserve? These people can't wait until August. These people can't wait until January.

These people on fixed incomes, these businesses, cannot survive with the current hydro rates. They need their rebate now. Will you end this disgusting effort and will you join us in fighting to roll out the rebate now?

1500

Hon Mr Baird: I sometimes wonder how the member opposite has time to get any work done. He must spend at least two or three hours a day practising that question in front of the mirror.

The rebate is contained in Ontario Power Generation's licence. It's contained right in their four-year licence from the Ontario Energy Board. It's based on their market share. It will be rebated if it's more than 3.8—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Come to order.

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West): He's got that extra curl here today.

Interjections.

The Speaker: The Minister of Energy may continue.

Hon Mr Baird: I say to the member for Windsor West, go after my policies but don't go after my hair.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAMS

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): My question is to the number one Minister of Public Safety and Security in Ontario. Minister, you announced \$1 million to establish volunteer emergency response teams in Ontario. As the minister is no doubt aware, a number of the teams already exist in the province. One of these is in Durham region, with many of its volunteers from my own riding of Durham.

The Ontario Volunteer Emergency Response Team, also known as OVERT, has up to 100 people who can be deployed on short notice in emergencies such as, for example, locating a lost child. This self-supported group was formed, as you might know, 11 years ago. I have written to you on this group. Shane Harbison is the operations coordinator.

Minister, can you update the House on the progress being made toward supporting Ontario's emergency response volunteers such as the men and women members of OVERT in my riding?

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Minister of Public Safety and Security): I want to thank the outstanding member for Durham for the question. As he is aware, our government applauds the efforts of those who work toward enhancing public safety. It's my understanding that the OVERT team, with members in his riding, is composed of a diverse group from within the community, some of whom serve in the emergency services field.

The OVERT agency has capitalized on the commitment and professionalism of these volunteers to provide effective services to the community in times of need. The agency is a registered charity and is supported by a number of persons, many from the Durham region. It's our hope that organizations such as OVERT will provide an experienced base for our CERV program so that neigh-

bourhoods across the province can benefit from enhancing community safety the way Durham has.

Mr O'Toole: I'm the sure the volunteers are encouraged by your comments here today.

Minister, after citizens recovered from the shock of the tragedy of September 11, one of the most immediate responses was to ask how they could help. I believe this occurs in most communities in Ontario when emergencies or natural disasters occur.

Volunteers, as you know, are one of the most important community resources we have. They can't replace the full-time professionals, but certainly they have to be ready for natural disasters and other emergencies. It's important that we have enough people trained and available who are able to respond immediately. Members of these volunteer groups are tireless and they are also often retired emergency response professionals themselves. Minister, can you explain the expanded role of these volunteers in preserving Ontario's public safety and security?

Hon Mr Runciman: The role I see the CERV teams playing is that of a complementary capacity, enhancing and providing support to the services already provided by the many dedicated firefighters, police officers, paramedics and other emergency service workers in the province.

When we were developing CERV, we drew upon the experiences of organizations such as the Red Cross and the Salvation Army to help us.

Volunteer emergency response teams will be made up of people who are not only eager to assist, but who are trained to do so. Emergency Measures Ontario will be working with local municipalities to offer training sessions within their jurisdictions. All residents of Ontario will be encouraged to join the CERV program. Ontario's retirees, especially those who have experience in the emergency services area, will be targeted for recruitment due to their first-hand expertise and leadership qualities.

We are committed to a partnership with the municipalities of Ontario and will offset up to 100% of the cost of this program in its first year and up to 50% of the cost in subsequent years.

ACADEMIC TESTING

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): A question to the Minister of Education: Minister, it's time to admit that your marriage to high-stakes testing is a failure. You refuse to answer what a pass or fail grade is for the grade 10 literacy testing. In my mind, you have an accountability and credibility problem, but worse, you're denying 32,000 students a high school diploma based on a test you admit is subjective and you won't give them a second chance. Oh, they can take a test again in three weeks, but you know they won't get any remediation in the next three weeks.

Your testing scheme is a political boondoggle. Your test is a problem at best and a failure at worst. Will you scrap the results of the grade 10 literacy test?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): I'm extremely disappointed at the words of the member of the third party. His words, speaking about the achievement of the students on the literacy test, are a disservice to the students and teachers who have worked so hard to improve the results this year. In fact, as we well know, 87% of the academic stream students who wrote the test passed, an increase of 6% over the year before. If we continue to take a look, all of the results have improved.

I've been visiting schools and I have to tell you that these young people and their teachers are doing everything they can to improve the basic level of literacy. We have invested \$25 million in order to help them with remediation. Furthermore, students who did not succeed were informed in June and many of the boards in Ontario provided remediation over the course of the summer. I can assure the member—

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

Mr Marchese: My disappointment with you, Minister, is you never answer questions. One high-stakes test based on—

Interjections.

Mr Marchese: Quiet down—secret, subjective standards should not determine the future of 32,000 students—should not. You know where the students who need help are. You have school profiles that tell you that, but yet you do nothing. You should give them the help they need.

I've got a couple of suggestions for you. You should allow boards to create some programs that will help them. In my mind—you could do this immediately—you could create school teams of local school teachers who are remediation experts to do that.

My question to you is, will you help them now, Minister?

Hon Mrs Witmer: I guess the reason the member didn't think I responded the first time is because I've already responded to this question.

The reality is, we want all students to achieve success on the literacy test. This is what parents and employers have asked us to do, to support these students in order that they will all have the basic literacy.

But I want to tell you about what's happening out in Ontario. For example, Mr O'Connor, the director of education for the Limestone board says in the paper today, based on the results in 2000—and of course this is the first time we had any indication of how our students were doing—he said, "We knew we needed to find ways to improve the results."

"The board hired literacy coordinators and Queen's University students to help tutor students. The board also ran summer literacy camps to improve reading and writing."

O'Connor said, "We didn't come up with excuses. We made sure that all the schools that needed help got help." That's where our money went, to the schools to help the students.

1510

BIRTH CERTIFICATES

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex): My question is for the Minister of Consumer and Business Services. The Information and Privacy Commissioner confirmed that upwards of 60 completed birth certificate applications were among the documents stolen from the Brampton land registry office. The theft of these confidential files represents a massive security and privacy breach. These forms contain a gold mine of private information that couldn't easily be found anywhere else. With the stolen information, a criminal could obtain a credit card under an assumed name. A more imaginative and bolder criminal could do far more—perhaps a duplicate birth certificate or maybe even a passport.

You waited several weeks to inform the privacy commissioner about the theft. You waited several weeks to inform the victims themselves that their privacy had been violated. Why, Minister, did it take you weeks to figure out that the private information had been stolen? How is it that you didn't know that these very sensitive forms had disappeared right from under your nose?

Hon Tim Hudak (Minister of Consumer and Business Services): As I've said on many occasions, I am greatly concerned about the security breach that has taken place in one of our land registry offices. Obviously the personal information of individuals should be held in the highest level of security. That's why we've brought improvements to the birth certificate application process. We made it more difficult to get a birth certificate. We improved, as well, restrictions like guarantors, shared secrets etc.

It is a great concern to me that despite these improvements, something happened and we did lose some documents. We've worked very closely with police forces to ascertain who was behind that. If there are other individuals involved, we're going to go after those people as well and make sure that no further breaches of this kind occur in the future. It's a serious concern to this government. We're going to make sure that we shut that down and catch those who are responsible.

Mr Crozier: But, Minister, you didn't answer the question about the delay. How can you continue to provide assurances when a colossal security breach like this has taken place?

Fact: you did not inform the privacy commissioner immediately. Fact: you did not inform the victims immediately. Fact: you irresponsibly waited. While you reported the theft of these private confidential documents to Peel regional police on June 12, it wasn't until some time in July that you notified the Information and Privacy Commissioner and the victims themselves. However, you falsely told the Information and Privacy Commissioner that you reported it as soon as you learned of the problem. That's simply not true.

Minister, why did you delay informing the Information and Privacy Commissioner? Why did you delay

in informing the victims that their personal information had been compromised? Why did you not tell the privacy commissioner immediately?

Hon Mr Hudak: Again, as soon as our staff was alerted about any missing documents, action was taken, contacting the police right away and working very closely with the police to make sure that we sealed any security breaches. We contacted each of the individuals whose privacy was at risk to alert them to any concerns that may be there. We flagged their personal information as well to make sure there were no transgressions.

As I've said, we've worked hand in hand with the local police force, as well as the OPP, to ensure we bring those individuals who are behind the security breach to justice. The reforms we've made have been very helpful to make sure that no more security breaches can happen in the future. We're working hand in hand with the police and we'll make sure those responsible are brought to justice and made to pay a price for that kind of transgression.

CITY OF TORONTO

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): My question is for the Minister of Finance. Minister, as you well know, we can hardly pick up a newspaper in this city without seeing the ongoing litany of woe, the hand-wringing from the city of Toronto about how they need more and more help. We never hear about the multi-hundred-million dollars in increased revenue they have obtained from their property taxes that have escalated in the last few years. It was interesting to see that the federal government just yesterday has bought into this whole mantra and has promised—they're Liberal promises so they'll never come to pass—to help out cities.

They've said that we're not doing enough here at Queen's Park. I'd like you to address the criticism that the province of Ontario has missed its obligation somehow to the city of Toronto and tell this House exactly what we're doing to help Canada's largest city.

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Finance): I'd like to thank the member for Scarborough East for his excellent question. As members of the House may know, through the Premier and through my colleague the Minister of Municipal Affairs we have been investing over \$1 billion over five years through SuperBuild, in strategic municipal infrastructure such as bridges, water, sewer projects and recreational facilities. That is a commitment we've made to municipalities, and Toronto is part of that.

Secondly, my colleague the Minister of Municipal Affairs and myself have been consulting with our parliamentary assistants and the municipalities to develop opportunity bonds and tax-free incentive zones, to help the municipalities with their funding needs.

Again I think these are important programs that are going to bring very important investments to all our communities. We will continue to work with Toronto to promote ongoing growth and prosperity here in this city

as well, because it is indeed an important economic driver of our province.

Mr Gilchrist: Thank you, Minister, for that response, but as we move forward, whether it's the bill we're debating this afternoon on the waterfront regeneration process, the city continues to ask for more money for culture projects and for infrastructure. I know we've done a lot and I appreciate the comments you've made, but how do we respond to criticism that there's more to be done? What precisely are we, looking down the road—the programs we've put in place now that will continue to build on what we've done for the city in the years to come?

Hon Mrs Ecker: One of the important facts I should share with the House is that Moody's Investor's Service, which is one of the international bond rating agencies, has actually increased Toronto's debt rating. The reason they did that was because of the increased provincial presence in funding municipal infrastructure projects. They have recognized and seen the fact that we have been supporting Toronto, through \$500 million for the development of the Toronto waterfront, a very important project, over \$64 million for Toronto this year under the Ontario transit renewal program, savings of more than \$50 million for the city as a result of the province's funding for Go Transit.

These are important supports for Toronto. Through the Ontario Municipal Economic Infrastructure Financing Authority we are prepared to continue to help Toronto and other municipalities across the province to have the kind of growth and prosperity their citizens deserve.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Mr Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale-High Park): I have a question for the Minister of Education. I want to ask you about the promise you made, the promise Premier Eves made, that when you sent in a supervisor to do your bidding in Ottawa, you wouldn't be harming kids' education. Well, I want to send across to you, from Jamie Mookerjea, a picture of her son Jevon. I want you to look at Jevon because Jevon is one of hundreds of kids who now know you've broken that promise. Jevon has oral-motor problems and apraxia and needs speech therapy, which he was registered to get in the Head Start program two times a week until your supervisor cancelled that program to get the money you wanted to take away from students like Jevon. His mother is here to get your response, to have you take responsibility for taking a program that her son badly needs away from him. Minister, will you explain to her today why you cut that program?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): First of all, I need to put right up front that I understand there is a court proceeding that has commenced in the Ottawa-Carlton DSB, so obviously I can't comment on any other cases. However, having said that, we would be happy to meet with the mother and with the child because our government, of course, if you

will recall, was the one that introduced special-education legislation to make sure all students had access. We are providing a considerable amount of money and we will continue to address the needs of those students.

Mr Kennedy: I hope in your supplemental, Minister, there's a chance to get past that rhetoric. There is a parent who's not in court, whose son is not in class, who doesn't get help, who has trouble speaking, the most fundamental thing to be able to derive benefit from in the education system.

Your Premier said, "It is my understanding that no student who receives and qualifies for special education will be denied those services." Jevon is being denied those services. You're the Minister of Education. We on this side of the House would like to know what you will be doing for Jevon. There is no court restriction. We want to know, Minister, today: will you pledge to put the money back to restore the Head Start program so 31 other kids and the hundreds of other kids who lost out because of 25 cancelled teaching positions will get their help back? Minister, you have a chance to respond right now.

Hon Mrs Witmer: I'm not prepared to politicize this situation. I said in my very first response that I was happy to meet with the mother and the child. We take this issue very, very seriously, and we are quite prepared to have a meeting.

1520

FOOD SAFETY

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): My question is for the Minister of Agriculture and Food. Minister, a lot of us grew up on a diet of beef, pork, chicken and potatoes grown on our farms and in our own gardens, and now a lot of foods are exotic and may come from thousands of miles away, from places where we don't know the people who produced them. I think of honey, I think of cranberries, I think of apple butter—it mostly comes from Wellesley—and maple syrup that comes from Quebec and Ontario.

Farmers in my riding of Perth-Middlesex have earned a well-deserved reputation for producing safe, high-quality food for consumers. Everyone agrees that we must continue working hard to maintain our record of achievement. I understand that over the summer our government introduced a new food labelling initiative to provide consumers with more accurate information related to the foods they purchase.

Minister, could you provide the Legislature with some information regarding the ticketing program?

Hon Helen Johns (Minister of Agriculture and Food): I'd like to thank the hard-working member from Perth-Middlesex for raising the question. He has a large agricultural contingency in his riding and of course this is a big concern to him.

I think it's a big concern to everyone in the province that we ensure that we have a policy that ensures that we have safe food in the province of Ontario. We have a

sterling and strong record with respect to safe food and we need to maintain this record. So we want to ensure that we have quality in food when we talk about the products we produce and process in the province, and that includes fruit, tomatoes, cucumbers, apples, maple syrup and honey.

We need to ensure that when we go into the grocery store, we understand that we're buying products that are made in Ontario, that we're buying quality products. In fact, we have to ensure that when we talk about made-in-Ontario products, we are very careful to ensure that we keep that safe quality aspect about that. And so we have an excellent reputation. We're moving forward to ensure that—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): The minister's time is up. Supplementary?

Mr Johnson: Thank you, Minister. We're all in favour of the made-in-Ontario program, and it's certainly good news for both producers and consumers of food products in Ontario. Indeed, this past summer, in August, I took advantage of the opportunity to attend the conference on Midwest state governments in Fargo, North Dakota, with our colleague Mike Brown, who represents Algoma-Manitoulin. Food safety was the topic of many of the seminars at that conference.

Minister, can you provide the Legislature with any further benefits that are being produced through the effective enforcement of labelling and packaging throughout the human food chain?

Hon Mrs Johns: I want to say, as people in Ontario receive more accurate information about products through food signs, labelling and packaging, we know that people will purchase products that are made in the province of Ontario, produced in the province of Ontario and processed in the province of Ontario.

The people of Ontario know that our producers and processors are committed to the highest quality of food safety and quality, and it is imperative for the Ministry of Agriculture to protect our food supply. We have initiated a streamlined process to deal with offences, where people pretend that the food is made in Ontario. We are ensuring that a fair marketplace is theirs, because that's important to the consumers, it's important to the producers and it's important to the processors.

We have every need and every right in the province of Ontario to ensure that the agricultural community is protected and that everyone knows that they're buying safe food that's produced and processed in Ontario.

TORONTO ISLANDS COMMUNITY

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): A question to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing: your ministry has decided to launch a review of the Toronto Islands community. This obviously makes the people living in this diverse and vibrant downtown community nervous. They see an unfriendly government conducting a review of the legislation, but to them, you're talking about their homes and their lives. Will you

end the suspense now and promise that you will maintain this vibrant and diverse downtown community?

Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I can't believe the audacity of the NDP, who passed this bill that called for the 10-year review, to stand up and question us on doing the 10-year review. Does nobody in your caucus tell you what they voted on back in 1992?

Mr Marchese: He is so clever, isn't he?

To the clever minister: look, the families in that community are obviously concerned about the future of their homes and their community. They are. I know the clause, but they're concerned about their homes. Downtown communities are already living under the threat of the expansion of the island airport, which is a source of noise and pollution, I would say, and more, as anyone whose home is threatened would.

Residents want to be reassured that you won't destroy their community. Will you promise to abide by the legislation and leave this community intact? That's the question to you.

Hon Mr Hodgson: I'm confused, because when I look at Hansard, and we're talking about Bill 61, subsection 32(2) talks about this 10-year review that has to take place, and then I see who voted for it, and it says "Marchese." Would that be the same member who's asking the question?

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Just before we begin petitions, pursuant to standing order 37(a), the member for Hamilton East has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of the Environment on Thursday last concerning the SWARU and Glanbrook landfill site. This matter will be debated today at 6 o'clock.

PETITIONS

COMPETITIVE ELECTRICITY MARKET

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Ernie Eves government has legislated the opening of the Ontario electricity market as of May 1, 2002, and the price per kilowatt hour for electricity in the province of Ontario has nearly quadrupled since May 1; and

"Whereas the Conservative government of Ontario has done very little to address the key issues such as energy supply, which forces the province to import power and causes the price of electricity to skyrocket; and

"Whereas Ernie Eves has done a poor job in educating the public as to the ramifications of an open electricity market in the province of Ontario and has done little to

punish the unscrupulous sales practices of door-to-door energy retailers; and

“Whereas the government of Ontario has saddled the population of Ontario with additional debt reduction charges, which further increases the amount that the citizens of Ontario have to pay per kilowatt hour, yet the Hydro debt continues to increase; and

“Whereas the Mike Harris-Ernie Eves governments appointed the board of directors for Hydro One, who approved exorbitant salaries and compensation packages for Hydro One executives;

“Be it resolved that the Ontario government move immediately to protect our province’s electricity consumers by addressing the serious generation problem in Ontario, by punishing unscrupulous electricity retailers and by moving forward the rebate to offset the increasing costs of electricity in Ontario.”

I affix my signature. I’m in complete agreement.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a petition that has been sent to me by John Van Beek of Local 204 of SEIU. It reads as follows:

“Whereas the Conservative government increased fees paid by Ontario seniors and other vulnerable people living in long-term-care facilities by 15% instead of providing adequate government funding for long-term care; and

“Whereas the Conservative government has therefore shifted the cost of long-term care on to the backs of the frail elderly and their families; and

“Whereas this increase is 11.1% above the rent increase guidelines for tenants in the province of Ontario; and

“Whereas in 1996 Ontario abandoned its minimum requirement of 2.25 hours of nursing care per nursing home resident; and

“Whereas the government’s own contribution to raise the level of long-term-care services this year is less than \$2 per resident per day; and

“Whereas according to the government’s own study, government cutbacks have resulted in Ontario seniors receiving just 14 minutes a day of care from a registered nurse; and

“Whereas the report also found that Ontario residents receive the least nursing, bathing and general care of nine other comparable locations;

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

“We demand the Conservative government eliminate the 15% fee increase for residents of long-term-care facilities, increase the number of nursing care hours for each resident to a minimum of 3.5 hours per day, and provide stable, increased funding to ensure quality care is there for Ontario residents of long-term-care facilities.”

I agree with the petitioners, and I’ve affixed my signature to it.

1530

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): I have a petition signed on literally hundreds of pages which is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the Eves government has increased the fees paid for by seniors and the most vulnerable living in long-term-care facilities by 15% or \$7.02 per diem effective August 1, 2002; and

“Whereas this fee increase will cost seniors and our most vulnerable more than \$200 a month; and

“Whereas this increase is 11.1% above the rent increase guidelines for tenants in the province of Ontario; and

“Whereas the increase in the government’s own contribution to raise the level of long-term-care services this year is less than \$2 per resident per day; and

“Whereas according to the government’s own funded study, Ontario ranks last amongst comparable jurisdictions in the amount of time provided to a resident for nursing and personal care; and

“Whereas the long-term-care funding partnership has been based on government accepting the responsibility to fund the care and services that residents need; and

“Whereas government needs to increase long-term-care operating funding by \$750 million over the next three years to raise the level of service for Ontario’s long-term-care residents to those in Saskatchewan in 1999;

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

“Demand that Premier Eves reduce his 15% fee increase on seniors and the most vulnerable living in long-term-care facilities and increase provincial government support for nursing and personal care to adequate levels.”

I have signed this petition, as I am in complete agreement with it.

SPECIAL EDUCATION FUNDING

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West): I’m very happy to have Jonna from my riding of Windsor West delivering the petition to the table today. Jonna, you have to come and stand up here so everybody can see you. Her parents come from my riding too.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas we, the people of Windsor-Essex county, continually see the number of students requiring special education increase; and

“Whereas we support the government’s efforts to provide school boards with proportional special education funding based upon need;

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

“To provide special education funding reflecting real needs and ministry-approved claims without delay based on immediate current levels of such needs identified within Windsor and Essex county, commencing September 2002 and henceforth.”

There are a number of people from across Essex county who have signed this petition, and I'll add my name to it as well.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Eves government has increased the fees paid by seniors and the most vulnerable living in long-term care facilities by 15% over the last three years or \$3.02 per diem in the first year and \$2 in the second year and \$2 in the third year effective September 1, 2002; and

"Whereas this fee increase will cost seniors and our most vulnerable more than \$200 a month after three years; and

"Whereas this increase is above the rent increase guidelines for tenants in the province of Ontario for 2002; and

"Whereas according to the government's own funded study, Ontario will still rank last amongst comparable jurisdictions in the amount of time provided to a resident for nursing and personal care; and

"Whereas the long-term-care funding partnership has been based on government accepting the responsibility to fund the care and services that residents need; and

"Whereas government needs to increase long-term-care operating funding by \$750 million over the next three years to raise the level of service for Ontario's long-term-care residents to those in Saskatchewan in 1999; and

"Whereas this province has been built by seniors who should be able to live out their lives with dignity, respect and in comfort in this province;

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

"Demand that Premier Eves reduce the 15% increase over three years in accommodation costs to no more than the cost-of-living increase annually and that the provincial government provide adequate funding for nursing and personal care to a level that is at least the average standard for nursing and personal care in those 10 jurisdictions included in the government's own study."

I proudly affix my signature to this petition.

NATURAL GAS RATES

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): My constituents are furious about the Ontario Energy Board approving the retroactive delivery charge by Union Gas. We've got a petition campaign going.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario Energy Board has consented to allow Union Gas to retroactively charge \$40 per month for a three-month period to recover additional system operation costs that occurred during the winter of 2000-01 totalling approximately \$150 million;

"Whereas Union Gas will recover accrued costs over the peak heating season, causing undue hardship;

"Whereas this retroactive charge will affect all customers who receive Union Gas, including new homeowners and new customers to Union Gas;"—which is absurd—

"Therefore we demand that the Ernie Eves government issue a policy directive under section 27.1 of the Ontario Energy Board Act disallowing the retroactive rate hike granted to Union Gas; and we further demand that the Legislature examine the Ontario Energy Board, its processes and its resources, and make changes that will protect consumers from further retroactive rate increases."

I encourage people to come into my office to pick up letters of protest and sign the petition. I personally am very pleased to sign this petition.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario Energy Board has consented to allow Union Gas to retroactively charge \$40 per month for a three-month period to recover additional system operation costs that occurred during the winter of 2000-01 totalling approximately \$150 million;

"Whereas Union Gas will recover accrued costs over the peak heating season, causing undue hardship;

"Whereas this retroactive charge will affect all customers who receive Union Gas, including new homeowners and new customers to Union Gas;

"Therefore we demand that the Ernie Eves government issue a policy directive under section 27.1 of the Ontario Energy Board Act disallowing the retroactive rate hike granted to Union Gas; and we further demand that the Legislature examine the Ontario Energy Board, its processes and its resources, and make changes that will protect consumers from further retroactive rate increases."

I am honoured to sign my name to this petition.

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): The Lakehead Regional Family Centre continues to be under great financial pressure. We have a petition campaign going to try to get the government to provide the needed funding.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the children and families with the Lakehead Regional Family Centre deserve to have quality and timely children's mental health services; and

"Whereas for the first time Lakehead Regional Family Centre has a deficit budget of \$200,000 due to the lack of adequate funding from the provincial government and the sharp increase in the demands for children's mental health services in the city of Thunder Bay; and

"Whereas referrals to Lakehead Regional Family Centre have increased 150% since 1995, and no additional permanent funding has been received to help meet the needs of our community; and

"Whereas since 1993, the government's investment in core funding for children's mental health services has

declined by 8%, and salaries for staff are up to 30% lower than in hospitals and other government services; and

“Whereas according to the Canadian Journal of Psychiatry, 18% of children and youth in Ontario have a diagnosable mental health disorder, and yet Ontario only treats one in six of these children; and

“Whereas without immediate additional permanent funding, children’s mental health services could be severely restricted to those children and families who need it the most,

“Therefore we, the undersigned citizens of Ontario and residents of the city of Thunder Bay, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“For the provincial government to provide an immediate infusion of additional permanent funding to the Lakehead Regional Family Centre to help fight the crisis situation facing children’s mental health services in the city of Thunder Bay.”

This is a very important petition; they continue to come in. I am very pleased to pass this off to Kyle, and I am proud to sign my name to the petition.

NATURAL GAS RATES

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): I will read some more petitions related to the decision by the Ontario Energy Board to allow Union Gas to charge a retroactive delivery charge. As I said, it is a huge issue in my riding and, I know, all across the province where Union Gas provides service.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario Energy Board has consented to allow Union Gas to retroactively charge \$40 per month for a three-month period to recover additional system operation costs that occurred during the winter of 2000-01 totalling approximately \$150 million;

“Whereas Union Gas will recover accrued costs over the peak heating season, causing undue hardship;

“Whereas this retroactive charge will affect all customers who receive Union Gas, including new homeowners and new customers to Union Gas;”—that is, those who have not received service two years ago—

“Therefore, we demand that the Ernie Eves government issue a policy directive under section 27.1 of the Ontario Energy Board Act disallowing the retroactive rate hike granted to Union Gas; and

“We further demand that the Legislature examine the Ontario Energy Board, its processes and its resources, and make changes that will protect consumers from further retroactive increases.”

Again I’m pleased to sign my name to this petition.

1540

ABORTION

Mr Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge): I have a petition from scores of good citizens of Cambridge, which reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas on October 31, 2001, in a submission to the federal House of Commons finance committee, Canadian Abortion Rights Action League executive director Marilyn Wilson said that women who seek abortions ‘do so for socio-economic reasons’ rather than as a necessary medical procedure; and

“Whereas the results of a 1998 study using findings from 32 studies in 27 countries stated that, ‘Worldwide, the most commonly reported reason women cite for having an abortion is to postpone or stop childbearing. The second most common reason: social-economic concerns ... ’; and

“Whereas the Ontario health system is overburdened and pregnancy is not a disease, injury or illness; and

“Whereas the province has the exclusive authority to determine what services will be insured and the Canada Health Act does not require funding for elective procedures; and

“Whereas the funding of induced abortion requires an estimated minimum of 25 million of Ontario health dollars annually;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to deinsure (therapeutic) induced abortion.”

ONTARIO DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): Another important petition regarding the Ontario disability support program:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas people with disabilities who rely on Ontario disability support program payments are facing rising costs; and

“Whereas people unable to work because of serious disabilities have had no increase in support since 1993; and

“Whereas with loss of rent controls their rents have skyrocketed, placing huge financial strains on many ODSP recipients,

“Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to bring fairness to the Ontario Disability Support Program Act, 1997, by amending it to provide for regulations requiring annual cost-of-living adjustments to income support payments.”

I’m in support of this and I’m very pleased to sign my name to the petition.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TORONTO WATERFRONT REVITALIZATION CORPORATION ACT, 2002

LOI DE 2002 SUR LA SOCIÉTÉ DE REVITALISATION DU SECTEUR RIVERAIN DE TORONTO

Resuming the debate adjourned on September 30, 2002, on the motion for second reading of Bill 151, An Act respecting the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation / Projet de loi 151, Loi concernant la Société de revitalisation du secteur riverain de Toronto.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): The member for Beaches-East York.

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): Last night, I spoke for some 40 minutes and I understand I have 20 minutes left today. I wish to resume not necessarily where I left off, but I wish to deal with an item that came up right at the end of my speech.

The Attorney General came forward to correct the record. It was my understanding that I had heard someone opposite say, "So what?" to one of my comments relating to rent controls. He came forward and suggested that in fact he had not said that, but was heckling me or talking to me in terms of my voting record in the city of Toronto back in 1998, a comment that I have heard many times. I take him at his word that that is in fact what the heckle was about and it was not about rent control legislation.

But having said that, I have heard this many times and I wish to deal with that, with your indulgence, before I go into the substantive details of the debate around Bill 151 and the waterfront development.

I have stood up many times and asked questions opposite about rent control legislation and the fact that people in the larger cities of this province are starting to have a difficult time with above-guideline increases, vacancy decontrol and the fact that rents are rising very quickly as a result of the legislation and the fact that virtually no social housing units have been built in this province since 1995.

Each and every time I ask that question, there is a statement made by one of the ministers or a heckle made by one of the members opposite that my voting record has really stopped housing from being built, in Toronto especially. They often state that as a result of voting that took place in 1998 and 2001. Specifically, I'm reading from Hansard the first time this was raised, because it caused me some considerable consternation, knowing that this was not true, because I had never voted in such a way. I quote from Hansard. This was the Honourable Mr Hodgson on the issue of affordable housing when this was first raised. I'm sorry, I don't appear to have the date with me, unfortunately. But I quote from this. It says:

"I don't think he understands the program, but to answer his question, we did do a little research. When you were on the city of Toronto council, you supported a motion that maintained the multi-residential tax rate at 4.7 times that of the residential rate. That minute was 4.15, C.1 A.2, April 23 to May 2, 2001."

He went on to say, "The second thing you did while you were a member of the city of Toronto council was support a motion in 1998 to create a new multi-residential property tax class. You're on the record for this. That has meant that every rent in Toronto has gone up 15% to 20% because of your actions. We're trying to get affordable rents in this province, particularly in the city of Toronto, over your objections."

We did some research. We went out and got those actual minutes. I want to tell you that I have no idea who is advising the minister or the members opposite about what is contained in those minutes of the council resolutions. I have absolutely no idea. At best, the advisers you have advising you are incompetent. That's all I can say. They do not know how to read municipal minutes or, at worst, they are simply making up something, because after 14 years of municipal service and the thousands of debates and the tens of thousands of votes that I've participated in over that time, they could not find anything at all to say that would embarrass me here in this House. I want to just go through what those minutes say in the order that they were raised by Mr Hodgson and in terms of what was said last night.

In terms of the first minute, that minute being that of April 23 to May 2, 2001, the vote on Toronto city council was 41 to 3. I was one of those who voted in the majority. This was the foregoing clause and it was in the affirmative by 38 votes. This was a motion that is entitled "The Optional New Multi-Residential Property Class." It quite frankly talks about establishing a new multi-residential property class applied to the city of Toronto.

It is asking that the province permit the municipality to extend the maximum period beyond the eight years that was allowed for in provincial legislation. It asked for the chief financial officer to report back on a new tax rate that would be less than the tax rate the city of Toronto applied. It went on to state that "council reaffirm its intent to create a permanent solution to ensure property tax equity between homeowners," condo owners "and tenants; and the work plan to that end be developed in 1999, as set out by council at its meeting held on July 21 and July 23, 1998.

"That city council request the province to grant the city legislation which would permit the city to create a new property class for rooming houses, bachelorettes and other housing accommodation for the poorest and most vulnerable residents in the community."

