



No. 10A

N° 10A

ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly
of Ontario

First Session, 38th Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario

Première session, 38^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Thursday 4 December 2003

Jeudi 4 décembre 2003

Speaker
Honourable Alvin Curling

Président
L'honorable Alvin Curling

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

Hansard on the Internet

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

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

Index inquiries

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

Copies of Hansard

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

Le Journal des débats sur Internet

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

Renseignements sur l'index

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

Exemplaires du Journal

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



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 4 December 2003

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 4 décembre 2003

*The House met at 1000.
Prayers.*

**PRIVATE MEMBERS'
PUBLIC BUSINESS**

ANAPHYLACTIC STUDENTS
PROTECTION ACT, 2003
LOI DE 2003 SUR LA PROTECTION
DES ÉLÈVES ANAPHYLACTIQUES

Mr Levac moved second reading of the following bill:
Bill 3, An Act to protect anaphylactic students / Projet
de loi 3, Loi visant à protéger les élèves anaphylactiques.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Bruce Crozier): Mr Levac has moved second reading of Bill 3.

Mr Dave Levac (Brant): Thank you, Speaker. I deeply appreciate the opportunity to address the House today, but before I move into the actual content of the bill, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the many people who have made contributions, particularly my previous assistant, Jane Almeida; today's assistants, Melanie Francis, Stephanie Radcliffe; and Mr Bill Chopp, the superintendent of education in the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board for his input; and to the many stakeholders, in particular NASK, the Niagara Anaphylaxis Support and Knowledge group struck out of the Niagara region, which works very diligently, soon to arrive. I see they're slowly coming in. Cindy Paskey, the president of NASK, and Renee Backshall and Roland Seehagel will be joining us shortly. I welcome them in the gallery today, and I thank them very much for being here, for their support.

I think it's important for us to point out some issues that have arisen in the not very distant past, just a little while ago. We have some situations that bring home why this bill is important. I want to start from the onset. This situation, anaphylaxis—that's the response—kills. We've had examples of young children dying as a result of anaphylactic shock.

Thanks to the work of NASK and many other people, we have come to realize that this extreme measure of allergic reaction is deadly, so in our platform we will provide public schools with guidelines on how to treat a child in anaphylactic shock due to these extreme allergies. Without immediate attention, severely allergic children can die from anaphylactic shock. To protect

children with life-threatening allergies, we will require every school to develop an anaphylactic plan based on province-wide standards.

Where those standards come from will be indeed in consultation. We need to get this bill into committee so that all the stakeholders have an opportunity to give input into their concerns, their issues, and an issue I want to bring to the attention of the House immediately is one of privacy and legal issues. I will not propose to you that every single bill in this House is perfect, and I stand before you asking the House to ensure that our stakeholders on this issue have input, including NASK. They are quite aware of the bill, they support the bill, but there are some issues that need to be addressed.

I want to walk over some general facts before we get into the actual detail of the bill. Some 2% to 5% of all Canadians, approximately 600,000 people, live with the risk of anaphylactic shock or reaction. More than 50% of us know someone, somewhere, with a life-threatening allergy. Those allergies can come under the guise of food and man-made products. Quite frankly, we all know somebody who has heard that before. They're allergic to peanuts; they're allergic to peanut oil; they're allergic to nuts; they're allergic to grass. They're allergic to many things. But what I want to make sure that everyone understands is that this is not a bill to take care of allergies; this is a bill to take care of anaphylaxis. I have a colleague who will be speaking to the medical issues involved around this. We're sorely behind when it comes to the protection of those people who can die in less than two minutes if we do not take care of this issue. We do know that people can die within minutes if not treated properly, and minutes translate into seconds to save a life. So I'm asking the House to get involved.

Right now, as it stands, the Education Act is silent on this issue, silent on this specific issue. It's a life-and-death issue, and the Education Act is actually silent. What it does say is that principals are responsible for the health, security and safety of the students in the schools. There are some guidelines in existence.

I would suggest that a vast majority of our school boards have taken this issue seriously. They do have policies; they do have procedures in place, the vast majority. However, what we do know is that we do not have records of the consistency across the province on how this is dealt with. We do not have that.

Food is the most common cause for anaphylaxis, but reactions can also be caused by bee stings, insect stings, medicine, latex and, believe it or not, exercise in some cases because of the reaction in the body. We're learning

more and more about this response as we move forward, but the one response that I have been passionate about is the consistency of standards, either through the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health—whatever body decides that we need to standardize the response for the sake of those children, we need to get those ministries involved to set that standard so that no matter where you come from in this province—Moose Factory, Windsor, Brantford, Simcoe, Mississauga—you know that the children in our schools have a plan, it's mandatory and it's consistent and knowledgeable. It's based on three pillars.

The first pillar is education. Believe it or not, we have people in our schools who don't know what anaphylaxis is. We need to show them how to respond. We need to know proactive stances of how to make them less likely to be exposed to anaphylactic response. That's important; something as simple as taking a garbage pail and not letting it sit in front of the door, where kids line up to go in and out of school; simply taking that garbage pail and moving it somewhere else so the bees go there instead of in front, where the kids are.

The second pillar is response, medical information; knowing that, in the responsibility of our parents to work with our schools to ensure that we know who has this response. We will have to work with the Attorney General's office to ensure that our integrity is held in terms of law. We will have to work with the privacy commissioner. We will have to work with many stakeholders to ensure that our students are cared for.

1010

This is not about party politics; this is not about this place; this is not a territorial or a geographic domain. A bee doesn't know where a border is. This is not about organizations and stakeholders, about principals councils, the teachers groups, the school boards, the parent groups, the health officials, the legal field; this is about pulling all those stakeholders together and saving lives.

We've got examples. Right now, they're dealing with a sample, in this province, of a seven-year-old girl who was suspended from school because she had an anaphylactic response. Is that not backwards?

We need to spend our time, our energy, our effort, in saving the lives of children who, through no fault of their own, are faced with life-threatening situations. There has been great work done in our province from stakeholders, from groups, from organizations, from concerned parents, who need to be able to get in the door and work with our schools, our school boards and ensure that those children are protected and not stigmatized through no fault of their own.

I personally have had to deal with this issue as a principal over a 24-year education career. I've had to face this five times. One time was critical. We had a plan in place and we did what we were supposed to do, but I dare say that's not the case across the province. My support is not based simply on a book knowledge; my support for this bill—and I hope each and every one of our members will be able to say this too—is based on the

fact we need to put things in place to protect the lives of our children, and anyone else for that matter.

I will explain to the House that I want this to go to committee, because there are some concerns about the bill. I want the stakeholders to step forward. I want the commission, the legals, everybody, to work on this bill to make it work. I'd rather make it work right the first time than to have anyone step into a school and say, "You can't come to school because you've got a medical condition," or worry about liability issues, lawsuits and work.

The reality is a simple one, a very simple one. This type of legislation is going to lead the nation, clearly, that we have identified a problem, we are going to fix the problem and we are going to assure those children and their parents that they can go to school and be protected to the best we can do. I'm asking for support of this bill in this House.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford): I'm very pleased to join in the debate this morning with respect to this private member's bill from the member from Brant. Certainly I can relate to the situation we're dealing with here in terms of legislation, which is Bill 3, having children in the school system and having—probably in the last couple of weeks—received a letter from the school indicating that there is a child with that type of disability and not to have your child bring any peanuts or whatever in their lunch bucket.

I think the boards—at least my board; I'm dealing with the boards within my riding—do have a policy with respect to dealing with this particular issue. It's an important issue. But, I know from my personal knowledge that that is something that's been enforced within the schools. I think perhaps the member, in his private member's bill, is trying to establish a little bit clearer guidelines, with respect to how to deal with that.

It does indicate that this was a part of the election platform of the governing party. I have to commend the member for pushing this forth, but it's certainly not the government that is doing this. This is a private member's bill. It would have been a lot stronger, I would submit, having done private members' business, if this would have been a ministry bill put through by the Ministry of Education as part of the government initiative in this area. The fact that it's not does suggest that the member is pushing this in his own way to bring it to the attention of his own government because they're not driving it. Everybody who has been here for a while knows that in private members' business, you can push your bill to the point of having committee hearings and it may just die there because it doesn't have the backing of the government. There's nothing here that indicates that this has the backing of the government other than it being a promise that they've put forth in their platform.

I think we have to look at it in that particular vein. If the member, who I believe is the government whip, has got the power to make sure that the government lives up to this commitment, I commend him for that. But the fact

of the matter is and the reality of the matter is that this not a government bill; it is a private member's bill that could face the order paper that we do every time with respect to private members' bills, and they don't get into law.

As everybody knows the process, there's a first reading, a second reading if the House decides, and the House will decide today whether there are going to be public hearings. After the public hearings, we come back to the House for third reading. If it receives third reading, then it will go to the Lieutenant-Governor for his consent. That's the process. Certainly that's what we're going to have to deal with today as we go through this.

In principle, I certainly support what the member from Brant is trying to accomplish in his own individual way as opposed to the government living up to their commitment, which they said they would do during the election. Here we have a private member bringing forth a bill to bring the government in accordance with their promises to live up to what they said during the campaign. I guess time will tell whether this, in fact, will become law.

I will say that there are some interesting legal issues here. I think the member has put it forth very correctly with respect to issues facing the Attorney General and the Privacy Commissioner. I think one of the main ones here that catches my eye is that in his backgrounder he indicates getting signed consent for school staff to supervise and/or administer the use of physician-prescribed medication for suspected anaphylactic reactions. That in itself will be a challenge because, first of all, you're going to have to get the consent of the parent to allow that to happen to their child. Secondly, you're going to have to get the consent and willingness of the individual from the school board to actually do that, and then the caveat that comes on with it is that there be no action for damages resulting from the administration being permitted.

That's obviously going to catch the eye of any parent with respect to having their child being administered drugs prescribed by a doctor by an individual who does not have that professional capability and training with respect to how to use that. I think what we're talking about here are very extreme measures where this could be used. Then there's a further caveat with respect to there being no action for damages resulting from the administration being permitted "unless the damages were the result of gross negligence." That is a wide-open term with respect to that. If I was a school board individual being given that particular coverage, I would be very hesitant, very reluctant with respect to administering a medication. I'm not a doctor; they're not doctors. They can be trained to a certain degree, but "the damages were the result of gross negligence"—"gross negligence," when you're dealing with someone who is a layperson, who is not a doctor, that's going to be a very wide term and it's going to be a very contentious term with respect to what gross negligence would be. If you're faced with the situation where you know the child has that type of reaction, you've got a situation where you believe from

whatever training you have received that the child is in discomfort, the question then becomes: How do you extend that to say that the child is at risk? Who are you as a layperson to make that decision? That's going to be a problematic situation.

1020

I give credit to the member for Brant, because he's a straight speaker and I think his intent is certainly there. He recognizes that's going to be an issue. It's going to be an issue. It's something that we can maybe work out, but that's sort of standard language that you see with respect to non-profit agencies that deal with people who have developmental disabilities, are developmentally challenged. There is always that caveat. There is also that qualified right with respect to, when you do provide that particular treatment, you're not going to be sued. That's what is important.

I think what the member is trying to accomplish here is that we need provincial standards; we need provincial guidelines. We want to make sure everybody is on board. That's right, because this is a serious situation. I can tell you, from my own riding, the school boards that are there are doing that.

Then you take it to the next step, in terms of how we help that child in a situation where you can't get them to the hospital and you can't get the ambulance there, that's going to be a tricky situation, and the member's correct when he states that, in terms of how we're going to have to deal with that.

He says that the plan should ensure that school-teachers, staff and appropriate volunteers are trained to recognize the signs and symptoms of a reaction, and to fulfill emergency procedures that are specified. That's going to be the challenge. Certainly people are trained to deal with CPR and to deal with the obvious situation. That's the kind of training that I guess they're going to have to be able to administer in a situation where they're going to be able to save a life. That's what we're talking about here: saving a life. That's training that will have to be provided to be able to deal with that, like in CPR, where there is that training. It's a last resort. It's a situation where you're trying to keep the individual in a state where they're safe and protected until the professionals get there. I think that's where you're going to have to deal with this.

The member states in his backgrounder that in the instance of "an emergency ... staff would be permitted to administer medication without consent." That's going to be a problem. Any parent who has their child with that situation is going to raise the red flag and say, "Wait a second, you're not going to administer anything to my child without my consent." I think that's where there's going to be a problem. Because, as a parent, I'll be quite frank with you, I would never support that—never.

It goes on to say, "No action for damages resulting from administering medication would be permitted unless the damages were the result of gross negligence." I don't care what happened there. Bottom line is, they're going to require parental consent to deal with that child.

If you think you're going to get a piece of legislation through here without parental consent to deal with a child who has a disability, I think you're dreaming.

I could support this bill in principle, but there are going to have to be changes with respect to those consent provisions before I'm ever going to support something like this, because parental consent is going to be the key to this, and also consent and willingness from the school board officials who are being asked to go into an emergency situation.

I thank you, Mr Speaker, for the time to speak on this. I commend the member for Brant for at least in principle bringing forth something that his own government hasn't decided to bring forth at this time.

Mrs Donna H. Cansfield (Etobicoke Centre): I'm delighted to be able to stand up in support of the anaphylactic bill. I also would like to thank my colleague from Brant for pushing it. It's a good idea, regardless of whether it comes from a private member or from the government as a whole.

I believe that as a parent myself, if it came to life or death—guess what, I'd sign the consent form, because there is no alternative to death. This is a situation that is extraordinarily difficult for parents and for schools to resolve without some support.

There has been some work that has been done by Canadian school boards back in 1995, where they brought in the legal associations and the medical associations to fully look at this problem of anaphylactic shock in our schools.

There's no question that this is happening currently in some of the schools. The challenge, of course, is that it's hit and miss. It is not as thorough in some schools as it is in others. People also forget that within the Education Act there are two requirements: One is a safe environment for all children in order that they can in fact attend school; the other is that in a public school system, the school is open to all children, not just to some children, regardless of their disability. So I think that needs to be considered thoroughly when looking at this bill.

Also, in Ontario there is something called the Good Samaritan Act, which requires that you do not walk away from a situation in which somebody is endangered. You need to put all of this into context before you simply decide not to give support to this bill.

One of the greatest challenges we all have is that you can either have education or you can have ignorance. With ignorance, lack of education, our situations then put children in jeopardy. You need to be able to find processes, and ways and means to support them, in order that those processes can be put in place in a way that engages people so that they're educated, first of all, about what anaphylactic shock is, so they can understand just how serious it really is: that if a child has peanut butter in the lunchroom and forgets to wash their hands—and we all have children and know that doesn't happen after they use the facilities—and they go into a classroom, touch a desk and leave, and then a child with anaphylactic peanut shock touches that desk and then their mouth, they could

die. Some people cannot understand that happening. That's how serious this is, and yet they think that sounds impossible, just something that's not possible. It is possible. So our role is to enable that education process to happen in a way that not only engages the students in the particular student's classroom but also those parents and ultimately the school to understand the seriousness of anaphylactic shock and what we as a society can do to protect a child.

I can remember a particular instance when I was involved with this back in 1995. A parent phoned me, and we ended up on all the talk shows right across Canada. Her point was, "My child eats only peanut butter. I can send only peanut butter sandwiches to school." That was it. She wasn't moving from that position, even though in that school was a child who suffered from reaction to peanuts and would have gone into anaphylactic shock and it was as serious as death. Her position was, "Why should my child be jeopardized for this child?" My question back to her was, "Could you live with the death of the other child for the sake of your child?" Of course not.

How do we engage those people in that understanding? How do we provide the alternative: "Could you have the peanut butter and crackers after school to satisfy the need? What are the nutritional components of peanut butter that you could use as an alternative in school?"

We know if we teach the children, they teach their parents—happens all the time. So when you engage the children in a classroom to help and understand, then ultimately that's their peer and their friend, and they're not going to put them in jeopardy. So you can find ways and means, and that's what this bill can do. There are a number of processes out there that we can use; we don't have to reinvent the wheel. The legal aspects have been looked at thoroughly by the best legal minds in Canada. You have an Attorney General here who certainly can help the parents in Ontario. But better still, it enables and provides a framework for principals to work with in engaging that community in what this issue is and just how serious this issue is as well.

The consent form from every parent I've spoken with who has an anaphylactic child is not a problem. All they need to know is that they can send their child to school and that the child is safe; that in the event that something unforeseen occurs, there is a process in place whereby they can feel that their child will be either revived or put out of harm's way until 911 is called. My understanding as well is that even if you give an epi-pen, it's not as serious an issue as if you didn't give it when in fact the child was in anaphylactic shock. So it helps to build relationships in schools; it helps to put some stability school-to-school; and it can make a difference. I'm full-heartedly in support of this bill.

1030

Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant): I rise to also speak to Bill 3, the Act to protect anaphylactic students, introduced by my colleague from Brant. Part of our purpose is to enable people to better

understand the nature and scope of some of these allergies that people run into, not only in schools, but in restaurants, supermarkets and corner stores. People are at risk of a wide range of allergic symptoms ranging from a scratchy throat, to hives, swelling, nausea, shock and sometimes, sadly, even death.

This proposed legislation, as we know, makes reference to the need for training and emergency procedures in our schools and the need for the administration of drugs. I do agree with the administration of drugs by students in some cases—senior students—teachers or secretaries.

I suggest that this bill be amended. This bill should be broadened in scope to deal with other ailments. I'm thinking of epilepsy, for example, something my family knows about. When a child has an epileptic seizure, the symptoms can be alleviated by medication. In many schools, someone in a responsible position can administer medication for a child suffering from epilepsy.

We are focusing on allergies, and I'll focus on nut allergies. I picked up a tea biscuit in the cafeteria this morning and there was a sign above the display case, "These products may have come in contact with, or may contain, nuts." Prevention is key, and a sign like that is an excellent way to continue to keep the word out.

One of my colleagues, on staff, can tell us a bit about his 35 years of personal experience with a peanut allergy. There are two serious dangers for children or adults who have these kind of allergies: first of all, the wide range of foods and food products that may contain nuts, or traces of nuts; secondly, the equally wide range of reactions that can accompany the ingestion of these products by someone who is allergic.

I'll use a couple of examples from just chatting with my colleague. Several years ago he related, going out for dinner with family and friends—for the rest of us it's really not an issue—he has to study the menu. There's a myriad of specialty foods and treats that potentially have danger.

One evening he went out on a limb and ordered a new tofu dish to go with his usual chicken balls and rice. He ate some of the tofu and noticed the strange but familiar feeling of scratchy throat, this awkward feeling. He checked again with the staff, and it turned out the tofu had been cooked in peanut oil. He was fortunate—nausea, was sick for awhile, and it subsided.

Five years earlier, it was a different situation. At university he ordered mushroom soup, the soup of the day. He had the same kind of feelings: swelling in his throat; he lost his voice. He had to write a note to another student, and they got him into the emergency hospital. This is the kind of issue that an adult is dealing with.

Where are we left with very young children who are not in the home with their parents but in a school setting, as the member from Brant is trying to impress on us today? What happens when it is a child with an allergy and the child doesn't know enough to protect himself—especially in the face of so many tasty, sweet treats? Again, my colleague has a number of incidents that

occurred to him when he was much younger as well. I think the intent of this legislation is certainly worthy.

Mr Shafiq Qaadri (Etobicoke North): My honourable colleague the MPP from Brant, Mr Dave Levac, who has brought forth this bill, and my colleagues in the House, first of all I think it's a very important bill, not only to be proactive about the state of allergy readiness but also as a matter of education.

Speaker, with your permission, in order to contour my remarks, I'd like to offer some road signs, some guideposts to some of what I'm about to share with this chamber. I'd like to speak first of all under four or five broad headings: (1) the importance of this bill; (2) some commentary about anaphylaxis, and I speak not only as the representative of the great riding of Etobicoke North but also as a medical doctor; as well, some of the elements of this bill in terms of the avoidance of anaphylaxis and its treatment. But before I engage in those particular remarks I would, with your permission and indulgence, like to engage in a little bit of rebuttal to some of the earlier remarks.

First of all, with respect to the MPP for Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant, I believe his comments regarding the inclusion of epilepsy, while noble in intent, are probably really beyond the scope of what we're attempting to achieve here. I'd probably like to share some of the medical details with regard to the management, especially the acute emergency management, of epilepsy at a later date.

I'd also like to more aggressively deal with the comments from the MPP for Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford, attempting to, I think, with the tenor of his remarks, diminish the calibre of this private member's bill or the import in which the government holds it. I would like to state for the record that we have the full weight, support and imprimatur of the government of Ontario, and that is the new direction that our leader, the Premier of this province, has shared with all of his caucus members. Democracy has a new day and a new way—

Interjection.

Mr Qaadri: And I would like to say, with respect, particularly to you, Mr Baird, as you're cackling in the front row, that this is a new day in Ontario.

