



No. 5A

N° 5A

ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly
of Ontario

First Session, 37th Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario

Première session, 37^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 27 October 1999

Mercredi 27 octobre 1999

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 27 October 1999

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 27 octobre 1999

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

PRINCE EDWARD-HASTINGS ECONOMY

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): My statement today is directed to the Premier and to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. It appears, unfortunately, that after four years in power for this government, they have not yet recognized that not all of Ontario is enjoying the prosperity that the greater Toronto area is.

The Prince Edward-Hastings economy is one of these areas. This past week my region was dealt another blow with the news that Bata will cease all production at their Batawa facility. This announcement is just the latest in a series of job losses my region has experienced over the years. These jobs are vital to our local economy and they enable our people to raise their families.

Unemployment in my region is 7.8%, compared to the provincial average of 6.4%. While 6.4% is dismal, 7.8% is tragic. But these numbers don't yet include the effect of Nortel, with 722 jobs gone, and Bata, with 209 jobs gone, and others.

Travelling throughout my riding, I've had the opportunity to meet many workers who have lost their jobs, and they have a message for the Premier: They want help from their government and they need it now. The economic problems facing our region are real, and I can assure you that they're hurting people.

I call upon this government to show some leadership and address the serious economic issues taking place in most parts of this province. Those who are losing their jobs were looking to the throne speech for help. My constituents were hoping that the throne speech would offer some specific proposals to deal with their concerns and give them a fighting chance. Unfortunately, the throne speech made it clear that when it comes to economic issues in eastern Ontario, the Mike Harris government either is not listening or it doesn't care.

Premier, my constituents need action, not rhetoric.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Just so the members know, if it is a member's first statement, I will have a little bit of leeway in terms of the time. I know sometimes it's difficult making the judgment on the time the first time around, so for any of the new members I will allow a little bit of grace on that matter.

WHITE RIBBON CAMPAIGN

Mr Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge): As I have in past years, I proudly stand in the House today to mark National White Ribbon Against Pornography Week. The week of October 24 to 31 has been declared WRAP Week across Canada. I have distributed pamphlets and white ribbons to all members of the House and ask that they consider wearing the ribbons to show their opposition to pornography in our society.

The annual white ribbon campaign encourages all citizens to wear the ribbon as an expression of their concern with the proliferation of pornography and its negative effects on our communities. Wearing the ribbon brings awareness to this growing problem. By educating the public, it unites all those who are concerned and highlights the importance to community leaders.

The white ribbon campaign is promoted by the Catholic Women's League, a very active organization in my community of Cambridge and across all of Ontario. I thank all the volunteers for their hard work and also the members of this Legislature for their support of this very important initiative.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I thank the member for his statement. The member will know that for wearing ribbons you need unanimous consent. Would the member like to ask for unanimous consent? Agreed.

ARCHIVES OF ONTARIO

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): Mr Speaker, in beginning, on behalf of my constituents, please accept our congratulations on your appointment as Speaker.

Today I'd like to pay tribute to the important efforts of the Elgin St Thomas Archives Association. Their goal is to see a permanent archives established and to make that archives accessible to the public. I believe that archives play a very important role in preserving our past for future generations.

The Archives of Ontario was established in 1903 with a mandate to collect and preserve Ontario's heritage. This collection has grown to over 200,000 cubic feet, so large that 70% of our heritage is stored off-site. Collections held at the municipal level are in a similar state. Our province is seeing the number of municipalities rapidly shrinking.

I am concerned that during this restructuring process, valuable historic records will be lost. I believe it is up to the province to do something about it. The Ontario

government must act in conjunction with the Archives of Ontario and the Archives Association of Ontario to undertake a consultation process and plan for the future of archives in Ontario. In addition, this government must ensure that there is adequate funding in place for archives.

My hope is to one day see an archives established in all Ontario counties, regions and major cities to preserve our heritage and to keep the past vibrant for the future.

WALKERTON ECONOMY

Mr Bill Murdoch (Bruce-Grey): The other week our fine colleagues of the press painted another doom-and-gloom story about rural Ontario, specifically one of my riding's most beautiful areas, Walkerton. And as usual, the negative press of the Toronto Star got it wrong, painting a picture of a small town facing an economic recession. Walkerton, my friends, is facing anything but that.

As far as great opportunities and quality of life are concerned, Walkerton has everything to offer, from being the seat of Bruce county to the recent launch of the new 125-acre East Ridge business park. This town, with its tree-lined streets and beautiful homes, celebrated its 125th birthday in 1996. Does this sound like a town facing the blues? I don't think so.

This year, the Rotary Club of Walkerton is celebrating 60 years of service. Down in the dumps? No, this town is full of citizens who have overcome what could have been insurmountable changes, a town that has launched, in conjunction with its municipality, a new plan resulting in the development of the Walkerton community development team.

Yes, the spool and bobbin factory did close down 10 years ago, but now the site is being torn down. That in itself is providing jobs, not to mention improving the scenery of the beautiful Saugeen River.

In the wake of the Canadian Tire store closing, three new businesses have sprung up, adding to the unique shopping experience that can only be found in Walkerton.

Walkerton offers a standard of living that many towns would envy, a low crime rate and beautiful scenery, the perfect combination of a rural and urban setting.

Next time you read the negative gloom and doom about small-town Ontario, don't believe it. Small-town Ontario—Walkerton—is doing just fine.

HIGHWAY SAFETY

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex): I would like to address my comments to the Minister of Transportation. In the summer, you described your tour on the London-Windsor section of the 401, where an inordinate number of highway deaths occurred, as a "pleasant drive." When you were forced to admit that your pleasant drive was in fact dangerous, you held a highly publicized news conference in Chatham.

As part of your long-overdue announcement, you told us that truck inspections at that section of highway would be carried out on a 24-hour basis. To do this, you would hire more inspectors and reallocate present resources.

As you know, Ministry of Transportation inspectors are responsible for Essex county, which includes Huron Line, Highway 2, Highway 3, Highway 18, Highway 77 and other arterial roads. I've been told that a study done by Ministry of Transportation officials shows that these changes will leave only one inspector for the rest of the areas. This will mean that trucks can simply run circles around the Windsor South inspection station. Obviously, this will have a dramatic effect on the safety of our roads.

Changes to the enforcement system are necessary and long overdue. Despite your promise to hire more officers, your announcement falls far short of providing the necessary tools to do the job. Increased inspection on the 401 should not be to the detriment of safety on the rest of the roads.

I hope it will not take more highway deaths to force you into addressing the problem.

1340

ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES LEGISLATION

Ms Marilyn Churley (Broadview-Greenwood): This Friday, October 29, 1999, will mark the one-year anniversary of the unanimous adoption of a resolution outlining principles that should have been included in the Ontarians with Disabilities Act. I thought it would be useful to remind the government today that we will not forget your betrayal of the disabled community and that disabled people will not forget your betrayal.

It is time to do the right thing. Disabled people are tired of being treated as charity cases. They want to be equal partners, treated with dignity and respect. We've had enough of the vague action plans mentioned in the throne speech.

The disabled community has told you again and again what they want. In 1995 you promised an ODA; in 1998 you introduced a pathetic three-page bill that did nothing to address the barriers to people with disabilities. It was a disgrace and a betrayal. I remember the ODA committee calling it "a kick in the stomach," and that's exactly what it was.

Finally, I want to be clear that this is just one essential first step, but it will not undo all the damage caused by your government. For example, we will continue to bring forward cases of the chaos at the Ontario disability support program, where your under-resourcing and under-staffing of this program have meant that files are lost, calls are left unanswered and transportation allowances are cut. It's a disgrace and must stop today.

AIRPORT NOISE

Mr Carl DeFaria (Mississauga East): I'm pleased to rise today to speak about an issue that is important to the

residents of the Rockwood and Fleetwood communities in Mississauga East.

During the election campaign, I had the opportunity to listen to their concerns about airport noise and how it affects their quality of life and the value of their homes. They expressed their frustration with the federal Liberals, who have jurisdiction over the airport but have failed to bring in measures to curb the noise and to restrict the use of the north-south runways.

As the provincial representative, I want to do what I can to help my constituents in the community. I want to inform the House that I am working on a private member's bill to amend section 19 of the Assessment Act to provide as follows: "For the purpose of determining the current value of land used for residential purposes, consideration shall be given to air traffic noise."

I hope all members of this House will be able to support my private member's bill in this regard. This is an important issue in my riding. Airport noise affects the quality of life of my constituents, and I hope I will have the support of this House when I introduce that private member's bill.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): One of the important parts about being government and about being open and accountable is answering letters. Arrogant governments don't respond to letters, not only from members of Parliament but, more importantly, from members of the public.

Let me give you some examples: to the Minister of Education, several letters—admittedly this was to the minister's predecessor, who was defeated—from one of our members, dated January 6, 1999, February 5, 1999, March 8, 1999—not responded to.

Interjection: None?

Mr Duncan: None. Not one response.

Another one of our members has written to the Minister of Health. This one is most interesting. This is about access to critical care for an individual. This is about someone's health care. I suppose if you're a land developer, a minister will write a letter for you right away. But let me give you an example: October 13, 1998, to the Minister of Health; December 1, 1998, on the same question; April 21 on the same question; October 1, 1999, on the same question—no responses. But they can write to developers.

This government claims that it is here to work for the people, but it really doesn't. If they are not arrogant, they are going to start answering letters from members of Parliament and they are going to answer letters from people in Ontario, not just land developers.

HIGHWAY 407

Mr Toni Skarica (Wentworth-Burlington): In a different vein, I have a good-news story. About an hour ago I was in a groundbreaking ceremony in Oakville, an area

which you have some familiarity with, Mr Speaker. I was there for yet another groundbreaking ceremony for the 407. It was announced that there was another westward expansion towards my riding. You couldn't be there, Mr Speaker, due to your other duties here, but present were Halton Regional Chair Joyce Savoline, Mayor MacIsaac of the city of Burlington, Mayor Mulvale of the town of Oakville, Mayor Krantz of the town of Milton and Mayor Serjeantson of the town of Halton Hills, as well as council Lynda Schreiber from my area. They were joined by the Honourable Cam Jackson, MPP and Minister of Tourism.

As you know, Highway 407's new expansion should reduce traffic on both Regional Road 5 in your riding and the QEW to Oakville and Burlington in both our ridings by 15% to 30% once opened in August 2001. In addition to traffic relief, Highway 407 will provide transportation access to new residential and industrial lands.

The sale of Highway 407 represents great value for the people of Ontario. The privatization means faster construction at no additional cost to the taxpayer. It means more expansions as the 407 expands to the east and west towards my riding, and it means that I can get here quicker for future groundbreaking ceremonies.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I would like to inform the members of the Legislative Assembly that we have today in the Speaker's Gallery a parliamentary delegation from the People's Republic of China. Would you please join me in welcoming our guests.

ORAL QUESTIONS

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): We were informed that the Deputy Premier and the Minister of the Environment would both be here. The Minister of the Environment is here. My question then is for the Minister of the Environment.

Here's a transcript of a radio show from this morning where Gerri-Lynn O'Connor, the mayor of Uxbridge, was interviewed and she said the following with respect to your letter:

"Why is a minister of the provincial government responding to a copy of a letter? Let the application take its course, and I mean certainly a flag went up for this council and for the residents of our community when we see a minister, particularly in light of Janet Ecker, who is our MPP and is in the cabinet and who has taken an arm's distance from this application, stating that once it was before the courts, she didn't want to comment on it," and yet we've got another minister who has gotten deeply involved for whatever reasons.

We're trying to understand the difference between your standards and Janet Ecker's standards. Can you explain to us why she said she wouldn't touch this with a 10-foot pole but, on the other hand, you jumped in with both feet.

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of the Environment, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): It is my pleasure to rise on this issue and reply to the honourable member. I think Janet Ecker and I are actually viewing this from the same angle.

I can report to this House that certainly from my perspective there's nothing in my letter that attempts to interfere with any judicial or quasi-judicial processes. It's indeed not a letter to a judicial or quasi-judicial body; it is a letter from one politician to another politician saying, "Abide by the law." I think it is within my rights, as a minister who has carriage over class EAs and over environmental assessments, to make that point and I stand by that letter.

Mr McGuinty: We're still trying to figure out who's right.

The Minister of Education, Janet Ecker, said the following when she was interviewed this morning: "I don't think it's appropriate for me to take a position formally or officially on a matter that is before the board. It is for the board to make the determination as they see fit."

We got the mayor of Uxbridge saying that you were wrong to get involved with this, so tell us who's right and who's wrong over there. Is Janet right or are you right? You cannot both be right at the same time. From our perspective she's right and you're wrong. So tell us which it is.

1350

Hon Mr Clement: I'd be happy to elaborate and make clear for the honourable member, who has difficulty understanding, that Janet Ecker and I are on the same side. We do not want to interfere with a judicial or quasi-judicial tribunal.

I'll tell you this: The honourable member has not got his facts right and I'd be happy to correct the record, because the honourable member does not have the decency to do so. When I wrote the letter, this was not subject to the Ontario Municipal Board, it was not a subject that was before the board, it was not referred to the board. So when he stands up in the House and says that I interfered with a board, that board did not exist at that time. He should be aware of that and he should have the decency to correct the record on his own behalf.

Mr McGuinty: This may wash with your colleagues here but it's not washing in Ontario.

This is something else the mayor of Uxbridge said:

"First of all, we in local politics understand the rules of the game and I just really feel that he was given some very poor advice in even responding to a copy of a letter, particularly in light that we have another very dangerous situation in Uxbridge township that we've been trying to get the Ministry of the Environment to deal with for two and a half years and they won't come to the table."

Suddenly you are copied a letter from a developer and this becomes a weighty matter, in your estimation. You decide that you'd better weigh in and you fire off a letter to the regional council. You've got another matter that's been sitting on your plate for two and half years at the ministry and you decide you're not going to do anything about that.

You don't have to answer me. Answer the mayor of Uxbridge. Why was it so very important to you that you weigh in on this matter when you're merely copied a letter from a representative of a developer?

Hon Mr Clement: I'd be happy to do the research for the honourable member, because if he had done his research he'd know that the mayor of Uxbridge got a letter from my predecessor addressing and resolving the issue. Perhaps the honourable member should have better researchers.

Here's another revelation for the honourable member and the caucus on the other side: Not only was there no OMB hearing when I wrote the letter, but the subject of my letter was not before the OMB and is not before the OMB at this time. So the subject of the letter, the class environmental assessment, has nothing to do with the OMB hearing. Perhaps the honourable member needs some help with his research. We'd be happy to provide it on this side of the House.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): New question.

Mr McGuinty: The Minister of the Environment has understood the game of politics for a long time; he is hardly a neophyte when it comes to these matters. He's a minister of the crown. When it comes to educating our ministers, we're talking about Poli Sci 101 here. Everybody knows you don't write these kinds of letters. You don't weigh in on these kinds of situations.

Let's set apart now the issue of the OMB. Why did you, as Minister of the Environment, feel that it was entirely appropriate for you to weigh in on behalf of a developer?

Hon Mr Clement: I find myself correcting the record yet again. I encourage the honourable member and his staff to read the letter. It in no way takes a position on the development, it in no way takes a position in favour of or against the development. It simply requests that, in his due deliberations as regional chair, he act within the class EA regulations and the law. I see no reason, either ethical or legal, why I should not write a similar letter.

Mr McGuinty: That is simply incredible. Nobody is buying that. Are you telling us that on a regular basis in your ministry you sign letters, you get involved in these matters? Is that what you're telling us, and that there's nothing wrong with this whatsoever? Whenever these kinds of matters arise, you get involved, you send off a letter? Whenever any developer sends off a letter to you and says they're trying to accomplish something, you suddenly take advantage of this copied letter and you fire off some kind of directive to a regional municipality, or any municipality in Ontario? Is that what you're telling us that you do? Tell us.

Hon Mr Clement: The letter speaks for itself. It's a matter of public record. It was a matter of public record, incidentally, six weeks ago and the Honourable Leader of the Opposition didn't see fit at that time to raise the issue in any public forum. What I would say to the honourable member is that he's weaving a web here, suggesting that somehow I was unduly influencing the regional chair. I can tell you—here's another revelation for the House; the House should be aware of all the facts—that in a CP newswire story that I have occasion to see before me today, Mr Anderson, who is the regional chair, said yesterday that he felt the letter was neutral and the minister was not taking any position. So who is the honourable member, the Leader of the Opposition, trying to kid in this House? That's the question I have for him.

Mr McGuinty: This is what the mayor said. This was the question put to her: "How do you respond to this letter? What should Mr Clement do?"

Her answer: "Well, I think Mr Clement should stay at arm's distance. It's before the courts. Why is a minister of the provincial government responding to a copy of a letter? Janet Ecker, who is our MPP and is in the cabinet, has taken an arm's distance from this application, stating that once it was before the courts that she didn't want to comment on it, and that was a direct comment that she made to regional councillor Susan Para and myself when we asked her if we could sit down with her and discuss what this application meant to Uxbridge township."

Why is it that she decided that it was inappropriate for her to get involved but, on the other hand, you decided, as our protector of the environment, that it was entirely acceptable to you to weigh in on behalf of a developer?

Hon Mr Clement: I find myself correcting the record yet again. Let me say in the simplest of terms so the honourable member can understand: When I wrote the letter there was no OMB hearing. When I wrote the letter it was about the class environmental assessment. When the OMB hearing was raised as an issue, which was after I wrote the letter, the class EA was not part of the OMB hearing. What part of that does he not understand? There was nothing in conflict. There was nothing untoward. There was nothing unethical. There was nothing illegal. If the honourable member has nothing else to talk about in question period, my question to him is, why is he the honourable Leader of the Opposition? Because he is not earning his pay today.

ONTARIO DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. Two days ago the Premier stood in his place and tried to convince the people of Ontario that your government somehow is improving services for disabled people. The fact is that the office for disability support is sadly under-resourced and understaffed.

The Premier talks about a 1-800 number. I want you to know that my staff have tried to call the 1-800 number.

The most recent experience is that it was busy for 15 minutes. Then when they called again, it rang for about 12 minutes and no one answered. Later on, when they called again, it was answered but by voice mail. Is that what you call helping disabled people?

1400

Then you tried to say that the transportation allowance hasn't been cut, but we have case after case of people who are telling us quite clearly that the transportation allowance has been cut, they can't get to their doctor, they can't get to a food bank, they can't get to their clinic.

Minister, this is starting to sound like the Family Responsibility Office, where you let down all those women and children who are vulnerable. Why are you picking on the most vulnerable people in this province, and when are you going to correct your mistakes?

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for francophone affairs): We created the Ontario disability support program to better meet the needs of the disabled in the province. It takes them off the welfare rolls, a place they never belonged in the first place.

We have listened to our clients who are receiving transportation costs to attend drug and alcohol recovery support groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous, and we'll continue to provide coverage for ODSP recipients to attend such groups under medical transportation.

New requests will be approved where a drug or alcohol recovery support group is recommended by the doctor or psychologist. We will obviously honour the existing transportation costs for various day programs which were covered on September 30, 1999, for those clients who are using them as long as they continue to attend the program.

We continue to cover 80% of discretionary benefits, and if the municipalities would like to offer more of that, we're certainly prepared to do our part. The ODSP does pay for all necessary medical transportation.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Supplementary.

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-East York): That was a nice public relations announcement, Minister. Please acknowledge the problem that you have created. I want to stress that it's not staff in the offices; it's the mess you've created in having a botched implementation of transition, in under-resourcing the offices, and in putting through rapid policy changes that haven't been thought through and haven't been communicated.

Peter Kivi, a dialysis patient in my riding who receives benefits and a transportation allowance, received a notice on October 17 that his benefits were suspended as of October 1 because he exceeded his income. They had calculated the transportation allowance as part of the income. This is contrary to the entitlement rules. The ministry has acknowledged that. But they've also said there is no guarantee he's going to get his cheque on Friday. And guess what, Minister? We're told that there

may be thousands of people in the province like this. Surely you know about it.