It went on, and I quote from that same minute, which is the allegation that I did something to keep it high, and quite clearly says from the resolved, "Therefore be it resolved that such recommendation be reopened and that council pass a bylaw to create a property class for newly constructed rental apartment buildings of seven units or

more at the residential/farm tax rate and that the province be requested to make this a permanent tax policy tool.”

The staff recommendation that accompanied all the votes is absolutely quite clear: “This report has also been forwarded to the Council Strategy for People Without Homes. The committee is involved in work on an affordable housing supply strategy for the city of Toronto. The new multi-residential property class recommended by this report is one of the mechanisms previously identified by the committee.

1550

It goes further on page 5 to say, “To bring the economic rent closer to market rent will require a number of initiatives and the co-operation of the municipal, provincial and federal levels of government. The most significant initiative is reducing property taxes paid by multi-residential properties to the residential rate. By creating the new multi-residential property class, and taxing it at the residential rate, the city can reduce the gap between economic rent and market rent by about 40% (based on financial proformas from *The Challenge of Encouraging Investment in New Rental Housing in Ontario*, Greg Lampert, Economic Consultant ... 1995).

“What is perhaps even more important is that by introducing the new multi-residential property class, the city would make a very strong statement to the provincial and federal government that the city is committed to doing its share to improve the supply of affordable housing, and that we expect other levels of government to contribute their share as well.”

That is what I am being heckled on. I don't know what the members opposite who heckle me on this vote are talking about. I quite frankly do not know.

The second one that is quoted is about the 1998 multi-residential property tax. We pulled the minutes from this: the vote was unanimous. It was not called to a vote but was done on consent because there was no opposition from any of the members who were present at that time—57 people were totally in agreement with what was suggested.

I looked through this to see what this was about, and again I am perplexed as to the heckling that continues to go on every time I ask this question. It set the multi-residential property rate at 4.7%, but it did so because it was the same tax ratio as the year before, and the province had requested that this be done in order that the city of Toronto could set the education portion of the tax rate.

I read from the minutes of the Toronto city council, April 23, 24, 25, 26, 27 and 30, 2000, and May 1 and 2, 2001. You may remember that was the great debate about the Adams mine; that's why the council meeting lasted so long. This was a relatively minor item that was passed without debate and with consent with all people present. This says, “the Minister of Finance be requested to prescribe a residential and multi-residential education rate for 2001 of 0.33934% in order to maintain total education tax burden on these classes at the 2000 level, and failing that, to adopt a residential and multi-

residential education tax rate for 2001 of 0.37092%, a level estimated to be revenue-neutral to the province.” What this is about is setting an educational tax rate in the city of Toronto on all of the rates that had been adopted previously by the city of Toronto council.

There is no known vote that ever occurred on that, other than the very first day of the first meeting of the city of Toronto council when we were required in a brand new megacity, in January 1998, to set a taxation policy for that year. In 1998 we literally had two weeks to set it and the motion was quite clear, and was unanimous as well, that we simply adopt the taxation levels of the year before on those expenditures for all the government departments, the six municipalities of metropolitan Toronto, tax from the identical sources—residential, multi-residential and others—and pool that together so that we could get on with the establishment of a new megacity.

If I am being criticized for that, then criticize me for that, but I don't know what anyone else could have done, given less than two weeks to prepare a \$6-billion budget in a new megacity. But what this really was about was setting the education tax rate. We simply asked the province to lower it for the city of Toronto, and I think that made good economic sense.

That is what the heckling seems to be about. I don't know if the members opposite want to continue to heckle me on that. I am sure they can find something better. I would suggest you go to your research staff and find something. In 14 years, I'm sure there is something I said or did that you can find to disagree with, but please do not make it up. This is totally irrelevant every time I ask a simple question or question the government opposite about rental policy or the building of affordable homes.

Having said that—and I hope I get a copy of that and that every word of that has been recorded. I intend to send some copies to the members opposite as soon as it is prepared so they might understand that the staff they are relying upon to do this research really don't know what they're doing.

Yesterday, I talked about the harbourfront development. I talked about the great things that can happen around the Don River, in the port lands and around the sites in what is a derelict and largely unused portion of the lands in Toronto; about the great visions that people in the city of Toronto have for that land; about the many cities across the world that have done wonderful things in their waterfront lands—places like Sydney, Australia; Cape Town, South Africa; our own Vancouver, and even Halifax, which has done some wonderful things.

I went on to talk about the city of Toronto's official plan. I went on to talk about the problems with big box retail gobbling up some of the land while we dither and wait to do the necessary legislation to get the final report established and to set up this new corporation. I talked about the port and how valuable it is to the city of Toronto and about the major setback that the two years of dithering has caused.

I went on to talk about other problems that I would like to see in the legislation when it is prepared, to bring this new corporation within the ambit of the freedom of information act. It is not now so done. I talked about affordable housing, hence the heckling. I talked about the business plan and why it was important that it be made public. I talked about the annual audit and that it be made public. I questioned section 13; that some changes should be made in committee about section 13 because it talks about the potential of the province pulling the plug and winding up this corporation after 20 years, when Mr Fung himself says this will take a minimum of 25 years and suggests it should involve all three levels of government—federal, provincial and municipal. I went on to talk about the city of Toronto being a junior partner, and the Municipal Act should be amended to recognize their position as a right. I went on to talk about the provision for open, public meetings, because it is not there. At that point my 40 minutes were up.

I wish to close today with one last item that I think needs to be said. The corporation that is being created does not have a power of expropriation built into the bill, and it is essential that it does have that power of expropriation. The power of expropriation is absolutely necessary if that waterfront is to be developed in the public interest. At the present time, approximately two thirds of the lands of the harbourfront are in the control of one level of government or another, but approximately one third of them are held in private hands, either owned outright or leased for long-term periods. I alluded to and spoke about some of them in my speech the other day. Those would be the Home Depot lands, the Canadian Tire lands and the Knob Hill lands that have been leased through TEDCO. There is some cloud still hanging over that. There are other lands that are owned, including Redpath sugar refineries, right on the waterfront, which it may be necessary to continue if Toronto is to continue to be a port city, but may as well be considered for other long-term development should that decision be made.

The power of expropriation is absolutely essential if the key lands developed, once the plans are finalized, are to be realized. It is important that that corporation be able to expropriate land if the plans require that it be done, and quite frankly, that has not been what has happened to date. It has not happened, and there is some considerable question.

1600

I quote from an article which first brought it to my attention, from the Toronto Star, dated September 25, urban issues by Christopher Hume. I think most of the members opposite and on this side of the House would be familiar with him. He writes a column a couple of times a week in the Toronto Star. The title of it is, "Fung's Waterfront Revitalization Group on the Way to Becoming a Paper Tiger." He points out quite correctly and succinctly, and I'll quote from that, "Then there's the issue of whether or not Fung's group will have the power of expropriation, an absolute necessity if it is to realize its mandate. So far, the issue hasn't been settled, but as one

insider pointed out, 'all three levels of government are trying to undermine the corporation at the 11th hour and getting their agencies to do the dirty work.'

"In Toronto's case, for example, it is TEDCO ... which has negotiated a deal for the film studios. According to someone who has seen the contracts, they contradict every principle by which the waterfront was to have been redeveloped.

"What this means is that instead of parks, green space, public amenities and residential buildings, we could well end up with asphalt and industry."

It is absolutely essential that this land be brought into the public forum. It is absolutely essential that it be developed for all of the residents of Ontario. Just as Ontario Place was developed all those many years ago as a public park and green space for every citizen of this province, so too must the harbourfront lands be brought into fruition so that they benefit not only the people who might one day work there, not only the people who might one day live there, but every single citizen who can enjoy the waterfront and the green space.

It is important that we regulate the land sales, as I alluded to and talked about yesterday, because this property could potentially be worth billions.

It is important that we talk about how it is to be financed, including a casino, which I think some of the members opposite are very interested in.

It is important that the land be cleaned up, because in some parts it is so toxic that no one could live there and no industry could even be built thereon. I am talking about the failed attempt of the city of Toronto many years ago, before amalgamation, who bought it for Ataratiri lands and to put up assisted housing, only to have it fail because the land could not be remediated to an acceptable standard.

Most important, we need to talk about public access.

Those are the things that are important and that must be done by this Legislature and must be done in committee before this bill is finalized.

I was heartened by the comments of the member from Oak Ridges yesterday, talking about changes that he is proposing. I understand this will go to committee. I hope the members opposite have heard what I have said in these last two days about this land and will take that to heart in committee and make the necessary changes.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Hon Dan Newman (Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I want to thank the member for Beaches-East York for his comments today and last night on this speech. His party seems to be in agreement with this bill.

This bill provides for an excellent partnership that shows that the federal government and the municipal level of government here in Toronto are working with the province. I think it's going to be great to see an environmental cleanup of the waterfront through this Bill 151, because this bill obviously benefits the city of Toronto. Toronto is, after all, the capital of this great province of Ontario, and Toronto is indeed a world-class

city. I think a world-class city like Toronto deserves a world-class waterfront.

But I do for a moment just want to focus on the member's remarks of last night regarding the monthly rent in Toronto. I think he said it's around \$900 a month for a one-bedroom unit. I just wanted to indicate that a fair portion of that money is property tax money that tenants pay, that is charged to the landlord and is passed on to the tenants. I simply wanted to indicate that in May 2001, Toronto city council passed a motion that maintained the multi-residential tax rate at over four times the residential rate that is charged in this city. The point I want to make is that if this tax rate were to be abolished, it would actually result in a 15% to 20% decline in the rent for the average tenant in the city of Toronto.

That's the point I wanted to make. Quite simply, there's a fair amount of money that is charged to tenants in this city for property tax that is added on to their bill. That accounts for why, I believe, rents are as high as they are in Toronto. A reduction like that would mean a reduction to all tenants across the city. It would mean a reduction for tenants in the ridings of Scarborough Southwest, Scarborough East, Scarborough Centre and, yes, in Beaches-East York.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): Following on that, of course those rents are going to skyrocket when the cost of electrical power in this province is added to them. I think the member would agree with me on that. We're going to see dramatic increases in rents as a result of this government allowing power costs to get way out of whack, way out of control. However, I diverge from the topic at hand.

I am surprised, because I don't think the member said this, that this bill is going to have anything to do with cleaning up the environment. It may clean up visually the waterfront of Toronto and we can have some lovely trails and so on, but when we have to clean up the lakes and the waters going into the lakes, this bill has nothing to do with that. That's going to require a major commitment on the part of this government. Instead of the environment being a priority, the government's priority is giving tax cuts to the wealthiest people in the province. Therefore, this government aligns itself with Ralph Klein.

We're going to have Ralph Klein, whose views were as neanderthal as you could get on the environment—I can tell you that because I was Minister of the Environment of Ontario when he was Minister of the Environment of Alberta. His views were regressive then, let alone now. In those days Ontario had to drag Alberta along by the ear to get them to agree to anything in terms of dealing with national environmental problems. Ontario had to prod the federal government. Today Ontario is aligning itself. I think the Premier may be on a tour with Ralph Klein, and some of the ministers may want to tour with the ministers.

Once again Conservatives are telling us why we can't clean up and protect the environment. They never want to tell us how we're going to do it or implement policies to do it. They want to tell us why it can't be done. The

person who would recognize that as well as anybody is the member for Beaches-East York, who has watched that as a municipal councillor and now as a member of this House. He must have found the response to the alternative fuels committee report today to be nothing short of pathetic.

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): I rise and I can't say enough in commending the remarks of my colleague from Beaches-East York. I was in the chair last evening when my colleague did 40 minutes of his speech and I heard most of it here today also. I would hope that the government would pay very close attention, not just because we think Michael Prue is an important person and should be listened to because he has valuable thoughts to offer, but he brings very unique credentials to this debate and to this place, being a former Toronto councillor. Probably more important for this debate, as a former mayor of East York, now part of the city of Toronto, he brings the mayor's view, which quite frankly cuts beyond all partisan lines and speaks to what's in the best interests of ordinary citizens.

A couple of the comments he made I hope the government will particularly take to heart. One is a recommendation that this needs adequate committee time. The second is that this is not just about Toronto. When I say that, I say it for two reasons: one, those of us who have beautiful waterfronts also, and I speak of my hometown of Hamilton, are also keeping an eye on what this government is prepared to do with Toronto. We're going to want to make sure that you're prepared to pay some attention and make a priority out of our waterfronts too, because they're an important part of our future. That's the first aspect of this.

The second one, and I think it's so true—I say this as a non-Torontonian—is that if you want it to belong to all the people of Ontario and want us all to take pride in it, then there has to be something there for everyone. That's why speaking to the culture, speaking to inclusiveness in terms of decision-making, is critical to making this feel like all Ontarians own it and not just Torontonians.

1610

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): I'm pleased to join in this response to the member from Beaches-East York. I spoke to this issue on September 25 and really did speak to the waterfront regeneration. It's interesting because for the first half of the member's speech this afternoon, I heard him defending his track record at Toronto city council. It seems to me he was on Toronto city council when the whole tent city issue began about three years ago, and it took well over three years for that issue to be resolved.

It's interesting that when we hear this sort of NDP rant about the protection of ordinary citizens, it was he and his gang, I would suggest, who opposed equality for taxpayers across Metropolitan Toronto and consistently opposed fair market value assessment—yet another example of how they refuse to protect the interests of the many rent payers, many of whom reside in the suburbs of Etobicoke and Scarborough. In fact, probably 45% of my

residents are renters in my riding of Scarborough Centre. I'll tell you, the one party that never protected their interests while I was a member of council was the NDP, so I resent every word he's just said.

The Acting Speaker: Response?

Mr Prue: I want to thank Minister Newman—and I'll get to him in a minute—the member from St Catharines and the member from Hamilton West, but with the greatest of respect I cannot thank the member from Scarborough Centre for her comments.

First of all, on the three years—

Ms Mushinski: I wasn't looking for your thanks.

Mr Prue: Yes, I was there and I do not remember a single vote on tent city. It was privately held land that did not concern the city of Toronto. We did from time to time make sure that those poor people had sufficient health care and we did from time to time authorize funds to make sure the medical officer of health and her staff could go there to make sure it did not get any worse than what it actually was.

On fair market value assessment, I want to inform the member opposite that she is again reinventing history. I was one of those people who supported market value assessment. Do you hear that? Contrary to what you are saying across there, which is not true, I was one of those who supported it because in East York half the people gained and half the people lost and it seemed to me eminently fair that it be done.

As for Minister Newman, I want to tell you that yes, it would save a lot of money in Toronto and other places if it was reduced. There is no question about that. The problem with the city of Toronto is that the city of Toronto is starved for funds. Every year the tax rate has gone up 5%—last year, this year and probably will next year—because it is confined to homeowners.

When the provincial government decided to cap the rents in order to allow homeowners to start paying more and to bring it into line, there was some discussion at Toronto city hall and I was on the side of the people who thought what you did was correct. I want to tell you that what you did was correct. It is a long and slow process, but it needed to be done. I would hope that somebody does the record—

The Acting Speaker: Thank you. Further debate?

Mrs Julia Munro (York North): I rise today to support the motion for second reading of Bill 151, the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Act.

The bill was first introduced in the Legislature last December. As members will recall, the passage of the proposed legislation would create a permanent Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corp, or TWRC.

The redevelopment and renewal of Toronto's waterfront would usher in an important new period in the city's history. It would ensure that Ontario's capital continues to be known as The City That Works throughout the 21st century.

We know that Toronto and indeed the entire greater Toronto area have already seen significant growth over the past 25 years—I would add, even over the past seven

years. That growth is expected to continue over the next quarter century, as some three million more people are expected to come here to live in central Ontario. Many of those new people will be drawn to Toronto: to the new jobs, the outstanding cultural attractions and the safe neighbourhoods that have played such an important role in the city's past success.

When viewed from the perspective of other areas, Toronto is not a very old city when you compare it to rival places like London, Paris and Rome, New York, Chicago and Los Angeles, but it has already established its reputation as one of the best places in the world to invest, work and raise a family.