Secondly, this is especially important as, just to share some particular—

Mr John R. Baird (Nepean-Carleton): Who wrote this speech?

Mr Qaadri: This is coming from the heart, sir, in answer to your question of who wrote this.

Our Premier, for example, for this very specific reason, to illustrate the new day of democracy, has appointed every single member of our caucus to a cabinet committee. That's why we have perhaps the most boisterous caucus meetings in living memory, and whether we have responsibilities in this chamber, in committees or as parliamentary assistants, or to bring forth private members' bills, I would suggest to you that this is a great contradistinction to your own way of doing things.

To return to the bill, as I'm being directed by some of my colleagues, the importance is actually extreme. As a

doctor I can tell you, first of all, that “phylaxis” is the Greek word for “protection,” as in, for example, the word “prophylaxis.” “Anaphylaxis” means “without benefit of protection.” As a doctor I can tell you that these are in fact very serious, potentially life-threatening reactions.

As my honourable colleague MPP Dave Levac from Brant has highlighted, there are several hundred thousand Canadians who may be prone to developing anaphylactic, full-body reactions, whether they’re provoked by things like foods—whether it’s peanuts or peanut oils, shellfish or mushrooms—other things like insect stings or particular medications, and even, as he quite rightly pointed out, something as benign-sounding as exercise.

Again, as a physician, as someone who has dealt with anaphylaxis first hand on a regular basis in my practice and in emergency rooms and even, I would sadly say, in social settings, as has been rightly pointed out by this chamber, I can share with you that, whether it’s in, say, a restaurant or on a school field trip or in summer camps and even at swimming pools, with the chlorine exposure and so on, it affects multiple body systems; it affects particularly the respiratory tract, as well as the cardiovascular system. Basically, individuals may develop full-body hives, itching reactions and actually drop their blood pressure. So there are a number of issues that are really important with regard to this bill.

First of all, part of the intent is to educate the community that is associated with this bill, whether it’s the parents, the children themselves—the school community, broadly—to avoid unknown emergency situations. For example, the intention in this bill is to have individuals who may be prone to anaphylaxis actually wear MedicAlert bracelets, to also share with them beforehand that they may be prone to this so that all the various communities will understand what the various protocols are.

1040

Another thing that is brought up here is the idea of injectability. One of the things we doctors do is that we prescribe what we call epi-pens, or autoinjectors. It’s not as if the school coach or gym teacher is suddenly going to be injecting a syringe and drawing up a particular dosage at whim. These are self-administrable calibrated injections. That’s why I would like to support this bill and would strongly encourage all of us to. And to re-emphasize, it has the full weight and support of this government.

Hon James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism and Recreation): As I did previously in this House, I will be supporting the bill from Mr David Levac, the member for Brant, because I think it’s good public policy, it’s one that’s overdue, and it recognizes that this is a challenge that has to be met across Ontario and not simply something that has to come from the grassroots in each of the communities.

I want to quote from a letter to the editor from Cindy Paskey, the president of NASK in St Catharines. I think it best captures what this legislation is about and why it is in need of our support. It reads as follows:

“I am writing to let your readers know NASK (Niagara Anaphylaxis Support and Knowledge) is spearheading an Ontario-wide campaign supporting passage of Brant Liberal MPP Dave Levac’s private member’s bill”—and that was Bill 19 at that time—“An Act to Protect Anaphylactic Students.

“Anaphylaxis is an allergic reaction that can be extremely swift and even life-threatening. There is no clinical way to predict the progression and severity of a reaction. A mild reaction one time may be followed by a severe reaction the next time.

“Briefly, Bill 19 would set consistent, province-wide standards regarding anaphylaxis in Ontario public and separate schools.

“Key elements are prevention and emergency strategies, communication with the school community, training, and waiver of liability except for instances of gross negligence. All of these are good reasons for the legislation to be passed.

“Notwithstanding, NASK has been told the Conservative government supported a ‘grassroots approach to managing such issues.’

“I understand this to mean parents working with the principals and parent/student councils of their schools.

“The result is parents across the province ... duplicating each other’s efforts. Duplication wastes valuable time and resources.

“A more productive focus would be prevention and cure of this increasingly common health care concern among children. This focus will not happen as long as the parents of these children are spending their precious time and emotional energy trying to ensure the very life safety of their children while at school.

“It takes practice, experience and support from others to harness deep emotions and become effective at advocating for the safety of your child’s life. I speak from seven years’ experience living with our son’s life-threatening allergies to tree nuts and peanuts.”

Cindy Paskey is right. She puts the need for this particular piece of legislation better than I could possibly put it in this Legislature. I call upon all members of the Legislature to support this legislation and to ensure that it goes to committee and that it ultimately becomes the law of the province of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate? The member for Niagara Centre—

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): Thank you, kindly, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: —has up to five minutes.

Mr Kormos: I want to indicate—no, thanks.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): I want to quickly make a couple of comments on the bill. Generally, we support the bill and its concept. However, there are a couple of things that I think we’re going to have to have a discussion in committee about. One is the whole concept of absolving people from the ability to be sued for having administered medication. I understand what the member is trying to do. We’re trying to deal with

making sure that the medication can be applied in a case where a child is in a seizure. However, that's a pretty wide, gaping hole. I think that at committee we're going to need a little bit of advice from leg counsel and others about what that really means in practical sense.

In the first place, what the bill basically says by way of that clause is that a person could not be sued for having administered medication if a person has passed out. However, they could still be sued for gross negligence. That's a pretty wide, gaping hole, and I think anybody who has any kind of a legal background would understand that that in itself can be an interpretation for the courts that could mean a whole bunch of things as far as, if your intent really is to try to protect the person when administering medication. If I happen to be in the school as a teacher, a custodian, a secretary, whoever, and all of a sudden I see someone who has passed out and is having some kind of seizure, and I grab medication, how do I know what kind of medication I'm administering? I could be charged by a lawyer in defence of the other side, saying I was negligent in my use of the medication because I didn't read it properly. There's all that kind of stuff that comes up. So I will just say that I support what the member is doing and I'm going to vote for it, but obviously we're going to refer this bill out to committee, and I think we need to look at that particular issue.

The other thing we have to talk about when we get to committee—in fact, we may have to have a talk about it now, at second reading—is that if we're going to say to schools across this province that we're going to make sure they put in place a plan to deal with these kinds of situations—I think all of us here in the House agree—are we going to be financially supporting those schools and school boards to put those plans in place? What do I know, as a school principal or teacher or custodian or secretary, about what a plan is? Obviously, there's going to be some structure put to this, there are going to be some guidelines set around this, and you're going to have to administer a plan that's in keeping with the intent of the bill. It's going to take some money to be able to develop the plan in the first place and it's going to take some money for the school boards to be able to put this policy in place and train school staff when it comes to fulfilling the intent of this bill.

I'll just say that one of the things I would really like to hear from Mr Levac, the member from Brant, is what the intent is of the government vis-à-vis his bill. Has he had any discussion with the Premier or with the finance minister or the Minister of Education around making sure the school boards are funded? I would like to hear back on that. It's not contingent on my support. I just want to make sure that we don't put yet another burden on school boards and tell them, "We have the great ideas provincially. Now you've got to pay for it inside existing budgets." We know that the previous administration did that on a number of occasions when it came to issues, where they would pass some legislation here in the House and say, "Look how smart we are," and then

throw it to the municipality or the school board to say, "What the heck are we going to do to pay for this?" They had to follow the law. So I really need to know that the government is in fact going to deal with that particular issue.

Again, generally, I'm in support—that was my heart pacer going off. Don't worry. I have a pacer in my heart.

I would just say that we generally support what the bill is all about, but we need to deal with those two issues, as I said: (1) making sure the school boards are resourced, and (2) the gross negligence clause of this bill.

I also want to say, and it's a good opportunity to remind members by way of this debate, that there's another such bill in this House, in the name of the member from Nickel Belt, my colleague Shelley Martel, that has come to this Legislature at least twice, and that's the meningitis C bill. As you know, there was a young man by the name of Michael Maxwell in, I think, 2002, who died within about a day after being brought to the hospital with meningitis C. The whole idea is to make sure that the provincial health units across Ontario are given the resources to do the inoculations that are available to deal with this. As we know, that has been on the increase, and a number of young people have died from that. I would just remind people, as we vote in support of this bill, not to forget that there's another bill coming to this House that's very important as well, which the previous government did not support but the Liberal caucus did at the time. I look forward to the support of the Liberal caucus on Ms Martel's bill when it does come up.

The Acting Speaker: The member from Brant has two minutes to reply.

Mr Levac: I thank the honourable members from Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford, Etobicoke Centre, Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant, Etobicoke North, St Catharines and Timmins-James Bay for their participation and kind words, and in some cases ill-placed words, about this bill.

I want to start off by explaining very clearly to the member from Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford that there's a new way of democracy in this place. I also made it clear that this was not about politics; this is about saving a life. He has acknowledged that. Thank you. Stay on that premise and we're going to be doing fine for the people of Ontario, particularly the children. This isn't about partisan politics. This isn't about taking an opportunity to whack the government with your standard stuff you've been doing. Leave that for another time and place.

1050

This is time for private members' bills. Each and every one of us will have issues we want to bring to this place that have true meaning and effect on the lives of the people in Ontario. I've heard that from members from all sides, that it's time for us to bring this place into what it's been known for, and that is protecting, saving and helping the people of Ontario.

I want to say specifically to all of you that this is an important issue that goes well beyond partisan politics. I'm asking you to put that aside for a while and

understand clearly. I know there are issues with this bill. They will be going to committee. We will work out the details. I'm convinced that each and every one of us here wants to save those children's lives. If we don't, get out of here, because it's not the place to do this. Put those things aside. We're talking about the children of Ontario. We're talking about the kids who are being refused to go to school because they have anaphylaxis. That's not acceptable in the Ontario that I know. Let's get on with this and make it work.

DEMOCRATIC RENEWAL

Mr Bill Murdoch (Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound): I move that, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should live up to its campaign promise to "strengthen democracy" through "democratic renewal."

The Acting Speaker (Mr Bruce Crozier): Mr Murdoch has moved private member's resolution number 2. Pursuant to standing order 96, the member has 10 minutes for his presentation.

Mr Murdoch: First, I'd like to say a few quotes that have been around and bring them to the attention of the House.

"We will make our institutions more democratic by freeing your MPP to represent you...."

"We will create new lines of communication to make sure your voice is heard in government...."

"We will respect and draw on the talents and expertise of every elected representative, including opposition members."

You know where they were? They're from this book, *Government that Works for You: The Ontario Liberal Plan for a More Democratic Ontario*. We heard all through the election and since we got here about how this government is going to make it more democratic in this House. They're going to let members represent their riding rather than all the bills and all the orders coming out of the Premier's office. We want that to happen, but it doesn't seem to be happening that way right at this moment.

I want to tell you a little story about after the election. Right now, as you know, Christmas is coming, and there are a lot of Santa Claus parades. Mr Speaker, I'm sure you go in some of those parades also. In most of the towns, there are thousands of people lined up on the streets for Santa Claus—definitely not for us, but we may be in the parades.

Interjection.

Mr Murdoch: Maybe in St Catharines, but in other places I'm sure they're waiting for Santa Claus. Maybe the member for St Catharines is Santa Claus; we're not sure of that.

Half those people didn't vote in this election. We had only approximately 54% of the people in Ontario vote. Something's wrong with our system. Something's drastically wrong when we can only see where 54% of the people of Ontario voted. I know it varies from riding

to riding, but that was the average all over. Something is wrong.

Our Premier said that the people don't trust politicians to do what they said they were going to do. The Liberal platform even states, "People have lost faith in their politicians and their institutions of government." My question is, do the Liberals feel they've made it better or worse since they've come into power?

Well, they had a chance when they came into power—a big chance—to show that they meant what they said. Unfortunately, another promise has been broken—another promise that this government has broken. They had a chance to make this place more democratic.

In the past, we've had three parties represented in this assembly, and now we only have one official opposition. The government said that they would let them have more democracy. They were going to let the members be more democratic, let them bring the ideas from their ridings. But when one of the parties here had a chance to be recognized, no, that didn't happen. All of a sudden, all these promises we heard on the election trail, that we were going to do better and that this government will make sure that they get a chance to represent their people—what about the 15% of the people across Ontario that voiced their opinion and said that they would like to see the NDP represent them? All of a sudden when the chance comes up, this government says, "No; we're not going to let you do that." They could have easily done that. I think it's approximately 660,000 people who voted that way—15% who voted. Unfortunately, there should be more people voting.

To point that out, when I was on the campaign trail I was introduced to this couple in a business that was at the back of my campaign office. My wife knew them and she introduced them to me. I had mentioned, of course, as probably as most MPPs would, or most people running, "If you can support me in this election I'd certainly appreciate it." Well, they looked at me and said, "You know, we generally vote for the Green Party." I sort of smiled and said, "That's your business. If you want to do that, that's fine. But if you can support me I'd certainly appreciate it." They said, "We may not even vote." I said, "Why would that happen?" They said, "Our vote will never be heard. We'll never get a chance to have our vote to be heard in the Legislative Assembly, so we may not vote." They could have become part of that 46% of the people who didn't vote because they feel that this place doesn't represent democracy any more. There's a problem here.

There are many more quotes that we could go on with. It's in this paper that the Liberals put out—many, many more quotes in here that say, "We're going to fix this place up. We're going to make it more democratic." They had a chance to do that right at the start. What happened? This government said no, right off the bat. What a way to start this assembly off.

Since I've been here for the past 13 years, I have complained a lot about representative democracy, that we don't have that any more. This was a chance. This is a

new government. They had all kinds of new quotes. They were going to make this place so much better and they didn't do it. They let us down again. Do they not want the people out there to get some renewal so that they'll go out and vote?

We had the municipal elections—not much better. In my city of Owen Sound, only 40% of the people came out and voted. In one of the surrounding municipalities, 26% voted. Something's wrong. People are not believing in their elected people.

Again, as I go on to say, there are many, many quotes in here that they could have done something about.

They were going to talk about proportional representation. We haven't seen that. I admit that they have appointed a minister to look into this, but where has he been? We haven't heard a thing.

We can go back to the point: They had a chance to do something. The very first day we were in this House they had a chance to do that. And then what did this government do? They add insult to injury. They put the NDP at the far end and us at this end, and put a rump in the middle just to make sure that we don't have effective opposition. If this government wants to govern Ontario and govern it well, they need effective opposition over here. We know that. Look what's happened in Ottawa. The Liberals have run amok up in Ottawa. They just do what they want to do up there; they're not worried. The opposition has been splintered, and they've just run amok. This is what's going to happen with this government if they don't figure out that we need to have more democracy in this House.

This government has gotten arrogant and they've only been in for less than two weeks. Something needs to be done to have renewal and make sure that we, as representatives of our areas, have a chance to speak here. To do that, you need effective opposition. This government needs to recognize the NDP and fix the seating up in here the way it used to be. The rump should be at the far end, and then the NDP, and then we should be sitting here. We can at least work together to make sure that this government is effective when they bring their bills in. They need us to do a good job.

1100

Four years from now when an election comes, they will regret the decision they've made by not allowing the NDP to have their official status. This has been a sad day in this House. I'll be the first to say that the NDP can be a big pain when you're in government. We were there for eight years; we know what they can do. But they do bring that voice of over 15% of the people. If we look at the next election, if those 15% decide they're not going to vote, we're going to be down around 40%, less than 40%, of the people voting—something wrong. You have a member in your caucus, Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde, who goes to other countries to observe voting. He'll tell you some of the stories where people walk for miles and miles in their bare feet, and they get there and there are armed guards standing there. We don't want that in this country. This country is open and free, and we want

people to get out there and vote. That's what democracy is all about.

Then when the representatives get to this place, they need to be able to express their opinion without the leader's office or the Premier's office coming down on them, saying, "You don't have a right to say that. This isn't our policy." I've been here for 13 years, and there have been difficulties on all three sides. I sat through when the NDP was in government and their Premier ran everything from his office. We had troubles in ours. I'll be the first to admit the Premier's office certainly ran a lot of things when we were in government, and it didn't do us any good, and you see where we're sitting today. If this government over here is going to let the same thing happen, which looks like it's happening—I listen to the answers we get from the ministers when they're asked a simple question in the House, and they get up and talk about a bogus deficit. We're not even near the end of the year yet, and that's what their excuse is. Where does that answer come from? That comes from the Premier's office. Don't let the Premier's office run you people over there. I'm sure the member for St Catharines won't let that happen. We need some democratic renewal in this House.

Mr John R. Baird (Nepean-Carleton): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: It's my privilege to introduce George Sardelis, who is in the gallery, the great Conservative candidate in the riding of Toronto-Danforth.

The Acting Speaker: That's not a point of order, but we welcome visitors to the Legislature.

Further debate.

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): First of all, I want to tell the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, who may not know this, that Dalton McGuinty, the Premier of this province, has actually appointed a minister responsible for democratic renewal. As you know, I'm the parliamentary assistant in that capacity. We had the political will, immediately upon being elected to government, to actually do something about it.

I find it interesting that the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound does not recall the contempt that the Conservative Party had for democratic process when they took the budget and presented it outside this Legislature, which was a contempt of this Legislature and a contempt to every representative here who represents the public interest in this chamber. I would suggest that the member remember this.

I'd like to list to this House what we're going to proceed with to enhance democracy in Ontario. As you know, we're going to change the Audit Act, so we can better understand where the money is spent and how it's being spent with our funding partners.

We're also going to make public agencies like Hydro One covered by freedom of information. It was in 1997 that the Conservatives decided to put a blanket of secrecy over Ontario Hydro. What is democracy about? Democracy is about the right of the public to know, and this is one of the actions the government took in 1997. We're going to change that.

Banning of partisan advertising: That is what we're going to do. Why? Because it is not the best use of public dollars to spend them on self-promotional advertising. That's what the government has done to a great degree over the last eight years.

Another part is making sure that ministers are here in the House during question period. We're going to be bringing forward legislation to make sure that ministers attend question period.

As well, we are going to put in fixed election dates.

We are going to reach out to youth, because it's important that they understand they are an integral part in participating in our democratic process.

We're also going to have juries on election financing, because too many times the ones who have the most clout in policy are the ones who can make the largest contributions.

As well, we're going to move forward on actual voting reform.

It's very important that you have a government that has the political will to do these things, and we are going to do it.

We released the democratic renewal part of our platform over two years ago, because we believed it was an important part of changing how government does its work for the people. We have seen over eight years a closure, if you want, of our democratic process over and over again. We want to change that, because government is here to work for people, and we want to do that.

We will be looking at the standing orders, for instance, enhancing the role of the private member, potentially, meaning that we can actually agree on certain legislation. Members from the Conservative Party, along with members from the Liberals and the NDP, might be able to agree on something and we can actually present a bill as private members and coordinate the effort.

Certainly we agree the government is going to live up to its campaign promise; it has. We've already established a ministry for democratic renewal. I didn't see that happen in the eight years the Conservatives were in power. I know the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound wants to make hay out of this, because he can go back to his constituency and say, "You know what? I really pushed for democratic renewal in the Legislature," when in fact his government has done exactly the opposite.

I say to the members in this House, yes, we are going to maintain our commitment for democratic renewal. We're going to act on it, and we're going to see that when we finish this four-year mandate, more people are going to get out and vote, because we will restore the confidence in why government is here.

Mr Bob Delaney (Mississauga West): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: We'd like to recognize the presence in the visitors' gallery of a group of grade 5 students from Divine Mercy Elementary School on Duncairn Drive in Mississauga and welcome their teacher, Pedro Tomas.

The Acting Speaker: That is not a point of order, but we welcome the students. Further debate.

Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant): I also commend the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound for bringing this—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker: Order. Will the member from Niagara Centre refrain from speaking to the gallery.

Mr Barrett: I do commend the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound for bringing forward this resolution on democratic renewal. As we've heard this morning, given the trail of broken promises that the Liberal government has left in its wake—and, again, after only two months—I join this call for the government of Ontario to live up to its campaign promise to strengthen democracy through democratic renewal.

On that note, I'd like to examine some precedents, both near and far, aimed at strengthening democracy through the power of people to recall their government members. This is a private member's bill I'll be introducing later in this session.

As we all know, "democracy" is derived from two Latin words. It means literally "government by the people." I can't think of a better way to ensure that this could be accomplished than to give people the power to remove their elected officials, not just at election time but any time the people feel a politician isn't living up to his promises or his requirements in the office.

To be sure, recall is not something to be taken lightly. I do believe that in a democratic society the electorate should have the right to hold elected officials accountable between elections.