I've got some questions. How many clients are affected by this? When will they receive this money? Will it be there on Friday? Will it be deposited? Are you going to cut manual cheques? Will you courier them, or will you force all of these disabled people to go to the office to pick up their cheques?

Hon Mr Baird: We weren't pleased with the way disability support programs were offered to the disabled when we were elected. There were backlogs of up to two years, and we found that unacceptable.

We set up a whole new program for people with disabilities to better meet their needs. We removed the label "permanently unemployable" and are providing substantially higher and greater supports for employment services. We are committed to using resources more equitably in order to ensure that an adequate level of transportation costs is available to all Ontarians with disabilities.

These changes aren't easy. I suppose it would have been easier to sit back and do nothing. We'll continue to work to try and improve the lives of people with disabilities. If the member opposite has cases of particular concern, I'd certainly be prepared to look at them on her behalf.

The Speaker: Final supplementary.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Broadview-Greenwood): The minister is either not listening to the question or not listening to the information that we are trying to give him here. We just got confirmation that this is not just one case in Beaches-East York. There could be thousands of disabled people affected this weekend, and the minister is standing there giving out platitudes.

Minister, the member for Beaches-East York asked you some questions, and I want answers. How many clients are affected? Will they receive their cheque by the end of Friday? Will you promise right now to leave this chamber and go look into this situation, find out if there really are, as confirmed to us, thousands of people affected by this, and tell us, if there are, what you're going to do about it so these people get their cheques on time?

Hon Mr Baird: We're committed to improving supports for people with disabilities in the province. Before the province took over the administration of the program, municipalities determined the level of transportation costs and were covered in their respective communities. The result was that the disabled in larger cities and some parts of the province enjoyed greater transportation support than in others. We're certainly committed to increase what is available and make it more equitable across the province, but making improvements is often difficult. We're certainly committed to work and follow through to ensure that the program is delivered in the best way possible. We're creating equity throughout the province by ensuring that a level of service is available to each and every disabled Ontarian.

OAK RIDGES MORAINÉ

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Minister of the Environment. The minister knows, or ought to know, how important the Oak Ridges moraine is in terms of water quality and water supply, not just for the Durham region but for much of the greater Toronto region. But we know that the moraine is under threat of rapid urban development. In fact, you are now on record as supporting one of those development applications by Jay-M Holdings, who make, as we found out yesterday, a lot of contributions to the Conservative Party.

Minister, you know that the mayor of Newmarket, Mr Tom Taylor, said on September 16 that the Oak Ridges moraine cannot be saved without the province getting involved. You are the Minister of the Environment, the last time we checked. Do you believe that the province must get involved and the province must act to protect the Oak Ridges moraine?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of the Environment, minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I thank the honourable member for the question and for his comments to the media, which are at counter-distinction with what he is saying today if he is saying today that I am somehow on the side of a development. He said, I believe it was yesterday, that the letter is not proof of anything illegal, so I thank him for his confidence in my abilities.

But let's get on to the broader issue, which is the issue that I would very much like to have as part of a public policy discussion, which is the challenge in an economy that is booming, in the prosperity that is returning to Ontario, to accommodate all of the people who want to buy houses, who want to create jobs in Ontario, and at the same time preserve a living legacy, if I may use that phrase, on the moraine for future generations. That is precisely the kind of issue on which the honourable member's input and his point of view should be taken into account by my ministry, and I thank him for his comments.

Mr Hampton: Minister, the question is, and the question was, very direct: Do you support protecting the Oak Ridges moraine? Your conduct and the conduct of your associates indicate that you're not in favouring of protecting it. You did write a letter which favours the proposals of Jay-M Holdings, and you do receive a lot of financial contributions to the Conservative Party from Jay-M Holdings.

There is another application out there from Joe Lebovic, who also wants to develop on the Oak Ridges moraine. In fact, there is a lineup of developers who have contributed to Conservative candidates or the Conservative Party who want to develop on the Oak Ridges moraine.

Minister, another very simple, direct question: Would you support a development freeze on the Oak Ridges moraine while you and your party sort out your environ-

mental responsibility and while you sort out your apparent conflicts of interest? Would you support that freeze?

Hon Mr Clement: There's a whole raft of questions in that series by the honourable member. I can tell him this: We are a government that has the responsibility to ensure ecological soundness in very sensitive areas. We think there is a way to indeed ensure that there is a legacy for future generations and at the same time accommodate the massive growth that is associated with the prosperity in which we find ourselves in Ontario.

The honourable member would know that this was an issue that his government was grappling with way back as early as 1991. If his government had actually grappled with it in a sensitive, coherent way, perhaps this question need not have been asked today in the House. But the fact of the matter is that it has landed on our laps, and I can assure the honourable member that this government knows how to balance growth and prosperity with ecological soundness and we will certainly do that in this case as well.

1410

CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): My question is to the Minister of Labour. On the eve of the election announcement, your government passed Bill 17, the Fairness is a Two-Way Street Act, with all kinds of fanfare, billboards and press conferences, at a cost of over \$1 million to the taxpayers. Now your government has chosen not to enforce section 24 of the bill, which states that a person who is not a resident of Ontario and who does not register with the job protection office is guilty of an offence, and upon conviction is liable for substantial fines.

I ask you now, Minister: How much longer must Ontario construction workers suffer? When do you intend to start enforcing section 24 of the bill, or is this just a one-way street? Are you going to ask the Quebec government to withdraw all outstanding fines given to our construction workers? Tell me, Minister, what will you do?

Applause.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour): Thank you. It is a different view; I will say that.

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke): All saints have a past; all sinners have a future.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Yes, and I've always been one step behind you, Sean. I've noticed that.

First, all three parties endorsed that piece of legislation in this House and it was implemented by this government before the election. Subsequent to the implementation, there have been many spot visits to many construction sites on the Ontario side of the border.

I myself have spoken on a number of occasions to the member from Prescott-Russell and he has advised me of some locations where there have been Quebec workers. We have inspected, we have talked to the workers, we've

asked them to leave the sites, and I think we're implementing this very well. In fact, hundreds of workers from Quebec have been removed from Ontario work sites. I think the offices out along the Quebec-Ontario border have done a very good job.

I've got to say that we want to continue and we'll force the continuation, but I say to the member that if you have sites where you believe these workers are working, I've said to you before, call my office. I've got these sites, we've investigated, and I presume that this has been OK. If it hasn't, let us know.

Mr Lalonde: Minister, we're not enforcing section 24 of the act. No one has been fined yet. They just move from one site to another.

But now tell me, what about SNC Lavalin, whose head office is in Montreal, the recent purchaser of Highway 407, the new contract at the Ottawa airport? I understand you gave them an exemption from Bill 17. Why? Is it because they have big Tory connections like the former Minister of Municipal Affairs, Al Leach, who is a member of their board? Also, I understand Hugh Segal, another big Tory, is on the SNC Lavalin board.

Tell me, Minister, do I pass the word along to other construction companies: "Get a big Tory on your board like SNC Lavalin and you are exempt and then, bingo, you have it made"? Who's next to be exempt? Do you want to give me the list? Who's on the list? Hand it over to me. I would like to see how many have Tory connections.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I know my new good friends Mr Leach and Mr Segal were a part of this corporation before I came to the office. Mr Leach didn't receive this job until after the exemption was given to Lavalin, to be fair.

Secondly, Lavalin was given an exemption not because they're just a Quebec operator. They have huge holdings in Ontario, they have a lot of workers in Ontario, they pay a lot of taxes in Ontario and they do a lot of work in Ontario.

The fact was, when they applied for the exemption, the ministry looked at this and said, considering their holdings in Ontario, considering the taxes they pay in Ontario, this would be one of those corporations that were considered cross-border. It had some investments in Quebec; it had substantial investments in Ontario as well.

Furthermore, this particular company, Lavalin, has been suggested to be a lot of things, but it hasn't been suggested to be a Conservative company. If anything, it's been suggested it's a Liberal company. I suggest they're a little off the mark on that one.

SUPERVISED ACCESS

Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough): My question is to the Attorney General. I've heard concerns from constituents in my riding of Peterborough regarding safety when it comes to child custody visits. In some instances, custodial and non-custodial parents are concerned for their personal safety and the safety of their children. They want to comply with their child custody agreements

by ensuring a safe and controlled environment for their children.

Could you please tell the Legislature what action this government is taking to assist families with their custody and access concerns?

Hon Jim Flaherty (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): I thank the member for Peterborough for his question. We have taken action. We have established 14 supervised access centres. Supervised access centres provide for visits between children and their non-custodial parents that might otherwise not happen.

The centres also offer an alternative way to resolve access disputes. Almost all referrals to supervised access centres are as the result of court orders, generally because of concerns about the safety of the child or one of the parents; for example, in cases with histories of domestic violence or risk of abduction.

We have also provided funding for new supervised access services in 22 communities across Ontario. This expansion surpasses the government's promise to double the number of supervised access sites from 14 to 28.

Mr Stewart: I personally am extremely supportive of this type of initiative. Anything we can do to protect children I believe has to be encouraged.

I would ask the Attorney General to describe to the Legislature the benefits of the supervised access centres and why this government feels it is important to expand this very valuable program.

Hon Mr Flaherty: The supervised access centres provide safe settings for visits between children and non-custodial parents and other adult relatives in a supervised and secure environment for the children. Supervised access centres help to reduce the emotional toll of family conflict on children and help them to maintain and establish healthier relationships with their parents.

I'm very pleased we've been able to surpass our promise to double the number of sites in the province of Ontario. We have expanded the geographic areas covered as well, and we are now serving all of the Unified Family Court locations with the supervised access program. That complements the mediation and the information services that are available to families in times of difficulty through the Unified Family Courts in Ontario.

Supervised access is an important service of the family court system. The expansion of this initiative is a key part of our ongoing effort to protect vulnerable children and support families.

1420

ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES LEGISLATION

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): It was with great interest that I listened to the Minister of Community and Social Services make the comment that they're committed to doing something for people with disabilities in this province.

My question is for the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation. Your Premier takes pride in saying that he is a man of his word. During the 1995 election he promised 1.5 million persons in this province with disabilities that he would enact an Ontarians with Disabilities Act during his first term in office.

Five years, three ministers and two elections later, there still is no Ontarians with Disabilities Act. The Premier callously broke that promise to the people of this province. Because the Premier turned his back on them, 1.5 million people with disabilities continue to face countless barriers in every aspect of their lives, barriers that they wouldn't face if they lived in the United States.

Minister, will you commit today, without qualification, that you will make up for the Premier's lack of integrity and enact an Ontarians with Disabilities Act during this term?

Hon Helen Johns (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation, minister responsible for seniors and women): As a result of the way the question was worded, it's important for me to correct the record, first off.

Let me say first that in the last term the government implemented a bill called the Ontarians with Disabilities Act. As we took it out for consultation, a number of people thought that changes could be made to that bill. So the Premier, in his wisdom, as I consider it, pulled that bill and said, "No, we're going to go back and we're going to look at this bill again because we want to hear what the people of Ontario, and especially the people with disabilities, have to say with respect to this bill."

It's important that the member opposite—I know he's new, so I give him the benefit of the doubt that he might not have known—recognizes that we did put a bill forward. The Premier was good to his word, but he decided that we needed to go back and have a look at this bill one more time. We have planned to do that. We said in the throne speech we will do that, and we continue to keep that promise.

Mr Peters: Minister, Bill 83 was a disaster. The government admitted as much during the throne speech last spring. You're hiding behind that legislation. Your own throne speech last spring portrayed that as inadequate.

Ontarians with disabilities deserve better—a million and a half people. Before the election you talked about introducing legislation. Now, after the election, all you talk about is a vague goal and an action plan. It's been five years, three ministers and two elections—still no ODA.

One year ago this Friday, this House voted unanimously in favour of a resolution asking the government to introduce an effective ODA. The Premier promised the people of this province that an ODA would be enacted in the first term. That pledge was broken. Today, persons with disabilities want to know one thing: When will you introduce an effective Ontarians with Disabilities Act? This month? This year? This term? When will you fix the promise that you broke to the people of Ontario?

Hon Mrs Johns: Let me once again reiterate that the Premier truly is keeping his word. He has said we will

come back, we will look at this again, and even in the throne speech he made that commitment. We all made that commitment.

In the throne speech we said as a government that we were going to initiate an action plan. For those who may not know what an action plan is, it's a framework which gives timelines; it talks about what we're going to study, when we're going to come forward with legislation. He said that would happen within this session, and we intend to keep our word on that.

TOURISM

Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Southwest): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Tourism. But first I want to take the opportunity to congratulate you on your election one week ago today. I also want to say what a privilege it is to ask the first question of the Minister of Tourism here in the 37th Parliament.

This morning in the Toronto Sun I read an article that the mayor of the city of Toronto, Mel Lastman, is asking the province of Ontario to impose a hotel tax of up to 3% in order to raise money to promote tourism within Toronto. This is obviously an issue that directly affects my constituents in the riding of Scarborough Southwest. Can you tell me where your ministry stands on the issue of raising hotel taxes?

Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister of Tourism): As the honourable member knows, this government does not raise taxes; it cuts taxes. In fact, in our first mandate we cut 69 taxes and we are on track to cut a further 30 taxes, a record for this continent.

This government has no intention of implementing any kind of new hotel tax, as suggested in this morning's media reports. In fact, yesterday the Greater Toronto Hotel and Motel Association met with the mayor to inform him that the hotels in this city were experiencing difficulties with their unusually high municipal property taxes over the last few decades.

The fact that Mel Lastman is even suggesting that a new tax on hotels be reinforced in the city of Toronto clearly shows the need for the Taxpayer Protection and Balanced Budget Act introduced in the House yesterday by this government.

Mr Newman: That's good news indeed for the people of the city of Toronto.

My supplementary question is also for the Minister of Tourism. I read with interest an article on Friday, October 22, last Friday, and in the article in the Toronto Star Mayor Lastman referred to the hotel industry as "corporate welfare bums." Does the mayor of Toronto really understand the challenges faced by the hotel industry in Toronto?

Hon Mr Jackson: I've called the mayor's office and I'm hoping that we can sit down with him and discuss a series of issues relative to the importance of the tourism industry to this great city of Toronto. It's important that

he understand the contributions that every level of government can be making to improve tourism.

The fact is that this government, under Mike Harris, has increased spending on tourism marketing. It's more than doubled the amount of money in the city of Toronto in the last two years, to over \$8.5 million. Yet the city of Toronto—and the mayor should know this—over the last seven years has reduced by over \$3 million the budget that it transfers to Tourism Toronto. Each level of government has a responsibility to promote this important sector.

The fact is, not one new hotel has been built in the city of Toronto for the last decade.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Answer.

Hon Mr Jackson: Therefore, this government and I as minister are committed to expanding jobs in the tourism economy. I look forward to working with the mayor to make sure he understands that every level of government has a responsibility to promote tourism in Ontario.

FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY OFFICE

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a question for the Attorney General. On October 9, your bureaucratic staff told the Toronto Star that the government was abandoning its use of private collection agencies to collect outstanding support payments. That's because it's such a dismal failure. After one year of operation, less than 1% of money owed to recipients was even collected. Twenty-four hours later, in an effort, I believe, to do damage control, your political staff announced that in fact your ministry would continue using private collection agencies to collect arrears and that a second tender was already in the works.

What is also interesting is that the Family Responsibility Office apparently knows nothing about your latest plans, because in a memo we received last week the FRO told us: "As of the end of this month"—October—"the CAPP project is finished. All cases are being returned to the FRO office. All information obtained by the collection agencies will also be redirected to the FRO. The cases will be assigned to individual client service associates directly to continue enforcement."

Minister, which is it? Is this fiasco finally over or do you really intend to continue with round 2 of a pilot project that has been a complete disaster?

Hon Jim Flaherty (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): I thank the member for her question about the Family Responsibility Office. It's important to realize, when you look at the work of the Family Responsibility Office, that since 1995 we're collecting more money than was ever collected by previous governments. This money's being collected, as you know, for spouses and families and children in Ontario who need this money, largely pursuant to court orders. Last year, there was a record \$500 million disbursed to recipients. That's in the last fiscal year. That's about \$135 million more than in the last year of your government, in 1994-95. I say this to the honourable member so

that we have in context the reality of the accomplishments that are happening with the Family Responsibility Office on behalf of spouses, on behalf of children in Ontario.

1430

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Supplementary.

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): Of course you're collecting more money, because you have more orders filed with the office than there's ever been before. But the fact remains that your much-touted private collection agency scheme managed to collect less than 1% of the almost half a billion dollars outstanding. Now you're going to embark on another private collection agency scheme to collect the arrears that have accumulated over the last three years, the three years during which that office has fallen into complete chaos and disarray.

Once again they don't answer the phone there. Try calling them. Once again they don't respond to e-mail, fax and correspondence. Claimants can't get through; their advocates can't get through. The solution—and please give us a time frame—is to make sure that office is adequately staffed by properly trained people. Three years later, it's still the biggest mess we've ever seen.

Hon Mr Flaherty: The amount collected by the Family Responsibility Office is greater than any other enforcement program in Canada. Let me tell you about the private collection section. The 12-month pilot program was an effort made to collect old debt. This was debt that was more than three years old. This was deemed to be uncollectable in fact. What has happened is that through this 12-month project, \$8 million has either been collected or is on program to go to women and children and other spouses in Ontario. We're proud of that program. It works.

For that reason, we're expanding it. Now we're going to move forward so that debt that's six months or older will be sought to be collected through the private collection services. This is important; it brings money to children and spouses in Ontario.

The Speaker: New question. The member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale.

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. May I take this opportunity, on behalf of the residents of Toronto Centre-Rosedale, to congratulate on your election as Speaker. As your member, in the Speaker's apartment I do hope that you'll follow the practice of your predecessor and not get enumerated here.

I'd like to take this opportunity to ask a question of the Minister of Transportation. For the last six weeks I've been travelling around the greater Toronto area, speaking with mayors and regional chairs and commuters. They have a message for me that I'm unable to deliver because the language would be found unparliamentary.

The issue of the gridlock in the greater Toronto area is choking our economic capability. It's diminishing the quality of life for residents. Minister, what are you going to do to unlock the gridlock in the GTA?

Hon David Turnbull (Minister of Transportation): I thank the honourable member and congratulate him on his first question in the House.

Indeed, our government recognizes the importance of building infrastructure in this province. This is why every year since we have been the government we have spent record amounts of money on the provincial highways. This year is the highest budget in history, at close to \$700 million. We will continue to strengthen the provincial highway system.

Mr Smitherman: I shouldn't be surprised that you hide behind the figures with respect to capital budget for roads and, of course, obfuscate around the impact that your lack of support for transit has had in the greater Toronto area.

The figures are clear. The startling number of reports that have been issued on this problem are there. The Greater Toronto Services Board is struggling to come up with solutions for a comprehensive and integrated transit system and transportation network.

What are you going to do to step in and show some leadership on this issue?

Hon Mr Turnbull: A strong, integrated system of transportation is indeed important. This is why we have realigned the responsibilities and created considerable tax room to allow municipalities to address that responsibility whilst we continue to strengthen the highways of this province. We will continue to strengthen the economy of this province by providing the highway system that is required, which your party, sir, did not do.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): New question. The member for Willowdale.

Applause.

HOMES FOR THE AGED

Mr David Young (Willowdale): Thank you, Mr Speaker, and I thank my friends and colleagues.

Interjection.

Mr Young: I shall do just that, for the lovely greeting.

Mr Speaker, let me start by congratulating you, as have many before me, on your ascendancy to that honourable chair. I want to congratulate you not only on your success but also on the manner in which the campaign was run; and the honourable member who ran against you deserves a similar sort of congratulations. I think it's probably something we can all learn from.

My question is for the minister responsible for seniors' issues. Over the past few weeks we have seen several media reports, particularly in the Toronto area, regarding the state of various rest and retirement homes in the greater Toronto area. There have been numerous reports suggesting that more needs to be done.

I have visited many of these homes, not only during the election campaign that we recently came out of but

also over the past number of months. I've also had the opportunity of meeting with various members of my constituency, including numerous seniors, and this issue has arisen.