Over the next 25 years, the growth we are expecting here in the greater Toronto area will represent a significant challenge, both for the city and the province. The Toronto area will need new infrastructure to accommodate a growing population, everything from roads to public transit to water and sewage treatment facilities. It will need schools, hospitals and other public services and it will need new jobs, housing, entertainment and restaurant services, as well as parks, playgrounds and recreational facilities.

As the city and the GTA continue to grow, our challenge will be to practise the principles of Ontario's Smart Growth initiative: to build strong, new communities while maintaining a competitive economy and a safe, healthy environment.

Through Smart Growth, we can manage Ontario's growing population and economy in a sustainable manner, and we can do so while avoiding urban sprawl and the destruction of valuable farm and recreational land.

The revitalization of Toronto's waterfront also represents an outstanding opportunity to utilize Ontario's brownfield redevelopment initiative. This will enable us to transform derelict and contaminated land into more productive uses.

There is no doubt that Toronto, as Ontario's capital city and the largest urban centre in Canada, has the potential to join the ranks of the world's great cities. The revitalization of the city's waterfront area offers us a tremendous opportunity to achieve that potential.

As members are aware, the province has two partners in the waterfront redevelopment initiative: the government of Canada and the city of Toronto. Those partners share our belief in Toronto's potential. They have each joined with us in committing \$500 million, for a total public investment of \$1.5 billion in the city's waterfront.

That is a significant amount of money and a major vote of confidence in Toronto's future. These funds will be used for investments to kick-start the revitalization and transformation of Toronto's waterfront. They will help strengthen the city's international competitiveness and they will create thousands of new jobs, new neighbourhoods and new facilities for people to live and work in the city's downtown area.

Bill 151 fulfills Ontario's commitment to take the lead on waterfront redevelopment through the creation of a permanent waterfront revitalization corporation. If the

bill becomes law, it will take us an important step closer to unlocking the potential of Toronto's waterfront.

1620

This potential is very significant indeed. We are talking about a massive redevelopment project. As Mr Robert Fung, who chairs the interim waterfront corporation has pointed out, we could be looking at a series of major proposals that include 10 million square feet of new commercial and industrial space, an amount equal to the floor space of five Sky Domes—

Mr Doug Galt (Minister without Portfolio): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I wonder if the House would consider unanimous consent that next week the NDP would have no questions during question period.

The Acting Speaker: Order. I'm not going to allow that. You don't technically have the floor. The member for York North.

Mrs Munro:—a total of 74 hectares or 183 acres of new public parkland; up to 35,000 new permanent jobs and an estimated 165,000 person-years of employment during construction; new homes for as many as 68,000 people; \$100 million in new annual property tax revenue, based on current tax rates; new attractions that would bring an estimated two million additional visitors to Toronto each year, which would represent an increase of 10%; and finally, some \$800 million in improvements to public transit, resulting in an additional 100,000 TTC trips per day, which would represent an 8% increase in overall TTC ridership.

As I have noted, the scale of these projects and the scope of Mr Fung's vision for the waterfront are truly impressive. That is why we need to create a permanent corporation to coordinate the public's investment in these projects as well as the billions in private sector capital we hope to attract to the waterfront.

That is the purpose of Bill 151. Under the proposed legislation the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corp would be responsible for developing business strategies and implementing projects along the city's waterfront. It would also act as a catalyst for the adoption of innovative new approaches in how those projects are planned, financed and delivered.

Bill 151 would provide the permanent Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corp with a framework to leverage the initial \$1.5 billion that has been provided by the three governments. The goal here is to allow the corporation to achieve financial self-sufficiency while forging new partnerships with the private sector in waterfront projects.

However, I think it is important to point out that the three governments are not proposing simply to write the waterfront corporation a blank cheque. To ensure the corporation's accountability, Bill 151 provides that the approval of all three governments would be required to permit the proposed corporation to borrow funds, mortgage its assets, or generate revenues.

The proposed legislation would give the new corporation a mandate to create an accessible, active waterfront. It would transform Toronto by giving it a whole new and

exciting district with many new developments where people can live, work and play. While the corporation would have a mandate to encourage private sector involvement in those developments, it would also be required to ensure that members of the public have an opportunity to express their views on its plans.

The proposed legislation and the future agreements that will be developed under the legislation include a number of other specific provisions regarding how the permanent Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corp would conduct its business.

For example, Bill 151 includes provisions for the following: future contribution agreements between the three levels of government and the corporation outlining the terms under which the governments will contribute assets and funding; second, financial self-sufficiency and risk mitigation as key principles in the corporations business plan; and finally, the usual powers of a corporation, including the ability to enter into binding contracts, issue debt, create subsidies and acquire, sell and lease land, as well as the distribution of assets and liabilities at dissolution, subject to government approvals.

As members can see, the proposed Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation Act provides a broad outline of the corporation's purpose, powers and mandate. It also provides a framework for the corporation's future decisions in key areas, such as business planning, financial accountability and annual reporting requirements.

The proposed legislation sets out the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corp's corporate structure and provides for a publicly appointed board of directors of up to 13 people. The three partner governments would each be able to appoint up to four board members, to ensure each partner's interests are appropriately represented.

Bill 151 also provides that on its passage, Robert Fung, who is currently serving as the chair of the interim corporation, would become chair of the permanent corporation. As members know, Mr Fung headed up the waterfront task force, and his broad vision of what the waterfront can be has created a great deal of excitement.

In Mr Fung's view, Toronto has a golden opportunity to create a new economic model on the waterfront, a place where business and technology clusters can coalesce, fuse and prosper together. To make this vision possible, we will need to build dynamic new live-work communities. It has been estimated that the port lands alone could accommodate a major new community of perhaps as many as 50,000 people.

Mr Fung has talked publicly about his vision of transforming a largely derelict part of the city into an innovative new working and living environment, a place where people, homes and businesses are linked electronically to university research facilities, for example, and to the rest of the world.

This new community would have the potential to turn Toronto into a leading supplier of creativity, and to become one of North America's key centres in the emerging knowledge economy.

Under the proposed legislation before us today, this exciting vision—and the important task of transforming the Toronto waterfront—would be managed by the permanent Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corp.

The legislation has been carefully drafted to ensure a smooth transition from the interim corporation that exists today to a permanent corporation. The bill also provides a process for conducting a sunset review and a co-operative wind-down plan, when the corporation completes its mandate.

I think the honourable members should know that since first reading of the bill, the government of Ontario has consulted with the federal and city governments and the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corp on a number of proposed amendments. As a result of these consultations, our government is proposing several amendments to the bill, to clarify certain sections of the legislation and respond to suggestions from the federal government, the city of Toronto and the corporation.

The proposed amendments include, first, a requirement for the corporation to conduct a review of the act and report back to the three governments within 12 months of its enactment on any suggested amendments to the act; second, a requirement that the corporation's business plan include a public consultation plan and, every fifth year, a five-year revitalization plan; third, a requirement that the province consult with the federal government and the city of Toronto prior to making any regulations under the act.

1630

It may also interest my legislative colleagues to know that, early in October, the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corp is expected to submit a formal development plan and business strategy to all three levels of government.

The strategy is expected to address the design, financing and implementation of waterfront renewal projects and to consist of three major parts: first, a development plan being prepared in co-operation with the three governments; second, a financial model outlining how projects would be paid for; and finally, an implementation plan indicating what will go where, and when it is likely to happen.

At the municipal level, the members should also be aware that the city of Toronto's central waterfront part two plan, which is consistent with the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corp's development plan, will also be going forward for the approval of the Waterfront Reference Group and city council.

Public consultation on this development plan will take place this fall, and that means the revitalization of Toronto's waterfront should really start to gather momentum in the coming year.

As members know, four priority projects on the waterfront have already received the green light: the construction of the Front Street extension is expected to begin in the spring; the building of a second subway platform at Union Station is expected to be completed by 2007; the rehabilitation of the port lands area will

upgrade the land for many new uses; and an environmental assessment will lead to significant improvements near the mouth of the Don River.

As I said earlier, these improvements to Toronto's waterfront represent part of a necessary response to the challenges of future growth in the city itself and in southern Ontario.

By implementing our bold new vision of the city's waterfront, all three government partners hope to take advantage of this tremendous opportunity and reap significant social and economic dividends over the longer term.

Revitalizing the waterfront lands will strengthen Toronto and make its economy and the economies of Ontario and Canada more competitive for the 21st century, and the passage of Bill 151 will help us to achieve those important goals.

I invite my honourable colleagues to join me in voting for a stronger Toronto, and a brighter future for the city and our province, by lending their support to the motion.

The Acting Speaker: Questions or comments?

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): I would like to make some comments on the member's statement and speech, which I thought was well made in every respect.

I have a question, though, and it specifically relates to when she talked about the four projects that had already been approved for these lands. It's my understanding a newspaper article—I'm not a Toronto member, so perhaps I'm not as up to speed on these matters as Toronto members would be—just last Wednesday in the Toronto Star in effect stated that two film studios have also been approved for the site by city council, which will include something like 20 hectares of parking, and also that the Ontario Power Generation Corp and Toronto Hydro have applied to construct electrical generating stations on the waterfront on these lands. I'm just wondering if she is prepared to comment, when she gets an opportunity, on how those three rather major projects—20 hectares of parking is one heck of a lot of asphalt—fit in with the original plans that were developed with the revitalization ideas that people are talking about.

It seems to me that this kind of legislation we're passing here today—perhaps we're about a year too late, which raises another question as to why this bill, which was first introduced here back in November of last year and only given first reading on December 11 of last year—why we've waited some 10 months to deal with it.

I would sincerely like to get an answer to those questions as to how these three projects could have been approved. All of them, in my mind, seem to run counter to what's actually been proposed for the site.

Mr Christopherson: In responding to the comments of the member for York North I want to draw attention to something my colleague from Beaches-East York spent a fair bit of time talking about. Quite frankly, in a couple of responses government members have alluded to it, but I don't think we're hearing enough around the issue of affordable housing given the importance of it. I know there has been some mention. I'm not suggesting it hasn't

been talked about or that there's no consideration. I just want to say from this side of the House, for those of us who are paying particular attention to the growing crisis—and that almost seems redundant to say. Since it was declared a national emergency or a national disaster, I think, two or three years ago, virtually every speech coming from the government side of the House should contain some reference to affordable housing.

The bill itself doesn't speak to that, so now we're relying on the goodwill of this government and other governments. Again, given the fact that there are no politicians that are going to be on the board of the corporation, now we're twice removed to the extent that we need to be appointing people that we know are going to be advocates. I just question how much those credentials will carry the day when this government reviews the makeup of the board or, quite frankly, concerns about the feds or municipalities. But then, why should we have to look to those levels of government to deal with the issue of housing, which primarily is a provincial responsibility? Given that you, the government of the day, the Tories, took us out of the business of affordable housing—we were the last bastion in North America directly providing affordable housing, yes, through the Rae government and when you shut it down, you shut down the last government dealing with affordable housing—we need to hear more from you.

Mr AL McDonald (Nipissing): I rise today to lend my support to Bill 151. I know in my riding of Nipissing, the city of North Bay is going through the challenges of trying to develop its waterfront as well. The one thing we all know and understand as individuals, as citizens of Ontario and of Canada is that we expect and we almost demand that all three levels of government co-operate for the betterment of the citizens of not only Ontario but Canada. I see this as a great opportunity where all three levels of government have come together and realized the benefits of water redevelopment.

I think back to the city of North Bay in Nipissing, which purchased the waterfront there a couple of years ago, and the struggles they are going through in trying to bring all three different levels of government on board to provide financial assistance, which I support. It will better the people of North Bay, the Nipissing region and northern Ontario.

The same could be said about the world-class city of Toronto. Toronto is the hub of our country. It's the financial heart. It creates tourism in itself. I think we should all be proud to be part of this partnership with all three levels of government. It doesn't matter which side of the House you sit on. This is about supporting the people of Ontario, supporting the people of Toronto, supporting tourism.

Personally, I think this is a great bill. I really want to speak in favour of it, and I'm hoping the individuals on the other side of the Legislature will see fit to approve it as well.

1640

Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough-Rouge River): I listened very carefully to the member for York North. My colleague from Kingston and the Islands pointed a question to you, and I would like you, in your comments back, to answer that. It's so important that I wanted to emphasize it anyhow.

This government seems to run hot and cold at times. What is in place today was so hot when the Olympics was around, and then all of a sudden it went away and nothing was heard about it. Now there's the dawn of an election coming up and there's a great interest in this.

I just wondered if you could answer the member's question. Why is it that we have all kind of visions around, people doing things around the waterfront—they're supposed to have a structure here. People seem to be working at cross-purposes. Why is it that this government, or this great corporation we have with the three governments—we're allowing these things to happen around us: the Home Depot, the Canadian Tire stuff. Everybody's doing something about it all. I'd like to know if this will put a stop to that. Is that going to be addressed directly in this strategy you have here?

I know that the member from Nipissing stated that we all should support it, but I'd like him also to tell you, to tell the government, to put your money where your mouth is. It's going to cost us about \$12 billion. I haven't heard your government yet stating how much money you're going to put forward to that project.

In your response—of course they have informed you, when you're speaking from your notes, how much money they will put forward for this wonderful, beautiful structure of the waterfront. I know you can do that.

The Acting Speaker: Response?

Mrs Munro: Thank you to the members for Kingston and the Islands, Hamilton West, Nipissing and Scarborough-Rouge River. There seems to have been a bit of a coalescing here in terms of the issues that members responded to. There are a couple of points I made reference to that need to be reiterated, simply to respond to the kinds of questions that have been raised.

The key thing with this waterfront project is the fact that it requires all three levels of government to agree, and when a suggestion is being made about individual projects—are they on? are they off?—I have outlined those that have been put forward at this time that demonstrate the commitment of the three levels of government.

The other issue that I think was raised was the question of the timing. Again, I did make reference to the fact that the bill was at first reading in December, and very specifically, the need to do the consultation with the other two levels of government, the response that came from that as well as the interim waterfront revitalization group. This bill, then, reflects the amendments that came from those discussions that have taken place in the last few months.

The issue about very specific things—when the member from Scarborough-Rouge River refers to the fact that it was a hot issue, yes, of course, at the time when much

attention was being directed to the Olympic bid. But it was very clear by this government that the money was—

The Acting Speaker: Thank you. Further debate?

Mr Curling: I am so happy I'm able to get the opportunity to speak on this very, very important issue and Bill 151. I know that basically what this bill proposes to do—and it will be passed by us. Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals support this direction and will continue supporting any growth in this respect.

Within the time I have, I'll try to highlight a couple of things that are of concern to me and I hope will be realized.

I have no problem with what is laid out here about how the corporation should be established and what should be done. As we know, the corporation in some respect has been established before. All this is doing is renaming it and of course putting special members on the 13-member board together.

But I wanted first to tell the people who are listening—and I know there are thousands out there very concerned about it who are watching right now and listening for where the direction is going to go, to say what Bill 151 is all about.

What grabs me is the first point. It says, "To implement a plan that enhances the value of the land in the designated waterfront area and creates an accessible and active waterfront for living, working and recreation, and to do so in a fiscally and environmentally responsible manner."

It's number 4 that really woke me up. It says, "To encourage public input into the development of the designated waterfront area." There was a time when they were challenged about how much public input they were going to have on this, how much public participation. I think Mr Fung—it was quite a coup when we got him to do this—had responded that it is the public interest that is first and foremost in all of this.

As I said, Bill 151, the corporation and the structure, really is something I support. But let me get into a little more detail of it all. I understand from this bill that they're going to have four members appointed by the federal government. I presume they will send their four down to this board. Then there are four members that will be appointed by the provincial government. I have a concern about that, because I understand they have appointed four bagmen from the Conservative Party. There we go again: we've gone off on this political influence immediately. I'm not going to prejudge them, but first I will say that I hope these bagmen are not biased and feel they have allegiance only to the Conservative Party. This is a very, very important structure we're putting in place.

Then we have four members appointed by the city council. I'm extremely impressed by the people who are being appointed to the board. I think the city was quite sensitive to the environment part of it. I think an environmentalist is on that board, and I'm sure they will get some more of the public input in there. Then there is one member, of course, who is jointly appointed by the feds, by the province and by the city council.