1110

Of course, as we've heard recently, there's a good example of recall legislation in the state of California. They were given a chance to voice their opinions on the track record of then Governor Gray Davis through a recall vote. We all know the outcome. Here again, I stress it's serious business and not to be entered into lightly. That was certainly the case in the state of California. Recall has been a fundamental part the governmental system in that state since 1911. It applies to both state and local officials, and to ensure that recall is not abused in California, it requires that, to qualify for recall, proponents need a minimum of 12% of the votes cast for the office of governor on a referendum ballot. What would a ballot like that look like? There are two parts. On the first part, voters vote for or against the recall, and secondly the voters select the replacement candidate, and the replacement candidate's occupation and party affiliation are also included on the ballot.

A little closer to home, MP Ted White introduced a similar bill in the House of Commons in 1999, Bill C-269. It was introduced as "An Act to establish the right of electors to recall members of Parliament." Again, the purpose was to allow electors of an electoral district to vote in a recall election no later than three months after a petition asking for a recall vote is signed by at least 25% of the number of electors who voted in the previous

election for that electoral district. In MP White's bill, signatures may be collected during a period of 12 months after a proposal for a petition.

I present to you, Speaker, several examples of where other jurisdictions are strengthening democracy, and I look forward to the chance to debate this further in my recall legislation. I certainly join MPP Bill Murdoch in his call for this government to live up to its campaign promise to strengthen democracy through democratic renewal.

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): I'm pleased to speak to this resolution. It is very commendable for the member to bring it forward, but it's almost surreal that we're debating it, considering where it's coming from. This is something Monty Python would have written for a script. As I read it, what this member is saying is, in essence, their government, when they were in power, did so much damage that they're imploring us to try to undo some of the damage. It's also very clear to me that they really don't understand the magnitude of the damage that the previous government did to democracy in this province. They're looking for it to be fixed. We've sat eight days now, and they're looking for it to be fixed in eight days? Well, they took eight years to do the damage. It's going to take a little bit more than eight days to fix it, but it will be fixed.

Why it's going to take more than eight days—let's have a look at some of the things that were done to destroy democracy in this province. There are so many examples, but let's start with the budget. The budget was done in a private facility that banned the general public from coming. For as long as we've had democracy in this world, one of the key foundations was having a chamber where the public could come and view—we had some schoolchildren introduced a few minutes ago—and see it in action. They couldn't have attended this so-called pseudo-budget that was presented before. The consultation that went into that pretend budget was done by invitation only. Even the general public didn't have an opportunity. There was a complete lack of openness, and indeed, it now turns out that the budget and the numbers that were presented bore no relation to the actual reality, but I never heard the government. Now, the government is, in a sense—not in a sense; the government is owned by the people. The owners of this province, each and every citizen, was entitled to know the financial status of their province. That was kept from them. That is a blot on democracy in this province.

We have seen a history over eight years of omnibus bills, bills that included into one the spectrum of every possible act and amendment. One of the reasons for it, I believe, was to make sure that it was so large and so complicated that the general public could not find what was actually being done to change their province. That, again, was a major assault on democracy.

Time allocation: Time allocation was used on any bill, of any significance whatsoever, over the previous eight years. Absolute lack of consultation, no opportunity for people who had been elected in their ridings to voice their constituents' opinions.

We have seen over the last eight years a significant reduction in the number of bills that are being referred to committee, and we've seen the committees travel very, very little over the last eight years.

An example that particularly bothered me was when the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, for what it was worth, was rammed through the Legislature. Consultations took place over four days. Persons with disabilities were given about 24 hours' notice to apply and to be at the first consultation. I am proud, very proud, that over the last four years the Liberal caucus did their own consultations on the Ontarians with Disabilities Act and travelled the entire province.

When the issue of insurance started to rise and the previous government said, "We just don't want to deal with it," it was our member, George Smitherman, who travelled Ontario with other MPPs and with Dalton McGuinty to hear the advice and suggestions from everyone in the province. It is that important that we believe everyone should participate.

Now we find out, after the election—if the media is correct, and I believe they are because they're basing their information on conversations with members of the previous government—the Premier didn't even consult his own cabinet ministers, his own party, with decisions that were being made.

I applaud this resolution because there has been a great deal of damage done to democracy in this province. Thank you for highlighting what damage you have done, and yes, we will fix it.

Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka): I'm very pleased to join in the debate this morning on the notice of motion put forward by the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound: "That in the opinion of the House, the government of Ontario should live up to its campaign promise to 'strengthen democracy' through 'democratic renewal.'" I believe actions are greater than words, especially in the case of the current government, especially the way the government is breaking its promises.

This morning I had breakfast with the egg farmers. They're here promoting egg supply management and consumption of eggs. John O'Toole, Frank Klees and I had a kitchen table discussion with the farmers and their spouses. They asked the question, "Why do politicians promise one thing and then do another after the election?"

It's like the Liberals electricity price promise: They promised to maintain the price until 2006, then very quickly have broken that promise after being elected. Why do they promise one thing to get elected, and do something very different after they become the government? I very much believe this breeds cynicism amongst the voters. It causes people not to bother to vote. Is democratic renewal going to become another Liberal broken promise?

Actions are greater than words, especially in the case of this government. Let's look at the Speaker selection process. The first order of business for this new

Legislature, the selection of the Speaker. It's supposed to be—it is a secret ballot. I'd been lobbied by two prospective candidates, Liberal MPPs who wanted to be Speaker. Mike Brown sent me a letter stating his intention to want to be Speaker of this House. He'd been the Deputy Speaker, a very well-qualified candidate, I was considering supporting him. Alvin Curling gave me a phone call asking for my support.

What happened? Mike Brown declined his nomination to run for the position. Instead of an election, we had an acclamation. I suspect that what happened was the Premier decided who would be the Speaker and Mike Brown was told not to run for the position. This was one of the first actions of the new government. This is democratic renewal, Liberal style.

Another action demonstrated by the Liberal Party which is anything but democratic is their process of hand-picking candidates. The leader of the Liberal Party is able to hand-pick candidates to get around the normal nomination process, something I find unbelievable. I think in the case of this election they hand-picked at least four candidates, including, I believe, the member from Scarborough Centre. I find this very offensive. I'm just amazed that the Liberal Party would do this. Is this Liberal democratic renewal, denying the people of a riding their rightful choice?

What about the way the NDP has been treated by this government: Denial of the recognized party status, their seating position in the Legislature? The NDP received 15% of the vote in the last election. There are a lot of people who support their socialist principles. I'm not one of them, but I respect those who did vote NDP. I believe that those people's votes should count. If you want more participation in elections, then those people who believe in the Green Party or the NDP should feel their vote means something.

As I said, actions are greater than words, and so far the actions of this government have been anything but democratic. I support the notice of motion of the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound and call on the government to start its democratic renewal process.

1120

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): I rise today in support of the motion made by the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound. I rise in support of it not only because what he is saying is timely but also because we need to remind ourselves what this institution is supposed to do. We need to remind ourselves what we promised during the election and what we are in fact delivering in the first eight days of this Parliament.

I have here the document Government that Works for You. I hope some of the members remember what was said a scant couple of months ago out there on the streets of this province knocking door to door.

Reading from page 7, because I think this is the page that says it all and is the reason why the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound felt compelled in the first action he has had available to him to put forward such a motion. It's entitled "Respect for your MPP." "We will

give your elected representative more power." With the greatest respect, in the first eight or 10 days of this Parliament, I have to tell you I do not have the same amount of power that I had sitting in the previous House, even under the Conservative administration. What have been taken are the stripped rights of myself and my party in this Legislature to stand up and to speak in this Legislature.

Interjections.

Mr Prue: Listen to this: "Elect more members." This is always the answer from the other side. They will not acknowledge that they have promised to deliver more democracy and in fact are delivering less democracy.

The next line: "Your MPP should be free to represent your views, not just parrot the views of his or her party." The first action of this government was to deny that we even had a party. It was only upon appeal to the Speaker that we were allowed to be called the party for which we were elected, for which we put our names on the ballot, for which we campaigned.

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): And that was touch and go.

Mr Prue: And that was touch and go. The governing party has even tried to deny us this right by calling us throughout independent members. We are not independent members; we are New Democrats.

There is another election promise that you're not keeping: You said you were going to strengthen the ability of the MPP within the party. "We will scrap the changes the Harris-Eves government made to the standing orders of the Legislature that concentrated powers in the hands of spin doctors and advisors." You have scrapped any modicum of support for the NDP, any support we might have had within the committee system, any voice we might have had within this Legislature. You have introduced a draconian bill, which is still being debated in this House, an omnibus bill on closure. What you are trying to say is that we have no rights at all. You are trying to say that any time, at a whim, without the normal—

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): It's not on a whim; it's rules your party supported.

Mr Prue: Come on, if you want to speak, stand up and speak later. You have nothing to say except to insult me.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Beaches-East York, make your comments through the Chair, please.

Mr Prue: I will address you, but I wish you would address him as well, Mr Speaker, with all respect.

The last and the laughable one: "We will bring a team approach to governing. We will respect and draw on the talents and expertise of every elected representative, including opposition members."

No one has asked for my expertise, no one has asked for my participation. Today, I went to committee, and as expected, I am treated as an independent member—as expected, and it comes as no surprise to me. I know what the rules of this place are if they're not to be changed. I have been told that I cannot be on the subcommittee. I

have been told that I cannot be substituted if I am not available. Those are the kinds of rules that are being used here, rules used flagrantly against democracy.

I and my party members are constantly referred to as independents; we are not. We are stuck over here in the corner, in a bifurcated rump, which I think is, with all respect to the Speaker, and I heard the Speaker's ruling, actually instigated by members of the governing party. We are awaiting some really fundamental changes, and we do not expect them to come in any hurry. But if this party is at all credible, if they intend to be at all credible, I want them to announce in very short order—because it doesn't cost a penny; you don't have to worry about the \$5 billion or the \$6 billion or the \$8 billion—when the election day is, because the people want to know that. We want to know when you are going to institute democratic reforms on proportional representation.

Mr Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'd like to recognize the LINC program from the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board. We have 50 new Canadians from the great riding of Mississauga East. I'd like to thank them for joining us here today in the House.

The Acting Speaker: That's not a point of order, but we welcome the visitors.

Mr Patten: I'd be happy to support this particular resolution. I find it somewhat ironic that this resolution comes from a member of the PC Party who probably contributed to this place being the worst Legislature in all of Canada in terms of the way in which it operates in the interest of being more businesslike, with business plans throughout the bureaucracy. Education has business plans, social development programs have business plans; it's very business oriented.

In the interests of efficiency and being more effective, that essentially undercut the opportunity for many members in this particular House to fully participate. Those rules will be changed; many of those will be reversed. There will be consultation. You will actually begin to see real consultation for the first time.

My democratic friend says that this government is not providing opportunities. They have seven members and yet they have more speaking time per member than the other two parties. They don't have the right, according to the rules, to sit on some of those committees. We've invited them to sit on the committees.

Interjection.

Mr Patten: We can never get you to shut up, that's for sure; we can never do that.

So when you look at the long list of approaches under democratic reform, many of you will be pleased because it will open up opportunities for people, it will help make government more transparent and more accountable. Just the Provincial Auditor's role, for example, expanding that to all government agencies; as it is now to the LCBO, it will be to Ontario Power Generation and Hydro One and the fiasco we saw there before. All of that will be transparent for the auditor to take a look at.

The advertising that was abused, these self-aggrandizing promotions that were sent out, which were nothing

more than campaigning and telling people how good the government of the day was, hundreds of millions of dollars, there will be a stop to that. We will have an independent authority that will take a look at that and approve promotions that will be done by government. That's a first. That is a very significant step.

1130

I was so concerned with some of the changes to the rules in this House that I wrote a paper. If anybody wants to read it, I would be happy to share it. I recall being quite disappointed when the rules of this House were changed. I'd like to read a couple of excerpts from my paper. I wrote at the time, and it's still the case now, and that's why change is imminent, "It's perhaps a measure of the well-being of our democracy that we rarely, if ever, think of it as being in any peril. But by and large, we think of the health of our democratic institutions as stable and solid, if nothing else.

"On the rare occasions that our thoughts do take a dark turn, we tend to imagine a loss of our democracy as a singular, cataclysmic event that would shake us to our foundations. But what happens if it starts to slowly slip away?"

We're talking about the way in which people do things and people don't pay attention, much as the media doesn't pay attention. You see what happens. I want to change that. Our government wants to change it, believe me. I'd like to say that most people are aware that there needs to be change.

I'd like to finish on this note: "Keeping democracy healthy is something that never happens naturally on its own. It must be nurtured and occasionally fought for. Sometimes democracy can seem to be a slow, burdensome exercise, without a doubt; it has frustrations. Be that as it may, there is a clear, indisputable responsibility for those holding office. Things may have to get done, yet they must get done while respecting the customs, institutions and conventions by which a healthy democracy lives and breathes."

With that sentiment, I'd be very happy to support the resolution from the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound.

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford): I'm pleased to join in the debate with respect to the resolution by the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound.

In this particular area, there's a text of a speech from the Premier when he was Leader of the Opposition. He says: "By changing the way our democracy works, we can give the people a real say; we can make their vote count; we can reduce the influence of money on politics and we can take away power from the backroom people and ensure the people's elected representatives are more than just puppets for political parties."

There are a couple of areas I want to address that I think should be alarm bells with respect to what the commitments are with respect to this government.

First of all, I want to deal with the backrooms. One thing I haven't noticed any change in, in this democratic

renewal, is that standing order 106 deals with the government agencies committee and how it works. What it has in there is that these appointments aren't reviewable; they're only dealt with by the government; they don't come to the committee. What it says is that it excludes from review re-appointments and appointments for a term of one year or less. There's nothing in this democratic renewal that is dealing with that, and I think that's the backroom that the Premier was talking about.

The first case in point was the removal of David Johnson as the OMB chairman. They put in a temporary appointment that did not go through the committee at all because it's less than a year. How many more of these are we going to see from this government in terms of playing around with appointments, because they want to live by these rules? If they really believed in getting away from the backrooms, getting away from having the money people influence appointments, they would change that standing rule. I'm putting it out to them today. I throw out the challenge to that government that believes in democratic renewal, doesn't believe in backroom boys, to change that standing order so that any appointment goes through the government agencies committee. I can tell you that that's important for democracy, so that backroom boys don't rule, especially with the OMB, when they put a hand-picked person in there who's not subject to any review. So I say, review rule 106, show that you're committed to democratic renewal, get the backroom boys out of your appointments right now. We'll see if you do it. I put that challenge to you.

The second thing is in the throne speech from the Premier. He says in his throne speech, and I commend him for this: "I'm going to introduce legislation that there will be 11 ridings in the northern boundaries." That's not the same under the new federal legislation, where there are going to be nine boundaries in the north. He says there are going to be 11, and that's a good thing; the more northern members we have, the better. But the bottom line is, he's going to do that, which is contrary to the Federal Election Act, which we're now mandated to follow with respect to our riding distributions.

What is the Premier going to do with respect to the southern Ontario boundaries? That's a big challenge with respect to what he's committed to in the north. He's committed to the status quo in the north because we currently have 103 members, and 11 of them are from the north. What is he going to do with respect to the south? Is he going to be honest and say, "We're going to leave the status quo," or are we going to get into riding gerrymandering?

Members across the way, you should be very concerned about it because of all the powers in your Premier's office. You should be very concerned about what they're going to do with respect to the rest of the boundaries. What are they going to do with the remaining 92 boundaries? Are they going to create new ridings? Are they going to keep the status quo? You may end up seeing that you're going to have a situation where you're going to have to fight for your own riding because your

Premier unilaterally will just basically say, "We're going to redistribute. I'm going to increase the number of ridings in the south," or, "I'm going to maintain the status quo."

You don't have to be worried. You can go back to sleep like the way you are now and just say, "The status quo is going to be fine." Then you can go back to sleep. But don't be sleeping if he decides to fool around with the boundaries. You're going to find yourself in a situation where you may not have a riding. You may be fighting your neighbour with respect to that riding. That's a big change. I don't know what he's going to do with respect to bringing democracy and fairness so we know what's going on.

A supplement to that is what's in your platform with respect to referendums and how we vote. You say that right now we have a first-past-the-post system, where whichever candidate has the most votes wins a constituency, even if there's less than 50%. There may be a fairer way of doing things. We need a full, open public debate on voting reform. The public should decide on whether we need a new system, and if so, what the new system should be, through a binding referendum.

Along with riding reform—because that's what I think the Premier is looking at, is fooling around, with the ridings, after he sees what happens in the federal election—

Hon James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism and Recreation): You're against the north.

Mr Tascona: I'm in favour of the north. I'm almost in the north in Barrie; you know that, member for St Catharines. I can tell you that what we're looking at is—look what happened in the election. Fifteen per cent of the people voted for the NDP, a recognized party on the ballot. They came back to the Legislature because they have seven seats, not the mandated eight, and now they have no status. But I'll say this, Speaker, and I think you would accept this view: Opposition is good for the government. It keeps them on their toes, it keeps them honest and keeps them accountable. That's all these people are asking for: that they have a voice.

Every four years we do review the standing orders. I'm saying, review the standing orders with respect to democratic representation here if you believe in democratic renewal, if you really believe an opposition is good for a government to keep them on their toes. So if you believe in democracy, if you believe in opposition, then I don't think you're going to have much trouble dealing with the standing orders with respect to the number of seats to give a representation with respect to how you do your appointments. It's important for them to change their appointment process if they want to be transparent and people want to know what's going on in the appointments process. They've got to get rid of that loophole with respect to less than one-year appointments and re-appointments, if they really believe in democratic renewal.

I support the member for Owen Sound because this is about time that we got to deal with this issue.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): I want to thank the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound for bringing this short but important resolution to the House today. You can say what you like about the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, and there's a lot to be said about the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound—I can't say it all in five minutes. But one thing that we saw with that member, when he sat in the backbenches in the Tory government—he never made it into cabinet. He was a maverick. I didn't agree with many, many of his policies and positions—still don't—but if you just look at his record on democracy, he railed against his own government when they changed the rules to further diminish democracy and members' individual rights and opposition rights in this House. We should all applaud him for that because he had the guts, unlike other members in his party, to stand up and speak out against his own government when it was necessary to do so.

What the Liberals are promising to do is fiddle around the edges. There are lots of announcements about changing this, changing that—don't look so dismayed. That's what this is all about. What we need to do is change the system. Fiddling around the edges and pretending to fiddle around the edges is not going to fix an archaic system that no longer works for the people of Ontario. You've got a first-past-the-post system. That sets up a dictatorship in this Legislature.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Order, and that includes those who are giving me advice.

1140

Ms Churley: That's what people have been seeing, not just with this government and the previous Tory government, but with the NDP government and the Peterson government before it, and with the election of each new government it gets worse. The power gets more and more entrenched in the Premier's office. I don't even blame the government; that's the system we have.

It becomes a dictatorship, and whoever is in power has the opportunity to change the rules if they're not getting their way, which is in fact what we just saw the Liberals do with an omnibus motion that is actually draconian, the worst we've seen in this place in terms of including five pieces of legislation in one motion—three bills and two motions—and enacting closure without talking to anybody in the New Democratic caucus; a deal worked out with the Tories in the back room. That is wrong, my friend, so don't stand up there and say, "We believe in democracy."

There is an old saying: "Where you stand depends on where you sit," and that's what we're seeing here. Whoever sits on that side of the House, from any party, stands changed dramatically when they get over there and thinks, "We're the government; we should be able to do whatever we want."

I want to debunk some of the myths. Dalton McGuinty said on day one, after New Democrats were reduced to seven seats but with an increase in the popular vote, "Hey, the rules are the rules; we can't keep changing the rules." At the same time, this is the same Premier who

promised to change the rules. At the first opportunity to demonstrate that he meant what he said, that this system is no longer working for democracy, for the people of Ontario—to say what happened when the Tories reduced the number of seats in this House from 130 to 103, they did not at the same time reduce the corresponding ratio, not only for the number you need for party status but also for a quorum in the House and members on a committee. None of that was done at the same time. We had an election with reduced numbers. The NDP came back with nine, I believe, at the time, and suddenly negotiations happened. The Clerk and the Speaker were not asked to come up with a fair number for all those; it was negotiated. It became a political football. Eight was plucked out of the air. David Christopherson and I were involved in those negotiations. We objected and said, "Let's take the average from across the country." For instance, in Ottawa, you only need 12 out of over 300 members.

The quorum was reduced here from 20 to 12, almost a 40% difference. It benefited the government of the day to have a huge reduction for a quorum. None of these numbers make any sense. They were plucked out of the air.

I would say to the government, it doesn't follow, it doesn't make any sense that the rules are already changed and we can't change them again. You can't be cherry-picking rules depending on whether or not it benefits your own party, which is what is happening in this case.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): I want to congratulate the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound for having raised this motion, because I think it raises a number of issues that are quite apart from what we experienced in the last election.

I just want to say, on that particular point, the member from Riverdale—

Ms Churley: Toronto-Danforth.