Minister, it's not only important to the seniors of my riding but it's also important to the people of Willowdale and undoubtedly to the people of Ontario. It is for that reason that I rise today to ask you to share with us what the government of this province is doing to address this very important issue.

Hon Helen Johns (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation, minister responsible for seniors and women): I think it's incumbent on me to recognize that we have seven new members on this side of the House and we're pleased to have each and every one of them with us.

The government of Ontario is committed to working with the retirement home industry to ensure that a self-regulation framework is in effect. We have worked with the Ontario Residential Care Association for the past six months on this very important issue to seniors. We've also encouraged the Ontario Residential Care Association to consult with the Canadian Council on Health Services Accreditation. This organization accredits hospitals, it accredits health care facilities across the province, and what we want to ensure is that they develop a framework in conjunction with ORCA to make sure that an accreditation process exists within the retirement home industry.

We've also ensured that we have legislation in place that allows municipalities to be able to tap into this, such as the Tenant Protection Act and the health promotion act.

Mr Young: I thank the minister. I point out that we in the constituency office in Willowdale have produced numerous materials to attempt to assist seniors with this and other challenges they may encounter. We've recently produced a seniors' guide that I think will be of great benefit. We did so after consultation with various stakeholders, we did so after we consulted with numerous agencies and we did so after we consulted with various municipalities.

My concern, though, regards recent measures taken by the city of Toronto, or lack thereof, and I would like your response, the response of this government to those measures. I want to know your comments, Minister, about how you feel that response from our municipal partners will address this very serious problem.

Hon Mrs Johns: I would just like to say a couple of things and move on to this subject. First of all, you may recognize that the NDP brought forward the Lightman commission in 1990 through 1995, which gave them some suggestions about to deal with this issue. They did nothing. The NDP put through a report in 1989 with respect to municipal regulation and they chose to do nothing to date, so the irony of this week should not escape any of us.

The other thing I would like to say is that I am encouraged by the city of Toronto. They have established a hotline for the retirement industry. They have also sent

out health inspectors to many of these residences to ensure that people are being protected. Previous to the city being amalgamated we had a city of Toronto and Etobicoke and both of those had bylaws which were there to ensure that there was some safety and protection for people within retirement homes. I am encouraged by the city of Toronto. I intend to work with them so that they can enact their own laws, because we have other experience with that such as Ottawa—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): New question.

1440

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West): My question is for the Chair of Management Board. You've asked us to tighten our belts for the last five years, all the regular folks across Ontario. I'd like you to explain why today there are hundreds of workers with the Alcohol and Gaming Commission who are at this moment negotiating their contracts, regular folks, hundreds of them across Ontario heading towards a Sunday strike deadline. I'd like you to explain to us why last year you authorized a salary increase for the executive director of the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of 35%. Why did you authorize an increase in salary from \$126,000 to five bucks short of \$170,000?

Hon Chris Hodgson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): As the member of the opposition would know, the contract she's talking about falls under the purview of my colleague the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations.

In regard to her second question, when we combined the two functions of the Alcohol and Gaming Commission—prior to that it was one function and now there's the merger, so some efficiencies have been found—it was recommended that you take a look at the market comparators, you take a look at the amount of work that's now required and you take a look at the scope of what this job entails.

I just want to remind the opposition and the people of Ontario that we have one of the most stringent regulatory climates in the world. We want to make sure, if gaming takes place in this province, that it's well regulated and conducted in an open and fair manner and that children aren't allowed into those premises. We want to make sure that if alcohol is served, it's not served to minors. This is what this man is responsible for.

Mrs Pupatello: So far in the last few months you've had a doubling of staff in the Premier's office. You've added six more cabinet ministers. That's six more limos and six more drivers. Not only has the executive director of the commission had an increase of 35%, but the director of licensing and registration has had a 25% increase in his salary. So never mind this change of jobs; you're increasing all the bosses' salaries.

My question for you is, why is it fair for you to have this kind of increase vetted through Management Board

for you and your bosses but for the rest of the regular folks in Ontario it's a whole different rule?

Hon Mr Hodgson: When you're talking about salaries, the ministries come forward with proposals that are vetted by Management Board so there is control on the money. If you're looking—

Mrs Pupatello: Control. Give me your cheque book.

Hon Mr Hodgson: I'll put our record up against your free-spending ways any day of the week.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order, member for Windsor West.

Hon Mr Hodgson: This comes from a party that doubled spending in this province in their short term in office, which led to the abysmal record that we had to dig ourselves out of.

When specific proposals come forward, they're dealt with on a case-by-case basis in terms of the merit and the qualifications that are required for that job. It's compared to the market. When you're comparing other salary rates, they are compared to the market comparators. In a unionized environment, the union comes forward and management negotiates that. In non-unionized environments, the Civil Service Commission makes those recommendations, if they work for the government. When you work for agencies, boards and commissions, they have arm's-length boards that make those comparisons on what skill set they—

The Speaker: Would the member take his seat. New question.

ABANDONED MINES

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): My question is for the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. As you know, when a mine's resources have been depleted, companies are required under the Mining Act to address environmental and health issues before closing a mine. These requirements have not always been in place, and as a result some of the older open pits and mine shafts may become public safety hazards.

Can you tell me what you, as the minister responsible for mining in Ontario, plan to do to address the public's concerns about abandoned mines?

Applause.

Hon Tim Hudak (Minister of Northern Development and Mines): Thank you very much to my colleagues for their kind commendations, and thanks also to the member for Simcoe North. It's an honour to receive his first question in the House, and I'm glad to have him here and congratulate him for his arrival here at the 37th assembly.

I've had the pleasure and the opportunity to travel to over 30 different communities as Minister of Northern Development and Mines to listen to northerners' views, and I want to add too, in my first question in the House, it's an honour as well to represent part of the province so vast, so beautiful, so proud. I'm very pleased and

honoured to be the Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

In fact, on a recent trip to Sudbury I had the pleasure of announcing a new program, a \$27-million investment in rehabilitating abandoned mine sites across the province of Ontario, a very exciting program that's going to bring back land that was previously restricted from public use; some hazards in the ground, for example, that now can be brought back into recreational use for things like hiking and exploring activities, very popular in the north and the rest of Ontario. Important, as well, in bringing back this land to productive use is the potential for further economic development, for commercial use or for further exploration and a mine in the future. It's a very important program for the north, and the \$27 million is going to go a long way for economic growth in the north.

Mr Dunlop: I thank you for that explanation, Minister. As you know, the mining industry dates back well over a century in Ontario. There are a number of mines that ceased operating before strict provincial legislation was in place to regulate mine closures. As a result, there is a lot of work to be done on abandoned sites in many areas of the province. Given that this is a new program and not every site can be rehabilitated immediately, how will your ministry prioritize these sites to decide what locations will receive your immediate attention?

Hon Mr Hudak: I thank the member for the supplemental question. The member is right. In fact, for most of the history of the province there were no strict requirements for closing up abandoned mine sites, and as such this created some hazards across the province, significantly in northern Ontario.

The good news is that, under the Mike Harris government, now the Mining Act requires that each mining project must include a closure plan that will explain and justify how the land will be restored to its natural state upon completion of exploration and mining. The Harris government remains vigilant in ensuring that the Mining Act is enforced to protect our natural environment.

As the member mentioned, under the abandoned mines rehab program we have developed a set of criteria that will be applied to determine which mine sites are of the greatest risk to public health and safety. I want to ensure, as do my colleagues on this side of the House, that those most urgent needs are addressed first.

As I said in Sudbury, we're beginning work this year on 30 sites. That's the first in the four-year program, and there are many more good things to come in this file and in northern development.

VISITOR

Ms Marilyn Churley (Broadview-Greenwood): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Briefly, I just want to take this opportunity to point out to the members in the House that we have a special guest today. Mr Jim Maloway, an NDP member of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly, is with us today.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): That is not a point of order.

PETITIONS

HIGHWAY SAFETY

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas 13 people died during the first seven months of 1999 on Highway 401 between London and Windsor; and

“Whereas traffic levels on all sections of Highway 401 continue to increase; and

“Whereas Canada’s number one trade and travel route was designed in the 1950s for fewer vehicles and lighter trucks; and

“Whereas road funding is almost completely paid through vehicle permit and driving licence fees; and

“Whereas Ontario road users pay 28 cents per litre of tax on gasoline, adding up to \$2.7 billion in provincial gas taxes and over \$2.3 billion in federal gas taxes;

“We, the undersigned members of the Canadian Automobile Association and other residents of Ontario, respectfully request the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately upgrade Highway 401 to at least a six-lane highway with full paved shoulders and rumble strips; and

“We respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario place firm pressure on the federal government to invest its gasoline tax revenue in road safety improvements in Ontario.”

I will affix my signature to this petition, as I agree with its contents.

1450

PARAMEDICS

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): I have a petition that reads as follows:

“To the Honourable Lieutenant Governor and the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario Ministry of Health this past spring amended O. Reg. 501/97 under the Ambulance Act so that paramedics are considered no longer qualified to do their job if they accumulate a minimum of six demerit points on their driving record;

“Whereas the amended regulation has resulted in at least one paramedic being fired”—that number is now six, two of them from my hometown of Hamilton—“from employment; and

“Whereas the Ministry of Health’s regulation is far more punitive and harsh than the Ministry of Transportation’s, which monitors and enforces traffic safety through the Highway Traffic Act; and

“Whereas the Ministry of Transportation mails out a notice to drivers at six to nine demerit points and

suspends a person’s driver’s licence at 15 points for a 30-day period; and

“Whereas none of the other emergency services in Ontario, e.g. fire and police services, are held to the same standard or punished as harshly; and

“Whereas this amended regulation is not needed since other sections of the Ambulance Act protect the public against unsafe driving and/or criminal behaviour by paramedics (specifically O. Reg. 501/97, part III, section 6, subsections 8, 9 and 10); and

“Whereas the Ministry of Health actions are blatantly unjust and punitive, and they discriminate against paramedics;

“Therefore, we, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, beg leave to petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To immediately eliminate any references to the accumulation of demerit points during employment from O. Reg. 501/97 under the Ambulance Act (specifically, part III, section 6, subsection 7), thereby allowing the Highway Traffic Act to apply to paramedics; and

“To order the immediate reinstatement of paramedics who have been unjustly fired under this regulation.”

I continue to support these paramedics in their legitimate fight.

WATERLINE INSTALLATION

Mr Marcel Beaubien (Lambton-Kent-Middlesex): I have a petition which reads as follows. It has been signed by approximately 200 to 300 people.

“We, the undersigned residents in the province of Ontario, draw the attention of the Parliament of Ontario to the following:

“Whereas the town of Bosanquet has billed the ratepayers for the incomplete waterline installation; and

“Whereas the waterline installation interruption is beyond the control of the ratepayers; and

“Whereas the engineering plans were completed for the projects in the spring of 1995, and the contracts were awarded and the waterline installation commenced June 1995; and

“Whereas the Ontario Clean Water Agency was responsible for the trunk line mains on Highway 21 and County Road 7; and

“Whereas all waterlines were to be installed within the width of the road allowances which are the responsibility of the Ontario government and Lambton county, respectively; and

“Whereas work stoppage occurred in November 1996 on Highway 21 between Outer Drive and Army Camp Road and continues to this present day because persons on the camp threatened the agency workers and the agency equipment;

“Therefore, your petitioners call upon Parliament to ensure that the residences, businesses and commercial consumers that could benefit by this waterline are not liable for any interest and further costs as a result of the interrupted waterline installation.”

MEDICAL CLINIC

Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“We, the people of Massey and surrounding area are proud of our medical clinic. We have appreciated the services of the Elliott Lake doctors for 27 years and wish it to continue.”

This is signed by literally hundreds of my constituents from Massey, Lee Valley, Sagamok, Webbwood and other places.

BOTTLE RECYCLING

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford): I wish to table a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It's from the students and teachers of St Mary's school, and it reads as follows:

“We are concerned about the future of Ontario's environment. We know that one-way plastic pop bottles and aluminum cans waste non-renewable resources and energy, create pollution, and 1.5 billion of them end up in landfill or as litter every year in Ontario.

“We know that recycling the other half billion of them is costing too much money and our blue box program is suffering as a result. To try to save their recycling programs, hundreds of municipalities representing over 80% of Ontario's population have passed council resolutions in support of a deposit-return system for beverage containers. We also know that a deposit-return system with refillable bottles works well all over the world and is possible for Ontario. We did it before, we can do it again.

“We ask you to support legislation to implement refillable bottles and a deposit-return system for Ontario.”

HENLEY ROWING COURSE

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have a petition that reads as follows:

“Whereas the Henley rowing course in St Catharines is an outstanding rowing facility which has for several decades been the site of hundreds of international rowing competitions;

“Whereas the World Rowing Championship has been held in St Catharines in 1970 and 1999 and has been declared an outstanding success on both occasions;

“Whereas the municipal, provincial and federal governments, along with generous private donors, invested several million dollars in the upgrading of the Henley rowing course to enable the 1999 World Rowing Championship to be held in St Catharines and that as a result the Henley is a first-class rowing facility;

“Whereas the organizing committee of the World Rowing Championship, the annual Royal Canadian Henley Regatta and other prestigious regattas has proven expertise to operate major international rowing competitions;

“Whereas all taxpayers in Ontario will be compelled to contribute to any financial assistance provided by the Ontario government for the Olympic bid for the city of Toronto;

“Whereas the creation of a new rowing facility outside of St Catharines for the Toronto Olympic bid would result in unnecessary expenditures of millions of dollars to duplicate the St Catharines rowing facility;

“Whereas the rowing facility for several recent Olympic Games has been located outside of the sponsoring and host city;

“We, the undersigned, urge the government of Ontario to persuade the Toronto Olympic bid committee to propose the Henley rowing course in St Catharines as a site of the rowing competition for the 2008 Olympic Games.”

I affix my signature as I'm in full agreement, and I hand the petition to Lydia Parafianowicz, who is a page from the city of St Catharines.

DRIVER EXAMINATIONS

Mr Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge): I have a petition of 2,736 names distributed by a young student constituent of mine, Melisa Roselli. It reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas according to the Ministry of Transportation for the province of Ontario there is at least a 10-month backlog for persons wishing to take their road driving test. This situation is prevalent throughout the entire province. With Ontario's booming economy and the current provincial government objectives this is an intolerable situation. This backlog situation could be rectified simply by the hiring of further testing staff or the reopening of examination offices.

“We, the undersigned, petition to the Legislative Assembly as follows;

“That the government of Ontario hire additional Ministry of Transportation road testing staff and open further testing offices to eliminate or substantially reduce the current testing backlog within the province.”

NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the northern health travel grant was introduced in 1987 in recognition of the fact that northern Ontario residents are often forced to receive treatment outside their own communities because of the lack of available services; and

“Whereas travel, accommodation and other costs have escalated sharply since the program was first put in place, particularly in the area of air travel; and

“Whereas the Ontario government has provided funds so that southern Ontario patients needing care at the Northwestern Ontario Cancer Centre have all their expenses paid while receiving treatment in the north

which creates a double standard for health care delivery in the province; and

“Whereas northern Ontario residents should not receive a different level of health care nor be discriminated against because of their geographic locations;

“Therefore we, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, petition the Ontario Legislature to acknowledge the unfairness and inadequacy of the northern health travel grant program and commit to a review of the program with a goal of providing 100% funding of the travel costs for residents needing care outside their communities until such time as that care is available in our communities.”

This is signed by thousands of people. Petitions keep coming in, and I'm proud to add my name to these petitions.

1500

HIGHWAY SAFETY

Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough): “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas 13 people died during the first seven months of 1999 on Highway 401 between London and Windsor; and

“Whereas traffic levels on all sections of 401 continue to increase; and

“Whereas Canada's number one trade and travel route was designed in the 1950s for fewer vehicles and lighter trucks; and

“Whereas road funding is almost completely paid through vehicle permit and driver licence fees; and

“Whereas Ontario road users pay 28 cents per litre of tax on gasoline, adding up to over \$2.7 billion in provincial gas taxes and over \$2.3 billion in federal gas taxes;

“We, the undersigned members of the Canadian Automobile Association and other residents of Ontario, respectfully request the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately upgrade 401 to at least a six-lane highway with fully paved shoulders and rumble strips; and

“We respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario place firm pressure on the federal government to invest its gasoline tax revenue in road safety improvements in Ontario.”

I affix my signature.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): I have a petition that reads as follows:

“Whereas Mike Harris is cutting the heart out of many communities by closing hundreds of neighbourhood and community schools across Ontario; and

“Whereas this massive number of school closings all at once will displace many children and put others on longer bus routes; and

“Whereas Mike Harris promised in 1995 not to cut classroom spending but has already cut at least \$1 billion from our schools and is now closing many classrooms completely; and

“Whereas Mike Harris is pitting parent against parent and community against community in the fight to save local schools; and

“Whereas parents and students in the city of Toronto and indeed many other communities across Ontario are calling on the government to stop closing so many of their schools;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario as follows: That the government of Ontario stop closing local schools.”

I'm affixing my signature to this document.

RELIGIOUS READINGS IN SCHOOLS

Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener Centre): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and it is with a great deal of pleasure that I read this.

“Whereas, to honour the children let us make a difference;

“We, the undersigned, are deeply concerned about the waning of morality, of respect for human feelings and life itself. Youth is where our future is.

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

“Collectively, we feel that some type of religious reading, such as the Lord's Prayer, be reinstated into the public school system. This would be a most important step towards ‘world healing.’”

I add my signature to this petition.

HIGHWAY SAFETY

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): I have a petition signed by people from Frankford, Belleville, Picton and Carrying Place expressing concern about Highway 401 and expressing concern that the amount of money that governments collect for the sales tax and for tax on gasoline is not being reinvested.

As one who's had the privilege of working for the once proud Ministry of Transportation back in the old days when the government cared about our road system, I am pleased to add my signature to this petition.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 26, 1999, on the amendment to the motion for an address in reply to the speech of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): I very much appreciate the opportunity to respond to this government's speech from the throne because we believe that there was a lot in the throne speech that misses the point, and similarly, we believe that there are a lot of

issues out there across Ontario that need to be dealt with that the throne speech tried to ignore.

Let me say at the outset that what the government tried to do in its throne speech was to essentially deflect attention away from what we regard as the major issues of the day. The government wants to try to pretend that it has an agenda for dealing with the causes of crime and dealing with crime.

The centre point of this so-called agenda is going out and attacking 300 or 400 squeegee kids, most of whom do their line of work in downtown Toronto. They try to play this up as the ultimate strategy to somehow take on the causes of crime and the manifestation of crime in our society.

It's a wonderful deflection technique, a wonderful deflection attempt, but at its heart it is phony. Let me tell you why it is phony. The government wants us to believe that it has put more police officers on the street, that it is putting more police officers on the street and that that is going to deal with this issue.

Thankfully, we have something called Statistics Canada which does, from time to time, reports and studies on these issues. Statistics Canada recently released a study looking at the number of police officers who are actually available. This is what they found in Ontario: In 1994, there were 20,737 police officers on the street in this province; in 1998, there were fewer police officers, 20,454 police officers in Ontario.

That number itself reveals something. When you add in the population increases in Ontario over that period of time, from 1994 to 1998, the actual deficit in police officers on the street is much larger. In fact, for the province just to get back to where it was in 1994, the province would have to go out and hire today—not next week, not next year; hire today—an additional 1,400 new police officers just to get back to where it was in 1994 in terms of the growth of population and the fact that a number of police officers have retired or gone on to other work.

Let me quote from some of the people who are speaking up out there. The Waterloo police chief says that the region of Waterloo needs 75 more police officers, minimum. He says: "Our police want to focus on community policing and on the serious crimes in our community. They want to be on the street, not shuffling paper or chasing after squeegee kids."

Let me say to the government, your strategy of going after squeegee kids, your attempt to say to people that you have a strategy to deal with the causes of crime and the manifestation of crime was a very nice deflection technique, but at its heart it is hollow and Statistics Canada has revealed for everyone exactly how hollow and how phony it is.