The chair, Mr Fung, who is now the chair of the Toronto revitalization committee, will I presume continue in this corporation. I think he'll do an excellent job. He's been a visionary in many of the things he has done in the past. We know that if he gets the resources, he will do the job.

There's an old saying back home in Jamaica, where I'm from, that sometimes we are given a basket to carry water. All the great ideas we may have here and this wonderful board—they're going to need the resources to carry out this wonderful project. They're going to need money. I understand from all this that they're going to need about \$12 billion, shared of course by getting it from the private sector, the city, the province and also the federal government. The city of course owns the land, so right up front they will say that's their contribution.

I have a little concern about the province. They should come forth with some money. I'm not quite sure, with all the speeches I've heard around here, that they're going to put forth that type of money—I think just about \$4 billion or so that they should put forward in order to get this program started.

1650

Yet I hope before the debate is over the Conservative Party will say to us, "We are committing \$4 billion to \$5 billion right now," and immediately put it aside so this structure can go on. We know how important it is, and I don't need to emphasize at length; the fact is that we have to get it going.

But I'm not convinced that this government is prepared to do that. With the way Ernie Eves is behaving these days, as he puts his fingers in the air to find out which way the wind blows and that the polls could go that way, he may take the money and run that way, or maybe it's another way and he'll go the other way, not understanding that a commitment was made with this project and that we have to follow this through.

The revitalization of the waterfront, in principle, is a very positive direction, and it is extremely necessary. Many of the members here have articulated the importance of having the waterfront revitalized.

I want to know that in the next 10, 15 or 20 years we will see a waterfront that is of use to all of us and to our young folks here today, like some of the pages, like Curtis Ng from my riding who is hoping, as he watches us develop the waterfront, that when he and his colleagues grow up, they can utilize it and say, "When I was at the House of Parliament they were debating 151 and today we are reaping the benefit, not only for ourselves but for all those who come from all over the world to enjoy it and the financial benefits."

As you know, for a long time Dalton McGuinty had put forward a strategy and had recognized the city of Toronto's waterfront. And of course the member for Nipissing had said, "This is the hub, this is the engine, this is the excitement of Canada, the Toronto waterfront."

What has been happening down there? In the last couple of days, in the last couple of weeks, as I said, things are working at cross purposes. We have seen tent

cities, Home Depot, Canadian Tire. We see the Gardiner Expressway where one minute it's going to be revitalized, redirected. Nothing is happening. I hope that we can be strong in our commitment to say there is one vision and we don't have it scattered all over the place about where we should get permission to do what, who's selling off what, and by the time the commission is ready to do their job, some of the things that are happening outside there would have completely turned this vision into something like a nightmare itself. We don't want that to happen.

The longer we delay this, the more we'll fall behind much of the global race and the global opportunities and the things that people come to Toronto for and the opportunities we have to make this place the vibrant and wonderful city that it is.

A part of that great development is a constructive and viable and clear future for the waterfront and its environs. I don't know when last you've driven along on the lakeshore there and the waterfront and have seen the potential. I don't know if you knew what it was in the last 20 years when you drove along there. It has been developing. One of my concerns, though, is that as they develop this, I hope that the access will be there continuously to be enjoyed by the public, and that the private sector doesn't dominate. I have confidence in Mr Fung that this will happen, that he will make sure that the public has that kind of access to it.

I noticed too that Bill 151 states emphatically that they must report annually of their vision and of their doings inside the corporation and the board. I noticed also that these reports must be available to the Minister of Transportation federally, the Minister of Finance provincially, but I didn't see anywhere that the public would have access to these reports. This is extremely important. Ever since this government has come into power, there has been no access to reports, there has been no access to what they're doing and somehow, if the public wants this kind of report, they may have to then pay for this. The fact is they're already paying for this. They've already allowed this wonderful development of the platitude saying public participation and openness.

If there is an amendment to this bill, it should say that it must be made available to the public at no cost. I'm not quite sure—I don't think so—if the corporation is charging the Minister of Transportation and the Minister of Finance for the report. Therefore, one should be made available to the public so they can see what's going on.

We know of course that the city's growing at a tremendous speed with the immigration that is happening. It's a wonderful thing. I support that sort of growth. Right now, they say we have 2.5 million people in the city, but I think there really are about three million people, as it goes on, with diverse cultural backgrounds. It's expected that in the next 20 or 25 years another million will be part of this city.

Do you know some of the events that happen annually, especially in the summertime? Millions of people come to the city and are attracted by some of the events that

happen here. We have Caribana. We have parades such as the Santa Claus parade. We have many things that people come to this great city for. I tell you, we have a waterfront here that would be a great attraction as we develop it in a business manner, which would not only create jobs, but it would bring the diversity of theatre and the various things that make a city vibrant and wonderful. As we know, in creating all these new jobs, new investment and new opportunities, we can become even a greater vibrant city than we are.

Many times people underestimate Toronto. When they come here, they think they're going to see a very dull city. Spending a day or two here, they find out how vibrant this city is. Beyond that, they find the potential and harmony that exists here, and the number of different cultural programs that we have is something that is the envy of many—not that we have it but that the harmony in which we all live and work is just tremendous.

This investment in waterfront restructuring is something we applaud, but let's not have this as a dream, because sometimes we dream too many dreams without having them realized and becoming a reality. This is not the first time we have been in this situation. It's not the first time we've had reports about revitalizing the waterfront. It's not the first time we have had great dreams.

We have amalgamated the city without any thought at all, without putting any money into it. We have seen a provincial government that has downloaded many of its responsibilities to the city, and the city is scrambling around. We have seen a provincial government that abandoned affordable housing. As a matter of fact, it's not even in their portfolio. It's not even a ministry any more. They don't recognize affordability. No wonder people gathered down at tent city on the waterfront. No wonder we have that kind of situation because what this provincial government has done is focus on basically making sure its corporate friends downtown don't pay any taxes and then they pass the load on to the poor cousins or the poor families within our city. That is bad because what we have seen is that people are now homeless.

We have had more homelessness in this city and this province than at any other time in the history of this province under this Conservative government. It's pathetic how we treat the most disadvantaged people in our society. If we are building waterfront revitalization that is going to bring jobs and show all these great opportunities, I hope the folks who are on the lower strata can also benefit and will be able to say, "This city's economic opportunities will benefit me," will benefit those poorer people and people who are struggling to even rent.

You know, it's funny: I watched the provincial government trying to bail out the tent city people, and they have no vision, no plans whatsoever. None. Then they turn around and say—and we see the city's saying they'll pay the first and last month's rent. What a joke. These folks say they can't pay any kind of rent for three or four months, even if you're going to pay the first and last month's rent. I'm telling the landlords who are taking those folks in that after the third month, behold, there is

no more money coming in because the folks have no money.

1700

I've seen a government that, on their watch, has had more people at the food banks. This is outrageous. Even people who are working have to line up at the food bank because they haven't got enough money to buy food for their children. They can hardly pay their rent.

What does this have to do with the waterfront? If we're going to revitalize the waterfront and be the economic engine where people will benefit through jobs and opportunities, we must see this through. If we're going to have it, we can't just talk about it. We must put our money where our mouths are. We must be able to say, if it's \$12 billion, we have a structure, a plan on how much money we're going to put forward. Just putting up the land alone and hoping that the private sector comes through with their \$7 billion, which they hope to do—and Mr Fung worked a lot of miracles in the past, and if he gets some support from the respective governments, it can happen.

But I want to have hope. I want this government to give me more hope and say, "Yes, we will do that; it can be realized," because I'm not quite sure that they are as committed as they say they are about this. It looks good and they hope that their rich friends will come through and of course people will want to invest, though I don't think the private sector will put the \$12 billion in. I think that the federal and the provincial governments must come forward with the money and things to make this work on its own.

I know they're saying, "We're not the same kind of government as we had with Mike Harris," but I have not seen a change. All I have seen is that one seat in the House has moved and is out. For the rest, the faces are the same, the attitude is the same, the arrogance is the same, but they speak with a little softer tone. But the dagger and the viciousness are still there. I also notice the fact that the confrontation we had with the education system, the tone is lower but they've still got the same attitude, and the people are not fooled by that.

So give me some hope. The member from Nipissing looks at me and says yes, he needs some hope, even from his own party. He said, "Give me some hope that when you say you're committed to the restructuring of the waterfront you will put some money there, so that jobs can be there, a theatre can be there, and a vibrant waterfront." As he said, "This is the engine of Ontario. Don't let us down." I fully agree with you: they should not let us down.

A lot of the funds that you took away from taxpayers—you were so obsessed that your big, corporate buddies didn't pay taxes that you forgot the others who need bread, accommodation, good schooling. They don't need 30 or 35 people in a classroom; they need lower class sizes. They need their young children and kids in daycare that they can afford—like the things Dalton McGuinty has put forward.

The applause that I heard for the new education plan that he put forward says that this is where the engine of this province will go. This is how we will benefit society, putting the money where it is deserved, not a lot of promises that talk about the money itself. We don't need promises, we need money and resources to build a waterfront that, as I said, will have the vibrancy and the economic benefit that not only Toronto or Nipissing or even baby BC but the world will enjoy. And while they're enjoying it, it's economically beneficial for us. While we are doing that, those people get work, they get a job and they feel as if this place belongs to them.

If we develop this, as I said, we want public access to it. We want to make sure we can look at it and say, "Yes, I was a part of that as John Public or Jane Public. Yes, I had a contribution to make here." Don't shove the people out. This government is good for this undemocratic way in which they behave, where they shut the public out, but I am going to have some hope that you will not do so.

The Acting Speaker: Comments and questions?

Mr Christopherson: I am pleased to rise and comment on and commend the remarks of my colleague from Scarborough-Rouge River. In particular, his closing comments made me reflect that it's important we understand the history of this project. There are reasons why the government is willing to spend money on this project. Historically, which was the point my colleague the member for Scarborough-Rouge River was making, given the fact that you have cut and attacked so many things that are so important, why do we have this day where you are now prepared to commit virtually hundreds of millions of dollars to one project?

Let's remember that this was very much tied to the Olympic bid, so you were dragged into this whether you wanted to be there or not. It was an opportunity for you to counter the reputation of being anti-Toronto, which you were, in my opinion, deservedly earning.

Interjection.

Mr Christopherson: Why? I say to the member in the back who is now so outraged, it's because all the issues that you hurt, that my friend has talked about in terms of housing, in terms of schooling, in terms of health, all those things are of an even greater magnification in Toronto because it's the largest urban centre in the nation. So when we have a crisis in education, a crisis in housing, a crisis in health care, yes, it's going to show itself in Toronto. Therefore it was quite easy for the average Torontonians to believe you didn't care about them.

Now, of course, you've got an opportunity. There will be lots of ribbons to cut, announcements to make, lots of money being spent, so there is a political win. Let's understand that this is not because you cared so much about Toronto and its future; it's because you were dragged into this politically and are trying to make the best of it.

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): I'm pleased to stand and offer some reflections on the member from Scarborough-Rouge River, who I think in the first part of

his commentary was both complimentary to the bill and quite correct in his suggestion that it is an initiative all three levels of government must pursue. I trust he will be applying with equal vigour his criticisms and his scepticism about the delivery on those commitments to his brethren in Ottawa.

His closing comments were not only inappropriate and, I would offer, unparliamentary because they weren't in keeping with the topic before us, but he is also just plain wrong, unless he is suggesting that there is some magical divide at Highway 401 and that his riding immediately north of mine is in some totally different universe. The picture he is painting about Toronto and the citizenry in Toronto and their current state of mind and the current state of their economy is completely, absolutely and utterly false. It falls into the category of absolute speculative ramblings by somebody who obviously, himself, is out to score political points.

I would invite the member opposite to cite the specifics. Tell me exactly how many constituents are coming in every Friday and contrast that with 1995. Tell the other members of this House today that you have more people coming in concerned about welfare issues and more people coming in today than in 1995 about housing problems. Tell me you've got more small business people coming in today and complaining about an incredible tax burden, government red tape and regulation run wild. I'd like to know the names of those businesses, I'd like to know the names of those individuals, and I'd like to know why, in all of these comments, you're suggesting the waterfront initiative isn't just one more example of the great investments this government has made in the biggest city in Canada.

1710

Mr Gerretsen: I would like to compliment the member from Scarborough-Rouge River for an excellent presentation, not only the first part but the entire speech. He not only dealt with the issue as to why this corporation has to be formed but also why it is so important for the three levels of government to work together on a project like this.

It's been my experience over the years that the most successful projects, particularly at the local level—and this will basically be a locally driven project. Any redevelopment project is, of its very nature, something that the community, the city, is finally left with. It's important for a project like that to have not only the support but the complete backing, financial and otherwise, of the three different forms of government involved. I think he pointed that out. He pointed out quite clearly why it is necessary for that to happen.

Also, at the same time that's happening, there are still so many people in our society who are a lot worse off than they were in 1995. An awful lot of people have just plain given up. The government used to be there for them at one time to give them a hand up or assistance when they needed it. A lot of these people have given up. It's as a result of that that you get situations like tent city and a lot worse than that throughout the province.

I can remember the very first year, when we came here in 1995, we certainly did not see as many people out on the streets in the middle of the winter as we see nowadays. To a certain extent we have almost become a little bit immune to them. Because we see so many of them, it doesn't have the same impact as it did then. Certainly the divide between the haves and the have-nots has increased dramatically over the last seven years.

Ms Mushinski: I am pleased to join this debate and respond to my friend from Scarborough-Rouge River. I like the member for Scarborough-Rouge River. I've known Alvin for almost 20 years now. I think he is a very good representative for his constituents of Scarborough-Rouge River, which sort of left me somewhat bemused by some of the responses to his speech with respect to waterfront regeneration from the NDP side, but I guess that particular diatribe is to be expected from the NDP.

But I'm also somewhat bemused by the comments that have been made by the member from Scarborough-Rouge River, if only because he tended to attack our government for some of the great initiatives we have taken that my friend from Scarborough East mentioned with respect to the regeneration of the Toronto waterfront.

Saving the Rouge would not have been possible without this government. Certainly waterfront regeneration would not be possible without this government. I would suggest to you that equal taxation across Toronto, which for years had been fought for by members from Scarborough—and certainly Scarborough council when you were an MPP, Mr Curling—was never addressed by the Liberal government but was addressed by us.

The Acting Speaker: Response?

Mr Curling: I just wish you had given me another 15 minutes to address some of those comments. In democratic terms, I would like to thank the member from Hamilton West for his compliments and his support. The member from Scarborough East, I don't know if his babbling that he was about was support or not. I know the member for Scarborough Centre was speaking tongue-in-cheek when she said, "Without our government we couldn't have the Rouge Valley." Oh, my golly. I remember the time when all three governments here played a very strong role in making sure that we had the Scarborough-Rouge Valley: the NDP, the Liberals in David Peterson's time, and over here. I know you went down the wrong road when you said that, but I'll excuse you on that point.

My friend from Kingston and the Islands made some comments and I also want to thank him for his comments.

If you are saying that the evidence is right there that we're building an economic and vibrant city at the waterfront, I want to say to all of you in the government that the lines at food banks are longer. I want to tell you that the affordable housing stock is lower. I will tell you that the gap between the haves and the have-nots is wider. The fact is that we need to pay attention to that.

If he is going to say to me that folks haven't come to his office to find out about their welfare cheques, you've scared the dickens out of them so much that they're even scared to come to a civil servant who is supposed to serve them. They do come. They're scared. They don't want to ask a basic question for jobs and so on. We are here to serve them at times. Sometimes they are scared even to ask for an OHIP card because they may be confronted. All I am saying is that we are here to serve. Make sure that in this revitalization you put the money there that will benefit all of us.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Gilchrist: Thank you to my colleagues opposite.

I rise today in support of Bill 151, the Waterfront Revitalization Corporation Act. As members of this House and hopefully folks watching will know, this legislation arises from the goal of all three levels of government—federal, provincial and municipal—to revitalize an essential part of the biggest city in the greatest country on the face of the earth. We have an incredible resource in the waterfront of the city of Toronto and a resource that for far too many decades has been poorly utilized, neglected, and in some cases has been an actual dumping ground for refuse and toxic waste.