Mr Bisson: —it used to be Riverdale; it's now Toronto-Danforth—raises a really excellent point. On the one hand, we've got a Premier who says, "Rules are rules; that's the way this place has to operate," and then we listen to the Liberal backbenchers and some of the Liberal cabinet ministers whine when we use the rules. Quite frankly, it's a little bit difficult to take. If the Premier says, "Rules are rules," then why are you whining when we use the rules? I just think it's kind of an interesting point.

What really is galling is that the first chance the Premier has to come into this House and demonstrate there's going to be a breath of fresh air through this Legislature and he's going to live up to his campaign commitment to put more democracy in the Legislature, what is the first thing he does? He brings the mother of all time allocation motions into this House.

Interjection.

Mr Bisson: I can't say what mother; it's not parliamentary. But I would just say it's one heck of a time allocation motion.

What the government is now doing by way of the time allocation motion we debated two evenings ago, and

quite possibly that we'll debate some time today or in the next few days, is to say, "The standing orders? Throw them aside." There are only four ways to end debate in this Legislature, as there is across this country in all the Legislatures and in the federal House. One is that no member wishes to debate any more, which ends debate. The other way to do that is basically by way of somebody putting the question. In other words, under standing order 47, it's basically a closure motion where an individual member gets up and says, "I move that the question now be put." But that allows for at least four or five days of debate, I would argue, and probably more. The only other way to close debate in this House is by standing order 46, which says you have to have three days of debate before the government can even contemplate bringing in a time allocation motion.

Now, I sat in opposition and the member from St Catharines and other members of this government who are now whining about us using the rules used to sit on this side of the House when the government introduced how many time allocation motions? Sixty or 100 or whatever the number was. Each and every time the government would introduce a time allocation motion, the now-government was up on their feet and they would be whining—squealing is the right word—against the Tories, and rightfully so, because the Tories were trying to reduce debate in this House.

So what's the first thing this government does when it has a chance to show Ontarians that there is true democracy in the Legislature of Ontario and that Dalton McGuinty is living up to his campaign commitment? They break that promise. Another promise made, another promise broken. What you're going to do by way of your motion—your huge time allocation motion that you have in here—is to basically say we no longer have rules in this House. By fiat, the majority of members in this House can basically decide to stifle the opposition.

I just want to put this proposal to you: We have a Charter of Rights in this country, and we understand that the basic right within the Charter of Rights is to protect the minority, because we have said in this country that those people in a minority have to be heard and have to be protected from the tyranny of the majority. Can you imagine if one Premier in this province, or a Prime Minister, was to say, "I want to make a change to the Human Rights Code, because those protestors are such a pain. We don't want to hear them any more. They're using the rules. So we the majority of Ontarians and Canadians will, by fiat because we're the majority, suppress the rights of the minority." This country would go wild, because we accept basic, fundamental human rights and we have enshrined that within the Charter of Rights of this country.

What this government is doing is analogous to us making an amendment to the Charter of Rights that says minorities don't have a say in this country and don't have to be heard and don't have to be respected.

Interjection.

Mr Bisson: That's exactly what this is. Can you imagine if the government was to change the Charter of

Rights to say, "We don't have to listen to the minority"? That's exactly what you're doing by your time allocation motion. You're saying, "We suspend the rules of this Legislature. We will no longer take into account whatever little rules we have in this House to give individual members the right to debate. We will take that away, and because we're the majority—and the Tories, who are in the pockets of the Liberals, because they did the same thing when they were in government when it came to time allocation, say, "Because we're the majority, we're smarter, we're better and we don't have to listen to independent members." I just say that you will rue the day you pass this motion and you go down that road, because we will all have to live, unfortunately, with what you're setting up by way of precedent. It's not only a broken promise; you should be ashamed of yourselves.

The Acting Speaker: The member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound has two minutes to reply.

Mr Murdoch: I appreciate all the debate we've had here tonight—or this morning, I guess; we're not here at night—and I want to thank the members from Sarnia-Lambton, Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant, Parry Sound-Muskoka, Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford, Prince Edward-Hastings, Beaches-East York, Ottawa Centre, Toronto-Danforth and Timmins-James Bay. We had a number of speakers here, and it's good for debate.

Something I want to remind the government of on the other side: They mentioned that it was ironic that a Conservative would bring this motion up. Well, I think it's rather ironic that they would say it was me who brought it up, because in the past eight years, I have complained about democracy in this House. If they had listened to me, I think they would have known about that.

They are the government now. Quit whining and complaining about what we've done over here. Look where we're sitting. We didn't have good opposition and we ended up over here. Now you people need good opposition, or you're going to end up back over here. Now you people need good opposition or you're going to end up back over here, so you'd better start to listen. It's nice to have all those ideas that you have and all the promises your Premier has made, a lot of promises. The member from Sarnia-Lambton brought them up. Now you have to live up to them.

But here's the problem. You broke the promise right at the start. Sure, you've only had eight days and you mentioned that, but in eight days you've broken a whole lot of promises. This is the problem. How do we trust you over here? You had a chance to bring democracy to this House. You had a chance to recognize the New Democratic Party and you didn't do it. So how do we believe you?

I'm telling you, just like I said to you, we're over here now. We made mistakes; yes, we did. The problem is that we didn't have any good opposition and we ended up over here. If you don't create good opposition, you're going to end up over here in four years, and that'll be your fault and your own misgivings.

The Acting Speaker: There being no further debate, pursuant to standing order 96(e), proceedings are suspended until 12 noon.

The House recessed from 1151 to 1200.

ANAPHYLACTIC STUDENTS PROTECTION ACT, 2003

LOI DE 2003 SUR LA PROTECTION DES ÉLÈVES ANAPHYLACTIQUES

The Acting Speaker (Mr Bruce Crozier): Mr Levac has moved second reading of Bill number 3, An Act to protect anaphylactic students.

All those in favour of the motion, please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

I declare the motion carried.

Pursuant to standing order 95(j), the bill is referred to committee of the whole.

Mr Dave Levac (Brant): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I seek that the bill be sent to the standing committee on general government.

The Acting Speaker: Shall this bill be sent to the standing committee on general government? It shall be sent to the standing committee on general government.

DEMOCRATIC RENEWAL

The Acting Speaker (Mr Bruce Crozier): Mr Murdoch has moved motion number 2.

All those in favour of the motion, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

I declare the motion carried.

There being no further private members' business, I declare the House adjourned until 1:30 of the clock.

The House recessed from 1202 to 1330.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

EDUCATION TAX CREDIT

Mr Jim Flaherty (Whitby-Ajax): I'd like to speak briefly about the Liberal government plans to cancel the equity in education tax credit. Apparently this government is hostile to the notion that parents should have the right to choose where their child can best be educated. I wonder why that is. It's certainly not about the money. The government is making funding announcements in education, as they did yesterday.

This government falsely claims that the EETC drains money from the publicly funded school system and only benefits the wealthy. An article in the Globe and Mail today reasserts that only 5% of Ontario's independent schools can be considered elite. The overwhelming majority of them meet specific needs, diverse needs: religious needs, linguistic needs, developmental needs that are not addressed adequately in the public school

system. There are over 850 independent schools in Ontario, and two thirds of the children that attend these schools come from low to modest levels of income. There's a tuition eligibility cap of \$7,000 in the EETC. In fact, most Canadians have the benefit of a tax credit or a tax support for independent schools, and that includes Canadians living in British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Quebec, and so far, in the province of Ontario.

I urge the members opposite to reconsider their discriminatory repeal of the equity in education tax credit.

RUN FOR OVARIAN CANCER

Ms Deborah Matthews (London North Centre): A small group of dedicated people in London have done something quite remarkable. Today I rise to celebrate that accomplishment. This group was inspired by a vibrant Irish Canadian named Ann Crowley from my riding of London North Centre. Ann was a real character, full of energy and life. Her friends at the Waltzing Weasel can attest to that.

In August 2002, Ann was diagnosed with stage three ovarian cancer. Rather than simply accepting her diagnosis and pursuing her own cancer treatment regime, Ann launched a fundraising and public awareness campaign. The vehicle would be a run for ovarian cancer and the goal would be raise \$5,000 to \$10,000. Many told her it couldn't be done, but she recruited other women, like Elaine Pensa and Nancy Ford, who are also fighting a personal battle with ovarian cancer. She recruited friends like Michelle Kerr, Tony Malloy and Val Morgan. Dr Akira Sugimoto, the London Health Sciences Foundation and countless others joined in.

Ovarian cancer is known as the whispering disease because the symptoms—Abdominal pain or bloating, gas, change in bowel habits, backaches or indigestion—are so easy to ignore, especially for middle-aged women. Too many ignore the symptoms until it is too late.

On May 5, 2003, despite rounds of chemotherapy and sickness from the disease, Ann Crowley showed up at the park and was met by 500 runners. I was one of them. We raised \$93,000.

Ann Crowley passed away on July 5. Her team continues in her spirit and is currently working on next year's run. I know all members join me in congratulating this extraordinary group of people.

UNIVERSITY OF ONTARIO INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): I rise to pay tribute to Canada's newest university in my riding of Durham. I was pleased to join the founding president with the dream, Gary Polonsky; elected officials, including MPPs Jim Flaherty, Jerry Ouellette and Janet Ecker; students, staff and leaders in the community to celebrate the first day of school at UOIT.

The University of Ontario Institute of Technology has welcomed its first class of approximately 1,000 students. Enrolment is expected to increase to 6,000. Indeed, the work underway on a 160-hectare site at the Durham College/OUIT campus is the largest construction project in Ontario.

OUIT offers nine undergraduate programs, some of which are unique to Canada. Areas of study include science, engineering, nursing, business, teacher education and justice studies. In keeping with the needs of the 21st century, our university offers career-focused learning and is fully accessible to laptop computer technology anywhere on campus. Of particular interest to the energy sector in our community is the school of engineering and nuclear science.

I would like to recognize the past chair, Bob Strickert; Garry Cubitt, current chair of the board of governors; Vice-Chair Lorraine Sunstrum-Mann; and all the board members for bringing this university to conclusion. Most of all, congratulations to the faculty and staff, such as Ken Swan, who is president of the student association at OUIT and Durham College. To all of our leaders and pioneers in the 21st century of education, congratulations.

PROPERTY TAXATION

Mr Mario Sergio (York West): It's that time of the year when property owners are receiving their new assessments. Of course, as usual, our constituency office is flooded with concerns about their 2004 assessment notices. Some concerns are legitimate, especially when homeowners see their assessment going up by tens of thousands of dollars, but many other concerns are created when some councillors refer them to the MPP's office, blaming the provincial government for their increase in assessment.

For the benefit of our constituents, there are two roles that we should be making crystal clear when it comes to the assessment of residential properties. We believe that we find the answer right in the memo sent from the finance department that says:

"What role does the government play in determining assessment?"

"The province establishes assessment policies to legislation and regulations only. For example, provincial legislation states that properties must be assessed at their current value.

"Who is responsible for assessing the property?"

"It's a municipal organization called, in short, MPAC, which is administered by the local municipalities and they are responsible for assessing residential properties."

I believe the passing of more information makes for better-informed taxpayers and better-informed constituents.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Mr Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln): I am pleased to rise in the House today to discuss the importance of the mid-

peninsula corridor highway. This will probably be the most important investment in a generation for the folks of the Niagara Peninsula, particularly those in southern and western Niagara. It stands to be a major artery of investment for trade and for tourism, creating jobs from the Niagara River to the Grand River.

We were prepared as a government. Under Premier Eves, Transportation Minister Klees moved the next step to get that highway moving, to build it, to take advantage of those investments and those jobs. I thought during the campaign that the local Erie-Lincoln candidate, Vance Badawey, also seemed to agree when he stated that we have to look at getting the second highway, the mid-peninsula corridor, built immediately.

However, they said one thing during the election; now they're saying another while in government. I was disturbed by the Minister of Transportation's remarks earlier this week in question period when he said he was going to go back to square one, the full environmental assessment, which, as I understand, involves a needs assessment. They're trying to determine whether they even need the highway to begin with. In fact, some of their Hamilton area candidates even mused about that during the campaign.

The need is clear. The need has been demonstrated. The need has been proven. It is time to move ahead with the mid-peninsula corridor, to get that highway built, to bring the jobs to southern and western Niagara. I call upon the Minister of Transportation to move forward with the mid-peninsula corridor expeditiously and also to meet with our new regional chair Peter Partington, and a delegation of councillors from Niagara to discuss next steps to get that corridor going.

1340

ROGER NEILSON

Mr Jeff Leal (Peterborough): I would like to pay tribute to a true Canadian hero, Roger Neilson, who passed away at the age of 69 last June after a courageous battle with cancer.

Roger lived in my riding, just north of the city of Peterborough in Bridgenorth. His dedication to hockey and those learning the sport is unsurpassed. In his 35-year career he coached more NHL teams than any other coach in history. Locally, in nearby Lindsay, he ran a hockey camp and coaching clinic, which is now in its 27th year.

Last year, Roger's hard work was recognized when he was inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame and received the Order of Canada. In June, the Ottawa Senators, where Roger was an assistant coach, announced they would honour his memory by building Roger's House. The facility will be constructed at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario to provide pediatric palliative care and help the families of those children battling cancer.

His contribution has also been recognized in the community of Peterborough. A city street has been named Roger Neilson Way. The street runs past the Memorial

Centre, where he coached the OHA Junior A Peterborough Petes for 10 years, from 1966 to 1976. The Senators, the Petes and the OHA provincial Junior A Lindsay Muskies, a team Roger owned, are wearing commemorative patches on their sweaters this hockey season.

Just last week it was announced that the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board would name a new school in Peterborough's south end after him. Roger Neilson Public School is scheduled to open in September 2004.

Roger was well known as a warm-hearted, generous spirit who supported many charities. I hope the community of Peterborough will always remember his contributions and carry on his legacy.

TAXATION

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford): Next Wednesday, December 10, a number of Ontarians will be visiting Queen's Park to tell the Liberal government that they do not appreciate the Liberal U-turn on their election promises. Tax Freedom Day in Ontario is already June 29.

The people of Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford and all Ontarians are working one half of the year to feed the beast of government, whether it is federal, provincial or municipal. So 50% of our workday is used to pay the government. Put simply, the government is taking half of our annual income, even before we can start to put food on our table, pay our rent or mortgage, or before we can begin to pay off our credit cards and debts.

In the recent election campaign, the Liberals claimed that they will protect hard-working tax payers. But what have they done since the election? They have broken their promise. They have given Ontarians the largest tax-hike in a single day, and they did so without any shame. Liberals believe we should all be working for the government and we should be working into each July for the benefits of government. This is unacceptable.

That is why hard-working, law-abiding taxpayers will be coming to Queen's Park next Wednesday to tell this government that they cannot afford higher taxes and reckless spending. Ontarians cannot afford higher debt and more broken promises.

On behalf of the PC caucus, I would like to take this opportunity to invite all Ontarians who are watching at home to come to Queen's Park next Wednesday at noon to tell Dalton McGuinty to stop raising taxes and breaking promises.

UKRAINIAN GENOCIDE

Ms Laurel C. Broten (Etobicoke-Lakeshore): It is an honour as a member of provincial Parliament to stand before this Legislature and take a moment to acknowledge and recognize the famine-genocide that occurred in Ukraine in 1933.

To date, the exact number of victims of the famine is not known. What we do know is that more than seven million Ukrainian men, women and children were starved to death by the occupying Soviet regime from 1932 to 1933—an appalling event that was hidden from the outside world for generations.

It is only by acknowledging the reality of such a horrific occurrence that we can together work to ensure that such a tragedy does not again repeat itself in our lifetime or in generations to come.

This year, the month of November was set aside by the Ukrainian community to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the famine-genocide through a series of concerts, lectures, visiting teachers and something that was undoubtedly heart wrenching, the testimony of remaining survivors.

I urge you to join me in supporting and acknowledging the Ukrainian community and, in particular, the Ukrainian Canadian Congress Toronto branch's famine-genocide committee's efforts to increase public awareness about the famine-genocide. Their continued work to include the teaching about this terrible tragedy in our schools and their work toward ensuring our youth are aware of the millions of lives lost in the famine-genocide is critical to the prevention of its repetition.

CABINET MINISTERS

Mr Robert W. Runciman (Leeds-Grenville): I rise to express concern related to Premier McGuinty's failure to have his cabinet appropriately represent the various areas of the province and, in so doing, his failure to recognize the long service of many of his loyal and hard-working caucus members.

Instead of appointing members such as Hamilton's Dominic Agostino, Essex's Bruce Crozier, Thunder Bay's Mike Gravelle or eastern Ontario's Richard Patten and one of his longest serving members, Jean-Marc Lalonde, Mr McGuinty turned his back on these long-serving members and instead opted to have almost 50% of his cabinet come from the Toronto area. This is wrong.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Order. I'd like to hear your list, sir.

Mr Runciman: If you had not been in the chair, Speaker, I'm sure you'd be a member of the cabinet.

In any event, this is wrong-headed, and we are already seeing decisions in agriculture, environment, education and elsewhere affected by this Toronto bias at the expense of underrepresented areas, especially small-town and rural Ontario.

LIBERAL CAMPAIGN PROMISES

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): I think a lot of people in this province woke up this morning to quite a pleasant surprise. They opened the door and must have been shocked when they picked up their morning newspaper. Right on the front page they saw a politician

who keeps his promise. The new mayor of Toronto, David Miller, has kept his promise. During the recent municipal election, he promised to stop the Toronto Island airport bridge, and yesterday he kept that promise. When asked why he did it, the quote was very simple: "I've done exactly what I said I would do."

Imagine that, politicians keeping their promises. That must come as a huge shock to the McGuinty Liberals, because you know they don't believe in keeping their promises. Look at their sorry track record: they broke their promise to protect the Oak Ridges moraine—promise broken; they broke their promise to cap hydro rates—promise broken; they broke their promise to stop P3 hospitals—promise broken; they broke their promise of an inquiry into the Aylmer meat scandal—promise broken; they broke their promise to give money to reinvest in health and education, and now they're talking about a \$4-billion shortfall—promise broken. I say to the new government, learn a lesson from mayor Miller. Clean up your act and quit breaking your promises.

VISITORS

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Today in the east gallery we have my aunt, Italia Berardinetti, and my uncle, Antonio Berardinetti, who are the parents of the newly elected member for Scarborough Southwest, Lorenzo Berardinetti. I'd like to welcome them to the House.

Today my uncle marks his 50th year of arriving in Canada at the famous pier 21 in Halifax. Fifty years ago today, he arrived at pier 21 with so many other great Canadians.

Mr Kim Craitor (Niagara Falls): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'd like to recognize some brothers who have joined us in the House today from the Teamsters Canada union: Jim Chalmers, John McCann and Brian Smith. Welcome to the House, and I hope you enjoy your stay.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES AMENDMENT ACT, 2003

LOI DE 2003 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES PERSONNES HANDICAPÉES DE L'ONTARIO

Mr Jackson moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill 12, An Act to amend the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 / Projet de loi 12, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2001 sur les personnes handicapées de l'Ontario.

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

Mr Cameron Jackson (Burlington): This bill amends the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001, to re-

quire that a municipality that operates public buses for transit purposes and did not operate them before this amendment comes into effect shall ensure that all of these new buses that they acquire will be accessible for persons with disabilities.

MACDONALD-CARTIER FREEWAY ACT, 2003

LOI DE 2003 SUR L'AUTOROUTE MACDONALD-CARTIER

Mr Lalonde moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 13, An Act to amend the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act to officially recognize Highway 401 as the Macdonald-Cartier Freeway / Projet de loi 13, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aménagement des voies publiques et des transports en commun afin de reconnaître officiellement l'autoroute Macdonald-Cartier.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

Those against, say "nay."

I think the ayes have got it.

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

The division bells rang from 1352 to 1357.

The Speaker: All those in favour, please rise.

Ayes

Agostino, Dominic	Flaherty, Jim	O'Toole, John
Arnott, Ted	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Arthurs, Wayne	Fonseca, Peter	Parsons, Ernie
Baird, John R.	Gerretsen, John	Peters, Steve
Barrett, Toby	Gravelle, Michael	Peterson, Tim
Bartolucci, Rick	Hardeman, Ernie	Phillips, Gerry
Bentley, Christopher	Hoy, Pat	Prue, Michael
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Hudak, Tim	Pupatello, Sandra
Bisson, Gilles	Jackson, Cameron	Qaadri, Shafiq
Bountrogianni, Marie	Jeffrey, Linda	Ramal, Khalil
Bradley, James J.	Klees, Frank	Rinaldi, Lou
Brotten, Laurel C.	Komos, Peter	Runciman, Robert W.
Bryant, Michael	Kwintner, Monte	Ruprecht, Tony
Cansfield, Donna H.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sandals, Liz
Caplan, David	Leal, Jeff	Scott, Laurie
Chambers, Mary Anne V.	Levac, Dave	Sergio, Mario
Churley, Marilyn	Marchese, Rosario	Smitherman, George
Colle, Mike	Marsales, Judy	Sorbara, Greg
Cordiano, Joseph	Martel, Shelley	Tascona, Joseph N.
Craitor, Kim	Matthews, Deborah	Watson, Jim
Crozier, Bruce	McMeekin, Ted	Wilkinson, John
Delaney, Bob	Meilleur, Madeleine	Witmer, Elizabeth
Dhillon, Vic	Miller, Norm	Wong, Tony C.
Dombrowsky, Leona	Milloy, John	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Duguid, Brad	Mitchell, Carol	Zimmer, David
Duncan, Dwight	Munro, Julia	
Dunlop, Garfield	Murdoch, Bill	

The Speaker: All those opposed?