Let me move beyond the deflection and let me get down to some of the other issues that I believe are very important but which were not dealt with in the throne speech at all. As I say, the throne speech tries to deflect attention away from the continuing holes and cracks in our health care system and tries to deflect attention away from the government's direction in health care, which is

to privatize and Americanize more and more of our health care delivery.

Where do we see evidence of the holes and cracks in the health care system? Anyone can look in their own community. In my constituency, the Lake of the Woods hospital in Kenora has had to essentially curtail the surgery which is ordinarily performed in the hospital because there is a chronic shortage of nurses, and they've had to close hospital beds now because of the shortage of nurses.

1510

In another community, Rainy River, a small rural community, none of the nurses in that hospital have been able to take any of their accrued vacation. Why? A chronic shortage of nurses.

In another community—in fact, in a whole series of communities further north, the aboriginal communities—there is a chronic problem now in recruiting nurses. Virtually every nursing station in those communities is short nurses. This has dramatic impacts on the health care that people receive on a day-to-day basis and even more dramatic impacts in terms of public health, because public health nurses get switched into day-to-day acute care nursing.

One manifestation is the growing shortage of nurses across this province, and this government has no strategy to address it. In the part of Ontario that I represent, which takes in 40% of the geography of the province, this government has shut down the only two programs at the community level for the training of registered practical nurses, both in the community of Kenora and in the community of Fort Frances. It has shut them down at the very time when in community after community there is a chronic shortage of nurses developing. I suspect I could go into almost any community in northern Ontario now, almost any community in rural Ontario, and in fact I could go into many small towns and small cities in Ontario, and find similar evidence of the nursing shortage.

What does the government have to say about the nursing shortage in its throne speech? It has absolutely nothing to say. It is as if this very pressing, very important issue which impacts the health care of all kinds of Ontarians didn't exist.

Then there's the issue of the physician shortage or, let's be more exact, the maldistribution of physicians within Ontario. The fact of the matter is that under this government, a problem which has existed in the past has grown much worse; that is, that physicians seem only to want to gravitate towards large cities like Toronto, like Hamilton, like London, like Ottawa, and that now even cities like Windsor, cities like Kitchener, cities like Peterborough and certainly all of the cities and all of the town in northern and rural Ontario are experiencing a physician shortage.

I have to give the government credit. They actually said they were going to do something about this. This is their answer, and I want to get it clearly on the record so that people understand how unacceptable this answer is:

The government says that from now on they will begin a process of subsidizing the tuition fees of medical school students provided they sign a contract that when they finish they will go back to underserved areas and will work as physicians there.

When I last checked, it takes about five years to get through medical school and to qualify for practice. The government's suggestion is that Ontarians will suffer through a continuing nursing shortage, a continuing maldistribution of physicians, and that five years down the road the government might be able to do something to address that.

I just want to point out—and I would have hoped the Minister of Health would have done this—that this strategy of subsidizing tuition fees with respect to medical school students has been tried before. The underserved area program for many years had a bursary program. I don't think there's much difference between a bursary and subsidized tuition. The idea behind the bursary program was that if someone was going to school in one of the areas of health care that was identified as a shortage under the underserved area program, they would receive a bursary.

The bursary program was tried many years ago. Unfortunately, it was found in the majority of cases not to be a success. Why? The people of the underserved area program will tell you this: It was found not to be a success because when young people go into medical school or nursing school or, let's say, physiotherapy, many of them have not given any thought as to where they want to live, where they want to practise, whether or not they want to practise some kind of speciality and, most of all, what happens if they decide to get married, to have a spouse, and where their spouse wants to relocate or locate. In fact, the underserved area program found that in about 75% of the cases with the bursaries, people who had originally signed up said later on in their medical education, "I want out of this because I know now, because of changes in my life—I'm married, we have a family, I've decided on a specialty, I have something else that's attracting me elsewhere in the world—I don't want to do this. I want out."

The government's suggestion in terms of the physician shortage is to wait five years and hope that a strategy that hasn't worked in the past—there's been a failure in 75% of the situations in the past—somehow succeeds this time. That is the most charitable analysis you can give to this government's one-off to rural and northern Ontario and small-town and small-city Ontario.

It goes on, and I want to delineate all of these. The government does try to skip by, to ignore, the holes and cracks in the health care system. Even more, it tries to skip by the fact that its general direction for Ontario's health care system is to turn more and more of the health care system over to private corporations for private delivery.

Let's make no mistake about it: That is what is happening overwhelmingly in home care. Non-profit community organizations like the Victorian Order of

Nurses and Red Cross are, in case after case, community after community, being given the back of the hand, and who is moving in? By and large, corporate health care providers, American corporate health care providers like the Olsten Corp, which have a dismal record in the United States. Olsten, convicted of health care fraud in the United States, having to pay a fine in excess of \$70 million because of that health care fraud in the United States, Olsten, which has a despicable record in the United States, is being invited into this province with open arms by this government.

However, it goes beyond that, because people need to look at what happens when you turn health care delivery over to private corporations. The former Conservative government in Manitoba—I say "former" because they are no more—went down this route about six years ago of privatizing and Americanizing home care. After they had gone down the road for about a year and a half, there was such public disaffection, such public unhappiness, that they brought in an independent auditor, an independent analysis, to look at what was happening in home care. The analysis was done by a group of university professors I believe out of Carleton University. They went to Manitoba and sort of followed what was happening in home care. Again it was Olsten Corp, an American private health care provider, which was welcomed into Manitoba.

What they found was this: First of all, they found that Olsten was engaged in a strategy to force down the wages and working conditions of the people who were providing home care, so the workers in the system whom we depend on to deliver quality care were having their wages, their benefits and their working conditions lowered in a deliberate strategy. As a result, many of those registered nurses, registered practical nurses and physiotherapists were leaving the system. They simply said, "I am not going to work in a system which I believe doesn't have integrity any more." So workers were leaving, and they were leaving for good reason.

Then they looked at it from the perspective of patients, and more and more they were finding that patients were being rationed or limited in terms of the home care they were receiving. They were being told in some cases: "This service is no longer covered by the system. This particular procedure is no longer covered by Manitoba health insurance. If you want this, you'll have to purchase it privately." In other cases, patients were being told: "We are going to limit your visit to 10 minutes or 15 minutes a day, and if it takes longer, we're sorry; that's all I've got. I'm on a strict schedule. I can only do this for 15 minutes a day."

The conclusion: Patients were not benefiting from this private, corporate delivery of home care. In fact, the quality of care they were receiving and the hours of care, or the minutes of care, that they were receiving were all declining.

1520

Who's winning? Well, Olsten was winning. Olsten had put in place a strategy to lower the wages, a strategy

to ration the care, and Olsten was showing projections that two or three years out they were going to make increasing profit from the provision of health care. The health care workers lose, the nurses lose, the registered practical nurses lose, the patients lose, but the private corporate deliverer of home care goes to the bank.

I invite members of this government to read the Manitoba study. Since you're following down the same road as your colleagues in Manitoba, you might like to have the benefit of what that independent analysis, that independent audit found.

Let's face facts. Not only are you privatizing home care, but you are privatizing the delivery of long-term care as well. Anyone who reflects on the last four years will note that instead of taking what have been hospital facilities and converting them into long-term-care facilities, you've been closing the public facilities and then turning over the provision of long-term care to private corporate deliverers. Overwhelmingly, your strategy for long-term care is to award the contracts, to award in effect the monopoly to private corporate deliverers.

I invite anyone again to look at where that leads. I would suggest that we're already seeing where it leads if we look at recent news reports. The recent news reports are full of information where seniors are being neglected, where seniors are receiving an inadequate level of care, where seniors are being told, "If you want a higher level of care, you should fork money out of your pocket to pay for it." That is in the news everywhere and that is going to continue to grow.

Why? There's no secret here. Those private providers will want at least 15% off the top for their profit line. If they couldn't get 15% in providing long-term care, according to the rules of economics, they would leave the provision of health care and they would go into some other sector where they could realize a 15% return. They want to take 15% out of the budget.

If I can go back to Olsten for a minute, there's a very instructive example with Olsten. Just a little bit of research would show you that the chief operating officer of Olsten in the year 1997 received close to \$2 million in salary and also close to \$2 million in bonus. In a health care system, I know that money has effectively got to come out of the pockets of patients; it's got to come out of patient care. That's what happens. There's only so much budget for health care. We hear from the Minister of Health of this province all the time that there is so much money available for health care and so hospitals, homes for the aged and home care providers have to make choices. If part of the model now is that the executive of Olsten has to be paid \$4 million a year, that is coming out of patient care. No matter how you try to square the circle or cut the circle, that's what's happening. That is very much the history of health care in the United States.

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): Is that where your \$2 million came from?

Mr Hampton: If the Premier wants to interject, I'd say to the Premier, look at any objective study that's been

done of health care in the United States. It is the most expensive health care system in the world; it is one of the least efficient health care systems in the world; it leaves close to 100 million Americans either without health care coverage or with health care coverage that, when you read the exclusion clauses, the exemption clauses and the limitation clauses, doesn't amount to anything.

The American system of health care, provisioned by private corporations, is the least efficient, most expensive health care system in the world. I can't figure out for the life of me why your government wants to emulate it, why you want to adopt the private corporate provision of home care, of long-term care. As we watch over the next four years, more and more we will see the private corporate provision of ambulance services and, I suspect, also public health.

Day by day, week by week, whether through the back door or the side door, what you're doing is Americanizing and privatizing our health care system; and the result is going to be a more expensive health care system, a less efficient health care system, where all kinds of Ontarians are going to fall through the gaps.

I would have wished at least that the government would have identified for people what your agenda is, so that people could understand clearly that that is your agenda, and then we could get into that debate.

But it doesn't end there with the government's attempt to gloss over and ignore what's happening in health care. I looked for some mention in the throne speech of the government's intention to deal with the tragedy that is developing in terms of special education in our schools. I know, as I make my way from community to community across Ontario, that thousands of children who have special needs, who need special education, are falling through the holes and the cracks of the education system.

I also know that this government's agenda is, and will continue to be, not to provide any additional resources for special education, not to provide any additional resources for children with special needs. In fact, this government's agenda will be to flatline education budgets for elementary and secondary schools, and as the number of students in the system grows, it will continue to say to boards of education, "You decide where you're going to cut." The agenda will be to cut more from education, not to deal with the tragedy that's happening in special education across this province.

I looked for some indication in the throne speech that the government recognized that it is dramatically underinvesting in our colleges and universities. I looked for some indication that the government was prepared to make those strategic, all-important investments in post-secondary education—colleges and universities—as we move more and more into the knowledge economy, and once again it was empty.

This is the problem: Today in Canada, Ontario ranks last in terms of its per person investment in colleges and universities. Every other province in Canada invests more on a per person basis in colleges and universities than Ontario does. Poor provinces like Newfoundland,

provinces like Saskatchewan which are facing a tremendous challenge in terms of their agricultural sector, poor provinces invest more in post-secondary education on a per person basis than Ontario does. That's the reality of the problem in Ontario.

If you put it in North American terms, only two states invest less in their colleges and universities in the United States than Ontario. That's Vermont and New Hampshire. Anyone who checks will find that Vermont and New Hampshire have historically and traditionally been the home of a large number of private universities and private colleges, so those two states believe that they'll leave it to those upper-echelon private institutions. But after that, if you compare Ontario to any other state in the United States, Ontario would rank behind. Even states in the United States that have chronic literacy problems—Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi and, for God's sake, even Arkansas—invest more in their colleges and universities on a per person basis than Ontario.

What is so dramatically wrong with this? We live in a knowledge economy. We all recognize that the most important thing we can do now in this knowledge economy is to invest to ensure that our people, Ontario people, have the best knowledge, the best set of skills, the best well-rounded ability than ever before. That will determine our success economically and socially more than ever. At the very time when it's more pressing than ever to make these investments, Ontario is de-investing. Ontario is going in the opposite direction to virtually every other jurisdiction in North America as they try to find ways to increase their investment in college and university education. Once again, the government tried to ignore this issue completely in their throne speech.

1530

But that's not the end of it; it goes on. The government tries to ignore the fact, the reality that Ontario now has the second-worst environmental record in North America. Only the state of Texas, a state where they brag, "Anything goes," has a worse environmental record than Ontario.

I won't recite for you all the United Nations reports which list, chapter and verse, the fact that if you do not take care of your natural and physical environment, if you continue to degrade your natural and physical environment, it will come back to bite you big time in terms of health care bills; that the health of our people, the health of our communities is intimately linked to the standards that we set for the protection and the enhancement of our natural and physical environment. Most jurisdictions in the western world, in Europe and—yes, it's true—even the United States, are taking more and more steps to protect and improve their natural and physical environments.

What is happening in Ontario? If you look over the last four years, every year the government cut the investment that it was prepared to make in protecting and improving our environment. Thus, we have the second-worst environmental record in North America, and there was absolutely nothing in the throne speech to indicate

that it's going to change or alter its direction in any way. We're going to continue to see the degradation of our environment with all the negative repercussions that will have for the health of our communities and most of all the health of our people.

I looked for some indication in the throne speech that the government had a strategy to deal with the growing daily crisis of homelessness and the lack of affordable housing. We first saw this crisis about three years ago with people who are hard to house, let's face it, people who perhaps have a problem of alcoholism or who have a drug addiction or perhaps are suffering from psychiatric disorders; we first saw that housing crisis in terms of that population, those most unfortunate people. The government I think tried to ignore it. In its language, it tries to say people in that unfortunate situation are not deserving or somehow are the authors of their own fate. So the government tried to ignore the problem of homelessness at that time.

What we saw this fall is that now university and college students who come to places like the University of Waterloo or Sir Wilfrid Laurier University or McMaster or any of the Toronto colleges or universities cannot find a decent place to live in order that they can pursue their education.

We also know—and all it takes is a cursory call to Statistics Canada who keeps track of this—that rents are increasing in major Ontario cities at an astronomical level since the government has essentially cut the heart out of rent controls through its so-called Tenant Protection Act. Landlords are finding a variety of ways to dramatically increase the rent. But we know from similar work that Statistics Canada has done that lower-income families and modest-income families are not enjoying a similar increase in their wages, in their income. So we are seeing more and more families out on the street and that problem is going to continue. It is indeed a crisis that's already happening and it's going to get worse.

What is so bad about this is, I don't know of anyone who can organize their life for work or education or training if they don't have a roof over their head. If you don't have a roof over your head, you don't have an address. If you don't have a roof over your head, you don't have a phone. If you don't have a roof over your head, it's very difficult just to organize any kind of schedule, never mind a work schedule or an education schedule.

The government, by ignoring this problem, seems to be saying it is OK to exclude from Ontario society a growing number of people, that it is OK to exclude them from the economy, it is OK to exclude them from society, to exclude them from the community in general.

There may be some people in Ontario who say, "I'm not too concerned about this." But I just want to again put on the table for public discussion what happens when people are homeless. When people are homeless they become more and more susceptible to very serious chronic diseases.

A public health nurse will tell you that in Toronto 36% of the people who are homeless—I'm not just talking here about single men; I'm talking about families, I'm talking about young people who are trying to find a job—now carry the tuberculosis bacteria. They may not manifest tuberculosis yet, but they carry the bacteria and it is only a matter of time before tuberculosis becomes a very serious problem.

Many people in Ontario perhaps didn't live through the 1940s or 1950s or early 1960s. Many people in Ontario perhaps do not know the history of how much money had to be expended out of the health care budget to get control of tuberculosis and chronic diseases once they found a hold in the population. Tens of millions of dollars, hundreds of millions of dollars had to be expended.

Yet the government here is allowing the very sort of scenario to be created once again which is going to create that problem and lead again to a very serious public health problem which will not respect income categories, will not respect what neighbourhood we live in and will not respect whether we are young or old. Once something like tuberculosis takes hold, it has an incredible capacity to travel. Government seems not to care one whit about this problem.

Just to show how out of step the government is with many other jurisdictions, I want to point out that right now in the large cities in the United States, the federal government is making a consistent and persistent attempt to address some of these problems because they know how serious they are. In fact, as Ontario increasingly steps away from its cities, increasingly abandons its cities, whether in terms of affordable housing or public health or ambulance services, or in terms of public transit or simply the building of roads, Ontario stands back and says, "You're on your own," in the United States they're headed in the opposite direction.

Why? First of all, just let me tell you what they're doing. Let's take Toronto, for example. This, by the way, comes out of the *Globe and Mail*, not an NDP publication. This is the right-of-centre *Toronto Globe and Mail*. It points out:

"In the 1970s, Toronto was the envy of large US cities because it successfully put neighbourhoods before expressways. Now bonus points for quality of urban life go south of the border. The explanation is simple: Three levels of government in the United States recognize that cities are the engines driving regional and sometimes national economies and fund them accordingly." They realize that "Every dollar spent on infrastructure—whether it is roads, public housing or social services—more than pays the investment in higher productivity.

"Once reviled by Jane Jacobs in the *Life and Death of Great American Cities*, the United States has profited from her teachings. While the provincial and federal governments in Canada have" allowed cities like Toronto to "languish on its laurels as a world-class city, their US counterparts are rebuilding and reinvesting to further their regional and national self-interest. That's another

Jacobs maxim: Organisms will co-operate, if only to compete more effectively.

"The largest infrastructure investment in the United States is the six-year, \$218-billion Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century.... In addition to roads and transit, the US federal government also provides funding for other urban regeneration programs, including the Community Development Block Grant ... the Home Investment Partnership Program ... and the Revitalization of Severely Distressed Public Housing Program...."

They've been there. They recognize that if they're going to be economically successful they have to make those investments in public health, they have to make those investments in the education of the population, they have to make those investments in public infrastructure and housing which allow people to take part in the economy, which allow people to gain the skills that are more and more necessary in that increasingly complex society and to also have the public infrastructure to allow them to get to work, to get home from work and to take part in what is, we all agree, more complex.

1540

But what is happening here in Ontario? The reverse. I've said this before; I will say it again. What we see in Ontario is a government that is underinvesting in the strategic investments in education, the strategic investments in health and in public health, underinvesting in the protection of the environment and the enhancement of the environment, underinvesting in the necessary public infrastructure which makes us all more economically and socially productive. It is underinvesting in all those things because it has to siphon away the money to finance their much-ballyhooed tax cut, a tax cut which, I invite people to sit down and analyze, at the end of the day only benefits the most well-off among us.

I was hoping that we would see somewhere in the speech from the throne an indication that the government wants to correct that balance somewhat. But what I saw was no indication that you want to correct that balance; in fact, you're going to distort that balance even more.

That brings me to the other things that were not in the throne speech which I think need to be addressed. The government had very little to say about child poverty, almost nothing to say about child poverty, despite the fact that child poverty today in Ontario is at a greater level than ever before and despite the fact that the growth in child poverty is faster in Ontario than in any other province in Canada. At a time when Premier Harris boasts that we're living in economic prosperity—and it's not just Premier Harris—at a time when Jean Chrétien boasts that we're living in economic prosperity, the reality is that more children in this province are living in poverty and the growth rate of child poverty is greater here than in any other jurisdiction.

Something is wrong with this equation; something is very wrong with this equation. Anyone who has looked at juvenile crime, anyone who has looked at the success of children in school and their success later on in life will tell you that an impoverished childhood is not a good

predictor of success. In fact, a chronic impoverished childhood is a predictor of leaving school early, dropping out of school, involvement in crime and, later, unemployment. Again, I looked for something in the throne speech which indicated that the government at least recognized this problem and at least had an idea of what must be done to start to wrestle with it. But again, the problem was completely ignored.

Finally, I want to talk just a bit about the most vulnerable and in many cases the most disadvantaged people in this province: people who are disabled, people who through no fault of their own are dealing with a variety of disabilities. We know the history of this government. This government promised, in 1994 and 1995, to bring in a disabilities act which would restore some fairness and would address the imbalances that disabled people face. What disabled people got instead of legislation to address this was an awful slap in the face. It was a three-page piece of wordage that is frankly shameful—shameful in the way that it cynically treats some of the most disadvantaged people in our society. We have seen since then the government continue in this shameful strategy.