For too many years, reports came and went that laid out very clear directions on how the thousands of acres of prime land in the downtown Toronto core could be turned around, instead of sitting fallow, instead of attracting nothing but vermin of the two-legged and four-legged variety. The bottom line is that finally all three levels of government have a common vision. They have all committed to \$500 million each that they will be applying to some bold and visionary projects.

The first issue they have to deal with is the very central core, approximately 10 kilometres of the waterfront from Coxwell at the one end to the Humber River at the other end, and focusing even within that area on the port lands and the areas in the very central part of the city of Toronto.

To anyone who has visited those lands lately, you will find that they are in most cases overgrown with weeds. There are still a few industrial facilities but they have largely been driven out of the city of Toronto because of the extraordinarily excessive property tax rates that the city has applied on its businesses—in some cases four or six times as much as the tax rate they paid when they moved to Markham or Mississauga or Pickering.

It really is sad from the perspective that we wouldn't have this problem before us today if the municipal government had been more responsible for the last 40 years in how it treated its prime taxpayers, the people who pay the freight more than any other category, in any municipality—not singling out Toronto. But because a corporation doesn't vote and residential taxpayers do, city of Toronto politicians took the easy path. They raped and pillaged the business community. They charged rates that gave business no choice but to pull up roots and move to Hazel's kingdom to our west, Don Cousens's

kingdom to the north and any number of other municipalities that set far more responsible tax rates.

That's not the fault of any party here. I'm not going to point a finger. We were all in power at the time I'm speaking about, when the city of Toronto councillors clearly ignored the reality. That reality is that you can kid yourself you're going to get the four-times or six-times-higher tax rate until the day that business moves out, at which point it's a vacant property. In most cases the building has been levelled. They get no tax assessment on any improvement and they get a paltry sum for the toxic dump left behind, in many cases. So the city has actually, ironically, driven down its tax revenue.

That's the kind of vision we have had for far too long from our municipal leaders here in the city of Toronto. We've transcended that, though, I hope, with the commitment by the federal government and the provincial government to put cold, hard cash into downtown Toronto. The city of Toronto, it is true, on paper, has committed for another \$500 million, but I think everyone in this place knows that they're trying desperately to make their contribution to be in kind. Maybe that means the per diem rates of the councillors and the mayor will be charged against this, if they get out of the way and allow for a rapid redevelopment.

1720

But again, we're faced with a very ironic situation, that the only level of government that will continue to benefit directly, most directly, will be the municipal government, because everything that's built on that currently empty land will start generating property tax again. And so it's a wise investment. I hope that ultimately the municipal government does more than pay lip service to this and makes tangible contributions to the project.

Mr Speaker, you're probably aware that a number of cities around the world in the last few years, major cities, have undertaken significant waterfront renewal projects. You can think of Canary Wharf, downtown London; proud to say, Canadian developers were the inspiration behind that breathtaking renewal in what was very similar to our port lands: abandoned, old industrial sites on the water. You'll find similar redevelopments have taken place in New York and in Barcelona.

In every case, an arm's-length development corporation was established to oversee that process, and while there's no doubt that the governments made a number of contributions, they took a step back and they made it very clear that micromanagement was not a job for the elected officials. We aren't architects. We aren't urban planners.

The corporation that we've envisioned here will have the resources to go out and cast as wide a net as they have to to attract the best and brightest minds, to have open competitions—public, transparent, open competitions. Out of that process, I have every reason to believe we are going to see some absolutely breathtaking developments on our waterfront.

You probably know that the first developments have already started, the ones that have been on the drawing boards for, in some cases, 20 to 25 years. One of the pro-

jects involves extending Front Street. Currently it terminates at Bathurst, and it will be extended all the way over to Dufferin, creating a considerable release valve for traffic in the vicinity of the SkyDome and east-west traffic generally.

It's also going to involve the construction of a new interchange on the Gardiner Expressway, and that, to anybody who has used that highway, particularly at rush hour, is long overdue.

The Front Street extension alone is going to cost \$170 million, and it has been recognized as an integral part of rebuilding the transportation infrastructure in the city of Toronto.

Over and above the Front Street extension, the projects also are going to include the redevelopment of the old railway lands. Here too, for those of us who have grown up in the city of Toronto, there was a time when the investments made by the railroads were paying big dividends. It was a far better utilized transportation resource. Aside from the GO trains now, and a fairly small number of riders on the Via line between Windsor and Montreal, there certainly is no need for tracks; in fact, there are 13 different tracks that currently occupy the land west of Union Station. So it's quite appropriate that we look at taking some of the surplus rail lands and redeveloping them. This will build on the private sector developments that have already started.

I think that anybody who hasn't visited Toronto for even the last year would be astounded at the amount of development immediately west of the SkyDome. There is literally a new city that has sprung up in what were completely empty, vacant lands for the better part of the last 20 years. Thousands and thousands of families have moved into that neighbourhood. They will all be patronizing the local businesses. They will all be paying property tax. They are all going to be stimulating the redevelopment of that part of the city of Toronto.

Clearly, government can't do it all. The private sector has already taken some very significant steps on lands that they control. Perhaps the biggest difference in what we're talking about here with the waterfront corporation is that there are vast tracts of land that, as a result of a number of decisions over the last 30 years, the various levels of governments own.

I think of the Ataratiri lands. I'm pained when I look at the dollars and cents the previous NDP government spent to acquire those lands, driving off, in some cases, legitimate businesses that were still viable, that were paying their taxes, that were employing hundreds of people, paying somewhere in the order of 40 times as much as the land was worth, putting in place none of the resources necessary for the cleanup and remediation of those parts of the land at the foot of the Bayview extension that had been the home of, in one case, a battery plant that had left behind it a legacy of lead and any number of other heavy metals and hazardous wastes. Our government has had to take on that responsibility, and I'm immensely proud that we have spent millions—in fact, tens of millions of dollars—cleaning up those lands.

But still, even having made those investments, after all the years that have passed and the inflationary pressures that you would expect to have driven up the price, the best guess, if we were to sell all those lands today at arm's length in any kind of a public and transparent process, is that we might get back 8% of the value Bob Rae put into the acquisition of those lands. Ninety-two per cent of the better part of \$800 million was flushed down the toilet. The taxpayers will never see that again. We can only hope that whoever benefited from that boondoggle spent most of those dollars back here in Ontario.

But the Ontario government now owns those lands. The municipal government and the federal government own a significant portion of the lands on the south side of Lake Shore Boulevard. The port lands themselves at one time were very viable and essential parts of the economy in Toronto. Many of us will recall many more mills and granaries that stood along the shoreline. We'll recall when there was a lot more freighter traffic coming into that port. Today, if my memory serves me correctly, Toronto ranks as something like the 43rd-busiest port in the country. There are small fishing ports in Nova Scotia that get more traffic than we do.

So clearly, by design or by historical evolution, the uses of those lands have to change. There is no longer the demand by the shipping companies to utilize that land for the purposes to which they were formerly put. But the federal government and the municipal government own a significant portion—almost all of the land in the Cherry Street area south of Lake Shore Boulevard.

We have the opportunity to be the architects—in a general sense, not a literal sense—of the long-term direction of all this land. The investment we're making, and the federal government and, hopefully, the municipal government, means there could be any number of new residential, industrial and commercial applications in that area. There could be a staggering number of new homes and apartments. There can be the equivalent of a large city anywhere else in this province developed and built over the next few years just on those 2,000 acres. We're confident that, in making this investment, in creating this corporation, that will be the result.

Another project that bears mention is the construction of the second subway platform at Union Station. There's no doubt: Union Station is the most important transportation hub in Toronto—in fact in the whole GTA. A second subway platform is going to provide literally hundreds of thousands of riders every day with a larger, safer, more efficient transportation facility, long overdue, and make it much easier and faster for them to get to and from work.

At the same time, we continue to hear the federal government suggest that there might be an opportunity to have a high-speed rail link between Union Station and the airport. I don't want to appear overly cynical; I guess I would only reflect that we've been hearing that same commitment for many, many years. But if it ever comes to pass—and there's no doubt the federal government has

the absolute control over railroads and it's within their power to make it happen—then there will be another important use for Union Station. It will become an even more important focal point of downtown Toronto.

1730

From the point of view of the expansion of Union Station, the corporation will be investing \$58 million. The goal is to have it completed in the next five years. When it's done, it will also be coupled with improvements in the GO Transit system that the province owns. So there is a role, I think, for all government not just to be involved in the funding of the corporation but wherever our various agencies and ministries touch on the activities in downtown Toronto to make sure there's a degree of coordination taking place that, historically, has not been the hallmark of our relations.

A moment ago I referred to the port lands. This is the third priority project I'd like to outline for the honourable members here today. We're investing a total of \$61 million in further environmental improvements: the cleanup and servicing of the lands that were contaminated by inadequate government oversight in the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. It's going to transform what is currently probably the most unsightly part of the city of Toronto into valuable real estate.

If you go only slightly east, to the site of the old Greenwood Racetrack, it is absolutely breathtaking what has happened on that piece of land. A drive-through just the other day revealed not just hundreds of homes but a vibrant community where every facility is close at hand, the beach is right next door and transportation is very simple and convenient: you've got streetcars and you're immediately adjacent to the start of the Gardiner Expressway. It has turned from simply empty land that once stabled horses as the only residential occupants to a community that now boasts thousands of residents: homes running to \$500,000, \$600,000 and \$700,000 at the high end, but at the other end there are very affordable apartments. So it's a balanced community.

I think we can look at that as an endorsement of the concept that, in that general area, it will be possible to build neighbourhoods, to attract people to make the investment personally, building on what the government does to clean up the land, to put in the municipal services, to develop the roads and make sure there's public transit, but ultimately it's going to take the public to make the final commitment and the final investment. There is no doubt they're going to do that, and there is no doubt the \$1.5 billion the three levels of government are investing will just be the tip of the iceberg. We envision that that investment will lever a public and private investment three to four times as great at least.

As we eliminate or contain any hazards to human health in that area, as we augment the park system down there—the Leslie Spit and other public facilities—to ensure that lands aren't just suitable for residential use but are attractive and will be the foundation for really livable communities, we're going to see some great changes in that area.

I'll quickly mention the fourth priority project that has already been developed by the corporation. That includes carrying out comprehensive environmental assessment work that will ultimately lead to major improvements at the mouth of the Don River. In this project, the corporation is envisioning spending \$2 million through the conservation authority on an environmental assessment that is needed in order to begin restoring the area at the mouth of the Don River.

Members will know that the current configuration of the Don is man-made. It is not in any way a reflection of how the river used to drain into Lake Ontario 100 years ago. There are a number of ideas on how we can take that fetid swamp at the bottom of the Don River and turn it instead into an important aspect of our park system and, in particular, an opportunity for another series of recreational uses—rowing, boating, fishing.

We've already saved the Rouge River from top to bottom. It is not beyond the realm of possibility that in our lifetime we can similarly address the pollution issues in the Don. My father certainly remembers a day when you could swim in the Don. I remember a day when you could swim in the Humber.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): Baloney.

Mr Gilchrist: I do. Many a tadpole, many a field trip the school took down to the Humber River 40 years ago.

Interjections.

Mr Gilchrist: The bottom line is, there is an opportunity for us to reverse government indifference and a lot of industrial problems over the last century.

In sum, these are all extraordinary investments in the future of the greatest city in the province of Ontario. It's an investment in liveability in the city. It will stimulate great economic activity. It's going to guarantee some of our most valuable lands are turned around and put to good use instead of sitting idle as they have, in some cases, for the last half century.

The Acting Speaker: Questions or comments?

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): Like my colleagues, I am very supportive of Bill 151. I think it's important legislation. It's unfortunate it's taken the government this long to move it forward.

Interjections: Oh, oh.

Mr Gravelle: No, it just is. I think it's fair saying that. It was sitting around on first reading.

But having said that, let me say a few things as a member from northern Ontario. Of course I'm the member for Thunder Bay-Superior North, as you know, which hugs the north shore of Lake Superior and may hug the entire north shore of Lake Superior. Those of us in northern Ontario have a bit of a love-hate relationship with Toronto, as you may know, which is that we think Toronto is an incredibly important city. It's probably the most important city and many of us, when we were young, would dream about actually going and living in Toronto. We're going to make it. We're going to leave the north.

Mr Gerretsen: You're here now.

Mr Gravelle: I am one of those who left Thunder Bay, may I say, to come to Toronto and then returned home. I realized I needed to be back in the north.

Hon Mr Stockwell: And we're glad for it.

Mr Gravelle: I'm glad you're glad.

It's an interesting relationship we have with Toronto. What we do recognize, and I think all of us recognize it as we get older, is that if Toronto does well and Toronto is succeeding, then it's a great benefit to us. But as I say, there are many challenges that we in the north face and we sometimes feel we're not doing as well, as a result of some of the situations here.

But I'll tell you, with the little time I have left, I still find myself somewhat irritated by the member for Scarborough East in terms of his tone. He spent some of his time actually criticizing the city of Toronto for their decisions or lack of decisions when indeed he made no reference whatever—his own sort of version of reality is fascinating—to the fact that the downloading this provincial government has done in terms of the city of Toronto and all across has really made it very difficult to meet some of these obligations.

His comments to the speech of my colleague from Scarborough-Rouge River calling it inappropriate were indeed in and of themselves inappropriate in that what he said in terms of the increase in homelessness and the increase in the use of food banks means there are some real challenges that are not being dealt with by this—

The Acting Speaker: Thank you. The member for Hamilton West.

Mr Christopherson: I appreciate the opportunity to respond to the comments of my colleague from Scarborough East.

It's interesting that again he employs the technique that some members of this government caucus, and he in particular, have perfected. I give them their due. Hopefully he'll perceive it as a left-handed compliment, but I give him that due. He talks about the problems with the NDP housing program. Fair enough—

Mr Gilchrist: I didn't mention housing.

Mr Christopherson: Affordable housing. You talked about purchasing land.

Mr Gilchrist: Ataratiri.

Mr Christopherson: Yes. You've got to buy the land to put the housing on, so the two are connected. I'd have to check the Hansard, but I think you managed to squeeze "boondoggle" in there in your comments. If not you, certainly your other colleagues have tried to do that.

My point in raising this is that he employs the technique of pointing out where something is less than perfect, and that somehow alone is enough to justify whatever it is they do.

John Snobelen of course got caught out on tape implementing that policy where he was saying to all the bureaucrats in the Ministry of Education—and I'm paraphrasing—that they had to create a crisis to justify the things they were going to do. You did the same thing with health care, with home care in particular. In fact, virtually everything you touched, you started by pointing

out where it was less than perfect. That alone is not proof of anything. There are no perfect systems, no perfect programs, whether it's the NDP, the Liberals, the Tories, or whether it's the public sector or the private sector. Nothing is perfect. What matters is, what do you replace it with? Your policy on affordable housing was just to kill it, and you wonder why there's a housing crisis in this province?

1740

The Acting Speaker: Questions or comments?

Hon Mr Stockwell: Frankly, I don't think we need to get into all that. Ataratiri, whether you thought it was a boondoggle or not, is really beside the point.

I think we all agree with this bill, I suppose, because—

Mr Christopherson: What are you talking about?

Hon Mr Stockwell: I don't want to get into it. Ataratiri was a boondoggle. But I don't want to get into this debate, because I think we all agree that the lands we're talking about today need some very vigorous help. It's a shame that we have a city as well-developed and as nice as Toronto and have these parts of the city as ugly, decrepit and contaminated as they are.

Being a member of Metropolitan Toronto council, it was fairly clear that we didn't have the financial capacity to clean up the land. I think everyone would agree with that. I look to my friend Ms Mushinski, who also sat on that council and would know that we couldn't afford to do it. There had to be some kind of leadership among the senior levels of government.

To give this government its due—and I know it's going to be tough for you—the leadership came from this provincial government. They were the first to come forward with \$500 million to clean this property up. It's a non-partisan issue. I don't know anyone on that side of the House who would say that we shouldn't be cleaning it up. It's a jewel. It's the waterfront jewel that Toronto can turn itself into. It isn't Harbourfront, which was supposed to be the jewel and turned into an unmitigated disaster, in my opinion.