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 79; the nays are 0.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I seek unanimous consent for second and third reading of the bill.

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House? I heard a no.

ADOPTION DISCLOSURE STATUTE LAW
AMENDMENT ACT, 2003

LOI DE 2003 MODIFIANT DES LOIS
EN CE QUI CONCERNE
LA DIVULGATION DE RENSEIGNEMENTS
SUR LES ADOPTIONS

Ms Churley moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 14, An Act to amend the Vital Statistics Act and the Child and Family Services Act in respect of adoption disclosure / Projet de loi 14, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les statistiques de l'état civil et la Loi sur les services à l'enfance et à la famille en ce qui concerne la divulgation de renseignements sur les adoptions.

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

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): For new members here, you will think that this really is the first time I've introduced this bill; it's actually the fifth time. It's in fact way past time for it to be passed.

What the bill does is amend the Vital Statistics Act to give adult adopted persons unqualified rights of access to their own original birth registration and to give corresponding rights to birth parents. The bill takes into account concerns raised by members in this House and includes a contact veto. It also makes counselling no longer mandatory but voluntary. It requires the government to provide it on request.

This bill or similar bills have been passed in jurisdictions all over the world. It is way past due here in Ontario. I want to give all the new members an opportunity to read this bill and catch up on the issues. Hopefully, we can debate it soon and pass it. By the way, it has gone out to committee hearings before.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY
AND RESPONSES

PICKERING NUCLEAR
GENERATING STATION

Hon Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader): Moments ago I tabled a report in this assembly that I received from the Honourable Jake Epp. The report focuses on the return to service of the Pickering A nuclear facility. The contents of this report are, in the words of its authors, alarming. They point to mismanagement of one of Ontario's most important energy assets, Ontario Power Generation, and specifically a very crucial and expensive nuclear project, the refurbishment of Pickering A.

Before I get into the details of the report, I want to extend a sincere thank you on behalf of the McGuinty government to the three members of the panel responsible for this submission. They are the Honourable Jake Epp, Mr Peter Barnes and Dr Robin Jeffrey. All three men should be congratulated on their diligence and

thoroughness in detailing the many complex issues associated with the Pickering A return-to-service project and for the excellence they have shown in compiling this report. Since June 2003, when the panel's work began, they have reviewed countless documents, spent hundreds of hours in working sessions and met with numerous stakeholders to ensure the accuracy of the report.

In 1999, the board of directors of OPG, under the watch of the previous government, decided to proceed with the restart of all four units at Pickering A. The board estimated that the total cost of the project would be \$1.1 billion and that all four units would be operational by December 2002. It has been nearly five years, and only one of the units, unit 4, is working. Restarting unit 4 alone cost \$1.25 billion, nearly triple the board's original estimate for that unit and considerably more than the estimate for all four units combined. Finishing the rest of the project would cost billions of dollars more and could take as long as five more years. This is an affront to the people of Ontario, whom we've been elected to serve and whose interests we are duty-bound to protect.

But why did this happen? How could the government of the day allow this mismanagement on the part of OPG, Ontario's most valuable and important energy asset? It's simple: They sat back and they did virtually nothing about it.

The report states that as a result of the costs and delays of the project, faith has been compromised in the affordability and certainty of the supply of electricity vital to citizens and businesses in this province. The board, shareholder and senior management team failed to exercise proper oversight over the project's economics and execution.

As a result, the delay in the return to service of Pickering A has adversely affected Ontario's electricity sector and unnecessarily pushed up prices for residential and business consumers.

Coupled with the recent auditor's report, this report makes it clearer than ever that the previous government failed to look out for the well-being of Ontarians.

Apart from the former government, the board and senior management of OPG must be held accountable for their management of a project that has resulted in alarming cost overruns and inexcusable delays. The report I have tabled states that from the outset, OPG's board and senior management failed to recognize the full scope and complexity of the project and that management of the project from its inception was seriously flawed. As a result, estimates of project costs and completion dates were consistently unreliable and unrealistic. Cost estimates were changed 11 times and completion date targets were changed 13 times.

And even today, after years of consultation and billions of dollars in spending, OPG still could not provide the Epp panel with a definitive estimate for the cost of returning the remaining three units to service, nor could they provide a definitive timeline for completion. Current cost estimates for the completion of all four units range anywhere from \$3 billion to \$4 billion, and com-

pletion dates are estimated at anywhere from October 2006 to August 2008.

1410

If these estimates are accurate, then I would point out that the total project cost would be almost four times greater than the original estimate in 1999. This is unacceptable, and our government must take action to do something about it.

As a result of the findings of this report, the McGuinty government is responding in the following ways.

First, we are giving Ontarians the straight goods and releasing the report to the public immediately. Unlike the Tory government, our government is dedicated to ensuring transparency in OPG's operations.

Second, I have accepted the resignations of OPG's chairman, Bill Farlinger; the chief executive officer, Ron Osborne; and the chief operating officer, Graham Brown.

Third, we have appointed an interim CEO, Richard Dicerni.

Fourth, we have passed a shareholder resolution which will limit the power of the existing board and ensure that all major decisions are approved by the sole shareholder: the Ontario government. We will be revealing the Epp report and its recommendations in detail and will make further announcements in the coming days.

Determining the future of OPG is a critical element in shaping electricity policy. As the sole shareholder of OPG, the McGuinty government will ensure that a responsible plan is developed for OPG that is in the best interest of the people of Ontario.

The actions we are taking reaffirm our commitment to protect Ontarians by ensuring a safe, reliable and sustainable supply of energy for the future.

The McGuinty government will apply the lessons learned from this disappointing project failure and move quickly to restore faith in our ability to generate power in this province. We are moving decisively and responsibly to send a clear signal that we are serious about dealing with energy issues in a way that is transparent and in the best interests of Ontario. The people have not had this for the last eight years. The people in this province deserve nothing less.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Responses?

Mr Cameron Jackson (Burlington): First of all, I want to thank the honourable minister for releasing the report today in its entirety and for making it available prior to the House.

Let me say at the outset as well that we on this side of the House accept the report and its sombre findings and we as well support the action taken by the government today. We consider it an important first step.

We concur with the report because, as the member opposite knows, our member from Nepean-Carleton, the Minister of Energy at the time, commissioned the report and was able to secure the involvement of Jake Epp, Peter Barnes and Dr Robin Jeffrey. These individuals, with the magnitude of their expertise—these people don't grow on trees. We were fortunate to be able to get them, and that's why the report will be an important basis on

which to consider some significant public policy questions which the government will be struggling with in the coming weeks and months ahead.

Pickering is the largest nuclear plant in all of Canada. It's also the oldest in this province. It presented many challenges to not only our government but the previous four administrations who were responsible for its management. This facility remains one of the most economic forms of creating new energy for OPG. Therefore today, when questions were raised about whether or not to mothball or proceed further with finalizing the complete overhaul and rehabilitation of this station, you were not in a position to respond.

But this is the first time in Canadian history that a nuclear facility has been completely overhauled and rehabilitated. Under no circumstances do I believe that any of the public servants responsible at OPG or prior at Ontario Hydro ever once felt that they should be compromising public safety in order to achieve scheduling objectives.

This was, as I said, an extremely complex and an extremely challenging overhaul; in fact, the largest one in North America. It involved the completion of almost 35,000 tasks, including the replacement and updating of all major components. There were 1,300 building trades, 700 engineering and project support, and 1,000 OPG employees working on this project almost full-time. This is, as I said, one of the largest rehabilitation projects, and by comparison the next-largest one that we can find is in the Tennessee Valley Authority, where the Browns Ferry unit 1 reactor was—their cost estimates, when converted to Canadian dollars, came in at \$3 billion, and that was a private sector nuclear plant that was being completely overhauled and reactivated.

The sad reality is that there were excessive cost overruns with this project, and the sad reality is that consumers in this province have paid. But this is a publicly run utility, we have entrusted public servants with its management, and it will raise some very large public policy questions for all members of this House as this government engages us, hopefully, in a process that will allow us to discuss issues about who should own the energy facilities in this province and who should be responsible for managing them.

Our government made a decision, one that involved bringing back on stream the Bruce nuclear facility. We were innovative in that approach by bringing in as partners the Power Workers' Union; bringing in financing from Borealis Capital Corp, which is in effect a large public sector retirement fund, TransCanada PipeLines and Cameco, the uranium producers from Saskatchewan. That project has been a success story, and yet it too had cost overruns and scheduling delays.

These are the realities of dealing with energy challenges in this century, and I hope the government will continue to work with all members of this House, whether it considers a select committee on energy to assist it in that capacity or engages in larger public hearings. For my part as the critic and for our part as the

official opposition, we want to work with the government to ensure that Ontarians continue to enjoy prosperity, which they have for the last century, well into the next century, having affordable, available power.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): I'm proud today to respond to the minister's statement on behalf of Howard—

The Speaker: I'm assuming, really, that we have unanimous consent for the member to make her response. Do I have unanimous consent? Agreed.

Ms Churley: Let me try again. I'm happy on behalf of Howard Hampton, the leader of the New Democratic Party, to respond to the minister's statement today because today we received a damning report about nuclear power, not just about this situation, but about nuclear power and the Pickering nuclear station. But we were not surprised. The report confirms what our leader, Howard Hampton, has been saying all along and what Conservatives and Liberals have been denying for years: Nuclear power is a billion-dollar boondoggle. Get used to it. It's a financial black hole that over the years has cost Ontario billions of dollars over and over again.

Here we go again. Here is some of nuclear power's track record: \$7-billion cost overruns at Darlington under the Conservatives' and Liberals' watch; millions wasted on the lease of Bruce; \$18 billion more flushed down the toilet to close down the plants and store the waste—that's to come.

Today we find out about billions more wasted at Pickering. Despite all of that wasted money only one of four promised reactors is producing electricity, and that one started up two years behind schedule.

1420

You do not get billions of dollars in waste from engineering problems. Come on. Give me a break. If comes from negligence and misappropriation of funds. That's why my leader, Howard Hampton—

The Speaker: Could I ask you to withdraw the word?

Ms Churley: I withdraw that and clarify my statement. That's why my leader, Howard Hampton, has called for a criminal investigation into the cost overruns at Pickering and a forensic investigation of the books to find out who's ripping off Ontario ratepayers once again. There are serious allegations of gross misuse of public money here. Just think, if Dalton McGuinty had all that wasted money he'd be able to buy a pony for every girl and boy in this province. Listen, this is serious.

Nuclear power is an utter failure. When are we going to grasp that fact? But despite the waste and a public confidence meltdown in nuclear power, Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals won't slam the door on nuclear power. Liberals may want to bring on more nukes; they're not ruling it out.

On September 6, 2003, the Toronto Sun reported Dalton McGuinty saying, "The Liberal plan includes significant new investment in generating projects, including nuclear plants (by adding to the \$38-billion hydro debt)."

On November 13 in the Toronto Star, Energy Minister Dwight Duncan said new nukes were possible: "At this point, nobody's ruled anything in or anything out." He just said the same thing—I heard him with my own ears—at a press conference minutes ago.

On February 14, 2003, Dalton McGuinty told the Owen Sound Sun-Times, "To my way of thinking, nuclear generation is an integral part of a responsible, progressive plan to generate electricity in the 21st century." He said, "We've had a nuclear industry in Ontario for about 50 years and it has been, by and large, a very successful and solid record." Some success.

I want to echo my leader, Howard Hampton: It's time for a ban on new nuclear plants and a phase-out of Ontario's existing nuclear generators as they come to the end of their lifespan. It is time to end the nuclear boondoggles. If we'd invested all those billions of dollars, just imagine where we'd be today: into energy conservation and efficiency and new green power.

Let's do that now. Let's move forward with energy conservation and efficiency. Let's invest in that wisely—more green power like wind, solar, cogeneration and run-of-the-river hydro projects. We have to stop throwing billions of taxpayers' money down the drain with nuclear power.

The Speaker: I want to thank the member of Toronto-Danforth for her response, but let me just be very clear about responses from the third party. Whenever there is a response from the third party, I must get unanimous consent. I would like some co-operation in the future on that.

ORDERS AND NOTICES

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): On a point of order, Speaker: This is the final day of the second week of this House sitting, and it's the first full week of this House sitting and considering government bills.

The Orders and Notices paper is a long-time practice in this assembly, and all of us, I put to you, are entitled to rely upon in it (1) in terms of identifying which items notice has been given for; (2) in identifying which items are eligible to be called; and (3) because it's published not only in the hard copy that you're very familiar with but also electronically on the OLA Web site. Those of us especially who don't have caucus staff look to the Web site publication of Orders and Notices in the morning in an attempt to ascertain what the government intends to call.

Last week there were failures to identify orders of the day; so be it. We're now in the second week, with the week of full consideration of government business. Monday, December 1, orders of the day, afternoon: "To be announced"; 6:45 pm: "To be announced." Tuesday, December 2—my goodness—orders of the day, afternoon: "G5"; evening: "To be announced." Wednesday, December 3, afternoon: "To be announced"; evening: "To be announced." Today, Thursday afternoon: "To be announced"; evening: "To be announced." This is far

more characteristic of a government that's in chaos at the end of a very unsuccessful term.

I put to you, Speaker, that we are entitled to have this information available to us so that even members of smaller caucuses, who don't have caucus staff, can arrange their day. The Speaker, I put to you, is put in a position where he ought to instruct the government House leader to get his act together and indicate what orders are going to be called. Otherwise, we're left with the impression that this government couldn't organize a drunk up at the brewery, never mind properly list items to be called during the debating day.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): I'll remind the member that orders of the day are called and it's up to the government House leader to call them at that time. No notice need be given. I should caution the member: Please watch your language.

DAY OF REMEMBRANCE
AND ACTION ON
VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Hon Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues): I seek unanimous consent. I understand we've arranged in advance that each party, including the third party, the NDP, would have five minutes today to address the memory of the Montreal massacre.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Agreed? It's five minutes for each party.

Hon Ms Pupatello: I rise in the House today in recognition of December 6, in a couple of days, as Canada's national Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women—a day that I wish, and I know all members of this House wish, we didn't have to remember. It's a haunting memory of a terrible tragedy in Montreal 14 years ago. Yet, two days from now, Canadians from coast to coast will once again gather in their communities to mourn the loss of 14 bright young women who were murdered on December 6, 1989, at Montreal's École Polytechnique.

Today, imagine where these women would be in their bright careers. Would they be spouses, would they be moms, they would be tremendous engineers, women who shouldn't have been taken from us—an act of violence that was felt in all our hearts; an act that changed the way we look at our mothers, our sisters and our daughters; an act that's imprinted in our memories forever.

There isn't a single person in this chamber who isn't revisited by, and fears that day—the fear of not being able to protect someone you love. How that single act of violence changed our lives.

As we remember these innocent young women, we must remember the thousands of Canadian women who've been, and continue to be, physically and emotionally abused, sexually assaulted and murdered in their homes, in our communities, every day of the year.

We've all read the headlines. They remind us all too clearly that violence against women still haunts our

society. That's why we've got to do more than just remember. We must act. We must, each one of us, find a way to make a difference, to make a contribution to putting this senseless violence behind us.

As individuals we have to lead by example in our own homes and in our own neighbourhoods. As communities we have to support women who are fleeing violence—give our time, our support, our commitment to never remain silent about this horrible crime.

As a government, each one of us in this House, we have to do more to protect women and children from violence by giving them real options to escape threatening situations and by holding abusers accountable for their actions.

1430

I think our Premier gave that very first step in his first couple weeks as Premier when he stepped into a shelter in the London area because he had extra time that day—shocked everyone who was there in the shelter but sent a very strong message that this is important to this government. We don't know when the last time was that a Premier dropped in at a shelter for women, but it sends us a strong message about how much work we have to do as a government to make the \$160 million that go out the door of this government work for women and children who are suffering from some form of violence.

Margaret Mead once wrote, "Never doubt that a small group of committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

If I may, I'd like to read you the names of those women who died and then ask all members to rise for a moment of silence.

Geneviève Bergeron, Hélène Colgan, Nathalie Croteau, Barbara Daigneault, Anne-Marie Edward, Maud Haviernick, Barbara Klucznik Widajewicz, Maryse Laganière, Maryse Leclair, Anne-Marie Lemay, Sonia Pelletier, Michèle Richard, Annie St-Arneault and Annie Turcotte.

The House observed a moment's silence.

Hon Ms Pupatello: I know that together we can make meaningful change.

Mrs Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener-Waterloo): I want to join my colleagues from the other two parties in recognizing Canada's national Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women on December 6. It was on that day, of course, that 14 young women in Montreal were brutally slaughtered—14 young women were killed in a simple, single, senseless act of violence—14 young women who were so full of promise and idealism. However, this massacre was not an isolated incident of violence.

As we have already heard, every day in this country, in this province and throughout the world, women flee violent and abusive situations. Abuse continues to exist and it is widespread. Violence, unfortunately, does breed violence, and women with a violent father-in-law are more likely to be assaulted by their own partners. Moreover, much of the violence today continues to go unreported.

So today it is not enough to just remember. We must continue to work for change. We must all dedicate ourselves to the task of eradicating violence against women. I believe the best tribute that we can continue to pay to those 14 young women, and the best monument we can ever build to their memory, is to continue to work to change society's attitudes about violence against women. All women deserve the right to live without fear. We need to continue to educate people in this province. We need to continue to sensitize them to recognize that there are certain attitudes, that there are certain behaviours, no matter how casual or seemingly innocent, which contribute to the continuation of violent and abusive behaviour. Also, parents have a responsibility. They need to exercise discipline at home and teach their children of both sexes to be kind, compassionate and understanding. We must also reject sexist language and behaviour. We must acknowledge and deal with the influence of song lyrics and media violence. These are a few of the preventive actions that we as individuals can act upon. However, if we are ever going to create a culture of safety, equality and justice for women, it is absolutely imperative that men and women work cooperatively together. So we need to take collective action and we need to arrive, hopefully, at that day when no one in this province, in this country or this world, whether they are a man, a woman or a child, will ever again be abused.

Today, as we remember, let each of us personally consider what we can do to ensure that we break the cycle of violence.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): On December 6, 1989, a lone gunman armed with a semi-automatic rifle brutally killed 14 vibrant young women at Montreal's École polytechnique. We mourn and we remember. Mr Speaker, I hope I'll have unanimous consent for this, because a rose has become a heart-breaking symbol representing the lives of these 14 young women who tragically died. Every December 6, I have held in my hand a rose to remember specifically one of the young women. I know that other women today at Women's College Hospital did the same, as they do every year.

Every December 6, since that horrifying day, I think—and I'm sure you do too—of those bright young women bursting with promise. I think of their families and friends and how dark a day this must be for them even after all these years. I shudder still, as I know you all do, even after all these years at the thought of that gunman. I can visualize it: Our own daughters—think—in a classroom going about their daily business and suddenly a gunman walks in, shouting, "I want the women." That's what he shouted, and then he separated the men from the women. He ordered the men to leave, and he lined the women up against an execution wall. "You are all feminists," he shouted and began shooting to kill.

I think of that tragic day, and I lament the fact that years later women are still the target of violence and hatred, sometimes simply because they are women who

dare to speak out and sometimes simply because they are women. As I pointed out last year, the leading cause of death for women worldwide, ages 15 to 44, is not cancer, is not automobile accidents, is not malaria; it's male violence against women. That's why it's so important that we stand here year after year and remember what happened 14 years ago.

Forty women in Ontario, it's been pointed out—and I appreciate the minister's comments today about her government's commitment to dealing with this tragic fact. Since June 1995, 161 women, 21 children, 10 family and friends murdered by male violence; a 33% increase in murders of women between 2000 and 2001, most of those in Ontario. We have to do something to stop this senseless violence.

I'm going to end by reading a passage from the Status of Women Canada Web site, 2002:

"Violence affects all members of society. However, violence against women is a complex issue that is closely linked to inequalities and power imbalances in society. It seriously affects the ability of women to achieve equality. Actually, it is not only the incidence of violence against women that limits women's lives, but the fear of violence that affects their daily existence, how they dress, where they go, with whom they associate, their mode of transportation etc. Violence against women continues to be a significant and persistent social and economic problem in Canada with serious impacts on our health, justice and social services system."