I would say that if the Premier is right that we are indeed living in an economic boom, then for God's sake, we should have the decency as a society to be able to reach out to the most disadvantaged people in our community, the people who through no fault of their own are not in every way able to participate in our economy and in our society, and we should reach out with an attitude and with a direction that we are going to right those wrongs and we are going to bring some balance and we are going to recognize the dignity that they have in their lives and that they ought to be recognized as having.

What did I see in the throne speech? The continuation of the shameful strategy we've seen before. I say to the government, I think you're making a huge mistake here. I hesitate to use this analogy, but I think in a crude sort of way it is the analogy: You went out and made statements, not so many months ago, that you would never under any circumstances do away with the bear hunt, and then somebody brought some polling to you which showed that not only were you saying something that was quite unpopular but you were inflaming the issue, and as an effort in political damage control you had to reverse your position, with much embarrassment to the Minister of Natural Resources and the Premier.

Recognize that the vast majority of people in Ontario believe, are convinced, that we need to address the inequalities, the unfairness, that exist in the lives of disabled Ontarians. They want your government to move forward, and they want you to move forward not in a half-hearted way, not in a half-step, but in a bold way. I looked for some indication of that in the throne speech, and unfortunately found none.

I want to refer to some other figures. They happen to be in the media today. This is October 27, Canada NewsWire, and it's titled, "Average Compensation for Toronto Chief Executive Officers in 1999 was \$353,900," and it goes on to point out, "Over 80% of all

executives received an increase to their base salaries of 4% or more, with the highest increase of 5.8% awarded to chief financial officers." Imagine that: You've got an income of \$354,000 a year, and then you get a 4% or 5% increase on top of that.

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): Nice work if you can get it.

Mr Hampton: As my colleague from Welland-Thorold says, "Nice work if you can get it."

Let me just contrast what's happening to all those very hard-working women and men who work for the minimum wage. While chief executive officers, who already have an income of \$354,000 a year in the greater Toronto area, got an increase of 4%, all of those people, women and men, mostly women, who work for the minimum wage, have had their wages frozen now for almost five years. For five years they haven't had a pay increase.

As this government has heaped on user fee and user fee, as this government has heaped on more and more copayment fees, administrative fees, the lowest-paid people in this province have not had a wage increase in almost five years.

What's in this story? Well, I invite members of the government to look at the research done by the Centre for Social Justice. It's a group of economists who record not only how the macro-economy is doing, but they also look at how it's being distributed. What they point out is that persistently and consistently under your government, those who are well-off, like these greater Toronto area CEOs, are doing better than ever, have higher incomes than ever. Those people who have lower incomes and modest-income families in fact are seeing their take-home income drop, in part because they haven't received a pay raise, but also in part because they're the people being hit by the \$1,500-a-year increase in tuition fees for college and university, the copayment fees for prescription medicine, the copayment fees to use a public library, to use a recreation centre—all of those things. They're the people who are being hit.

So in fact, at the end of the day, at the end of the year, modest- and middle-income families are worse off in your Ontario, while these CEOs are doing better and better.

The research also shows something else. The so-called middle class, middle-income families are in fact declining. The percentage of families in Ontario that can be classified as middle income—as I understand it, the middle-income category is somewhere between \$30,000 and about \$65,000—is declining under your government. It has gone from about 68% of families down to about 43% of families. That's what's happening.

1550

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): They're all getting richer.

Mr Hampton: The Premier says they're all getting richer. Premier, as is usual with your comments, you're about one-tenth correct. Some of them have gotten wealthier. Nine-tenths of them, in fact, are seeing their incomes decline. They're equally being hit by the

\$1,500-a-year increase in tuition fees, the increase in health care user fees, the increase in municipal taxes, the increase in library user fees and recreation user fees. You may be able to keep the lid on this for a while, but let's face political experience: After a certain period of time people will start to realize that.

I just want to draw reference to something else the government has said. The government has introduced its legislation, and they referred in the throne speech to their taxpayers protection and balanced budget legislation. They're saying that in the future if you raise any taxes, there must be a referendum. They're bragging that they haven't increased taxes.

I just want to say to the Premier and to all the members of the government, particularly the cabinet ministers, I got a note last week from a fellow who rents crown land. He's got a little, two-room cabin and he rents crown land. He got a notice from your government about three weeks ago that you're increasing the rent from less than \$100 a year to almost \$500 a year, a 500% increase, what is for him a tax. Let's recognize what it is. Let's recognize it—

Interjections.

Mr Hampton: I think that tax increase—

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): Order. Stop the clock. Premier. Member.

Mr Hampton: This individual lives in a small community named Ear Falls, which has had a very tough time and has to struggle with some very high levels of unemployment. But imagine his surprise, Premier, when he hears you saying there will be no tax increases and then he gets a notice which says that the Ontario government—let's call it what it is; it's essentially a property tax—is increasing the property tax on that property by 500%.

But it doesn't end there, because everybody who is an angler or a hunter in the province is getting notice over the next little while that in addition they are going to pay a higher tax. The fee, the tax, you're going to charge them to go out and catch a few fish or to go out and enjoy the experience of hunting is also going to go up by not quite as much, not 500% but by a significant amount.

Interjections.

Mr Hampton: This mention of tax increases by the back door is touching a nerve. There's a little twitching going on on the government side.

You can get away with this back-door stuff, this side-door stuff for a while, but don't treat the people of Ontario with contempt. It will take a while and people will see what's going on, they'll figure it out.

I just want to close on another note, because it's very important to people who live where I live in Ontario, people in northern Ontario. We know that gas prices have been increasing in a chronic way but also that private marketers, when they can, on special weekends, have really been boosting up the price.

The government's answer two years ago was to bring out somebody they called the gas-busters. I think people in Ontario recognize now that was frankly the Ghost-

busters, because they were a ghost. They didn't do anything, they didn't see anything, they didn't learn anything and they had no impact.

What does the government say in the throne speech? What are they going to do now about higher gas prices, something which they have the legislative competence to regulate or even to lower? What's the government going to do? What's the strategy? The strategy is: Ghostbusters II.

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-East York): The sequel.

Mr Hampton: It's the same old movie. They're not going to do anything. They think they can snow-job the people of Ontario again.

I just say to you, the throne speech was bereft of the ideas, of the agenda, of the strategy to deal with the real problems that Ontarians face. There is no agenda to deal with the growing holes and cracks in the health care system. There is no agenda to deal with the growing shortage of nurses, the imbalance in distribution of physicians. There is no strategy to deal with the tragedy of special education that's happening in our elementary and secondary schools. There is no strategy to start to reinvest in our colleges and universities and bring us up to a level—please, please—that is not next to the bottom in North America. There is no strategy to deal with the growing degradation of our environment, the second-worst environmental record in North America. There is no strategy to deal with child poverty. There is no strategy to deal with the growing problem of homelessness and affordable housing. There is no strategy, other than Ghostbusters II, to deal with the problems of consumers and the growing price of gas. There is no strategy other than the continuation of the cynical strategy with respect to people who are disabled.

I'm disappointed in the throne speech. Over the next few weeks, from now until Christmas, we're going to try to outline for this government the kinds of investments that we think should be made. Just as I pointed out, just as the realization is being made in the United States that those infrastructure investments have to be made, that those investments in education have to be made, those investments in public health have to be made, those investments in affordable housing have to be made, I want to outline for this government the kinds of strategies that I think they should be employing. They're workable, they're practical, and I believe they would make us a more productive jurisdiction, both economically and socially. But regrettably, those things aren't going to happen, at least in the short term.

In view of my dissatisfaction with the throne speech, in view of the fact that the government tried a strategy of deflection, tried to pretend it somehow has an agenda to deal with the causes of crime and the manifestation of crime, even though that is hollow because they have fewer police officers on the street than were on the street in 1994, in view of the fact that the government doesn't deal with the real problems Ontarians confront, I move, seconded by my colleague Ms Lankin:

"That the amendment to the motion for an address in reply to the speech of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session be amended by striking out all of the words after 'Whereas the throne speech' and substituting the following:

"Whereas the throne speech lays out a government agenda that will increase the growing gap between the rich and poor in Ontario, while tightening the squeeze on the middle class; and

"Whereas much of that agenda is supported by an official opposition that is complaining about the tone, rather than the substance, of the government's direction; and

"Whereas the government's policies will continue to enrich the wealthiest in the province while damaging environmental protection, child care, home care, affordable housing, community safety and other areas of primary importance to the people of Ontario; and

"Whereas the protection of the rights of workers and the health and safety of Ontarians on the job will continue to be eroded by the government actions; and

"Whereas the government has repeatedly broken promises to people with disabilities, both to pass an Ontarians with Disabilities Act and to put in place an effective disabilities support program; and

"Whereas working families who are falling farther behind need a government that will address their growing economic insecurity, not funnel more money into the pockets of those who are already well off;

"Therefore, this House regrets that the government has failed to put forward a legislative agenda which deals with the issues of concern to a majority of Ontarians."

1600

The Acting Speaker: Mr Hampton, seconded by Ms Lankin, moves that the amendment to the motion for an address in reply to the speech of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session be amended by striking out all of the words after "Whereas the throne speech" and substituting the following:

"lays out a government agenda that will increase the growing gap between rich and poor in Ontario, while tightening the squeeze on the middle class; and

"Whereas much of the agenda is supported by an official opposition that is complaining about the tone, rather than the substance, of the government's direction; and

"Whereas the government's policies will continue to enrich the wealthiest in the province while damaging environmental protection, child care, home care, affordable housing, community safety and other areas of primary importance to the people of Ontario; and

"Whereas the protection of the rights of workers and the health and safety of Ontarians on the job will continue to be eroded by the government's actions; and

"Whereas the government has repeatedly broken promises to people with disabilities, both to pass on an Ontarians with Disabilities Act and to put in place an effective disabilities support program;

"Whereas working families who are falling farther behind need a government that will address their growing

economic insecurity, not funnel more money into the pockets of those who are already well off;

"Therefore, this House regrets that this government has failed to put forward a legislative agenda which deals with the issues of concern to a majority of Ontarians."

Further debate? We are at the point where the member from North York has completed her speech. We now have questions and comments. The member for Don Valley East.

Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East): Thank you, Mr Speaker. At the outset, I congratulate you and your colleagues on your appointment to the chair. I know that you will serve fairly and justly.

It's interesting when you look at the throne speech document for what is there but also for what's not in the document. Not one mention of seniors, especially in the International Year of Older Persons, as designated by the United Nations, which all members have celebrated, which all members would recognize. This government doesn't choose to put any mention of seniors in our throne speech. It's no surprise because we have a minister for seniors who refuses to acknowledge that there's a problem in retirement and care homes with the kind of care that our seniors and elderly, disabled and mentally ill people are receiving.

It's interesting to note what also is not in the throne speech. The throne speech makes absolutely no mention of housing. We have a housing crisis. Here in Toronto alone our vacancy rate is well less than 1%. In fact, some time in the next few weeks CMHC is going to be releasing the numbers. It's going to be a very sorry picture and an indictment of this government and their actions, particularly when it comes to the target they have painted on every tenant in this province.

What's happened that is tenants have been forced to pay incredible rent increases, yet at the same time tenant incomes have been dropping at a substantial rate. This government has placed people in an incredibly vulnerable position. It is a shameful act.

The fact that our seniors and our tenants have received absolutely no mention at all in the throne speech shows the arrogant nature of this government, shows that these are groups of people that they don't even care about. It shows just how out of touch this government is, and it's only a few months into their mandate.

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): It's my privilege to respond to the member from York North's remarks, concluded last night, in response to the speech from the throne. I just want to pick up on the main theme that the member from York North was trying to make. It's a point that all sides of the House should recall.

Without a strong economy, you can't have a strong health and education social support system. If anyone disagrees with that fundamental premise, clearly the last 10 years where they spent more money and got less service demonstrates the success of that particular approach.

I think a great starting point to pick up on Ms Munro is the seven-point plan in the Blueprint, covered during

the election. Very clearly the public supported that and we formed the government, so I think we have a mandate to move ahead with a strong economy.

Clearly there is another initiative that's on the front page of most papers, and it's the balanced budget legislation, the taxpayer protection act. That's a very important fundamental change in spending your way out of every problem. When the Liberals were in power they had the greatest revenue and highest number of people on welfare. Our debt doubled during the period of the last 10 years. No longer can the taxpayer tolerate a government that just spends money to solve problems. We have to do more with less. We do it in our own household, and as a government we're committed to it. Really, it's a strong economy. Our plan demonstrates 825,000 net new jobs. Just imagine, keeping this strong economy—it's the small business sector that creates the real jobs in our economy—and being accountable for our actions to the taxpayers of Ontario.

I respect the member for York North. I think she respects the system and we're the government to deliver on our promises.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Elgin-Middlesex-London.

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): Thank you, Mr Speaker, and congratulations on your appointment.

It really is truly an honour and a privilege to be in this House. Serving as a municipal politician, I saw at first hand some of the damage that was done by this government.

There are many areas that were not addressed in this throne speech, and in some of the areas that are talked about, such as the balanced budget, all we're going to see here is another form of downloading to municipalities. It's been unprecedented what municipal politicians have witnessed. I think that this House needs to take into account that municipal politicians are a very important part of the decision-making process.

If we're going to hold the line on new taxes in this province, what you're going to do is download more to municipal governments. You're going to cause property taxes to rise. You're going to cause new user fees to be found.

Mr Frank Mazzilli (London-Fanshawe): More jobs have been created in St Thomas because of this government.

Mr Peters: No, we demonstrated in St Thomas—we recognized that we needed to be fiscally responsible well before this government was elected in 1995. We recognized in 1992 that we had to get our financial affairs in order.

But what else was not addressed in this throne speech was the environment. We need to do a great deal towards improving environmental controls in this province. Your goal of a 50% reduction in garbage going to landfill sites is not going to be achieved. The city of St Thomas, though, I can tell you, achieved that. We had a great model of a garbage collection system, and I need you as

government to do more to help work with municipalities. You're not doing that; you're just passing more off to municipalities.

The 401 is not addressed in the throne speech. Eighty kilometres of the 401 are within my riding. You have not addressed the serious concerns and issues that are faced with the 401.

I will reiterate to the Minister of Citizenship and Culture: Your comments in the throne speech to the Ontarians with Disabilities Act were not appropriate. More needs to be done.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Broadview-Greenwood.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Broadview-Greenwood): Broadview-Greenwood used to be Riverdale. Although I wasn't in the House last night, I guess I should get a life because I was actually watching the proceedings on TV. I did see a portion of the member's speech last night. What disturbs me is what was left out of her speech and all of the government members' speeches that I've heard.

We're in this House today and we raised a very serious issue. It looks like we have a looming crisis within the disabled community. It looks like, and we had it confirmed today, that there may be thousands of people affected by a so-called computer glitch. I notice that the minister is here, but I don't think he paid attention. He didn't run out and see what's going on. None of this was talked about last night or in the throne speech. The reality is that we still do not have an Ontario disabilities act after five years of promise after promise, and just a bare mention of that in the throne speech.

Now today, on top of that, we find out—and we've been trying to point this out all week—that there's a problem with this program, the program where people are supposed to have their lives improved and in fact it's getting worse because of this government. Today we mentioned a crisis in the making where there could be thousands of people not getting their cheques on Friday, thousands of people worried about where they're going to get food to eat, in some cases get their medication, pay their rent. They may have to come down and pick up cheques. How are they going to get there when their transportation has been curtailed, plus they're not getting the—it's a chicken-and-egg.

I am absolutely amazed that this government can make such speeches and not even refer to the disabled in our communities.

Mrs Julia Munro (York North): Thank you very much to the members for Don Valley East, Durham, Elgin-Middlesex-London, and Broadview-Greenwood. I certainly appreciate the opportunity to respond to some of the issues that have been raised.

There are two that stand out, and one of those is that mentioned by the member from Don Valley East. In his comments he discussed the fact that seniors, he felt, had not been addressed by this throne speech. I think it's important to understand that when a throne speech is crafted, it is crafted with the idea of all citizens in this province. Very clearly, there are some strong messages

of support to those people in our community, those seniors who have contributed so much in their working life and their volunteer life. In my riding, in York region, we're talking over 1,500 long-term-care beds. It's ironic that it should come from the opposition, who chose not to introduce one long-term-care bed during their time in office.

It's also interesting to note our commitment to increase by 20% the health care dollar in this province, to raise it beyond the historic elements that it is now. I'd also suggest that the seniors are going to be the recipients of the 20% decline in the provincial portion of residential taxes. These are very direct benefits that the seniors of our province are going to receive as a result of the commitment of this government in the throne speech.

Mr Caplan: I move adjournment of the debate on the throne speech.

The Acting Speaker: Mr Caplan moves adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for francophone affairs): I seek unanimous consent for the House to now recess until 4:30 this afternoon.

The Acting Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to adjourn until 4:30 this afternoon? Agreed. The House will stand in recess until 4:30.

The House recessed from 1614 to 1630.

The Acting Speaker: Orders of the day.

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Government House Leader): Order G4, Mr Speaker.

I think for all members present I will just explain what we expect to go on this afternoon. We're going to try to deal with the amendments to the Legislative Assembly Act as well as deal with our standing orders. I expect that members will be involved in the debate on the standing orders rather than the Legislative Assembly order, and we'll be treating these more or less as a package. That's my hope.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY STATUTE LAW
AMENDMENT ACT, 1999

LOI DE 1999 MODIFIANT DES LOIS
EN CE QUI A TRAIT
À L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE

Mr Sterling moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 4, An Act respecting the Legislative Assembly and its officers / Projet de loi 4, Loi concernant l'Assemblée législative et ses fonctionnaires.

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

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Government House Leader): Mr Speaker, I had understood that we were going to have our

debate on the standing orders, but if we would like to talk with regard to the Legislative Assembly Statute Law Amendment Act, that's fine.

There are two guiding documents which really control this Legislative Assembly. One is the Legislative Assembly Act and the other is the Standing Orders, and we're dealing with both of those this afternoon.

The amendments to the Legislative Assembly Act are primarily focused on the number of members that are required to make up an official party in the Legislature for purposes of appropriation of monies to run their party caucuses and to hire people to do their research and that kind of thing.

Before, there was a requirement for 12 members to make up a recognized party in this Legislature. As you know, in order to save the taxpayers some money and to make our electoral process somewhat less confusing, our government in the 1995 election promised to reduce the number of seats from 130 to whatever number there would be in the House of Commons from Ontario. In other words, there would be an equivalent number, the same number of MPPs, members of provincial Parliament, as federal members of Parliament. In doing that, what has happened is the Legislature has reduced from 130 to 103 members, a reduction of about 20% of the House. This resulted in each of us having fewer members, save and except for the Her Majesty's loyal opposition who went up slightly in the number of members that they have. The third party went from I think it was 16 members—something in that nature—down to nine members.

Shortly after the election, both party leaders said that they would recognize the third party and therefore we are adjusting that number from 12 down to eight in order for the third party, the New Democratic Party, to have an appropriation and funds to run their party activity and to fully participate in Parliament and represent the people who voted for them.

The Legislative Assembly Act also makes some other minor amendments which I'm sure the other members will point out. I look forward to the support of all members of this Legislature. Fortunately, we had very successful negotiations between the three House leaders of the three parties to come to the conclusions that we are arriving at today.

This is perhaps the first time that I know of in some considerable period of time where the House leaders have been able to negotiate a package which they have all said we will support. That meant compromise on the part of each one of us, compromise on the part of each of the parties. I think it bodes well for this Parliament. It bodes well that the parties I believe all have a unified purpose, and that is to make this place work as best it can under what political circumstances we have.

I say with great pride, as the government House leader, that we have in fact been able to put our differences aside and come to a common conclusion and all support these rules. I think that means then that when members are speaking in this Legislature, when members

are participating in this Legislature, there will be a greater tendency, there will be a greater discipline to in fact follow the rules which we have all agreed upon.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): I'll have a moment to speak at greater length in a moment, but there are a number of other issues that we will be putting on the table over the course of the coming year with respect to the standing orders. We have some thoughts with respect to the freedom of information act, by way of example, and the need to expand people's access to information. We have some thoughts with respect to protecting the budget and staff complement of the environment commissioner and we fully expect that the government in this era of co-operation will want to move on some of those recommendations.