Speaking as a local councillor at the time, our opportunities here are great. I want to see as balanced a committee as we can put in place. I know I supported a lot of NDP initiatives on council, because I think from the planning point of view and the Planning Act, they don't have bad ideas. Some of them are very good, and I agreed with them.

In as non-partisan a way as we can go, we're spending half a billion dollars to invest in the Toronto waterfront. We should be sure that it doesn't end up like Harbourfront. That's not what anyone in Toronto wants. If we can develop this in a way that's presentable, it can rival any waterfront in the world and—forget the world-class city—just make Toronto a better place to live.

The Acting Speaker: Questions or comments? If not, response?

Mr Gilchrist: I appreciate the comments from all three of my colleagues.

I think the member from Etobicoke Centre hit the nail right on the head. This is a non-partisan issue. No one, I

am sure, at least no one who has taken the time to visit those lands, is going to suggest that this money is not necessary.

To the member from Hamilton West, I hadn't mentioned your housing program. I mentioned the land acquisition that ultimately might have led to building houses, but you never got the second half of that equation. As you know, I'd be happy to debate at any time that failed policy.

But in this area, I think it's important to stress the fact that the money is required. The money has been pledged by the province. We took a leadership role. Ottawa has gotten onside, the city has gotten onside, and the actual formal establishment of the corporation is the last step needed to launch this initiative.

I want to put one thing on the record, though, here tonight. While I respect the fact that you have to walk before you run and I respect the fact that the lands that are most in need of intensive remediation are the ones in the downtown core, I have said to Mr Fung and I will continue to say on behalf of my colleagues from Etobicoke and Scarborough that the waterfront does not run from the Don to the Humber; it runs from Etobicoke Creek to the Rouge River. I fully expect that the important initiatives on the Scarborough waterfront and the Etobicoke waterfront will receive their due consideration as well in the fullness of time.

In the short term, though, the four projects that have already been announced will deal with some significant transportation issues and environmental problems and will be the precursors to the development of all sorts of new housing. And it will include affordable housing, I have no doubt. All three levels of government have a commitment to turn this into the jewel of Toronto, the jewel of this province.

I hope the members will support the bill at second and third reading.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Gerretsen: I too am very pleased to join the debate on this bill. Just to pick up on a comment that was made by the Minister of the Environment, I totally agree with him that on a major project like this, the only way it's going to work is if you not only get the three levels of government working together and committing funding together and all the various expertise that each individual government level can bring to the table, but what's also important is that people will have to put their ideological blinkers off to the side, or their ideological spheres.

It's always been my impression that when you're dealing with a major problem like this—at least it was at the municipal level—what solves issues like this is if you bring people together who are truly committed to working on a problem and getting that problem solved.

I can remember back in the Kingston area, back in the mid-1980s, we had a housing crisis there as well. We brought a group of people together, people with left-wing ideas, right-wing ideas, down the centre, whatever, and these people all had one thing in common: they wanted to do something about the housing situation as it existed

then. As a result, they all worked extremely well together, and they even changed their minds about various aspects of the problem they were dealing with. The end result of the whole situation was that it was unanimously agreed at the end, between the so-called right-wing developers and the left-wing activists, that a municipal housing corporation should be set up, which was the first time that had happened in the city of Kingston, and housing was built as a result, and various other initiatives as well.

What made it so successful was that people literally left their ideologies at the door when they went into a meeting, dealt with the problems and the issues the way they were presented, and were able to work it out. And it's the same thing here, on a much larger scale.

I suppose I've been coming to Toronto, sometimes by train, for the last 30 or 40 years—30 years anyway. And it always amazed me that when you come into Toronto—first of all, you get Pickering and Ajax, nice communities along the tracks. Scarborough is fairly nice too. And then as soon as you hit the old city of Toronto, right past the racetrack that the member was talking about earlier, the Greenwood racetrack, the area there has been desolate—well, you can give it any descriptive word that you want, but it has been barren and probably toxic and derelict for many, many years.

Whoever it was that got everybody onside—I mean, quite frankly, I don't care who wants to take credit for it. Of course in the political scheme of things, people always want to take credit for whatever they're doing. The bottom line is that in the end, people aren't going to remember that once the project is completed. It will take 20 years, according to the legislation, for this corporation to in effect deal with the entire situation. It is a massive undertaking when you're talking about potentially a \$12-billion project that will require government funding at all levels, and also private funding etc. All that people will remember afterwards is the notion that somebody somewhere, 20, 25, 30 years ago, started the ball rolling to get rid of these derelict areas.

The only question I have—and I know the members on the government side are not going to like this. They're going to say, "Oh, here he comes again," but I really don't understand. This bill was first introduced last December. We've had many sitting days since then, both day and night. Why is it that only now this bill is being given second reading? I don't understand this.

We've been back here now for a week and two days, and it seems to me that every piece of legislation we're dealing with has been on the table for at least a year, or almost a year, and nothing has happened to it.

You may recall we had the Family Responsibility Office act that we dealt with last week, the interjurisdictional dispute aspect of it, or the enforcement aspect of it. That was another bill that was given first reading some time last November, December, and nothing happened to it. It was also a bill that was supported by everybody. So if bills are supported by members on all sides of the

House, why do we wait a year before giving them second reading?

1750

I guess the conclusion you can come to on an issue like that is the extent to which people are really committed to it. To what extent is the government really committed to this process? A lot of money has been announced; a lot of announcements have been made by all levels of government. The feds are just as guilty of this as the provincial government. If you ever had all the money that was announced from time to time, each government could probably have about three times the budget it actually works under. Announcements are wonderful, but they don't really mean anything. The only thing that means something is if the money is actually being put to work, in this case, for example, to deal with some of the toxic problems these lands contain.

I think it is relevant to talk about the more general issue, and that is how our municipalities have been weakened by this government. Our municipalities over the last four to five years have been asked to take on more and more responsibilities, whether you're talking about social housing or transit—remember how that was totally a municipal responsibility and now the government is coming back into it a little bit?—or whether you're talking about a lot of the social services out there. Municipalities and municipal taxpayers simply cannot afford all this. I think that is relevant. That's not only a problem for Toronto; it's a problem for my city, Kingston, and it's a problem for Frontenac Islands, which I represent as well, and I'm sure it's a problem for Thunder Bay, Hamilton, Windsor, Ottawa and just about every municipality that's out there.

What it all basically boils down to is that one level of government wants to look to the general taxpayer better than another level. In other words, if we just give all these responsibilities to municipalities, we can somehow at this level look better, because we can cut your taxes to some extent. There's even a great debate as to whether you should have done that. Perhaps you would have been a heck of a lot better off if you hadn't cut those taxes and had put them into quality education programs or quality health care and long-term-care programs.

I am absolutely convinced that the disparity between the haves and the have-nots in this province has widened tremendously over the last seven years. Somebody can get up and say, "It also happened in the five years before that or in the 10 years before that." I don't know about that, but I do know that over the last seven years there are many more poor people who have basically given up on the system completely. That's why I think it is very important that a major project like this has a large affordable housing component to it. I think it's absolutely essential that if we ever want to do something about the problems relating to homelessness and poverty, then we need the two senior levels of government to get re-involved in the housing scene. You cannot simply say, "We'll somehow leave it to the private sector; we'll

somehow leave it to local municipalities," because they don't have the wherewithal to do it.

I have a few seconds left. My time has been severely limited by the magic of our new rules, which basically state that after so many hours, the debate time is reduced to 10 minutes, and then after a while it's reduced to absolutely nothing. Now closure even exists in this House without a closure motion being made. If you think about it, at one time you could stand in the House as long as you wanted to on any issue and talk out the clock. We've slowly eroded those rules as well by saying, "We're going to limit debate after this many hours," and that sort of thing.

This is a good bill. I would just urge the government to get on with it. Let's have second and third reading. Let's get them going. Let's clean up the mess that's out there.

The Acting Speaker: Questions or comments?

Mr Christopherson: I want to commend the member for Kingston and the Islands in reflecting on the Toronto project, particularly as he linked it back to his own community and mentioned a number of others, mine included, Hamilton, in terms of the waterfronts we have and the importance of them.

I want to pick up on one point he made, and I think it was one of the strongest points of his comments this evening, which was that you can make all the announcements in the world, but what really matters is when you get the dollars out there, actually putting shovels into the ground. He specifically mentioned cleaning up toxic land.

The reason I want to touch on that and comment on that remark is that in Hamilton the beautiful waterfront we have now—I encourage anyone who hasn't yet seen it to take an opportunity, if you're near Hamilton, in Hamilton, to see the waterfront and get an idea of what you can do in terms of reclaiming beautiful vistas that belong to and should be shared by all the citizens in a given community.

What happened was that we had a piece of property that was used as industrial—it's called the Lax property. Thanks to the leadership of then-Alderman Brian Hinkley and Bruce Charlton, who I would mention parenthetically is the younger brother of the former cabinet minister and MPP from Hamilton Mountain, Brian Charlton, led the charge. At that time, they were being written off as sort of, "Come on now, you're not thinking about the economics." They made the argument that this land is critically important for future citizens to enjoy all the city has to offer. They were the ones who discovered the land was toxic. Suddenly industry didn't want it and the only reason we have the waterfront we have is because the NDP government came along and provided the \$10 million to clean up the land. That triggered millions of dollars of investment and enthusiasm in our community unlike any other single project.

I compliment him on his remarks. He's dead on this evening.

Mr McDonald: I enjoyed hearing the member from Thunder Bay-Superior North talking about how great northern Ontario is. I come from the riding of Nipissing that extends from Trout Creek up to North Bay and over to Mattawa, and we live between two lakes. One is Lake Nipissing and the other is Trout Lake. I can tell you that there should be a motion on the floor to make Lake Nipissing the sixth Great Lake of Ontario.

I listened to the member from Kingston and the Islands. He speaks of co-operation and about maybe not taking credit. Every time they stand up, we hear, "We support this, but." Great things do happen when nobody tries to take credit. When you see all three levels of government standing together for the betterment of Ontario, for the betterment of Toronto, I don't see anyone trying to take credit. I see everyone trying to do the right thing, and doing the right thing is more important than trying to get credit for situations that help the people of Ontario.

I'm proud to stand up and say that this is a good bill. This is good for all Ontarians. This is a bill that needs all-party support. In the end, you're right, nobody's going to remember who led this charge or who's taking credit for this. All they're going to know is a good thing happened when all three levels of government came together to make this a reality.

I think back to the city of North Bay going through the same challenges, and I hope all three levels of government will come to the aid of the city of North Bay and the district of Nipissing to help them with their waterfront, to bring prosperity, growth and economic development to northern Ontario.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): Pursuant to standing order 37, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made. The member for Hamilton East has given notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given on Monday by the Minister of the Environment. The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter and the minister, or his parliamentary assistant, has up to five minutes to reply.

HAZARDOUS WASTE

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): I rise here today as a result of a question I asked the Minister of the Environment last Thursday regarding a very serious issue, an issue that affects not only the people of my riding where the incinerator SWARU is operating, but also affects the good people of Glanbrook in the riding of Stoney Creek represented by the Minister of Labour.

Between 1995 and 2000, thousands of tonnes of hazardous waste material from the SWARU incinerator were dumped in the landfill site in Glanbrook. The government let this go on unchecked for a five-year

period. They only became aware of it in October 2000 because the new company that was running the incinerator came forward with these concerns. The ministry then launched an 18-month investigation that did not result in any charges being laid.

1800

This matter was then tossed over to the police for review. The police reviewed the file. Here's what the police said. Sergeant Mark Simchison who was in charge of the review said, referring to the Ministry of Environment, "Their decision not to lay charges due to insufficient evidence was in my mind quite questionable. They left a lot of questions unanswered and it was clear that a lot of investigative ground still needed to be covered—investigative ground that would best be covered by the MOE itself under its own provincial regulatory authority. In fact, this was not done."

He went on to say, "Throughout the period from 1994 to 2000, the entire fly ash analysis and dumping operation went unchecked by ministry abatement staff. That should not have happened and I don't know why that happened. I don't perceive the police to be an accountability mechanism for another body whose own practices fail to meet their own internal standards."

The Ministry of the Environment responded by saying it thought it had done a good job on this. Spokesman Terry O'Neill from the enforcements branch said, "I believe it was thorough, I believe it got to the point and I believe it's answered the questions."

O'Neill went on to say that the government has no intention of re-opening the investigation, primarily because the ministry admits the statute of limitations for laying charges is now up.

These are some of the most stunning indictments we have heard in this Legislature in the past seven years about the role of a ministry agency in carrying out an investigation. This is an experienced fraud investigator with the Hamilton Police Service, a well-respected police officer, who has made these comments.

When I asked the question, the Minister said there would still be the possibility of a police investigation. He said it is up to the police to decide whether to proceed with a criminal investigation. Well, the reality is the police reviewed the file. They decided there were no grounds to lay charges. They have now returned the file to the city of Hamilton. The same answer will come back. There will not be a police investigation into this.

The minister committed to an internal review last week. The reality is an internal review is not good enough. We know they can't lay charges now. We know the police have said there's no ground for a criminal investigation, but we know there was a massive screw-up by the Ministry of the Environment in allowing five years of unchecked hazardous waste to go into a landfill site in Glanbrook, potentially harming and affecting the people in that neighbourhood. The Ministry went for five years without once checking, without once investigating. It is unheard of that this would happen in Ontario, but it has

happened under this minister, under his watch, under his predecessors.

The reality is that the ministry was aware of this. I sent a letter to Minister Newman in October 2000. He ignored it. This particular minister here denied my request to the Environmental Commissioner for a review of this matter as late as a month ago.

My question I guess is, why is the government afraid to order an independent investigation into the mishandling of this file? We don't need an internal review. We don't need Chris Stockwell's lackeys covering up for his incompetence.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): Oh, I have no lackey.

Mr Agostino: The reality is—he can take all the shots he wants—that they have put the people of Glanbrook in jeopardy and they don't care. They have hung out their Minister of Labour, Brad Clark, who has to answer questions from his constituents about why this government, this minister, won't launch an investigation. They have totally abandoned any sense of responsibility in a very serious matter.

The government and the minister may think it's a joke. They'll get up and make some comments to be humorous and to deflect. The reality is you can't deflect the responsibility. It was a massive mishandling of this file by the Ministry of the Environment. That has been admitted. I'll take the credibility of the police officer investigating this over this minister, or his staff, any day.

We're not going to give up. This minister can give up on the people of Stoney Creek and Glanbrook. He can hang his Minister of Labour out to dry with his constituents, but I'm going to continue fighting for the good people of Stoney Creek to get this case resolved.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I am happy to see that the member—I read it in the local paper—has got over this dial-a-quote stuff and he's not going to treat every issue the same way. It's a serious matter and we need to deal with it very seriously and not respond by making allegations of lackeys of ministers and personal comments like that. I'm glad you've gotten over that. In the Hamilton Spectator, you told them on April 12, 2002, that you got over it. You don't want to be like a monkey with a shotgun any more. It seems the only thing missing today is the shotgun.

Let's deal with the reality, the facts of the case. An internal review of the investigation is underway by the ministry. The director of the investigations and enforcement branch will be reviewing the investigator's files. The legal services branch of the ministry will also be reviewing the investigator's files, and we wanted to ensure that the report, the evidence and conclusions were gathered and documented in an appropriate and timely manner consistent with other investigations. After the investigations and enforcement branch has reviewed their findings, they will be reporting back to me, as minister.

The ministry did not lay charges due to the lack of evidence to substantiate charges that hazardous waste had been dumped at the Glanbrook landfill site. You know

that. The period in question was between 1994 and 1997. SWARU had a process in place to stabilize the fly ash from the incinerator. You knew that too. The process made the fly ash non-hazardous so it couldn't be deposited in the Glanbrook site. You knew that too. The ministry did a routine inspection in 1999 at SWARU to assist in addressing odour and particulate complaints. The city corrected the problem. I think you were there, weren't you, in that period?

Mr Agostino: No. I was here.

Hon Mr Stockwell: You were around in 1994.

The ministry began the review in July 2000. Upon inspection by the ministry, it became evident that potentially hazardous ash from the incinerator smokestack had been dumped in a non-hazardous landfill site—potential—without being adequately processed. We admitted to that. Yes, we've got to look into this. It's a potential.