On behalf of the New Democratic caucus, and of course of on behalf of all of us, we send our best wishes and our sympathies to the families of the 14 women who were so brutally murdered those 14 years ago.

1440

ORAL QUESTIONS

PROVINCIAL DEFICIT

Mr John R. Baird (Nepean-Carleton): My question is to the Minister of Finance. Taxpayers were shocked and horrified when they opened the morning papers and saw the title "Ontario's deficit expected to exceed \$5.6 billion." Minister, you seem to be so concerned with vilifying the former Conservative government that you seem to be prepared to put Ontario's economy at risk and you want to play games with Ontario's economy. You're putting our economic health and the well-being of Ontario taxpayers at risk. Would you stand in your place and tell Ontario taxpayers that you won't allow this projected deficit to grow? Would you stand in your place and say you'll roll up your sleeves, get to work and balance the budget of Ontario, just as you promised to do 60 days ago?

Hon Greg Sorbara (Minister of Finance): It takes an unbecoming degree of temerity for the member from Nepean-Carleton, a former energy minister of this province, on the day that the Epp report is released—a report

that says that mismanagement may cost this province an extra \$4 billion—to stand in this place and call for the kind of actions he calls for. I want to tell him that we are working day and night to try to begin a process to fix eight years of mismanagement, and that member from Nepean-Carleton was one of the perpetrators.

Mr Baird: I was the one who commissioned the report that was released today, I would remind the Minister of Finance.

Minister, it's time you accepted your responsibilities as the guardian of the public purse. The people of Ontario voted for tough fiscal watchdogs, and what they appear to be getting are a bunch of drunken sailors in government. Stop the flim-flam; stop the con jobs. Stand in your place and say you won't allow this deficit to grow beyond \$5.6 billion and you'll finally get to work and balance the budget, just as you promised to do in the last election campaign.

Hon James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism and Recreation): He insulted sailors.

Hon Mr Sorbara: My friend from St. Catharines says, "He insulted sailors." I think we can do without the name-calling, I tell my friend from Nepean-Carleton.

We've been in office about six weeks. I admit to this Parliament and to the people of Ontario that we are still opening closets and finding disasters—there's no doubt about that. But at the same time, I can tell him that we are going to work diligently to make sure that over the course of our mandate we have transformed the government of Ontario, we have undone the damage they left us and we have put this province on a sound financial footing. That commitment will inform every day of our work from now until the next election.

Mr Baird: What the people of Ontario want is for you to stand in your place and answer the question. I say to the Minister of Finance that you can't simply open the doors of the provincial treasury and invite all your special interest friends to come in and feast on an all-you-can-eat buffet. Yesterday it was education, and all these ministers are out making more and more promises to increase government spending at a time when we cannot afford to. Would you stand in your place and accept some responsibility. The Minister of Municipal Affairs mused publicly that perhaps your government was too naive when you were making promises before the election campaign. I want to ask the member very directly: Were you naive, were you reckless or were you just lying to the people of Ontario?

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Will the member for Nepean-Carleton withdraw those comments.

Mr Baird: I withdraw.

The Speaker: Minister?

Hon Mr Sorbara: When the member from Nepean-Carleton talks about spending, and then we look at what the auditor's report said about \$750 million in the old Ministry of Innovation, and we look at the way they gutted public education, I remind him that one of our first moves in this Legislature was to get rid of the private education tax credit, because we are determined to put

education on a sound footing again. That's why, for example, yesterday we made an allocation to start to repair that damage. It's going to take some time, but with the attitude of my friends and the state of denial they are in in this project, I can tell you they will be of no help.

HIGHWAY TOLLS

Mr Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): My question is also to the Minister of Finance. I wonder if the minister remembers May 8, 2003. That was the day a news release was put out that was headed, "Sorbara and York Region Liberals Campaign Against Highway 407 Rip-off." On that same day, the honourable member, along with other Liberal candidates, made the commitment to the people of the GTA that, if elected, this Liberal government would in fact roll back the tolls on Highway 407. Does the honourable minister recall that and, in light of the fact that that commitment was absolute, unequivocal and unconditional—

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Question.

Mr Klees: —will he stand in his place today and confirm for this House, and for everyone who elected a Liberal based on that promise, if he and his Minister of Transportation will keep that promise?

Hon Greg Sorbara (Minister of Finance): I would like to refer my friend from Oak Ridges to an article in today's Globe and Mail by one Derek DeCloeet. The headline reads, "To Find SNC-Lavalin's Hidden Value, Take the 407." The gist of the article, just to sum it up, and I know you want to rush me: They refer to the soaring value of SNC-Lavalin's stock price and say it's all because of the sweetheart deal that that government gave to the owners of Highway 407 back in 1999.

Mr Klees: I will refer to the same article, in which it says, "Elect us, he said"—that is Mr McGuinty—"and we'll force the road's owners to roll back the fees." You, sir, have not answered one single question directly in your six weeks in office and two weeks in this Legislature. I'm going to ask the question one more time: Will you and your government keep at least this promise, the breaking of which, by the way, you cannot ascribe to a bogus deficit. Will you keep this promise?

Hon Mr Sorbara: I recall that the member from Oak Ridges was the Minister of Transportation. I remember that it was his government, when they sold the highway, that announced publicly that the tolls would not rise more than 2% above inflation for 15 years. I remember Mike Harris saying the consumers of this province were protected.

Highway 407 is an example of the mismanagement and the misstatement of reality that characterized eight year of this government. I will tell my friend from Oak Ridges that we will do everything within the law to try to bring about lower rates on that highway.

1450

Mr Klees: I, in fact, am very familiar with this contract. I'm also well aware of the fact that so was he, and so was the leader of the Liberal Party when he made this promise.

I'm going to remind the honourable member of another Liberal who made a promise to the people of her constituency—in that case regarding the GST. Having to break that promise because the government of the day didn't back up that promise, she—one Sheila Copps—did the honourable thing and resigned her seat because she could not keep the commitment. Will the honourable member do the same? Will the member have the same integrity and say, "Yes, I promised this. I can't deliver. I was elected on the basis of that promise. I will do the honourable thing"—you, along with Mr Racco, who made the same commitment? Sir, will you do the honourable thing?

Hon Mr Sorbara: The answer to my friend's question is, yes, we will do the honourable thing. We're going to start to repair the damage done with the sale of Highway 407. We're going to start to repair the damage done to our hospitals. We're going to start to repair the damage done in education. We're going to start to put this province on a sound financial basis. I want to invite my friend, as a return invitation, to send back to the treasury of Ontario 25% of his ministerial salary, given that he left this government and this province with a \$5.6-billion deficit.

ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

Mrs Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener-Waterloo): My question is for the Minister of Health.

Hon Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader): We pointed out to you earlier today that the minister had to leave at about 2:45.

Mrs Witmer: We had received word that he would be here until 3 o'clock. He's gone? OK. The Deputy Premier—who is the Acting Premier today? All right. My question then will be to the acting Deputy Premier.

Earlier during this session, both your Premier and your finance minister refused to guarantee to Ontario's seniors that you were not considering changes to the Ontario drug benefit program. Will you today stand in your place on behalf of seniors and guarantee that you will not impose an income test, that you will not introduce user fees and that you will not restrict access to drugs? I'm quite sure you're capable of answering without the guidance from the finance minister.

Hon Leona Dombrowsky (Minister of the Environment): I would very much like to answer the question, but I believe the Minister of Finance has the information that the honourable member has specifically requested.

Hon Greg Sorbara (Minister of Finance): Over the course of the past eight years, we have seen in the health care system a lack of attention and a degree of mismanagement. My friend from Kitchener-Waterloo was the minister for quite some time. I will simply tell her that what we find, having taken on our responsibilities, is that, for example, the way in which they approached their business is they allowed hospitals to live on their credit cards, not in order to build new facilities but to keep the doors open in the hospitals in this province.

I want to tell my friend that we are looking at ways to transform the enterprises of this government, whether it be in health care or education, to make certain that within four years we have this province on a sound financial footing again. The province and the people deserve nothing less than that.

Mrs Witmer: This government and this minister have now had several occasions to demonstrate their support for seniors and access of seniors to drug benefits in Ontario. They have refused to do so. It is obvious they are planning to introduce a means test, user fees and start the delisting of drugs.

I'll give you one more chance. Can you guarantee that you are not going to income-test, introduce user fees or reduce access to drugs?

Hon Mr Sorbara: I tell my friend from Kitchener-Waterloo that she has now gone from effective opposition to scaremongering. I'm not going to indulge in that, I tell my friend. That would simply be absolutely inappropriate. If she wants to use those tactics in this House, that's perfectly all right with me. I simply want to tell her that our mandate is to make sure that we start on improvements in this health care system as soon as possible.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms Kathleen O. Wynne (Don Valley West): My question is for the Minister of Education, and I'm pleased to ask it in order to give him an opportunity to clarify a really positive initiative.

Yesterday you announced an investment of \$112 million for students who are struggling the most in the province. Your announcement recognizes that students who have recently arrived in Canada or who come from single-parent or low-income families do have additional needs. It signals the end of the previous government's one-size-fits-all approach to education. Instead of applying the recommendation of the Rozanski report, the previous government turned their back on children in crisis and cut ESL funding instead of investing in it.

The investment made yesterday is an investment in our priority: public education. Minister, can you tell us how this announcement is specifically going to help students in Ontario?

Hon Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education): Thank you to the member for Don Valley West for the question. It is, I think, important to tell people in this province that there are children in our schools today who aren't achieving what they could in reading and writing, for reasons that we know about that have been long understood by the teachers, by their parents. They've had to struggle on their own or boards have had to become destabilized trying to meet their needs.

When the previous government was faced with taking over the funding of the province, they had a recommendation for \$400 million to address the needs of kids who are in poverty, kids with single-parent households and recent immigrants. They chose instead to fund it at \$185 million. For eight years these kids have been left to

fall behind, to not be part of the benefits of Ontario society. We are saying that we will not make them wait another year.

We have our challenges, but we are not going to do it on the backs of young children who need to learn how to read, write and acquire mathematics to be a sustaining part of society. We are very proud in fact that we were able to find a way to make this happen this year, working co-operatively with the boards around this province, to make sure that these children have indeed a better future.

Ms Wynne: Thank you, Minister. This is really excellent news for parents and students across the province. It means the beginning of the end of trying to fit square pegs into round holes.

I know that people in my riding of Don Valley West will be glad to hear of this government's commitment to improving literacy across the province. It's something I think we all can be proud of.

I don't need to remind you how important ESL programs are in a province like Ontario that continues to grow with immigrants whose first language is neither French nor English. Literacy is one of the cornerstones of our democracy and of citizenship.

Can you talk about what kind of literacy programs will be funded by the new \$112-million investment?

Hon Mr Kennedy: Thank you to the member for the question and the supplemental, because we need to come to grips with our collective challenge here. There are, I think, obviously children who need to acquire English as a second language, and they're held back. They score half as much on the test scores in this province as kids who don't have that kind of handicap. We need to bring them in and we need, as the member mentioned, to do this, not just for their sake and society's—working for our economy. This economy needs us to be good at bringing in new immigrants, needs us to be very good at the cohesion our school boards provide, and needs us to not hold these kids back simply because this government previously cut back from those particular individuals.

It's a kind of savings that is now being told in our schools, it's being told in terms of our workforce, and we want them to catch up. There are literacy programs we can do in terms of individual attention, time out for them. There are things we can do to help parents at home that have yet to acquire English, to reinforce things.

I was at a school yesterday in Mississauga where they have books that are falling apart, but they're the right books to have. They're scaled to the ability of those kids. They'll be able to acquire new books, they'll be able to continue the programs to do with parents, and bring back some of the ones they cancelled two and three years ago and make sure that these kids again are part of the future.

1500

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): New question?

Mr Jim Flaherty (Whitby-Ajax): My question is to the Minister of Education. There are some remarkable conveniences, coincidences, arising out of the announcement yesterday.

First of all, the government says it can't find any money, but it suddenly found \$112 million yesterday.

Secondly, the lion's share of the money, more than 53%, more than \$60 million, went to the city of Toronto school boards.

Thirdly, the superintendent of insurance of the Toronto District School Board says that most of the money is going to pay down the deficit voted by the trustees of that school board, contrary to section 231 of the Education Act. They broke the law.

Fourthly, the amount going to the Toronto District School Board, coincidentally, in a deficit of between \$43 million and \$48 million, is \$46 million.

This is a bailout. I say to the minister: Come clean. Stop the masquerade. Just admit to the people of Ontario you're bailing out the trustees who broke the law at the city of Toronto school board, at the expense of all the folks in the 905, all the folks across the province of Ontario, and dishonouring those trustees who obeyed the law.

Hon Mr Kennedy: We have a question from a member opposite who stood idly by, here in the greater Toronto area, not respecting the diversity that we have in this province. With his eyes tightly shut, the blinders firmly on, he stood by as program after program was eliminated that could help kids in this province have an equal chance. He didn't stand up for his constituents, or those who happen to be in the 416 area code.

This funding simply recognizes the nature of the challenge that takes place in every community in this province. We on this side of the House have no problem saying that Toronto needs to be strong; the schools in this community need to be strong. So do those in Pickering; so do those in Durham region.

They didn't have the members stand up for them, but they do now. They have people on this side of the House who care how those kids do, and we make no apologies for it.

Mr Flaherty: With eight cabinet ministers from Toronto, it's not surprising that there's this focus, this concentration, on Toronto. But remember, Minister, you're the minister for the entire province of Ontario. Listen: The data you used isn't even right. You used 2001 census data to allocate this money.

The Toronto Star—your favourite—talked this week about enrolments going down in the Toronto District School Board. The enrolment has gone down by 7,700 students in the past year alone. Students are moving to the 905, immigrants are moving to the 905, more people to the 905. The 905 got a pittance out of this money. That's not fair to parents of children outside the city of Toronto.

I know you don't want to admit that this is slush money that you're giving the Toronto District School Board trustees. I know you don't want to admit that. But at least use accurate statistics. Come to this House with accurate statistics and allocate the money fairly for families across the province of Ontario, not your friends at the Toronto District School Board.

Hon Mr Kennedy: Here we see the living embodiment of a government with its blinders firmly on, unable to see the real Ontario. The member opposite refers to

using census figures from 2001. His government used census figures from 1991. That would suggest, the attitude that he reflects is from 1891.

I will tell him, for example, in Mississauga where we were yesterday, using the 2001 figures that reflect today's reality, the same reality that said no to the politics of division, that said no to your old-style of politics. That reality meant the amount of money to help new immigrant families, to help kids living in poverty, to help kids who require English as a second language, doubled in the region of Peel, because there is no artificial division any more between 416 and 905. There's just children in this province who haven't recovered from the effects of a government that preferred private education over public education. We'll work with them.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. New question.

Mr John R. Baird (Nepean-Carleton): On a point of order, Speaker: the member for Eglinton-Lawrence said that my colleague for Whitby-Ajax was anti-immigrant. I'd like you to review that. I think it's very serious—

Interjection.

Mr Baird: He says, "Yes, I did say it." I think it's disgraceful that a member of this House is accused of being anti-immigrant, and I want the member opposite to apologize.

Interjections.

The Speaker: If the member said something unparliamentary, I ask him to withdraw. I didn't hear it.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. I don't think the language you use is good either.

Mr Flaherty: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I didn't hear what the member said, but my friend from Nepean-Carleton tells me that he used that language. I'm a member of the House, and if it was used toward me I would expect the member to withdraw it.

The Speaker: I did not hear it.

Mr Flaherty: I didn't hear him either.

The Speaker: The matter has been settled.

Interjections.

Mr Baird: Would you ask him if he said it?

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order.

Mr Flaherty: On a point of order, Speaker: I'm certainly satisfied if the member for Eglinton-Lawrence would simply assure the House that he did not say what is alleged.

The Speaker: I asked the member if he had said something unparliamentary and wanted to withdraw it. I did not hear it. If that's the case—

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): Speaker, just to make it simple, I withdraw.

1510

MEAT INSPECTION

Mrs Maria Van Bommel (Lambton-Kent-Middlesex): My question is for the Minister of Agriculture and Food. Food safety is a very important issue in Ontario today. As

a poultry producer, I understand the critical role that meat inspection plays in the agriculture industry and for farmers. People want to know that their meat is safe and reliable, and they want to know that the Ontario meat inspection system is accountable and responsive. The livelihood of agriculture depends on public confidence in the food safety system. How will your recent announcement about hiring more full-time inspectors to help the agricultural industry?

Hon Steve Peters (Minister of Agriculture and Food): We made a commitment to hire more full-time meat inspectors in this province. We made a commitment to ensure that meat inspectors in this province were part of the public sector. We made that promise and we've kept that promise, because we need to ensure that consumers in this province have the utmost confidence in our industry. But more important than that, we need to ensure that farmers' economic confidence is there as well. Hiring these 128 new full-time and part-time meat inspectors is going to help to instill that confidence for producers like yourself and other producers in this province. It's incumbent on us to do that.

We saw, with the Tory proposal for contract meat inspectors, a 30% annual turnover in meat inspectors. That doesn't help to instill confidence in the system. That doesn't help to ensure that those meat inspectors are going to receive adequate education and training. We made that promise. We believe in the agricultural community in this province. We believe that one way to instill that confidence all around is through full-time meat inspections.

Mrs Van Bommel: I'm glad to hear you have that commitment to agriculture and that you take this so seriously. The previous government unfortunately did not take food safety as seriously. They failed to give us the resources needed to ensure that there was a safe meat inspection system. They didn't take responsibility for food safety in this province, and that neglect almost jeopardized the public confidence that we need as an industry. How will your announcement to increase the number of full-time meat inspectors reverse this dangerous problem?

Hon Mr Peters: Thank you again for the question. What we're going to see happen in this province is that the per capita ratio of abattoirs is going to increase from what it was in 1995. We're going to ensure that we don't have auditors' reports like 2003, pointing out faults in our food safety system. We're going to ensure that we don't have auditors' reports like 2001, pointing out faults in our food safety system.

We're going to ensure that legislation is passed. In 2001, the previous government passed the Food Safety and Quality Act. Did that act get proclaimed? It did not. Were those regulations written? Never. We're committed to food safety. We want to instill, as I said earlier, that confidence in consumers, that confidence in the agricultural community. Food safety is going to be a priority for this government. We're going to ensure that Ontario's food products, unlike the previous Minister of

Agriculture and Food, are second to none. We're going to make sure that Ontario products are first not only for Ontarians but for the world over.

POLICE SERVICES

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): My question today is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Minister, as you know, this week MPPs gathered on Tuesday evening for a reception with the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police. At this reception—you were there, of course, and many of us in this room were there—the Premier mentioned in his comments to the chiefs, “You can count on us.” That’s what he said to the chiefs of police. I hope that every member of this House supports the chiefs of police of this province. Minister, based on this very supportive comment from your leader and our Premier, can you please answer this question: What are your plans for the public complaints process?

Hon Monte Kwinter (Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services): The area of public complaints is going to be reviewed. I’ve given the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police that commitment. When that review is complete, I will be very pleased to share the results of that review with you.

Mr Dunlop: Thank you very much, to the minister, for that. My leader, Ernie Eves, clearly indicated our support for the Toronto Police Service by earmarking \$1 million for the purchase of a much-needed helicopter in this year’s budget. If police services across Ontario can count on your government, like your leader says, does this mean that the spring 2004 budget will include money for a helicopter for the Toronto Police Service?

Hon Mr Kwinter: I think it’s important to understand that the previous government, under Ernie Eves, made a commitment to the Toronto Police Service that they would contribute \$1 million toward the purchase and operation of a helicopter. Notwithstanding that they made that commitment in their budget, they never delivered on it. When the chief said to me, “Are you going to honour their commitment?”—“their” being your government—my response was, “No, we are not.” We have discretionary funding constraints, and when the chief wouldn’t even put the operations into his request to his police services board, it seems to me that that is not the highest priority. Our priority is to make sure we get enough police on the streets. So that is a commitment you did not honour. To suggest I should pick up your commitments is something that is totally unreasonable.

NUCLEAR ENERGY

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): My question is for the Minister of Energy. Minister, I have some questions for you on the report that was released today. Your government received a damning report today about nuclear power and the Pickering nuclear station. The report reveals that nuclear power is a billion-dollar boon-

doggie; it’s a financial black hole that has cost Ontarians billions of dollars. The Premier recently said we’ve had a nuclear industry in Ontario for about 50 years, and it has been, by and large, a very successful and solid—

Interjections.

Ms Churley: Mr Speaker, this is ridiculous. Please. I hope you’ll indulge me to start again so the minister can hear me. What the Premier said before was that we’ve had a nuclear industry in Ontario for about 50 years, and it has been, by and large, a very successful and solid record. During the election, he said he might build more nuclear plants.