Yes, we were, through a course of sometimes difficult negotiations, able to come up with a package of compromises and I welcome the government House leader's observation that he hopes this portends things to come. I'll take him at his word then that when I put forward a number of changes that we're going to be proposing to the standing orders the government itself will in fact be prepared to discuss and will, based on what he said here today, I'm sure be most likely to agree with some of them, to help make this Legislature function in a more efficient and better way for the people of Ontario and to help make it a Legislature for the 21st century, one where the opposition has the opportunity to question the government, one where we get more time to debate.

I'll look forward to that era of co-operation and that ability to discuss and hopefully find the kinds of compromises that will allow what I know this government said, because the House leader has now said it, this desire to work together to make things work better here for all sides of the House, the opposition and the government.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Broadview-Greenwood): I just want to take a minute to congratulate the three party leaders for coming to this agreement. I, as the whip of our party, was behind the scenes and every now and then our House leader would come and consult with me. I know a little bit about the comings and goings and things on the table, off the table, and I know my House leader is getting very nervous now because we haven't voted on the deal yet and I'm up on my feet talking about things being on and off the table. So I won't go any further, but I do want to take this opportunity to congratulate the three.

It's very unusual, as anybody who watches this channel and anybody who's ever been in this Legislature knows, to see a situation where three party leaders can get together and come to an agreement that basically everybody's happy with. Obviously, everybody had to give and take and there are some things that each party would like to see changed I suppose in some ways, but I was very gratified to see everybody smiling at the end of the process.

It bodes well for the people of Ontario, what this means not just now for the NDP with nine members but

in a smaller House. In fact, we all agree some of this should have been done beforehand. It wasn't, and what this means is for future parliaments some other party—I will be careful, House leader—may be in this situation some day with even fewer seats. Who knows? I do want to say that this bodes well for the people of Ontario. We've kept a three-party system that we're all familiar with and works well for us in Ontario in representing the people of Ontario.

Again, let me congratulate the House leaders and wish us all good luck now in carrying out our duties for the people of Ontario.

1640

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I must say that the arrangement that is made through this particular piece of legislation is much more benign than what we've seen in the past. It may be that if I get a chance to speak a little later on, I may want to review some of the draconian measures which were imposed by the Harris government on the opposition and talk a little bit about this House.

What I wanted to do in the two minutes in response to the minister was to commend the three party House leaders, who had a very difficult time coming to an agreement. There were substantial changes that took place after the last election: a new government coming into office or a renewed mandate often has some new ideas as to how it would like to treat the Legislature, in particular the opposition.

I know that the discussions are difficult. The House leader for the Liberal Party, Dwight Duncan, member for Windsor-St Clair, did an outstanding job in his negotiating and kept in touch with members of the caucus. I'm sure his hair is turning grey now. That doesn't happen to the government House leader because he has already reached that stage. But for each of the House leaders it's difficult, because they come back to their members and each member has a pet project with which to deal.

I want to say about this House—it is my opinion, being here in my 23rd year now—that this House is virtually irrelevant to the province of Ontario and the governing of Ontario. That's very difficult for me to say, because if you say, "Well, why would you run for a House that's irrelevant?"—I just have seen a change of the rules by three political parties: the Liberal Party, then the NDP and then the Conservatives, which have shrunk the role, which have diminished the role of the opposition, indeed of the individual member of the Legislature. That's why the suggestions of my House leader, Dwight Duncan, should be taken into account as to how the role of the members can be enhanced through further changes.

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): I also want to compliment all three House leaders, in particular our fine House leader, Mr Duncan, for the negotiations that have taken place. May I say, though, that I come from a new riding, Thunder Bay-Superior North, which is probably a pretty good example of the need for some of these changes that are taking place, a certain understanding of the fact that as the gov-

ernment House leader mentioned, the ridings have been dropped from 130 to 103.

As a result, there was an amalgamation of many of the ridings. My riding was formerly Port Arthur, which I was proud to serve for four years. I'm very grateful to the people of Thunder Bay-Superior North that they have elected me for this term. But the riding has changed in a rather dramatic way. From previously representing simply the north side of Thunder Bay and some areas outside that, I now in essence have taken over a large part of the previous Lake Nipigon riding, which puts real demands in a very different way on me, as it does on you as well, Mr Speaker, in terms of your largely expanded riding.

Many of the issues we will be discussing today that are in the agreement are ones that are truly crucial so that we can represent our constituency well. Having spent most of the summer travelling throughout my new riding and having seen some of those challenges, I am pleased that there has been such co-operation and such understanding brought forward in terms of some of these decisions.

We look forward to further debate today to do so. I hope I get an opportunity at some other time, perhaps later this afternoon, to go through my riding so people can understand what the large new riding of Thunder Bay-Superior North is all about. There are a number of communities, 10 First Nations communities, all of them vibrant communities that truly have exciting things happening, many projects that are going forward that I want to work very hard on. I look forward to further discussion today and having an opportunity myself later on to talk further about my riding.

The Acting Speaker: Response?

Hon Mr Sterling: I didn't intend a long debate at the first setting out of this. The member from Thunder Bay recognizes that the government acceded to giving a significant boost in resources for seven northern ridings even though we, this government, only occupy one of those ridings. That's a recognition of fairness, a fairness in terms of trying to strike these.

We've heard from I guess one of the longest-sitting parliamentarians here, Mr Bradley, from St Catharines. In spite of his interventions about what he wanted in these standing orders we couldn't include them all. Jim, I just want to say to you, we're not going to have an appointed Senate at the provincial level.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Duncan: I believe we have unanimous consent for me to split my time with the member for St Catharines.

The Acting Speaker: Is that agreed? Agreed.

Mr Duncan: Let me elaborate a little bit on what I spoke of a few minutes ago. My colleague from St Catharines quite correctly pointed out that there have been significant changes to the rules in this House prior to this agreement that we have reached today.

The official opposition, for its part, intends to bring a number of its own proposals to make this Legislature work better, to make it more relevant to the people of Ontario. My colleague from St Catharines, who has been

here a long time, understands and remembers the history of this chamber and how important it could be once again if only we took seriously our commitment to recognizing the role of individual members both on the opposition side and, dare I suggest to my colleagues on the other side, in the government back benches, those who aren't in cabinet. So we'll be bringing those changes forward.

Our objective when we entered into these negotiations was that the rules of the House need to reflect what the people said and did on June 3, 1999. To that extent, I believe we've achieved that objective within reasonable boundaries. I believe all three parties, as represented by their House leaders, understood that.

Certainly there was give and take. We didn't get everything we wanted, but I believe we have corrected a situation which we felt was unfair to our party over the last nine years in terms of the allocation of time and questions, time in the Legislature and money for caucuses. I believe that what we've set up is a template so that in future legislatures it will be easier to come to terms with these changes. Other than the fact that this government will be changed in four years, I don't expect the kinds of changes we saw resulting from the Fewer Politicians Act that the government introduced.

I welcome the comments of the government House leader today, his willingness to co-operate and to work together to make this place once again the kind of relevant legislative body it was when my colleague from St Catharines began his career several years ago.

I look forward to the opportunity of debating with my colleagues in the New Democratic Party, because they are a party, and that needs to be said. They campaigned together with a common leader, a common theme, and they have a rich and deep tradition in this place. I think the agreement we reached was appropriate and reflects the will of the people of Ontario as expressed on June 3 of this year.

With that, I turn it over to my distinguished colleague from St Catharines. I should tell you that those of us who have not—

Hon Helen Johns (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation, minister responsible for seniors and women): You've had a change of heart.

Mr Duncan: Pardon me? What I wanted to suggest was—to those of us who don't have the same amount of experience, we've come to refer to the member for St Catharines as Yoda. Yoda, you'll recall from the Star Wars movie, was the wise and experienced Jedi knight who trained all of the younger members in the ways of the Force and how to use the Force to conquer the dark side. With his guidance and his representation, let me tell you, the forces of good will defeat the dark side in four years' time.

Mr Bradley: I want to thank the member for Windsor-St Clair for the very kind and mercifully brief introduction this evening.

The government House leader, who was elected to the Legislature the same time I was, in June 1977, has also seen some significant changes take place. I must say that

what I liked about this set of changes—even though I don't necessarily find all of them changes I would cheerlead about, I do find them acceptable and I know how the procedure of give and take works.

1650

What I think was absent previous to this was any meaningful negotiation between whoever was the government House leader of the day and the opposition House leaders. There was from on high given an edict that the rules would change substantially in June 1993, when Dave Cooke, the member for Windsor-Riverside at that time, was given orders to make substantial changes to the Legislative Assembly procedures to limit the activity of the opposition and the power of the opposition—I think ultimately it reflects on all members of the Legislature—and then, of course, the draconian measures brought in I think under Mr Johnson in that case. He simply was the person taking the orders from the Premier's office. They had the now Minister of Community and Social Services, who I think was age 29 by then, who was coming forward with all these changes—

Hon Mr Baird: Now 30.

Mr Bradley: He's now 30, he tells me. He was coming forward with changes which were written in the office of—who's the chief adviser again?—Guy Giorno, the chief adviser and the person with the most power in the government, and others who contributed to it.

What has happened as a result of these? What's happened as a result of these is that the House has become relatively ineffective and relatively irrelevant. It really amounts now to WWF wrestling. In other words, because you've removed legitimate means of slowing down the government or bringing criticism upon the government, the opposition now must act in an extraordinary way in order to gain the same attention.

Where I first saw this happen was with bell-ringing. I was in opposition at that time; the Conservatives were in power. Federally I think it was the opposite then, and the Conservatives had used the bell-ringing. It meant that bells rang for long periods of time and the House was tied up. Was that good? No, it wasn't. I did not like that tactic, but it was a tactic that had to be used to slow the government of the day down and to have them pause and reflect upon controversial legislation.

That came about because we removed the filibuster. The filibuster, for those who are at home and may not be familiar with the term, was a very long speech. The one I remember most in this Legislature was by Peter Kormos, who is the member now for Niagara Centre, then for Welland-Thornold, who took great exception to a bill on automobile insurance brought in by the Liberals and spoke for some 17 hours in succession. As a result of that, the Liberal House leader of the day brought in rule changes which would eliminate that possibility.

I think upon reflection, allowing longer speeches and allowing more speeches is preferable to finding tricks to bring the Legislature to a complete standstill. We in the opposition in the last Parliament resorted to those tricks. One night the House was brought to a complete standstill

because the Sergeant at Arms was not allowed to physically remove a member of the opposition from the House. It's not something that the opposition looked forward to. There was not great euphoria, though it was something different and the news media was interested. It was a tactic that was employed because there was virtually no other way of getting the attention of the government.

I was reading some of the comments of the now government House leader and of Ernie Eves, who was the previous government House leader, about the role of the opposition. I'm not doing it to be mischievous because I'm not even going to read it into the record—I can't really find it right now and didn't do the research for that—other than to say that both made an excellent point about why it's important to have an opposition with the power to at least slow the government down.

Government is elected and has the right to govern, but it's important that the government pause and look at its legislation. Some of the best legislation I've seen—and the government House leader made reference to this in a eulogy to Ross Hall the other day, Ross Hall being the Liberal member for Lincoln who passed away recently and whom we were eulogizing in this Legislature. He said that when you were in a minority Parliament, both sides had a responsibility. The government had to be acutely aware of what the opposition was thinking, but also the opposition couldn't oppose simply for the reason that it's there in opposition to oppose. It had to take some responsibility for legislation. It worked well. I'm not advocating minority Parliament all the time, but I'm going to tell you, I was amazed with that.

A person who was good on the US side and who just died a couple of days ago was Senator John Chafee, a Republican from Rhode Island. He was one of the last of what they call "centrists," a bipartisan person. You used to see in the US Senate some good bipartisan agreements. One of them was the Clean Air Act, by the way, that the former Minister of the Environment would be interested in and is aware of. That came about as a result of people like John Chafee of Rhode Island, a Republican, and Senator Stafford of Vermont, Senator Mitchell of Maine and so on. These people got together on a bipartisan basis and developed good legislation.

My observation in this House is that it has never been so divided ideologically as I've seen it in the last few years. Some people like that. They say, "Hey, that's the way it's got to be." I don't. I've never liked it that way, but it is, and I understand why that is the case. There is partisanship in politics, and we have to understand that.

But what I've seen is a continuing erosion of the power of individual elected members. At the risk of being repetitious, I don't want to centre in only on Ontario, but let me look right around the country and in other jurisdictions. The offices of the premiers or the prime ministers or the presidents have become extremely powerful these days. The individual elected members, particularly new members when they get elected, think they have some power and influence. Well, you'll get

patted on the head and you'll be told that you have some role and responsibility, but essentially it will be the unelected political advisers to Premiers or Prime Ministers who are the people who are responsible.

Now I'm going to get some orders from my House leader on how much time I have and what I should talk about.

Interjection.

Mr Bradley: He wants me to wrap it up fairly soon, I see. I'm much prepared to do that. I simply want to contrast this particular group of changes as one that is much more built on consensus than the others. Even though I think the House has become largely irrelevant today and without much power, I want to commend the government House leader and the other two House leaders for making an effort to reach a consensus and to make the atmosphere just slightly better in this House and to make members' roles slightly more meaningful.

I hope this is just a start and that we can continue to build upon that to restore some of that responsibility and power to elected members of the Legislature.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Further debate?

Questions and comments? The Chair recognizes the member for—

Ms Churley: Broadview-Greenwood. It's going to take a while, I know, Speaker. You're having to look at all those photos and ridings again.

As always, I listened quite intently to—should I say Yoda?—the member for St Catharines. I'm sorry, member for St Catharines, but that's it for you. You're Yoda forever now.

The member for St Catharines raised a very good point. I would say that it's a very good thing that two of the three House leaders who were negotiating have experienced both opposition and government. Although the Liberal House leader had not experienced government, I know that he was working closely with his mentor, our good friend from St Catharines, better known as Yoda now.

But one of the points he makes, and I think it's very important—frankly, I saw it as a new member in our government and I saw it with new members in the last Parliament; I haven't seen it yet, there hasn't been enough time, and I hope it doesn't happen—is that new members come here and get into government and see opposition acting up and actually sometimes stalling legislation or demanding certain things, and there's a bit of, "We're the government." What we are hearing now already is, "The debate is over."

1700

But the opposition plays a very important role. I'm afraid that what happens is new members—and it happened to many of us too, coming right into government—are very offended and insulted when you see this pesky opposition trying to, in your view, hold things up when you have a majority and you feel you should be able to get it through like that. We experienced it. I believe, from what the member for St Catharines said, that the Liberals

before changed rules as well, and now your government came in the last session and I think, again, because there were a few things which were perceived as quite draconian, rules were changed even further and that's something we really have to keep an eye on.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): Let me begin by first of all thanking both my counterparts—Norm Sterling, the government House leader, and Dwight Duncan, the Liberal House leader—for a job well done on behalf of the people. I realize that could seem very self-serving, given the fact that we have something today, assuming the vote goes the way that Norm tells me it's going to, as opposed to what we had before.

There was a real spirit of co-operation, a desire to try and find an agreement, and I don't think that people should underestimate how far apart we were when we began. Most of my negotiating experience in the past has been with two parties. When you have three parties present with three separate agendas, it becomes a whole different game of chess; and make no mistake, there were a couple of times during the debate where we nearly went into the ditch and almost didn't get to this point, notwithstanding our desire to reach an agreement. There's a lot of emotion involved here and a lot of history, a lot of tradition and a lot of principles, and they're not always the same among the three parties. This was not an easy road.

I want to say the great respect that I have for my two counterparts in terms of the personal integrity that they brought to the table. I would say to Speaker Carr that the relationship we have developed will serve him well, as well as the people of Ontario. When we get into those situations where there is a legitimate impasse—we've got hard-line politics, hard-line emotions, hard-line passion and principles happening here in this place and the business of the Parliament seizes up when the political will eventually overtakes us—I think we as House leaders will be able to sit down and find our way through whatever situation we've all got ourselves into and find a resolve to it.

I also want to express—and I think this is probably the first time I have ever done it and likely the last—a thanks to the Premier because I think he showed great leadership on this issue at a time when it wasn't so motherhood that, "Oh yes, the NDP will get party status, it's just a matter of working out the details." There were those advocating at the time that this not happen, and I think it was the intervention of the Premier, who stated clearly and unequivocally that the government was in support of the fact that we would have party status, and that then launched the negotiations because it shifted some other people's positions and that gave us the environment to allow the negotiations to begin and ultimately to prosper.

While I am thanking individuals—because this was an important issue for us and certainly given the feedback we've all got from New Democrats across Ontario, both members and supporters who believe in the things we

advocate. This was an important part of Ontario's history, an important part of democracy.

Two of the people who played an important role happen to be right here beside me and I think that's quite convenient: Marilyn Churley, our whip, and our deputy leader, Frances Lankin, both of whom stayed here late hours, early in the morning, available by phone. I want to put on the record how much I appreciate their playing that role and the advice and assistance they provided. They played a big role in getting us to this point.

In this context—the government House leader talked about the fact that they changed the number of seats in this House to reflect the federal House—there's an important principle there that we still don't accept: This idea that somehow having the same number of provincial seats as there are federal seats is better democracy is one that we reject. It's based on the fact that it's 103 in Ontario out of 301 across the country. This 103 is everything. That's all there is, if you will. I have been an alderman and I know that if anybody suggested, "Well, let's just by extrapolation say, why don't we streamline things even further and make municipal wards the size of MPP ridings?" that's not going to serve democracy. A lot of it has to do with the scale.

When you're an alderman, potholes and tree roots in the sewers are important. They may not be earth-shattering but they're important to the people who live there. If you're an alderman or a local councillor, you've got an obligation to deal with that.

I sure wouldn't want to try now, given the kind of territory that I cover or even the territory I had before, to understand those kinds of local needs. Given the number of school boards that are now within each of our ridings, parent councils, community groups, Neighbourhood Watch, it's going to be so difficult for us to provide the same kind of relationship to the communities that make up our ridings that we did in the past. I predict that not too far in the future we will begin to change and go back to slightly smaller ridings, recognizing that ultimately gives us the kind of democracy that people want and gives them the kind of access they need as MPPs.

The other thing I want to put on the record at this time is that the most significant thing for us—and this is where we got into a lot of difficulty in the negotiations, and I'm not going to name names because that serves no purpose—one perspective at the table was: "Look, there are only nine of you and there's X number of us, so why should you get this and this?"

That argument was repeated over and over and was extremely frustrating for us. It's not the numbers per se that matter. We'd like to have a bigger caucus, for sure, no question about that. But the principle that I took on behalf of our caucus to the negotiating table was that we provide the historic third alternative to the Tories and the Liberals. I don't expect anyone in the other two parties to agree with this, but we make the case that in far too many instances there's really not a lot of difference between the Liberals and the Tories, and that the people of Ontario deserve—now we're getting into the kind of debate I'm

used to: We provide an alternative that's different. If this were a regular debate I'd be arguing better, but I'm not going that far till after the vote, OK?

That was the important principle, that once you crossed the threshold of party status, you then had an obligation to have a position and respond to environmental issues, labour issues, health issues, social service, all the things that provincial government provides. That obligation is not decided based on whether you have 8, 9, 12, 15 or 30 members.

Providing that legitimate third choice, the second alternative from the government, requires a certain infrastructure. First of all, you've got to be in question period. You've got to be in the game in order to be offering the kind of constructive criticism that opposition does and also offering your alternative. If you're sitting quietly during all of question period, the reality is that it's not happening. You really aren't participating as a full partner in this House. We know for decades that has been the experience. As I read into the record earlier, there are experts who have said that we have the only real, true, stable three-party system in this place.

It was important for us in the NDP, on every issue we debated, to maintain enough presence, enough resources, enough opportunity to make a difference in some of the voting procedures, that we were offering a legitimate, full-fledged, fully researched, fully credible third choice to the other two traditional parties that make up this place.