We brought these concerns to the city immediately and then the ministry also recommended an investigation. This went to the investigations and enforcement branch. You knew that too.

The site operator initiated its own investigation as well. While the investigation was taking place, a comprehensive review by the ministry requested under the EBR, continued. The review involved testing fly ash, ensuring the stabilization process was effective and leachate monitoring at the Glanbrook landfill site. There was no evidence, I repeat, no evidence of any human health or environmental impact. You knew that too. It also indicated there was no hazardous waste present. You knew that too.

The review, which lasted one full year, did indicate a need to update and strengthen the certificates of approval, address odour concerns, particulate, stack concentration limits and more frequent monitoring and testing of the site. The issuing of an amended C of A is imminent. It was posted on the EBR for the 30-day period which ended August 21, 2002, and the member Dominic Agostino knew that as well.

The Environmental Commissioner commented on this. He said: "Depending on what kinds of changes are eventually made of Cs of A for SWARU, the result of this EBR review will be a modest environmental success story. The ministry, for its part, made a good decision in agreeing to carry out a review under the EBR. MOE staff completed a thorough review of SWARU operations, and should be commended for their detailed recommendation to strengthen the C of A for the incinerator." That's the Environmental Commissioner suggesting that. You knew that too.

Mr Agostino: You're on the wrong briefing note, Chris. Turn the page.

Hon Mr Stockwell: You know why he says it's the wrong briefing note? Because he knows this. He doesn't like the facts. He wants to stand up like that monkey with a shotgun, make a whole pile of allegations that he knows aren't true, and then spear-monger in the community. But he knows this.

The investigation into whether or not hazardous waste had been dumped at Glanbrook between 1994 and 1997 took two years to complete. You knew that. Testing at Glanbrook indicated that there was no evidence of hazardous material. You knew that. This meant that the investigator had to rely on witnesses—eye witnesses—present at the site during this period. The investigator concluded that there was insufficient evidence to lay charges, as testing indicated there was no hazardous material and no off-site human health or environment risks. Update: listen, Dominic, I don't want you to go back to Hamilton and make these allegations. It's very important you listen.

We are currently amending the C of A to strengthen it and make it more enforceable. An amended C of A is expected very soon. SWARU is going above and beyond

what the current C of A says and is testing their fly ash daily and analyzing it weekly. Nothing is deposited in the Glanbrook site until it is confirmed as non-hazardous. Ongoing monitoring of the site by the city and ministry officials continues to take place. Each load of ashes that is put into the site is precisely identified so we know exactly where it is for any future reference.

Don't go home and say you don't know this, Dominic. You know it. You sat here. Don't go home and tell them you don't know that.

The Acting Speaker: There being no further matter to debate, I deem the motion to adjourn to be carried. This House stands adjourned until 6:45 of the clock.

The House adjourned at 1810.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon / L'hon James K. Bartleman
Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Gary Carr
Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers
Clerk Assistant / Greffière adjointe: Deborah Deller
Clerks at the Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Algoma-Manitoulin	Brown, Michael A. (L)	Guelph-Wellington	Elliott, Hon / L'hon Brenda (PC) Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services / ministre des Services à la collectivité, à la famille et à l'enfance
Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot	McMeekin, Ted (L)		
Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford	Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)		
Beaches-East York	Prue, Michael (ND)		
Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale	Gill, Raminder (PC)	Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant	Barrett, Toby (PC)
Brampton Centre / -Centre	Spina, Joseph (PC)	Haliburton-Victoria-Brock	Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC) Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Brampton West-Mississauga / Brampton-Ouest-Mississauga	Clement, Hon / L'hon Tony (PC) Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée	Halton	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)
Brant	Levac, Dave (L)	Hamilton East / -Est	Agostino, Dominic (L)
Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Hamilton Mountain	Bountrogianni, Marie (L)
Burlington	Jackson, Hon / L'hon Cameron (PC) Minister of Tourism and Recreation / ministre du Tourisme et des Loisirs	Hamilton West / -Ouest	Christopherson, David (ND)
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington	Dombrowsky, Leona (L)
Chatham-Kent Essex	Hoy, Pat (L)	Huron-Bruce	Johns, Hon / L'hon Helen (PC) Minister of Agriculture and Food / ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation
Davenport	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Kenora-Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Don Valley East / -Est	Caplan, David (L)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	Gerretsen, John (L)
Don Valley West / -Ouest	Turnbull, Hon / L'hon David (PC) Associate Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation / ministre associé de l'Entreprise, des Débouchés et de l'Innovation	Kitchener Centre / -Centre	Wettlaufer, Wayne (PC)
Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey	Eves, Hon / L'hon Ernie (PC) Premier and President of the Executive Council, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif, ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales	Kitchener-Waterloo	Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth (PC) Deputy Premier, Minister of Education / vice-première ministre, ministre de l'Éducation
Durham	O'Toole, John R. (PC)	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	Beaubien, Marcel (PC)
Eglinton-Lawrence	Colle, Mike (L)	Lanark-Carleton	Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W. (PC) Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Elgin-Middlesex-London	Peters, Steve (L)	Leeds-Grenville	Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W. (PC) Minister of Public Safety and Security / ministre de la Sécurité et de la Sécurité publique
Erie-Lincoln	Hudak, Hon / L'hon Tim (PC) Minister of Consumer and Business Services / ministre des Services aux consommateurs et aux entreprises	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne (PC) Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Essex	Crozier, Bruce (L)	London West / -Ouest	Wood, Bob (PC)
Etobicoke Centre / -Centre	Stockwell, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC) Minister of the Environment, government House leader / ministre de l'Environnement, leader parlementaire du gouvernement	London-Fanshawe	Mazzilli, Frank (PC)
Etobicoke North / -Nord	Hastings, John (PC)	Markham	Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H. (PC) Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Culture / président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement, ministre de la Culture
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Kells, Morley (PC)	Mississauga Centre / -Centre	Sampson, Rob (PC)
Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)		

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Mississauga East / -Est	DeFaria, Hon / L'hon Carl (PC) Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors / ministre des Affaires civiques, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées	Scarborough Southwest / -Sud-Ouest	Newman, Hon / L'hon Dan (PC) Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre associé de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mississauga South / -Sud	Marland, Margaret (PC)	Scarborough-Agincourt	Phillips, Gerry (L)
Mississauga West / -Ouest	Snobelen, John (PC)	Scarborough-Rouge River	Curling, Alvin (L)
Nepean-Carleton	Baird, Hon / L'hon John R. (PC) Minister of Energy, Minister responsible for francophone affairs, deputy House leader / ministre de l'Énergie, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones, leader parlementaire adjoint	Simcoe North / -Nord	Dunlop, Garfield (PC)
Niagara Centre / -Centre	Kormos, Peter (ND)	Simcoe-Grey	Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC) Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Niagara Falls	Maves, Bart (PC)	St Catharines	Bradley, James J. (L)
Nickel Belt	Martel, Shelley (ND)	St Paul's	Bryant, Michael (L)
Nipissing	McDonald, AL (PC)	Stoney Creek	Clark, Hon / L'hon Brad (PC) Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
Northumberland	Galt, Hon / L'hon Doug (PC) Minister without Portfolio, chief government whip / Ministre sans portefeuille, whip en chef du gouvernement	Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh	Cleary, John C. (L)
Oak Ridges	Klees, Frank (PC)	Sudbury	Bartolucci, Rick (L)
Oakville	Carr, Hon / L'hon Gary (PC) Speaker / Président	Thornhill	Molinari, Hon / L'hon Tina R. (PC) Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre associée des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Oshawa	Ouellette, Hon / L'hon Jerry J. (PC) Minister of Natural Resources / ministre des Richesses naturelles	Thunder Bay-Atikokan	McLeod, Lyn (L)
Ottawa Centre / -Centre	Patten, Richard (L)	Thunder Bay-Superior North / -Nord	Gravelle, Michael (L)
Ottawa-Orléans	Coburn, Hon / L'hon Brian (PC) Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre associé des Affaires municipales et du Logement	Timiskaming-Cochrane	Ramsay, David (L)
Ottawa South / -Sud	McGuinty, Dalton (L) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition	Timmins-James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	Bisson, Gilles (ND)
Ottawa West-Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest-Nepean	Guzzo, Garry J. (PC)	Toronto Centre-Rosedale / Toronto-Centre-Rosedale	Smitherman, George (L)
Ottawa-Vanier	Boyer, Claudette (Ind)	Toronto-Danforth	Churley, Marilyn (ND)
Oxford	Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Trinity-Spadina	Marchese, Rosario (ND)
Parkdale-High Park	Kennedy, Gerard (L)	Vaughan-King-Aurora	Sorbara, Greg (L)
Parry Sound-Muskoka	Miller, Norm (PC)	Waterloo-Wellington	Arnott, Ted (PC)
Perth-Middlesex	Johnson, Bert (PC)	Whitby-Ajax	Flaherty, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC) Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation / ministre de l'Entreprise, des Débouchés et de l'Innovation
Peterborough	Stewart, R. Gary (PC)	Willowdale	Young, Hon / L'hon David (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge	Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet (PC) Minister of Finance / ministre des Finances	Windsor West / -Ouest	Pupatello, Sandra (L)
Prince Edward-Hastings	Parsons, Ernie (L)	Windsor-St Clair	Duncan, Dwight (L)
Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke	Conway, Sean G. (L)	York Centre / -Centre	Kwinter, Monte (L)
Sarnia-Lambton	Di Cocco, Caroline (L)	York North / -Nord	Munro, Julia (PC)
Sault Ste Marie	Martin, Tony (ND)	York South-Weston / York-Sud-Weston	Cordiano, Joseph (L)
Scarborough Centre / -Centre	Mushinski, Marilyn (PC)	York West / -Ouest	Sergio, Mario (L)
Scarborough East / -Est	Gilchrist, Steve (PC)		

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

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

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Estimates / Budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Gerard Kennedy
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Alvin Curling
Gilles Bisson, Ted Chudleigh, Alvin Curling,
Gerard Kennedy, Frank Mazzilli, Norm Miller,
John R. O'Toole, Steve Peters
Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

**Finance and economic affairs /
Finances et affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Marcel Beaubien
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Vacant
Ted Arnott, Marcel Beaubien,
David Christopherson, Monte Kwinter,
John O'Toole, Gerry Phillips,
Rob Sampson, Joseph Spina
Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

General government / Affaires gouvernementales

Chair / Président: Steve Gilchrist
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Norm Miller
Marilyn Churley, Mike Colle,
Garfield Dunlop, Steve Gilchrist, Frank Klees, Dave Levac,
Norm Miller, R. Gary Stewart
Clerk / Greffière: Anne Stokes

Government agencies / Organismes gouvernementaux

Chair / Président: James J. Bradley
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Michael Gravelle
James J. Bradley, Leona Dombrowsky, Michael Gravelle,
Bert Johnson, Tony Martin, Frank Mazzilli,
Wayne Wettlaufer, Bob Wood
Clerk / Greffière: Anne Stokes

Justice and Social Policy / Justice et affaires sociales

Chair / Présidente: Toby Barrett
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: AL McDonald
Toby Barrett, Marcel Beaubien, Michael Bryant,
Garry J. Guzzo, Ernie Hardeman,
Peter Kormos, AL McDonald, Lyn McLeod
Clerk / Greffier: Tom Prins

Legislative Assembly / Assemblée législative

Chair / Présidente: Margaret Marland
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Julia Munro
Caroline Di Cocco, Jean-Marc Lalonde,
Bart Maves, Margaret Marland,
Julia Munro, Marilyn Mushinski,
Michael Prue, Joseph N. Tascona
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

Public accounts / Comptes publics

Chair / Président: John Gerretsen
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Bruce Crozier
Bruce Crozier, John Gerretsen,
Steve Gilchrist, Raminder Gill,
John Hastings, Shelley Martel,
AL McDonald, Richard Patten,
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

**Regulations and private bills /
Règlements et projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Rosario Marchese
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Garfield Dunlop
Gilles Bisson, Claudette Boyer, Garfield Dunlop,
Raminder Gill, Pat Hoy, Morley Kells, Rosario Marchese, Ted
McMeekin, Bill Murdoch, Wayne Wettlaufer
Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

CONTENTS

Tuesday 1 October 2002

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Mubarak Ahmad Ansari	
Mr Sergio	1699
Community leaders in Nipissing	
Mr McDonald	1699
Hydro rates	
Mr Lalonde	1699
Huron-Perth Centre for Children and Youth	
Mr Johnson	1700
Diagnostic services	
Mrs Pupatello	1700
Education funding	
Mr Marchese	1700
Ina Trolove	
Mr Miller	1701
Chinese community	
Mr Ruprecht	1701
Orono Chili Cook-Off	
Mr O'Toole	1701

FIRST READINGS

Ontario Water Resources Amendment Act, 2002, Bill 183, Mrs Marland	
Agreed to	1702
Mrs Marland	1702

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

Environmental protection	
Mr Baird	1702
Mr Stockwell	1702
Mr Bradley	1704
Mr Bryant	1704
Ms Churley	1704
Senior citizens	
Mr DeFaria	1703
Ms Martel	1705

ORAL QUESTIONS

MFP Financial Services	
Mr Duncan	1707
Mr Tsubouchi	1707
School closures	
Mr McMeekin	1708
Mrs Witmer	1708, 1709
Mr Agostino	1709
Mrs Bountrogianni	1709
Hydro dam safety	
Mr Hampton	1709
Mr Baird	1709

Domestic violence

Mr Hampton	1710
Mr Young	1710
Ms Churley	1710

Slot machines

Mr Kwinter	1711
Mr Young	1711

Research and development

Ms Mushinski	1711
Mr Turnbull	1711

Hydro rates

Mr Bryant	1712
Mr Baird	1712

Emergency response teams

Mr O'Toole	1712
Mr Runciman	1712

Academic testing

Mr Marchese	1713
Mrs Witmer	1713

Birth certificates

Mr Crozier	1714
Mr Hudak	1714

City of Toronto

Mr Gilchrist	1714
Mrs Ecker	1714

Special education

Mr Kennedy	1715
Mrs Witmer	1715

Food safety

Mr Johnson	1715
Mrs Johns	1715

Toronto Islands community

Mr Marchese	1716
Mr Hodgson	1716

PETITIONS

Competitive electricity market

Mr Bradley	1716
------------------	------

Long-term care

Ms Martel	1717
Mr Gerretsen	1717
Mr Duncan	1718

Special education funding

Mrs Pupatello	1717
---------------------	------

Natural gas rates

Mr Gravelle	1718, 1719
Mr Duncan	1718

Children's mental health services

Mr Gravelle	1718
-------------------	------

Abortion

Mr Martiniuk	1719
--------------------	------

Ontario disability support program

Mr Gravelle	1719
-------------------	------

SECOND READINGS

Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation Act, 2002, Bill 151,

Mrs Ecker

Mr Prue

1720, 1724

Mr Newman

1722

Mr Bradley

1723

Mr Christopherson

1723, 1726,

1730, 1735, 1737

Ms Mushinski

1723, 1731

Mrs Munro

1724, 1727

Mr Gerretsen

1726, 1731, 1736

Mr McDonald

1727, 1738

Mr Curling

1727, 1728, 1731

Mr Gilchrist

1730, 1732, 1735, 1736

Mr Gravelle

1734

Mr Stockwell

1735

Debate deemed adjourned

1738

OTHER BUSINESS

Visitors

The Speaker

1701

Child protection

Mrs Elliott

1705

Mrs Dombrowsky

1706

Mr Martin

1706

Mr Kormos

1707

Notice of dissatisfaction

The Speaker

1716

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

Hazardous waste

Mr Agostino

1738

Mr Stockwell

1739

TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Mardi 1^{er} octobre 2002

PREMIÈRE LECTURE

**Loi de 2002 modifiant la Loi
sur les ressources en eau
de l'Ontario, projet de loi 183,
M^{me} Marland**

Adoptée

1702

DEUXIÈME LECTURE

**Loi de 2002 sur la Société de
revitalisation du secteur
riverain de Toronto,
projet de loi 151, M^{me} Ecker**

Débat présumé ajourné

1738