Minister, now that you’ve read the report, clear up where you stand. Tell us, will you sink billions more into Pickering and nuclear plants?

Hon Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader): The report that was presented to me did not pretend to go beyond the issue of the immediate management concerns around the restart of Pickering. As I indicated—and I believe the member was there—no options are on the table or off the table at this point. The government will have further announcements with respect to not only the future of Pickering but the future of our entire energy system.

We inherited a mess. We inherited a situation where there is no security of supply, no reliability of supply, prices that were fluctuating all over the map. We received this report this week. It did not purport to go beyond the mandate that was very narrowly defined in its undertaking. At this stage what we have said, and it remains my position, which is the position of the government, that we’ve ruled nothing in and nothing out at this point with respect to the future of energy.

It’s important to remember too that we need to have adequate and reliable energy available at all times and in all parts of this province. Premier McGuinty is showing leadership. We will make sure that this province has reliable, safe, clean energy to ensure that our economic future remains bright and prosperous.

Ms Churley: Nuclear power has been neither reliable nor affordable. That’s been proven again today. Minister, I say to you, your support for nuclear power is putting Ontario on the verge of public confidence meltdown.

Let me tell you about nuclear power’s track record—it’s not just today: billion-dollar overruns under your watch at Darlington; billions wasted on the Bruce lease; billions wasted at Pickering and \$18 billion more to close the plants and store the waste.

New Democrats are telling you today we should learn that we should stop tinkering with nuclear power, because every single time that we do, billions of dollars get flushed down the toilet.

So I ask you again, Minister, now that you know how big a boondoggie nuclear power is—

Interruption.

Ms Churley: There’s the call. How can you keep even an open mind to more nuclear plants today?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Order. Need I say it?

Hon Monte Kwinter (Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services): I'd like to offer my apologies to the members of this Legislature.

The Speaker: Thank you very much. Could you all check your devices and turn them off? Minister.

Hon Mr Duncan: There are many questions that need to be addressed in the context of our future energy supply. Surely the member is not suggesting that at this moment we can possibly shut down the nuclear reactors we have and not deal with them. I would remind her, in five years her government did nothing to that effect. You had the chance on many occasions; you did nothing.

In 1993, the board of directors of Ontario Hydro suspended all demand-management programs—all of them. One or two of them were restarted later. They did have a conservation method: Before they froze prices, prices for electricity went up 40% under her government. They refused to address, in a realistic fashion, the reality of our energy sector.

I can assure this House that our supply of energy, when we're done our first term, will be safer, more energy-conservation-wise, and greener and cleaner than anything that gang ever did. That's our commitment. We'll deliver, unlike that rump over there.

1520

VISITORS

Mr Mario Sergio (York West): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Joining us today in the House and watching the progress of the House and the workings of the House, I have the pleasure of introducing a group of students and teachers from the wonderful school of Cardinal McGuigan in the riding of York West, in the west public gallery.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Welcome. You know it's not a point of order, however.

IMMIGRANTS' SKILLS

Mr Khalil Ramal (London-Fanshawe): My question will be for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. Minister, I am glad to know that we finally have a government that is prepared and dedicated to really solving two serious problems facing Ontario: the problem of a skilled labour shortage and the problem of failing to integrate new immigrants into our economy.

Minister, in order to make smart choices, new Canadians need better access to information about how to work in Ontario. What plan does the government have to make information available to skilled immigrants so they can better plan where and how they will practise their skills?

Hon Marie Bountrogianni (Minister of Children's Services, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): I'd like to thank the member opposite. He raises a very important issue. Our government views immigration as a

tremendous opportunity, a solution that will propel our economy and sustain the cultural and social vitality of Ontario.

Earlier we heard from my colleague the Minister of Education how we are doing that at a very young level, with the children of immigrants. But we will do much more, and the honourable member raises that as well. Each year, more than 120,000 immigrants choose Ontario. No workforce in Canada benefits from immigration more than ours. Our newcomers are highly educated, highly skilled people who offer us a clear competitive advantage in today's global economy if—if—we take the steps to remove the barriers that prevent them from contributing to our labour market and economy. I'm working very closely with the Minister of Economic Development and with the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities to meet this end.

Last month, I met with my federal counterpart to begin collaborative discussion on an immigration agreement for Ontario, an agreement that will improve support for labour market integration, settlement services and language training. My colleagues and I will consult with various stakeholders, including municipalities, to ensure we have an immigration agreement that works for immigrants and works for the province.

Mr Ramal: I have another question to the same minister. Minister, Ontario is experiencing a brain gain. Every year, internationally trained professionals bring their skills here. But too many new Canadians are not able to use their skills to make our province better. While many new Ontarians have post-secondary education, thousands of newcomers face barriers that prevent them from working in their field of expertise. How will you harness the skills and expertise of new Ontarians who received their training elsewhere, so they can find good jobs that make use of their talents?

Hon Mrs Bountrogianni: What I'm discovering through our consultations is that there are patchworks of programs—federal, provincial and municipal—but it's the coordination of those programs that is missing. We envision an integrated and comprehensive Internet portal that points potential immigrants to a wide variety of provincial, federal and other resources. This will help people make informed choices about where to live and practise in Ontario before they come. The tragedy does exist that people come here with higher expectations, and we do very little in this province to remove that barrier.

We are the only province that doesn't have an immigration agreement with the federal government. We have begun discussions with the federal government. Consultations begin December 19 and will continue through the new year. We will ensure that our new Canadians have the skills to contribute to the economy of this province.

NORTHERN TAX INCENTIVE ZONE

Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka): My question is for the Minister of Northern Development and

Mines. There was no mention of the northern tax incentive zone in the throne speech. Is the government planning on implementing the northern tax incentive zone, as announced last spring?

Hon Rick Bartolucci (Minister of Northern Development and Mines): I'd like to thank the member from Parry Sound-Muskoka for the question. Indeed, if he's finally agreeing with us that the Tories, his former government, left Ontario with a \$5.6-billion deficit that we have to deal with, if he's saying that his government created 8,200 fewer jobs in northern Ontario in the last six years, if he's saying that because of their failed policies the population in northern Ontario decreased by 4.2%, then what I'm saying to him is, yes, he's right on all of those.

We as a government are looking at very creative strategies to ensure there is renewed growth in northern Ontario, that there is renewed presence of our youth, who have out-migrated from northern Ontario at 18.3% over the course of the last six years. We will explore those possibilities that will turn around this deficit you created for those of us in Ontario and those of us in northern Ontario.

Mr Miller: I assume that was a long-winded way of saying no. I attended the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities meeting May 9, 2003, when then-Premier Eves announced that the entire north was to be a tax incentive zone. I can tell you he received a standing ovation from all the municipal representatives, who recognized how helpful this tax incentive zone designation would be to the economic challenges of the north. I quote from the May 10 Sault Star: "Every community in the north is suffering from declining population and lost assessment and we need the tax-incentive zone to stabilize things," said Joe Fratesi, the city's chief administrative officer." That's the chief administrative officer of the city of Sault Ste Marie.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): Question.

Mr Miller: This initiative was obviously very much supported by northern municipalities. What are you going to do to replace this, if you're not going to carry out this initiative?

Hon Mr Bartolucci: Indeed I did meet, two weeks ago, with FONOM's executive board. Richard Adams from Parry Sound is the chair of that board. Certainly we had great dialogue. Do you know what FONOM was very impressed with? Finally they had a Northern Development and Mines minister who would come and meet them. Finally they understood that Premier McGuinty lived up to his commitment to appoint a northerner as Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

But do you know what they were very concerned about? They were very concerned that the previous government had left the people of northern Ontario in the dark about the looming deficit that was about to happen. They were very concerned that they would have to struggle, but this time in partnership with a government that cared, to tackle the \$5.6-billion deficit that you left.

1530

FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY OFFICE

Mrs Linda Jeffrey (Brampton Centre): My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. The Provincial Auditor's scathing critique of the Family Responsibility Office revealed some very serious flaws in that organization. Here are some alarming facts: There were 1,500 cases with arrears greater than \$50,000, totalling some \$126.7 million, that have not been actively monitored or enforced. Since 1994, the number of case workers has been cut by 20%, while the number of cases has increased by 50%. It takes an average of seven months between the time support falls into arrears and the time of the office's first enforcement action.

Children and families are suffering because of the former government's inaction. What are you planning to do to make sure that deadbeat parents pay their family support obligations on time so that our children get the justice they deserve?

Hon Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues): I want to thank the member from Brampton Centre because this is an issue that I think is near and dear to the hearts of many individuals in this House. Many of us have worked in our constituency offices over the years with the Family Responsibility Office to try to get support for families in our constituencies. I can't tell you the irony now, being within this ministry to deal with the problems that we have been identifying for the government for so many years.

I want to assure the member from Brampton Centre. In her short days as new MPP for Brampton, she's already received calls about the FRO office, and I am telling her to let her people know that in a very short time, we will see some modest improvements in service for these people. I'm suggesting that within three months we'll see some improvements; within six months, we'll see more. We know that gives us some time to identify our strategy to attack the real problems. My first tour outside of the offices of the ministry was, in fact, to see the Family Responsibility Office, and I was struck by the industrial revolution-type assembly line systems that they have to employ to do their job. This area will not be ignored by this government, and I want assure the member from Brampton Centre of that.

Mrs Jeffrey: Minister, I'm glad to hear you're taking this very seriously. However, a constituent in my riding who's struggling to raise her son is in need of support payments from her former spouse—payments that are court ordered, yet the arrears are six months old, with no sign of resolution in the future. Another constituent who's living on a fixed income has been dutifully paying his monthly support, but this month, due to an error somewhere in the system, too much money was deducted from his monthly income and now he's not able to pay his rent.

The auditor states that the FRO is "in grave danger of failing to meet its mandated responsibilities." That's a

damning statement. The former government failed to protect families and children.

Minister, what are you planning to do to ensure that these problems are corrected and families in my riding are able to get the answers they need?

Hon Ms Papatello: I can't stress to this member how urgent it is that we get to the bottom of actually having our staff work on enforcement of the court orders. This is just one example of the numbers of individuals, families and children, who have been forced on to welfare, who should be receiving payments through their spouses. We're going to fix this. We've already introduced some new technologies to free up staff people. We've got to get past 90% of the people who can't get through on the telephone lines, and we're working on that. We have plans to use some very aggressive means so that our people will have the tools required to go after people who aren't paying what justice says they should pay. We're insistent that people shouldn't be on welfare and that parents who should be paying support will pay support. We're determined to fix this, and I hope that all the members of the House are going to work with us to see that this is done.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): My question is to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. First, I'd like to extend my congratulations on your recent election and appointment to cabinet. I can assure you, you did beat a very respected member from Scarborough East, Steve Gilchrist. Furthermore, your appointment as Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities reflects your background as a banking executive and former vice-chair of the governing council of the University of Toronto.

Recently, I, along with other members, I'm sure, met with Adam Spence, Paul Yeoman and Graeme Stewart, members of the Ontario Undergraduate Student Association. These young student leaders had several requests. They want the government to make sure that it maintains and improves the quality of education at universities in the midst of a tuition freeze. They also asked for the OSAP maximum to be increased to reflect the current level of expenditures for students in university.

Minister, are you prepared to commit to the requests of these students for the future of Ontario?

Hon Mary Anne V. Chambers (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities): I'm very grateful, but a little surprised, to have received that question from the member from Durham. Thank you for your question. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to share with you the distress that those same students shared with me when they met with me yesterday.

Hon James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism and Recreation): They were worried about the deficit.

Hon Mrs Chambers: We actually didn't even get into the deficit, when in fact we could have.

But I think you may want to realize that those students are well aware of the situation that your government has left this province with, a shameful situation, a situation that suggests that your government did not seem to understand that the province would be a lot better off if you had invested adequately, as opposed to insufficiently, in our colleges and universities.

So thank you very much for your question, but I'm really surprised that you would want me to reveal the inadequacy of your support for that system.

Mr O'Toole: I would take that as a no, that you aren't going to help the students. I think it's shameful that you've responded with the tried and trivial message of the \$5.6-billion deficit. You either believe in students and are going to invest or you don't. It's that simple.

Furthermore, Minister, on behalf of the students and families—I've had five children. I know that this is a leading question, but certainly in Durham, with the new university, I believe that the new UOIT needs to have your commitment to the ongoing capital required to meet the double cohort at that university and indeed across Ontario. Are you prepared to commit to the students' future, both in the completion of the capital projects that we started and funded as well as the operating funding for students in their full-time education at our universities and colleges?

Hon Mrs Chambers: I'm really happy to address the supplementary from the member from Durham. I want to tell you that the McGuinty government's Ontario includes all Ontarians, not just the people of Durham and not just institutions that may have been opened up by your government. Please understand that there are 18 universities and 24 colleges that are publicly funded, and our government, the government of Premier McGuinty, is fully committed to properly supporting every single student in this province who is qualified for post-secondary education. We are committed to accessibility, we are committed to affordability and we are committed to quality, and I don't think you can make the same claim, based on your record.

1540

BROWNFIELDS REDEVELOPMENT

Mr Dave Levac (Brant): My question is to the Minister of the Environment. Brantford, in the riding of Brant, which I am honoured to represent, is a wonderful and historic city that was known in the 19th century as the heartland of industry. But Brantford is a city in transition and renewal. Parcels of land known as brownfields are lying in waste, waiting for remediation. In order for Brantford to have a sustainable and healthy urban core, these brownfields must be returned to vibrant use, particularly residential, and for those that are surrounding those lots.

What can the minister do in concert with the city of Brantford to ensure the redevelopment of these lands for a healthy, sustainable Brantford of the future. Will you meet with the representatives from our city and the

brownfields redevelopment committee to discuss these brownfield sites and see how we may partner to reclaim these underutilized and often abandoned lands?

Hon Leona Dombrowsky (Minister of the Environment): Brownfields are certainly a very important issue. You probably recall that the Premier made a commitment during the throne speech that we are going to do all we can as a government to assist municipalities to reclaim these lands.

These lands are integral for two reasons. They can go a long way in their redevelopment to address urban sprawl. In many municipalities these are serviced lots that are not being utilized. We certainly want to do all we can as a government, and the Ministry of the Environment will do all we can to ensure that municipalities in their development plans can move forward in a way that protects the health of the community and our environment. I would be very happy to meet with any municipality that would like to work with us to do this.

The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling): That is the end of oral questions.

I just want to make a point: The member for Toronto-Danforth approached me with regard to the fact that she was unable to hear herself when she was asking a question, and I have taken it under consideration. There is quite a lot of noise in the assembly today, and I want to say to her that we all have to protect the one who is asking the question and the one who is answering the question. I'm going to ask for more co-operation in the future so I can hear the members very clearly. I could hear her but I'm quite sure many other members here could not hear her.

PETITIONS

ADOPTION DISCLOSURE

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): I have a petition which reads—oh, here is Laura Konkell, the page from Toronto-Danforth. Laura is going to deliver this petition to the table. It reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas existing adoption secrecy legislation is outdated and unjust;

“Whereas Canada has ratified standards of civil and human rights in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the UN Declaration of Human Rights, and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child; these rights are denied to persons affected by secrecy provisions in adoption laws of the Child and Family Services Act and other acts in Ontario;

“Whereas 20% of persons in Ontario are directly or indirectly affected by restricted rights to personal information available to other citizens;

“Whereas the adopted person's right to his or her birth identity is rooted in a basic and fundamental human need;

“Whereas most birth parents did not ask for lifelong confidentiality; it was imposed on them involuntarily;

“Whereas research shows that not knowing basic personal information has harmed adopted persons, birth parents, adoptive parents and other birth relatives;

“Whereas research shows that access to adoption information does not cause harm;

“Whereas research shows that unqualified access to information in adoption satisfies the overwhelming majority of the parties involved”;—I will now narrow this down a little bit. It also reads:

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario to enact revision of the Child and Family Services Act and other acts to:

“Permit unrestricted access to identifying information to adoptive parents of minor children...;

“Allow adopted persons and birth relatives to file a notice stating their wish for no contact;...

“Recognize open adoptions in the legislation.”

This is a long petition. I will now sign my name because I fully support it.

TUITION

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): I have received a few more petitions from the Canadian Federation of Students. I know that you're interested in this as well because this is a bona fide, good petition from the students. It reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas average” student “fees in Ontario are the second-highest in Canada; and

“Whereas average undergraduate” student “fees in Ontario have more than doubled in the past 10 years; and

“Whereas tuition fees for deregulated programs have, in certain cases, doubled and even tripled; and

“Whereas Statistics Canada has documented a link between increased tuition fees and diminished access to post-secondary education; and

“Whereas four other provincial governments have taken a leadership role by freezing and reducing tuition fees;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to” do the following:

“(1) Freeze tuition fees for all programs at their current levels; and

“(2) Take steps to reduce the tuition fees of all graduate programs, post-diploma programs and professional programs for which tuition fees have been deregulated since 1998.”

Since I agree with this petition, I am happy to sign my name to it.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford): “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty, our newly elected Premier, has publicly pledged to move quickly to re-

establish local democracy when it comes to public education in Ontario; and

“Whereas Mr McGuinty has publicly asked that cuts and school closures should be set aside and that business should be left for the incoming, duly elected trustees; and

“Whereas Mr Gerard Kennedy, our newly elected Minister of Education, has stated publicly that school boards aren’t operating as closed shops any more; and

“Whereas there is universal support for the school amongst its staff, parents, student body and the community at large; and

“Whereas Prince of Wales Public School in Barrie is the oldest continuously operated school in Simcoe county; and

“Whereas Prince of Wales Public School has been providing the community with quality education for more than 125 years; and

“Whereas the impact of the closure of Prince of Wales would be devastating on the whole of the downtown core, and most especially the urban neighbourhood which the school serves;

“Be it resolved that we, the undersigned, demand that Dalton McGuinty’s government live up to its commitment and ensure that community schools are not forced to be closed and, specifically, that the Liberal government will immediately halt the closure of Prince of Wales Public School in Barrie, Ontario.”

I agree with the petition and I affix my signature.

PROVINCIAL DEFICIT

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford):

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the government insists there is going to be a \$5.6-billion deficit;

“Whereas the government campaigned on a ‘fully costed plan’ that accounted for a \$2-billion deficit;

“Whereas the government campaigned on a ‘fully costed plan’ that included a \$1-billion contingency fund;

“Whereas the government campaigned on a ‘fully costed plan’ which included over 230 promises;

“We, the undersigned, call upon the provincial government to take the responsible approach and immediately apply to the projected deficit the \$3 billion the government said they had set aside. We believe this will substantially increase Ontario’s ability to balance the books during the current fiscal year and solve the financial dilemma faced by the government.”

I agree with the petition and I affix my signature.

OPTOMETRISTS

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): I have a petition from a couple of hundred people. It reads:

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

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

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

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

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

I support this bill.

1550

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford):

This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, which reads as follows:

“Whereas Prince of Wales Public School is the oldest continuously operating school in Simcoe county; and

“Whereas Prince of Wales Public School has been providing the community with quality education for more than 125 years; and

“Whereas the current government has made no commitment in the recent throne speech to ensure the survival of our school; and

“Whereas the current government has made no commitment in the recent throne speech to add one cent of new funding to classroom spending; and

“Whereas the Liberal government’s priorities in education seem to be” giving “school boards and teachers’ unions more attention than the students in the classroom;

“Be it resolved that we, the undersigned, demand that the Dalton McGuinty government live up to its commitments and ensure that community schools are not forced to close; and that specifically the Dalton McGuinty government will immediately halt the closure of Prince of Wales Public School.”

I agree with the petition. I affix my signature.

OPTOMETRISTS

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a petition that’s been sent to me by people living in both Emo and Fort Frances. It reads as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

I agree with the petitioners and I have affixed my signature to this petition as well.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford): This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty, our newly elected Premier, has publicly pledged to move quickly to re-establish local democracy when it comes to public education in Ontario; and

“Whereas Mr McGuinty has publicly asked that cuts and school closures should be set aside and that business should be left for incoming, duly elected trustees; and

“Whereas Mr Gerard Kennedy, our newly elected Minister of Education, has stated publicly that school boards aren’t operated as closed shops any more; and

“Whereas there is universal support for the school among its staff, parent and student body and the community at large; and

“Whereas Prince of Wales Public School in Barrie is the oldest continuously operating school in Simcoe county; and

“Whereas Prince of Wales Public School has been providing the community with quality education for more than 125 years; and

“Whereas the impact of the closure of Prince of Wales will be devastating on the whole of the downtown core and most especially the urban neighbourhood which the school serves;

“Be it resolved that we, the undersigned, demand that the Dalton McGuinty government live up to its commitment and ensure that community schools are not forced to be closed and that specifically the Liberal government will immediately halt the closure of Prince of Wales Public School in Barrie, Ontario.”