I'm pleased that at the end of the day we were able to overcome the differences on that point of view. There are things we would have liked to have in here that aren't, there are some things in here that we like less than others, but I have no hesitancy in saying that I think it's a fair agreement. I think it provides the kind of traditional Ontario Legislature that Ontarians have expected and expected to see as a result of the June 3 election.

1710

I want to also say on at least one point that there is something new and innovative here. It came at a price, but it's new, it's innovative, and I want to make sure that if it works, the government House leader, Norm Sterling, gets all the credit. Conversely, if it bombs, Norm, you're going to wear it.

I won't go into the detail of it because we don't want to take up too much time today, but I think it's important because it's not often that we see—I see—things coming across from the government that are new and that enhance democracy. I realize that can be an explosive point, but that's my opinion. In this case, though, what we see is a change to the committee system where in two of our committees now individual members of those committees can generate bills that at least will get the time of day in committee. If they get the support of five members on that committee—it doesn't matter which party, and no one party can control that—the issue has to come to the House and there has to be at least a debate on it.

This is a good thing. I hope we pay a lot of attention to it and I hope we analyze it carefully, because if it works,

maybe we can build on it in the future as a way of putting real meaning to what we all say, which is that backbenchers in the government and in the oppositions have to play a bigger role. Everybody makes that speech and nothing changes. This is a change that has some real potential.

When it was first introduced, I really had some concerns about it because we didn't have the mechanism for the vote spelled out, but I want to give House leader Sterling all the credit in the world for backing up his words with a process that said yes, he's trying to provide people with a new role, a more effective role. If that means down the road that backbenchers come to play a more important role in this place, then I think the source of that ought to be recognized. It was from the government House leader, who had no real gain to put it on the table other than as something he's personally felt strongly about. I want to acknowledge it and give him credit for having the courage to put it on the table and to give individual members some opportunity to play a bigger role than we have in the past.

With that, Speaker, I will conclude my remarks except to say to all the members of the House, to tell you straight up, that I don't think we've gotten anything that quite frankly the third party didn't deserve at the end of the day, because had there been a change in the math formula in the original bill that reduced the number of seats, we wouldn't have had these negotiations. Having said that, there was nothing that absolutely guaranteed or ordained that we would get party status. As much as I feel we deserve it, there was nothing to guarantee that. I want to thank all the members of the Tory party and the Liberal Party who put their support behind this to give us the opportunity to continue to play the important historical role that we have in Ontario and at least provide some glimmer of light that indeed democracy is alive and well in Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker: Comments and questions?

Mr Bradley: I want to say right off the top that I believe the NDP should be extended party status. During the election campaign and after the election we've had some tough contests between us, between the various political parties, but I've always believed that each of the political parties after the election should have been recognized as political parties. Each has an important role to play in a democracy and each of us has a different approach to politics. It varies from time to time. Sometimes if we're in government, tough decisions have to be made that don't always reflect what we feel we would like to do, but there we are.

I want to say that I think the House is enhanced by the fact that we have three political parties that are recognized in this House and that we have members of all political parties who are able to make a contribution to this House. I believe that's as it should be. I suspect that all of us, right after the election, knew that would be the case, but I want to say that I most assuredly believe that.

I also want to say that it is more of a challenge for us with larger ridings today, and to meet those challenges

some provisions have been made in the discussions between the three House leaders which will be helpful. I know particularly the northern members—I represent north St Catharines, so I don't know if I'm eligible for this, but some of the northern members particularly have a long way to travel. I can get through my riding in three minutes. I better amend that, because that would be breaking the speed limit. In four minutes I can drive from one side of my riding to the other along the Queen Elizabeth highway if it isn't tied up with an accident. It would take some members in the north a couple of days sometimes to travel because they don't even have roads or railroads and they have to fly into some places. So I think the provisions that are made for those folks are excellent.

I do want to say, if I may sound partisan for a moment—the government House leader would be disappointed if I were not—that I think you really put the boots to the Ombudsman and the Environmental Commissioner, both of whom were critical of this government. I thought the reappointment of both would have been in line, but obviously the government does not agree with me on this.

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-East York): It's such a rare occasion in this House when there is such unanimity and good spirit that I had to stand up. I just wanted to be part of it.

I say in response to our House leader's comments that he was very gracious in the tribute he paid to the others who were involved in the negotiations, and of course we are pleased with the result that has been arrived at. I did want to make the point, however, that I think the issue of party status is not one of largesse on the part of the other parties. I believe, with the reduction in the number of seats in the House, it was due and expected. I also want to make the point that the new number, at eight, is still the highest percentage of any Legislative Assembly in the country. The average is 4.9%, which would turn out to be a caucus of five members in this Legislature, and we have the number at eight. This is just to make the point that this is something that I think is the right thing to do, and I applaud that it is being done.

I want to close my remarks echoing the minister responsible for seniors' issues from question period today. When she was responding to a question from one of her back-bench members, she said that she wanted to acknowledge that there were seven new members on that side and she wanted to say how pleased they were that there were seven new members and how pleased they were to have each and every one of them. Well, let me say there are nine returning—I almost said "old"—members. I can't tell you how pleased we are to have each and every one of them, and we wish them all a very long and very healthy term of office in this Legislature.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Further questions and comments? Further debate?

Mr Sterling has moved second reading of Bill 4. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Hon Mr Sterling: Mr Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to move third reading of the Legislative Assembly Statute Law Amendment Act.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent? Agreed.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY STATUTE LAW
AMENDMENT ACT, 1999
LOI DE 1999 MODIFIANT DES LOIS
EN CE QUI A TRAIT
À L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE

Mr Sterling moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 4, An Act respecting the Legislative Assembly and its officers / Projet de loi 4, Loi concernant l'Assemblée législative et ses fonctionnaires.

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

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

1720

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

STANDING ORDERS REFORM

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Government House Leader): Mr Speaker, I believe I have unanimous consent to move the following motion without notice regarding the standing orders and that the debate time remaining on the clock this afternoon be divided equally among the three parties.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Agreed? Agreed.

Interjection: Dispense

Hon Mr Sterling: I wish I could. This is going to be rather long because it includes a number of changes to our standing orders.

I move that the standing orders of the Legislative Assembly be amended as follows:

That standing order 1(d) be struck out.

That standing order 2 be struck out and the following substituted:

"2. For the purpose of these standing orders, 'recognized party' means a party caucus of eight or more members of the Legislative Assembly.

"'Routine motion' means any motion, including motions under standing order 9, made for the purpose of fixing the days or times of the meetings or adjournments of the House, or its committees; establishing or revising the membership of committees, and the meeting schedule thereof; arranging the proceedings of the House; or any other motion relating strictly to the technical procedure of the House or its committees and the management of the business thereof.

"'Substantive motion' means a motion that is not incidental or supplementary to any other business of the House, but is a self-contained proposal capable of expressing a decision of the House. Examples of such

motions are: the motion for an address in reply to the speech from the throne, the budget motion, want of confidence motions on allotted days, resolutions and motions for returns or addresses;

"'Sitting day' means any day on which the House meets.

"'Sessional day' means a meeting of the House held pursuant to standing orders 8(a), 9(c)(iii) or 10(a); or an evening meeting of the House held pursuant to standing order 9(c)(i) or (ii).

That standing order 4(c) be struck out and the following substituted:

"(c) At the commencement of every Parliament, or from time to time as may be required, the House shall appoint two Deputy Chairs of the committee of the whole House, to be known respectively as the First and Second Chair of the committee of the whole House, either of whom shall, in order of precedence, whenever the Chair of the committee of the whole House is absent or otherwise unable to act, be entitled to exercise all the powers vested in the Chair of the committee of the whole House including those powers as Deputy Speaker."

That standing order 9 be struck out and the following substituted:

"9.(a) Except as provided in clause (c)(iii), and in standing order 37, at 6 pm on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, the Speaker shall adjourn the House without motion until the next sessional day.

"(b) Except as provided in standing order 95(e), at 12 noon on any day on which the House meets in the morning, the Speaker shall leave the chair until 1:30 pm.

"(c) Upon passage of a government motion, the House shall meet, as the case may be,

"(i) Between the hours of 6:45 pm and 9:30 pm, notice of which must appear on the Orders and Notices paper by the first sitting day of the first week to which the motion applies, or

"(ii) Between 6:45 pm and another specified time not later than midnight, notice of which must appear on the Orders and Notices paper by the second sitting day of the week immediately preceding the first week to which the motion applies, or

"(iii) Past the adjournment time set out in clause (a) and continuing to a specified time not later than midnight, notice of which must appear on the Orders and Notices paper by the second sitting day of the week immediately preceding the first week to which the motion applies.

"Such a motion may apply to one day or to more than one day and, in the latter case, shall specify whether clauses (i), (ii) or (iii) apply to different days. The question on such a motion shall be put forthwith and without amendment or debate. If a recorded vote is requested by five members, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes.

"Evening meetings held under clauses (i) or (ii) shall be limited to the consideration of government orders or private members' public business or both, according to the terms of the motion, but no government bill shall be

called on more than one sessional day during a single sitting day without unanimous consent. At the adjournment time specified for the day or days in the motion, the Speaker shall adjourn the House without motion until the next sessional day.

“(d) Where a motion under clause (c) provides that all or part of an evening meeting shall be devoted to the consideration of private members’ public business, the motion shall indicate the business to be considered, the time or times reserved for such business, and any special procedure to be followed. Such motion may provide that all or part of standing order 95 applies with necessary modifications to the debate on private members’ public business.

“(e) When the House adjourns, the members shall keep their seats until the Speaker has left the chamber.”

That standing order 10 be amended by adding the following clause:

“(a.1) The Speaker shall have the authority to vary the time of any recall made under this standing order to such extent as is, in his or her opinion, necessary to ensure that reasonable notice of the recall is conveyed to each member and to permit all other arrangements to be made for the House to meet. However, no variance may be made if the time specified in the notice of recall for the House to meet is at least 24 hours later than the time the Speaker receives the notice.”

That standing order 10(b) be struck out.

That standing order 11(a) be amended by striking out the number “20” in the first line and substituting the number “12.”

That standing order 11(b) be struck out and the following substituted:

“(b) If at any time after prayers, the Speaker’s attention is directed to the apparent lack of a quorum, the Speaker shall, upon determining that a quorum is not present, cause the bells to be rung until a quorum is present and, in any case, for no longer than five minutes. If a quorum is not present after the expiration of five minutes, the Speaker shall adjourn the House without question put until the next sessional day. The matter under consideration prior to the adjournment is deemed to be adjourned to a future sessional day.”

That standing order 14 be struck out and the following substituted:

“14. Whenever the Speaker is of the opinion that a motion offered to the House is contrary to the rules and privileges of Parliament, the Speaker shall rule it out of order, and may quote the rule or authority applicable.”

That standing order 15(d) be struck out.

That standing order 16 be amended by striking out all of the words between “may” in the second line and “adjourn” in the fourth line.

That standing order 24(a) be amended by striking out the words “of a committee” in the second line and the words “or committee” in the third line.

That standing order 24(b) be amended by adding the following:

“At any time during a debate limited by this clause, a member then speaking may divide his or her time among a member or members of his or her party. Such speeches shall be given consecutively without rotation among the parties and shall be deemed to be a single speech for the purposes of standing order 25.”

That standing order 24(d) be struck out.

That standing order 25 be struck out and the following substituted:

“25. Following the speech of each member, up to four members may ask questions and comment for up to two minutes each on matters relevant to the matters before the House, and the member originally speaking may reply for up to two minutes, in the following circumstances:

“(i) debate on second reading of a government bill, but no such questions and comments shall be allowed following the reply allowed to the minister or parliamentary assistant who has moved second reading of the bill;

“(ii) debate on third reading of a government bill, but no such questions and comments shall be allowed following the reply allowed to the minister or parliamentary assistant who has moved third reading of the bill;

“(iii) debate on the address in reply to the speech from the throne, but no such questions and comments shall be allowed following the speeches of the mover and the seconder of the motion for the address; the speeches of the members speaking first on behalf of the official opposition and the other recognized opposition parties, and the speeches of the members winding up the throne debate for each recognized party;

“(iv) debate on the budget motion, but no such questions and comments shall be allowed following the presentation of the budget by the Minister of Finance, the speeches of the members speaking first on behalf of the official opposition and the other recognized opposition parties, and the speeches of the members winding up the budget debate for each recognized party; and

“(v) debate on a motion for interim supply.”

1730

That standing order 28 be amended by striking out clause (h) and substituting the following:

“(h) Except in the case of any division arising out of any routine proceeding, or where a standing order or other order specifies the time of the vote, a vote may be deferred at the request of any chief whip of a recognized party in the House. The Speaker shall then defer the taking of the vote to the next sessional day during the routine proceeding ‘Deferred Votes,’ at which time the bells shall be rung for five minutes.”

That standing order 28(j) be struck out.

That standing order 30(b) be amended by adding at the end thereof the words “However, routine proceedings shall continue past 4 pm to permit the Speaker to put every question on the deferred votes.”

That standing order 31(b) be struck out and the following substituted:

“(b) Up to nine members of recognized parties in the House may make a statement during the period for ‘Members’ Statements’ and the statements shall be allo-

cated in proportion to the number of private members of each of the recognized parties in the House.”

That standing order 31(c) be struck out.

That standing order 32(c) be amended by striking out the words “then shall adjourn the debate” in the fourth and fifth lines and substituting the words “notwithstanding standing order 45(a), shall then move adjournment of the debate.”

That standing order 33(c) be struck out and the following substituted:

“(c) On the introduction of a government bill, a compendium of background information shall be delivered to the critics of the recognized opposition parties. If it is an amending bill, an up-to-date consolidation of the act or acts to be amended shall also be delivered unless the bill amends an act amended previously in the session.”

That standing order 34 be amended by striking out the words following the word “motions” in the second line and substituting the words “as set out in the definition thereof in standing order 2. Except as provided by standing order 9 and 105, these routine motions do not require notice.”

That standing order 35(c) be amended by striking out the words “opposition party leaders” and substituting the words “the leaders of recognized opposition parties.”

That standing order 36(b) be struck out.

That standing orders 37(a) and (b) be struck out and the following substituted:

“37(a) The Speaker’s rulings relating to oral questions are not debatable or subject to appeal. However, a member who is not satisfied with the response to an oral question, or who has been told that his or her question is not urgent or of public importance, may give notice orally at the end of the oral question period that he or she intends to raise the subject matter of the question on the adjournment of the House and must give written notice to the Speaker and file reasons for dissatisfaction with the Clerk before 4:30 pm, and the Speaker shall, not later than 5 pm, indicate the matter or matters to be raised at the time of adjournment that day.

“(b) Where notice has been given and reasons filed, as provided in clause (a), at 6 pm on any Tuesday or Thursday, the Speaker may deem that a motion to adjourn the House has been made, whereupon the matter in question may be debated for not more than 10 minutes, five minutes to be allowed to the member raising the matter and five minutes to the minister or to his or her parliamentary assistant to reply if he or she so wishes. No more than three such matters of which notice has been given and reasons filed shall be debated on any single sitting day. At the conclusion of such debate or debates the Speaker shall deem the motion to adjourn to be carried and shall adjourn the House to the next sessional day.”

That standing order 37(e) be struck out.

That standing order 37(f) be struck out and the following substituted:

“When the House continues to meet past 6 pm on a government motion as provided in standing order 9(c)(iii)

the adjournment proceeding under this standing order shall not apply.”

That standing order 37(g) be amended by replacing the time “6:30” in the first line with the time “6:45” and by replacing the time “6:25” in the third line with the time “6:30.”

That standing order 38 be amended by adding the following clause:

“(b.1) No member may seek to present a petition unless it has previously been given to the Clerk of the assembly who has examined it and certified that it is correct as to form and content.”

That is known as the Jim Bradley standing order amendment.

That clause 38(c) be amended by adding the words “In order to be certified by the Clerk,” immediately before the word “every” in the first line.

That standing order 38(h) be struck out and the following substituted:

“(h) Within 24 sitting days of its presentation, the government shall file a response to a petition with the Clerk of the House and shall provide a copy of the response to the member who presented the petition.”

That standing order 39(b) be amended by striking out the words “opposition critics” in the third line and substituting the words “critics of the recognized opposition parties.”

That standing order 42(c) be amended by striking out the word “sessional” in the first line and substituting the word “sitting.”

That standing order 42(g) be amended by replacing the time “6” in the second line with the time “5:50” and the number “five” in the fourth line with the number “10.”

That standing order 42(1)(ii) be amended by striking out the word “sessional” in the first line and substituting the word “sitting,” and by adding at the end thereof the words “and during any extension thereof.”

That standing order 43(a) be amended by deleting the words “third party” in the third line and substituting the words “recognized party having the third largest membership in the House.”

That standing order 43(b) be struck out and the following substituted:

“(b) Debate on a motion under clause (a) shall be at a time allotted by agreement of the House leaders of the recognized parties and restricted to one sessional day. The time available shall be apportioned equally among the recognized parties in the House. At 5:50 pm on that day, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and put the question without further debate.”

That standing order 43(c) be amended by replacing the number “five” in the second line with the number “10.”

That standing order 44(b) be amended by adding the word “recognized” immediately before the word “parties” in the second line.

That standing order 45 be amended by adding the following new clause:

“(a.1) When a motion to adjourn the House is carried, the matter under consideration prior to the adjournment is deemed to be adjourned to a future sessional day.”

That standing order 45(d) be struck out.

That standing order 46(a) be amended by striking out the words "or any minister of the crown" in the first and second lines.

That standing order 46 be amended by adding the following new clause:

“(a.1) The time available for debate on a time allocation motion shall be apportioned equally among the recognized parties.”

That Standing order 46(b) be amended by replacing the time “6” in the first line with the time “5:50,” the time “9:15” in the first line with the time “9:20” and the number “five” in the last line with the number “10.”

That standing order 46(e) be struck out.

That standing order 48(a) be struck out.

That standing order 57(a) be amended by adding the following words at the end thereof, “Following the budget speech, if requested by the Minister of Finance, the House shall revert to “Introduction of Bills” for the purpose of allowing the Minister of Finance to move the introduction of any bill or bills arising from the budget.”

That standing order 57(b) be amended by replacing the time “5:45” in the second line with the time “5:50,” the time “9:15” in the third line with the time “9:20” and the number “15” in the last line with the number “10.”

That standing order 58 be struck out and the following substituted:

“58. When a budget has been presented, the main estimates shall be tabled in the House no more than 12 sitting days later. During those 12 days the budget debate shall be completed. If no budget has been presented by the first sitting day following Victoria Day, the main estimates shall be tabled at the next available sitting day. Upon tabling, the estimates shall be deemed to be referred to the standing committee on estimates.”

That standing order 59(d) be amended by adding the word "recognized" before the word "party" in the fourth line.

That standing order 59(e) be amended by adding the words “including a procedural motion,” following the word “matter” in the second line.

That standing order 62 be amended by adding the following clause:

“(b.1) In the event that any supplementary estimates are not presented to the House until the third Thursday in November, or thereafter, then those supplementary estimates shall be deemed to be referred to the standing committee on estimates as they are presented to the House, shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House.”

1740

That standing order 62(c) be amended by replacing the time “5:45” in the third line with the time “5:50,” the time “9:15” in the third line with the time “9:20” and the number “15” in the 14th line with the number “10” and

by striking out the words “subject to the usual standing orders” in the last line and substituting “and the Speaker shall apportion the time equally among the recognized parties in the House.”

That the following new standing order be added:

“62.1 Adoption of orders for concurrence shall constitute an order to bring in a supply bill founded on the resolutions contained therein, and founded on the resolutions contained in the deemed concurrences made pursuant to standing orders 60 and 61. Debate under this standing order shall be apportioned equally among the recognized parties. At 5:50 pm or 9:20 pm, as the case may be, on the sessional day during which debate on the second reading stage of the supply bill commences as the first government order of the day, or after three hours of debate if the debate did not commence as the first government order of the day, the Speaker shall without further debate or amendment put all questions necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill. A supply bill given second reading shall be ordered for third reading, and the order for third reading shall then immediately be called and the Speaker shall put the question forthwith without further debate or amendment, no deferral under standing order 28(h) being permitted. In the case of any division under this standing order, the division bell shall be limited to 10 minutes.