I agree with it and have affixed my signature.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Resuming the debate adjourned on December 2, 2003, on the motion by Mr Duncan to apply a timetable to certain business of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Bruce Crozier): Further debate? The Chair recognizes the member for Beaches-East York.

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): I’ll get right to it. I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker: Sorry. I’m informed by the table that you completed your comments the last time around. It was questions and comments, but perhaps it didn’t get—

Mr Prue: I had approximately two minutes left.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker: There you are. I’ll give a minute for the table, but they’ve given me that information. I’m sorry, that’s the way I’ll have to rule.

The record shows there was a finish to the debate. Further debate?

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I participate in the debate, not with any great pleasure. You would know, because you’ve been here for some time and maybe other members won’t know this, but I have been here now over 16 years. In fact, there are but a handful of people who have been here longer than me, about 10. It’s a bizarre situation to be a veteran in this House and only be 40 years old, but that is the circumstance.

I have seen a lot of change in terms of the operation of this House, in terms of people’s relationships one to the other in this House, in terms of the business that’s been conducted or not conducted. I think that I have to say very clearly that we operate now in a scenario that I find to be really difficult.

I came at a time in 1987 when there was a huge Liberal majority that was elected. I was one of but three members who were elected from the New Democratic Party at that time for a caucus of 19. My colleague, Howard Hampton, was elected at the same time, and we had a former colleague, Mike Farnan, who was elected in Cambridge. It was a huge Liberal majority under David Peterson, and some of those people from that majority are still here today.

I can say, as I reflect on that time, that there were a number of pieces of legislation that we supported that were brought forward by that government. Off the top, I remember that we supported pay equity legislation that came forward in that time. There were a number of finance bills that we supported; there were changes in assessment that we supported.

I also remember that, by and large, for a good portion of that three-year period, legislation was dealt with in a timely fashion. I recall that there was agreement to much of the legislation in terms of timing. There was a recognition that the government was going to get its bill

at the end of the day, given the huge majority, and there was, on many, many pieces of legislation, an agreement among the three House leaders about how much time would be spent in debate, how much time would be spent on committee and how much time would be taken with travel. I think, by and large, things functioned relatively well.

Let me give you an example, with respect to committee, because during that period of time, I was the critic for workers' compensation and the current finance minister was the Minister of Labour. He was responsible for bringing in Bill 162, which was a bill that involved very significant changes to the Workers' Compensation Board.

We in the New Democratic Party made it clear to the government at the very outset that we were opposed to many of the changes that the government was bringing forward. The government understood that. The minister, to his credit, understanding that we were going to oppose this and do whatever we could to oppose it, still agreed to some very significant public hearings across the province. He did that to his credit, because for those of us who were on the committee, it wasn't a lot of fun. It wasn't a lot of fun for some of the Liberal members who are on the government side. But we must have had at least four weeks of public hearings right around the province with respect to that piece of legislation: Chatham, Windsor, London, Sudbury, Thunder Bay, Ottawa—we were all over the place. Not only did we have very significant public hearings, where people on both sides of the issue—injured workers and their advocates on one side and employers on the other—had an opportunity to come and have their say, but when it came time for the clause-by-clause portion of Bill 162, we had quite significant time in committee. I can't remember how much time, but I can certainly tell you it was a whole lot longer than we see being given to bills in clause-by-clause today or, in fairness to this particular government, what we had under the previous regime.

1600

Those are some of my recollections about that three-year period. Despite a very large majority, there was much agreement on the timing and the House business during that period of time. There was a great deal of committee work done. I mentioned Bill 162 because I was the critic at the time, but there was debate that occurred on auto insurance, there was debate that occurred on pay equity, and there was debate that occurred on other labour changes. By and large, there was a fair bit of committee time that was held, not just here at Queen's Park but around the province, so that people could have a chance to have their say.

I look at my experience then, in the first three years, and I look at what is before us today, and I don't think things are changing for the better in terms of politics in Ontario. I think all of us have a share in the blame for that. I regret that we find ourselves in a position now where there is essentially very little committee time allocated to bills. That certainly became the common

practice under the past government over the last eight years, and regrettably I see the government continuing with this practice. How many times in time allocation motions in the last two or three Parliaments under the Conservatives did we see time allocation motions that came forward and allocated perhaps one or two days of committee—one or two days of committee here at Queen's Park, not out on the road hearing from people across the province—and committee time that would occur after the end of routine proceedings and finish by 6 pm?

I sat regularly on Wednesdays in the last Parliament—actually, for the last couple of years—and my colleague Tony Martin and I used to say, "If it's Wednesday, it must be a time allocation day." The Speaker will know that, because he sat on a lot of those Wednesdays, and he remembers that regularly, frequently—

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): Inevitably.

Ms Martel: Inevitably, my colleague from Niagara Centre is quite right, a Wednesday was a time allocation day. Pretty common to the time allocations were either very limited time for hearings only here at Queen's Park, or none at all, and third reading debate that didn't occur at all, or if it did, it might have occurred on a single afternoon. Again and again, Wednesday after Wednesday, time allocation motion after time allocation motion, under the former government, we saw legitimate debate being cut off, being strangled, being choked off, to the point where you really wondered what the point was in the rest of us, who were legitimately elected, being here to try to raise an opposing point of view.

What's interesting is that we weren't the only two, as New Democrats on those Wednesday afternoons, who used to rail against those time allocation motions. I look at Mr Caplan, who is here in the Legislature this afternoon. On more than one occasion on those Wednesday afternoons, Mr Caplan was on his feet. He was railing against the Conservative government. He was talking about the breakdown in democracy. He was talking about what a Liberal government would do, if elected, to restore democracy in this place.

He had a great deal to say about how undemocratic the Conservative government was, about the jackboot tactics the Conservative government was using time and again, Wednesday afternoon after Wednesday afternoon, to shut down legitimate debate.

It didn't matter what the issue was. If it was education legislation, if it was finance legislation, if it was labour legislation—although in the case of labour law, the government didn't have much debate on very many issues. I remember the Conservative government repealing the law we had brought into place to ban scabs, a law I'm very proud of. I remember the Conservative government shut down that debate very quickly. There were no public hearings. There was not much debate on third reading. It was over. Done.

Mr Kormos: Did the Liberals care?

Ms Martel: Well, it's true that the Liberals didn't care very much about the repeal of the anti-scab law, because

the truth is that when we brought the bill forward, both the Conservatives and the Liberals voted against our bill to ban scabs. So they had the same point of view, the same philosophy, the same position on that very important piece of labour legislation.

I find that regrettable because—and I'll give you a very clear example—in the last three years in my community alone, Sudbury-Nickel Belt, we've had four very significant strikes. In every case, scabs were used by the employers from day one.

There was the case beginning in August 2000 at Falconbridge: Mine-Mill workers were faced with scabs the day that strike started, August 1, 2000. That strike went on for well over six and a half months. I can tell you that strike was prolonged because there was no incentive for the employer to get back to the negotiating table and bargain a contract. There was no impetus, because he—I use that generically to refer to Falconbridge—could bring in scabs, and did right from the get-go, and still continue work at the smelter and some ongoing production.

There was a second strike that occurred at Sudbury Downs. Again, from the get-go, scabs were in place during that three and a half week strike. The employer brought them in from day one that that strike started. Again, there was very little incentive on the part of the employer to negotiate. Why should they when they could bring in scabs?

Mr Kormos: —sees a motion coming.

Ms Martel: What kind of motion?

Mr Kormos: Well, to adjourn the debate.

Ms Martel: OK, let me just finish with the scabs.

Two other points, because I want to finish this part of my remarks with respect to scabs. There was a strike as well at a place called Marona Kitchen, a very small operation—13 months. The bargaining unit went in there in the first place because there were serious concerns about health and safety. After 13 months, with the employer using scabs from day one, that strike was finally ended. Frankly, the union was broken as well because of the changes that government had made around decertification.

The fourth one involved the Sudbury Star—my colleague Mr Kormos was on that picket line with me last March—and again from the get-go, the publishing company, Osprey, had scabs in doing the work of people who were legitimately on strike. In the case of the Sudbury Star, they were in fact locked out. They didn't even have a chance to vote on a strike; the employer locked them out before that could even happen.

I remember that we had much consultation on that bill, over 18 months of consultation with respect to that change and changes to the Ontario Labour Relations Act. When the Conservatives came to power, there was no consultation and no public hearings. After seven hours, that bill was repealed. It was done and over with.

On that note, Speaker, at this point I move adjournment of the debate.

The Acting Speaker: Ms Martel has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30 minute bell

The division bells rang from 1609 to 1639.

The Acting Speaker: All those in favour, please stand.

Take your seats.

All those opposed, please stand.

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 6; the nays are 37.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

Further debate?

Ms Martel: We're dealing with government order number 3. We've resumed the adjourned debate on a motion that was put forward by Mr Duncan, which essentially applies a timetable to the business of the House.

I know that people from the Liberal Party have tried not to refer to it as a time allocation motion. Frankly, it is the mother of all time allocation motions, because it deals with three pieces of legislation, one of which had not even had two days of debate; it deals with an opposition day; and it deals with two government motions as well, something we have not seen in this House, certainly in the time that I have been an MPP, which is over 16 years now.

I want to talk about the motion itself, but I think I need to just go back a bit and set the stage so that people understand how bizarre it is that we would see a Liberal government move forward with such a motion—I say the mother of all time allocation motions—when some of these very people had so much to say against the same kind of thing when it was perpetrated on us by a former Conservative government.

I look, for example, at what Mr Duncan had to say on December 9, 2002. We were dealing at that time with another time allocation motion moved by the Conservatives, and Mr Duncan said the following:

"I'm always reminded that previous governments, whether the NDP government of Mr Rae or the Liberal government of David Peterson or indeed the Conservative government of the great Premier William Davis, rarely, if ever, used time allocation—rarely, if ever."

"Peterson used it twice. I believe Mr Rae was in the magnitude of 10 or 11 times. Mr Davis, with his mandates, both minority and majority mandates, rarely used the tool either."

That was Mr Dwight Duncan railing against the Conservatives moving time allocation on December 9, and here we are. We haven't even sat for two weeks and we've got Mr Dwight Duncan, Liberal House leader, moving the mother of all time allocation motions in this House, a precedent that we have not seen, a precedent which has now been set as a result of the Speaker's

ruling—a ruling that I feel is very difficult to accept, but a ruling that has been made by the Speaker nonetheless.

That's what Mr Duncan had to say when he railed against it, and here he is in a Parliament, where we've sat for less than two weeks now, doing less than that in terms of business. We had the election of the Speaker, of course, and we had the throne speech, and one Mr Dwight Duncan has come in here and just landed on this House with the jackboot motion of all time to shut down debate.

He's not the only one who had something to say about these kinds of time allocation motions. Here's one from December 3. We were dealing with a time allocation motion that day—it probably was a Wednesday—December 3, 2001. Mr McMeekin, the member from Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot, said, "I'm also pleased to join in this important debate." It was the debate about the time allocation motion, and he said, "A very wise man once said, 'You don't know what you've got until you lose it.' In these troubling times, we must be particularly vigilant to affirm our most precious democratic freedoms, because compromising core components of our healthy democratic process is very dangerous indeed, and we've seen a lot of that the last week."

Where is the member? Here we are today, with his Liberal House leader moving the mother of all time allocation motions, and he's got nothing to say about how dangerous that is, how wrong that is and how his government shouldn't be doing it. The same member who used to rail most recently against the Conservatives is silent, is just complicit with the tactic that is being used here today, which is essentially to shut down debate, not just on one bill but on three bills, on an opposition day and on two government motions.

And let us not forget Mr Bradley, who has been here longer than I, who has been here a very long time indeed. Here is one example, December 3, 2002: "If the Eves government is not called to account in a very public and prolonged manner, how can Ontario citizens have any hope that a fair and vibrant democracy can exist in that province?" How indeed can they have any hope? "The Eves crowd has rigged the procedural rules of the Legislature to ensure complete control of the parliamentary process and timetable, and uses its majority to choke off debate and shut out the public. Does anyone care?" I've got to ask Mr Bradley, does he care? It was OK when he was on this side to rail against a big Conservative majority when they were choking down debate. Where is he? Why isn't he standing in his place? Why isn't he condemning his House leader and his leader, Mr McGuinty, for the very same tactics that he used to rail against when he was over here in the opposition? Somehow, it's OK that the McGuinty crowd can come forward with a time allocation motion to choke off debate and shut down the democratic process. It sure wasn't OK when he was over here. What has changed?

We have a motion before us. Not only does it allocate one bill; it allocates three. It tells the opposition when

they have to have their opposition day, which is going to be next Wednesday, December 10.

It shuts down debate on two debatable government motions, which would have allowed us two or three days of debate, and the government has nothing to say. The government thinks it's OK. The Liberals, who had so much to say about how undemocratic this was, think it's OK. I guess that was then and this is now.

In conclusion, I think I should move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion shall carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1648 to 1718.

The Acting Speaker: All those in favour, please stand.

OK, take your seats.

All those opposed, please stand.

You may take your seats.

Clerk of the House: The ayes are 5; the nays are 35.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

Further debate?

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): I, for one, am basically a member of the opposition. I believe we each have a duty here in the House. We have been discussing what's been referred to as the mother of all time allocation motions. It's a program motion that really exceeds anything that we did when we were government.

If I look over the Hansard record, which I have, in preparation for these few remarks—the two 20-minute remarks—the three bills, it's my understanding, are being referred for further discussion in many cases. There's been considerable debate, looking through the Hansard records, and it's my understanding that the government moved this substantive time allocation motion, and the opposition are of some accord on this. It seems that the rump of individuals now referred to as the third party or the NDP party are really interfering with the procedures.

The Acting Speaker: Point of order?

Mr Kormos: Yes, I suspect more so with respect to syntax and grammar: To speak of the NDP party is a redundancy. It's either the New Democratic Party or the NDP, Mr O'Toole.

The Acting Speaker: That's not a point of order.

Mr O'Toole: I might have been referring to—the Marilyn Churley-NDP was what I was referring to.

But with your indulgence, I beg leave that the question now be put.

The Acting Speaker: Mr O'Toole has moved that the question be put.

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

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1721 to 1751.

The Acting Speaker: Mr O'Toole has moved that the question now be put. All those in favour, stand one at a time until recognized.

Ayes

Agostino, Dominic	Duguid, Brad	Phillips, Gerry
Arthurs, Wayne	Duncan, Dwight	Qaadri, Shafiq
Baird, John R.	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Racco, Mario G.
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Fonseca, Peter	Ramal, Khalil
Bountrogianni, Marie	Gravelle, Michael	Ruprecht, Tony
Bradley, James J.	Jeffrey, Linda	Sergio, Mario
Brotan, Laurel C.	Kennedy, Gerard	Tascona, Joseph N.
Cansfield, Donna H.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Wilkinson, John
Caplan, David	Levac, Dave	Wong, Tony C.
Colle, Mike	Marsales, Judy	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Cordiano, Joseph	Mossop, Jennifer F.	Zimmer, David
Delaney, Bob	O'Toole, John	
Dhillon, Vic	Peterson, Tim	

The Acting Speaker: All those opposed, please stand and be recognized.

Nays

Bisson, Gilles	Kormos, Peter	Prue, Michael
Churley, Marilyn	Marchese, Rosario	

Clerk of the House: The ayes are 37; the nays are 5.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

On December 2, Mr Duncan moved government notice of motion number 13. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

Those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1755 to 1825.

The Acting Speaker: Mr Duncan has moved government notice of motion number 13.

All those in favour will stand one at a time and be recognized.

Ayes

Agostino, Dominic	Duguid, Brad	Peterson, Tim
Arthurs, Wayne	Duncan, Dwight	Phillips, Gerry
Baird, John R.	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Qaadri, Shafiq
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Fonseca, Peter	Racco, Mario G.
Bradley, James J.	Gravelle, Michael	Ramal, Khalil
Brotan, Laurel C.	Jeffrey, Linda	Ruprecht, Tony
Cansfield, Donna H.	Kennedy, Gerard	Sergio, Mario
Caplan, David	Klees, Frank	Tascona, Joe
Chambers, Mary Anne V.	Kwinter, Monte	Wilkinson, John
Colle, Mike	Marsales, Judy	Wong, Tony C.
Delaney, Bob	Mossop, Jennifer F.	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Dhillon, Vic	O'Toole, John	Zimmer, David

The Acting Speaker: All those opposed will rise one at a time and be recognized.

Nays

Bisson, Gilles	Kormos, Peter	Prue, Michael
Churley, Marilyn	Marchese, Rosario	

Clerk of the House: The ayes are 36; the nays are 5.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

It being past 6 of the clock, this House is adjourned until 6:45 of the clock.

The House adjourned at 1827.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

Continued from overleaf

TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Jeudi 4 décembre 2003

AFFAIRES D'INTÉRÊT PUBLIC ÉMANANT DES DÉPUTÉS

Loi de 2003 sur la protection des élèves anaphylactiques, projet de loi 3, <i>M. Levac</i>	
Adoptée.....	429

PREMIÈRE LECTURE

Loi de 2003 modifiant la Loi sur les personnes handicapées de l'Ontario, projet de loi 12, <i>M. Jackson</i>	
Adoptée.....	432
Loi de 2003 sur l'autoroute Macdonald-Cartier, projet de loi 13, <i>M. Lalonde</i>	
Adoptée.....	432
Loi de 2003 modifiant des lois en ce qui concerne la divulgation de renseignements sur les adoptions, projet de loi 14, <i>M^{me} Churley</i>	
Adoptée.....	433

CONTENTS

Thursday 4 December 2003

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Anaphylactic Students Protection Act, 2003, Bill 3, <i>Mr Levac</i>	
Mr Levac	413, 419
Mr Tascona	414
Mrs Cansfield	416
Mr Barrett	416
Mr Qaadri	417
Mr Bradley	418
Mr Bisson	418
Agreed to	429
Democratic renewal, private member's notice of motion number 2, <i>Mr Murdoch</i>	
Mr Murdoch	420, 428
Ms Di Cocco	421
Mr Barrett	422
Mr Parsons	423
Mr Miller	423
Mr Prue	424
Mr Patten	425
Mr Tascona	425
Ms Churley	427
Mr Bisson	427
Agreed to	429

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Education tax credit	
Mr Flaherty	429
Run for Ovarian Cancer	
Ms Matthews	429
University of Ontario Institute of Technology	
Mr O'Toole	429
Property taxation	
Mr Sergio	430
Transportation planning	
Mr Hudak	430
Roger Neilson	
Mr Leal	430
Taxation	
Mr Tascona	431
Ukrainian genocide	
Ms Broten	431
Cabinet ministers	
Mr Runciman	431
Liberal campaign promises	
Mr Prue	431

FIRST READINGS

Ontarians with Disabilities Amendment Act, 2003, Bill 12, <i>Mr Jackson</i>	
Agreed to	432
Mr Jackson	432
Macdonald-Cartier Freeway Act, 2003, Bill 13, <i>Mr Lalonde</i>	
Agreed to	432
Adoption Disclosure Statute Law Amendment Act, 2003, Bill 14, <i>Ms Churley</i>	
Agreed to	433
Ms Churley	433

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

Pickering nuclear generating station	
Mr Duncan	433
Mr Jackson	434
Ms Churley	435

ORAL QUESTIONS

Provincial deficit	
Mr Baird	437
Mr Sorbara	437
Highway tolls	
Mr Klees	438
Mr Sorbara	438
Ontario drug benefit program	
Mrs Witmer	439
Mr Sorbara	439
Education funding	
Ms Wynne	439
Mr Kennedy	439, 440
Mr Flaherty	440
Meat inspection	
Mrs Van Bommel	441
Mr Peters	441
Police services	
Mr Dunlop	442
Mr Kwinter	442
Nuclear energy	
Ms Churley	442
Mr Duncan	442
Immigrants' skills	
Mr Ramal	443
Mrs Bountrogianni	443

Northern tax incentive zone

Mr Miller	443
Mr Bartolucci	444
Family Responsibility Office	
Mrs Jeffrey	444
Ms Papatello	444
Post-secondary education funding	
Mr O'Toole	445
Mrs Chambers	445
Brownfields redevelopment	
Mr Levac	445
Mrs Dombrowsky	446

PETITIONS

Adoption disclosure	
Ms Churley	446
Tuition	
Mr Ruprecht	446
School closures	
Mr Tascona	446, 447, 448
Provincial deficit	
Mr Tascona	447
Optometrists	
Mr Marchese	447
Ms Martel	447

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Business of the House, government notice of motion number 13, <i>Mr Duncan</i>	
Ms Martel	448
Mr O'Toole	451
Agreed to	452

OTHER BUSINESS

Visitors	
Mr Colle	432
Mr Craitor	432
Mr Sergio	443
Orders and notices	
Mr Kormos	435
Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women	
Ms Papatello	436
Mrs Witmer	436
Ms Churley	437

Continued overleaf