That the following new standing order be added:

“65(a.1) The time available for debate on an interim supply motion shall be apportioned equally among the recognized parties.”

That standing order 65(b) be amended by replacing the time “5:45” in the second line with the time “5:50,” the time “9:15” in the second line with the time “9:20” and the number “15” in the last line with the number “10.”

That standing order 68(b) be amended by striking out the word “sessional” in the second, fifth and sixth lines and substituting in both cases the word “sitting.”

That standing order 68(c) be amended by striking out the word “sessional” in the second line and substituting the word “sitting.”

That standing order 68(d) be amended by adding the words “including a procedural motion,” following the word “matter” in the second line.

That standing order 71(a) be struck out and the following substituted:

“(a) At any time before the commencement of second reading debate on a public bill, during “motions,” the government House leader may move the following motion, no debate or amendment being permitted, ‘That the order for second reading of bill [insert bill title] be discharged and the bill be referred to the standing committee on [insert committee name].’

“(a.1) Notwithstanding standing order 76(a) a bill referred under this standing order, when reported from the committee, shall be ordered for second reading.”

That standing order 71(c) be amended by striking out the number “12” in the fourth line and substituting the number “eight.”

That standing order 73 be amended by striking out the words "five calendar days" and substituting the words "the fifth calendar day."

That standing order 74(a) be amended by adding the word "recognized" immediately before the word "parties" in the last line.

That standing order 74(b) be struck out.

That standing order 74(c) be struck out and the following substituted:

"(c) The chair of a committee, including the Chair of the Committee of the whole House, may take such reasonable steps as he or she considers necessary to facilitate the committee's consideration and disposition of multiple amendments."

That standing order 82 be amended by striking out the word "Revenue" in the fourth line and substituting the word "Finance."

That standing order 94 be amended by striking out the first full paragraph of the "Public Notice" and substituting the following:

"The rules of procedure and the fees and costs related to applications for private bills are set out in the standing orders of the Legislative Assembly. Copies of the standing orders, and the guide 'Procedures for Applying for Private Legislation,' may be obtained from the Legislative Assembly's Internet site at <http://www.ontla.on.ca> or from."

That Standing Order 95(g) be struck out and the following substituted:

"(g) To be considered in private members' time the order for second reading or notice of a motion must appear on the Orders and Notices paper two weeks in advance of the day that is determined by the ballot conducted under clause (d)."

That standing orders 96(d) and (e) be struck out and the following substituted:

"(d) The minister shall answer such written questions within 24 sitting days, unless he or she indicates that more time is required because the answer will be costly or time-consuming or that he or she declines to answer, in which case a notation shall be made on the Orders and Notices paper following the question indicating that the minister has made an interim answer, the approximate date that the information will be available, or that the minister has declined to answer, as the case may be.

"(e) The answers to such written questions shall be given to the member who asked the question and to the Clerk of the House who shall print a notation in the Votes and Proceedings that the question has been answered."

That Standing Order 98 be amended by adding the following thereto:

"Unless expressly provided by the standing orders or by unanimous consent, no member shall speak for more than 20 minutes at a time in committee of the whole House."

That standing order 105 be amended by striking out the words "each session in" in the second line; inserting the words "on motion with notice" following the word "appointed" in the third line; and striking out the word

"session" in the last line and substituting the word "Parliament."

That standing orders 105(a), (b), (c) and (d) be struck out and the following substituted:

"(a) Standing committee on justice and social policy;

"(b) Standing committee on general government."

That standing order 105(h) be struck out.

That standing order 105(i) be amended by adding at the end the following:

"and to be the committee which is empowered to review and consider from time to time the reports of the Ombudsman as they become available; and, as the committee deems necessary, pursuant to section 15(1) of the Ombudsman Act, to formulate general rules for the guidance of the Ombudsman in the exercise of his or her functions under the act; and, to report thereon to the Legislature and to make such recommendations as the committee deems appropriate;"

That the following new standing order be added:

"105.1 In any standing or select committee, the standing orders of the House shall be observed so far as may be applicable, except the standing orders limiting the number of times of speaking. Unless expressly provided by the standing orders or by unanimous consent, no member shall speak for more than 20 minutes at a time in any standing or select committee."

That standing order 107(a) be amended by striking out the words "(a), (b), (c) and (d)" in the first and second lines, and replacing them with the words "(a) and (b)."

That standing order 107(b) be struck out and the following substituted:

"(b) At the beginning of each Parliament and, if necessary, during the course of a Parliament, the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly shall prescribe the ministries and offices assigned to the standing committees for the purposes of this standing order and shall make a report thereon to the House, which report shall be deemed to be adopted."

That standing order 109 be struck out and the following substituted:

"109(a) No standing or select committee shall consist of more than nine members and the membership of such committees shall be in proportion to the representation of the recognized parties in the House.

"(b) Notwithstanding clause (a), each independent member shall, at his or her request, be appointed to at least one standing committee. An independent member may state his or her committee preference to the House leaders but such statement of preference is not binding. Unless the House decides otherwise, no standing committee shall include more than one independent member.

"(c) The appointment of an independent member to a standing committee shall be in addition to the members of recognized parties referred to in clause (a). A recognized party with a majority of seats in the House is entitled to an additional member of the committee for each independent member appointed to the committee.

"(d) Any member appointed to a standing or select committee may, at any time afterwards, be discharged by

order of the House from attending the committee and another member appointed.

“(e) A temporary substitution in the membership of a standing or select committee may be made provided a notification thereof, signed by the member acting as the whip of a recognized party, is filed with the clerk of the committee either before or within 30 minutes of a committee meeting being called to order.”

That standing order 111 be amended by striking out the word “sessional” in the first line and substituting the word “sitting.”

That standing order 112 be struck out and the following substituted:

“112. At the commencement of every Parliament, or from time to time as may be required, each standing committee shall elect a Chair and Vice-Chair.”

That standing order 114 be amended by striking out the word “sessional” in the fourth line and substituting the word “sitting.”

That standing order 116(c) be struck out and the following substituted:

“(c) If at any time during a meeting of a standing or select committee the Chair’s attention is directed to the apparent lack of quorum, the Chair shall, upon determining that a quorum is not present, suspend the proceedings of the committee; if no quorum is present at the expiration of 10 minutes, the Chair shall adjourn the committee to the next scheduled meeting of the committee.”

That standing orders 117 and 118 be struck out.

That standing orders 121(a) and (b) be struck out and the following substituted:

“121.(a) At the beginning of each fiscal year or as soon as possible thereafter, the Clerk of the House shall prepare a budget for presentation to the Board of Internal Economy for its approval in whole or in part. The budget shall set forth in reasonable detail estimates of proposed expenditures of standing and select committees for the fiscal year.

“(b) When the expenditures of any committee have reached the limits set forth in any such budget, the Chair of the committee shall present to the Board of Internal Economy, for its approval in whole or in part, a supplementary budget or budgets.”

That standing order 124 be struck out and the following substituted:

“124(a) Once in each session, for consideration in that session, each member of a committee set out in standing order 105(a) or (b) may propose that the committee study and report on a matter or matters relating to the mandate, management, organization or operation of the ministries and offices which are assigned to the committee, as well as the agencies, boards and commissions reporting to such ministries and offices.

“(b) Notice of a motion by a member under this standing order shall be filed with the clerk of the committee not less than 24 hours before the member intends to move it in a meeting of the committee. The clerk of the committee shall distribute a copy of the motion to the members of the committee as soon as it is received.

Whenever a motion under this standing order is being considered in a committee, discussion of the motion shall not exceed 30 minutes, at the expiry of which the Chair shall put every question necessary to dispose of the motion and any amendments thereto.

“(c) The proposal of a member for study and report must be adopted by at least two-thirds of the members of the committee, excluding the Chair. Such study in the committee shall not take precedence over consideration of a government public bill.

“(d) Following its consideration of such a matter, the committee may present a substantive report to the House and may adopt the text of a draft bill on the subject matter. Where the text of a draft bill is adopted by the committee, it shall be an instruction to the Chair to introduce such bill in his or her name as primary sponsors. The other committee members who support the bill may have their names printed on the face of the bill as the secondary sponsors.

“(e) There shall be not less than one sessional day, or three hours, of debate in the House on such a bill, to take place at a time or times allotted by agreement of the House leaders of the recognized parties.”

That standing order 129(c) be struck out and the following substituted:

“(c) Every member of the committee, other than the Chair, shall be permitted to indicate that he or she dissents from a particular recommendation or comment. The committee shall permit a member to express the reasons for such dissent in an appendix to the report.”

That standing order 129 be amended by adding the following new clause:

“(c.1) The Chair of a committee may establish a reasonable deadline for filing any dissenting opinion with the clerk of the committee.”

That standing order 133 be amended by adding the following new clause:

“(a.1) To certify whether petitions proposed to be presented by members are correct as to form and content.

That standing order 134(a) be amended by striking out the word “sessional” in the second line and substituting the word “sitting.”

That standing order 137(e) be struck out and the following substituted:

“(e) Provide assistance to standing or select committees considering bills.

And that the Clerk of the House be authorized to make such consequential changes in the standing orders, including renumbering as may be required as a result of the amendments made herein.

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I missed a couple of words and I wonder if you could repeat it again.

The Speaker: That’s not a point of order.

Just a clarification from the government House leader: On section 71(a) you said “charged.” The copy of the motion says “discharged.”

Hon Mr Sterling: I’m sure it’s “discharged.” I just wanted to see if you were awake, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: I was listening very carefully. In 74(a) you read “after” instead of “before,” which is in the table copy.

Hon Mr Sterling: It’s obviously “before.”

The Speaker: Finally, in 107(a) you omitted to indicate standing order 107(a).

Hon Mr Sterling: I did intend to include 107(a).

The Speaker: Thank you. Mr Sterling has moved that the standing orders of the Legislative Assembly—

Interjection: Dispense.

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

It almost being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 6:30 of the clock this evening.

The House adjourned from 1758 to 1830.

Evening sitting reported in volume B.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneure: Hon / L'hon Hilary M. Weston

Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Gary Carr

Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers

Clerk Assistant / Greffière adjointe: Deborah Deller

Clerks at the Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Algoma-Manitoulin	Brown, Michael A. (L)	Halton	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)
Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford	Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)	Hamilton East / -Est	Agostino, Dominic (L)
Beaches-East York	Lankin, Frances (ND)	Hamilton Mountain	Bountrogianni, Marie (L)
Bramalea-Gore-Malton- Springdale	Gill, Raminder (PC)	Hamilton West / -Ouest	Christopherson, David (ND)
Brampton Centre / -Centre	Spina, Joseph (PC)	Hastings-Frontenac- Lennox and Addington	Dombrowsky, Leona (L)
Brampton West-Mississauga / Brampton-Ouest-Mississauga	Clement, Hon / L'hon Tony (PC) Minister of the Environment, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre de l'Environnement, ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement	Huron-Bruce	Johns, Hon / L'hon Helen (PC) Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation, minister responsible for seniors and women / ministre des Affaires civiles, de la Culture et des Loisirs, ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées et à la Condition féminine
Brant	Levac, Dave (L)	Kenora-Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Broadview-Greenwood	Churley, Marilyn (ND)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	Gerretsen, John (L)
Bruce-Grey	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Kitchener Centre / -Centre	Wettlaufer, Wayne (PC)
Burlington	Jackson, Hon / L'hon Cameron (PC) Minister of Tourism / ministre du Tourisme	Kitchener-Waterloo	Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth (PC) Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	Beaubien, Marcel (PC)
Carleton-Gloucester	Coburn, Brian (PC)	Lanark-Carleton	Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W. (PC) Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, government House leader / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Chatham-Kent Essex	Hoy, Pat (L)	Leeds-Grenville	Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W. (PC) Minister of Consumer and Com- mercial Relations / ministre de la Consommation et du Commerce
Davenport	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne (PC) Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Don Valley East / -Est	Caplan, David (L)	London West / -Ouest	Wood, Bob (PC)
Don Valley West / -Ouest	Turnbull, Hon / L'hon David (PC) Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports	London-Fanshawe	Mazzilli, Frank (PC)
Dufferin-Peel- Wellington-Grey	Tilson, David (PC)	Markham	Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H. (PC) Solicitor General / solliciteur général
Durham	O'Toole, John R. (PC)	Mississauga Centre / -Centre	Sampson, Hon / L'hon Rob (PC) Minister of Correctional Services / ministre des Services correctionnels
Eglinton-Lawrence	Colle, Mike (L)	Mississauga East / -Est	DeFaria, Carl (PC)
Elgin-Middlesex-London	Peters, Steve (L)	Mississauga South / -Sud	Marland, Hon / L'hon Margaret (PC) Minister without Portfolio (Children) / ministre sans portefeuille (Enfance)
Erie-Lincoln	Hudak, Hon / L'hon Tim (PC) Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines		
Essex	Crozier, Bruce (L)		
Etobicoke Centre / -Centre	Stockwell, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC) Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail		
Etobicoke North / -Nord	Hastings, John (PC)		
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Kells, Morley (PC)		
Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)		
Guelph-Wellington	Elliott, Brenda (PC)		
Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant	Barrett, Toby (PC)		
Haliburton-Victoria-Brock	Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC) Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / président du Conseil de gestion		

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Mississauga West / -Ouest	Snobelen, Hon / L'hon John (PC) Minister of Natural Resources / ministre des Richesses naturelles	Scarborough Centre / -Centre	Mushinski, Marilyn (PC)
Nepean-Carleton	Baird, Hon / L'hon John R. (PC) Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones	Scarborough East / -Est	Gilchrist, Steve (PC)
Niagara Centre / -Centre	Kormos, Peter (ND)	Scarborough Southwest / -Sud-Ouest	Newman, Dan (PC)
Niagara Falls	Maves, Bart (PC)	Scarborough-Agincourt	Phillips, Gerry (L)
Nickel Belt	Martel, Shelley (ND)	Scarborough-Rouge River	Curling, Alvin (L)
Nipissing	Harris, Hon / L'hon Michael D. (PC) Premier and President of the Executive Council / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif	Simcoe North / -Nord	Dunlop, Garfield (PC)
Northumberland	Galt, Doug (PC)	Simcoe-Grey	Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC) Minister of Energy, Science and Technology / ministre de l'Énergie, des Sciences et de la Technologie
Oak Ridges	Klees, Hon / L'hon Frank (PC) Minister without Portfolio / ministre sans portefeuille	St Catharines	Bradley, James J. (L)
Oakville	Carr, Hon / L'hon Gary (PC) Speaker / Président	St Paul's	Bryant, Michael (L)
Oshawa	Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Stoney Creek	Clark, Brad (PC)
Ottawa Centre / -Centre	Patten, Richard (L)	Stormont-Dundas- Charlottenburgh	Cleary, John C. (L)
Ottawa South / -Sud	McGuinty, Dalton (L) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition	Sudbury	Bartolucci, Rick (L)
Ottawa West-Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest-Nepean	Guzzo, Garry J. (PC)	Thornhill	Molinari, Tina R. (PC)
Ottawa-Vanier	Boyer, Claudette (L)	Thunder Bay-Atikokan	McLeod, Lyn (L)
Oxford	Hardeman, Hon / L'hon Ernie (PC) Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales	Thunder Bay- Superior North / -Nord	Gravelle, Michael (L)
Parkdale-High Park	Kennedy, Gerard (L)	Timiskaming-Cochrane	Ramsay, David (L)
Parry Sound-Muskoka	Eves, Hon / L'hon Ernie L. (PC) Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances	Timmins-James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	Bisson, Gilles (ND)
Perth-Middlesex	Johnson, Bert (PC)	Toronto Centre-Rosedale / Toronto-Centre-Rosedale	Smitherman, George (L)
Peterborough	Stewart, R. Gary (PC)	Trinity-Spadina	Marchese, Rosario (ND)
Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge	Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet (PC) Minister of Education / ministre de l'Éducation	Vaughan-King-Aurora	Palladini, Hon / L'hon Al (PC) Minister of Economic Development and Trade / ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Prince Edward-Hastings	Parsons, Ernie (L)	Waterloo-Wellington	Arnott, Ted (PC)
Renfrew-Nipissing- Pembroke	Conway, Sean G. (L)	Wentworth-Burlington	Skarica, Toni (PC)
Sarnia-Lambton	Di Cocco, Caroline (L)	Whitby-Ajax	Flaherty, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Sault Ste Marie	Martin, Tony (ND)	Willowdale	Young, David (PC)
		Windsor West / -Ouest	Pupatello, Sandra (L)
		Windsor-St Clair	Duncan, Dwight (L)
		York Centre / -Centre	Kwinter, Monte (L)
		York North / -Nord	Munro, Julia (PC)
		York South-Weston / York-Sud-Weston	Cordiano, Joseph (L)
		York West / -Ouest	Sergio, Mario (L)

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

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

CONTENTS

Wednesday 27 October 1999

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Prince Edward-Hastings economy	
Mr Parsons	121
White ribbon campaign	
Mr Martiniuk	121
Archives of Ontario	
Mr Peters	121
Walkerton economy	
Mr Murdoch	122
Highway safety	
Mr Crozier	122
Ontarians with disabilities legislation	
Ms Churley	122
Airport noise	
Mr DeFaria	122
Government response	
Mr Duncan	123
Highway 407	
Mr Skarica	123

ORAL QUESTIONS

Conflict of interest	
Mr McGuinty	123, 124
Mr Clement	124
Ontario disability support program	
Mr Hampton	125
Mr Baird	125
Ms Lankin	125
Ms Churley	125
Oak Ridges moraine	
Mr Hampton	126
Mr Clement	126
Construction industry	
Mr Lalonde	127
Mr Stockwell	127
Supervised access	
Mr Stewart	127
Mr Flaherty	128
Ontarians with disabilities legislation	
Mr Peters	128
Mrs Johns	128
Tourism	
Mr Newman	129
Mr Jackson	129
Family Responsibility Office	
Ms Martel	129
Mr Flaherty	129
Mr Kormos	130
Transportation infrastructure	
Mr Smitherman	130
Mr Turnbull	130
Homes for the aged	
Mr Young	130
Mrs Johns	131

Government spending

Mrs Papatello	131
Mr Hodgson	131
Abandoned mines	
Mr Dunlop	132
Mr Hudak	132

PETITIONS

Highway safety	
Ms Di Cocco	133
Mr Stewart	135
Mr Parsons	135
Paramedics	
Mr Christopherson	133
Waterline installation	
Mr Beaubien	133
Medical clinic	
Mr Brown	134
Bottle recycling	
Mr Tascona	134
Henley rowing course	
Mr Bradley	134
Driver examinations	
Mr Martiniuk	134
Northern health travel grant	
Mr Gravelle	134
Education funding	
Mr Ruprecht	135
Religious readings in schools	
Mr Wettlaufer	135

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

Mr Hampton	135
Mr Caplan	143
Mr O'Toole	143
Mr Peters	144
Ms Churley	144
Mrs Munro	144
Debate adjourned	145

SECOND READINGS

Legislative Assembly Statute Law Amendment Act, 1999, Bill 4, Mr Sterling	
Mr Sterling	145, 147
Mr Duncan	146, 147
Ms Churley	146, 149
Mr Bradley	146, 148, 151
Mr Gravelle	147
Mr Christopherson	149
Ms Lankin	151
Agreed to	152

THIRD READINGS

Legislative Assembly Statute Law Amendment Act, 1999, Bill 4, Mr Sterling	
Agreed to	152

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Standing orders reform, government notice of motion number 3, Mr Sterling	
Mr Sterling	152
Agreed to	158

OTHER BUSINESS

Visitors

The Speaker	123
Ms Churley	132

TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Mercredi 27 octobre 1999

DEUXIÈME LECTURE

Loi de 1999 modifiant des lois en ce qui a trait à l'Assemblée législative, projet de loi 4, M. Sterling	
Adoptée	152

TROISIÈME LECTURE

Loi de 1999 modifiant des lois en ce qui a trait à l'Assemblée législative, projet de loi 4, M. Sterling	
Adoptée	152