



Legislative Assembly
of Ontario

First Session, 37th Parliament

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de l'Ontario

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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Thursday 16 December 1999

Jeudi 16 décembre 1999

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 16 December 1999

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 16 décembre 1999

The House met at 1000.

Prayers.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

AMBULANCE AMENDMENT ACT
(MINIMUM READINESS), 1999

LOI DE 1999 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LES AMBULANCES
(DISPONIBILITÉ MINIMALE)

Mr Lalonde moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 29, An Act to amend the Ambulance Act to provide for the minimum staffing and equipping of ambulance stations / Projet de loi 29, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les ambulances pour assurer la dotation minimale en personnel et en équipement des postes d'ambulances.

Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): I am pleased to have the opportunity to discuss in this House Bill 29, An Act to amend the Ambulance Act to provide for the minimum staffing and equipping of ambulance stations.

For those of you who live in large urban areas and have ambulance service 24 hours a day, this bill may seem unimportant, but to many people in rural areas it is a matter of life and death. Imagine what it would be like if your kid, your wife, your husband or your partner was hurt in an accident or was in a life-threatening situation and there was only off-site ambulance service at your closest ambulance station.

I have here a list which was prepared in January 1999 for eastern Ontario region 4, approved ambulance coverage. There are only two towns on this list, Alfred and Rockland, both of which are in my riding and both have service only five days a week, leaving the weekend with off-site service only. All we are asking for in this bill is ambulance service seven days a week, with a minimum of 12 hours a day, which is still less than many other parts of Ontario.

The Rockland ambulance station serves over 27,000 people in rural areas spread over at least seven villages and one city, as well as a large farming community. Alfred serves over 10,000 people, covering seven villages as well as, once again, a large farming community.

This past week, a 49-year-old resident of Rockland, Mr Morin, suffered a heart attack and the ambulance was called. Mr Morin lives only three doors away from the ambulance station, but because there was no one at the station and the ambulance attendants were on-call only, no one was readily available to immediately proceed to Mr Morin's residence. By the time the attendants reached Mr Morin's residence, life support procedures had to be implemented, but unfortunately, as we do not have on-site service, it was too late to save Mr Morin's life. In fact, Mr Morin's funeral is Saturday.

Another case of several I could tell you about: M^{me} Martin, another resident of my riding, also suffered a heart attack. It was during a period of time when there was only off-site ambulance service, and because of the time delay once again in getting ambulance attendants to Mrs Martin, she suffered eight heart attacks. En route to the hospital, an attendant had to use the defibrillation procedures twice. The good news in this case is that Mrs Martin today is in good health, but what a risk to have to take.

The county of Russell, including the city of Cumberland which is part of my riding, has a population of over 90,000 and is the only county in Ontario without an hospital. Therefore, ambulance trips are not just a short trip. Down the road, I have confirmed reports that an average call in our riding takes at least one hour until the patient arrives at the ER.

In March 1998, the Ministry of Health issued criteria and fundamental principles to which upper-tier municipalities must adhere for ambulance service. It also stated that services provided must be accessible and all residents of the province are to have equal accessibility to ambulance service regardless of socio-economic or demographic status.

This is not happening in parts of my riding, as well as some other rural areas in Ontario. We do not have ambulance service seven days a week for a minimum of 12 hours a day. There are many areas across Ontario that have 24-hour service seven days a week. We are not asking for 24-hour service. We are asking for minimum staffing seven days a week for a minimum of 12 hours a day to ensure that our constituents are able to get the necessary treatment they may require.

I would also like to address the letter faxed to all members of this Legislature by the Association of Municipalities of Ontario stating that subsequent to a meeting of the Ontario ambulance implementation steering committee, municipal government could not support

this legislation. My discussions yesterday with the AMO steering committee co-chair, Mr Roger Anderson, indicated that the steering committee, without checking out the true content of the bill, recommended that AMO not support the bill. Mr Anderson's understanding was that we were requesting 24-hour-a-day, seven-days-a-week service. He said costs were too high. We are requesting only 12-hour-a-day, seven-days-a-week service, not 24 hours a day, seven days a week, as Mr Anderson understood.

I find this more irresponsible, that without checking on the facts, AMO sent such a letter to try to influence members of this Legislature. The cost to taxpayers for this additional service, after consideration of amounts already paid to attendants for on-call service, would be approximately only \$20,000 a year per station. Is this cost too high to save a life?

1010

We need this ambulance service in my riding and all other small communities across Ontario. As the provincial principles governing transition indicate, this service must be provided.

I am asking you to support this bill for the people of my riding as well as other small communities in Ontario. They are without this necessary service, and it is a must that this Legislative Assembly supports it.

I have here a list of all the ambulance stations in eastern Ontario. I have asked the ministry to supply me with a list of all the ambulance stations across Ontario, which I haven't received, but I also have information about a study done by IBI, which was just done in May 1999 that shows the importance of having this service in place.

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke): I want to join the debate today and do so in supporting my colleague the member from Prescott-Russell, who has brought a timely private member's item to the chamber concerning ambulance service in rural Ontario.

I don't profess to know all the details of Prescott and Russell, but I can tell you that in the great county of Renfrew we have a very large geographic region, some 3,000 square miles—I think that translates into 7,000 something or other, but I know it as 3,000 square miles—and communities that are served by hospitals in places like Deep River and Barry's Bay that have very large rural catchment areas.

There is a very real concern that as a result of the downloading from the province through the Ministry of Health to the local counties, ambulance services may undergo a deterioration that is neither necessary nor in the best interests of patients.

As a matter of fact, this week, just two or three days ago, in the Pembroke Observer there was an editorial which appeared on the opinion page of our daily paper entitled "Quality Service Must Continue." At the end of this opinion piece, the editorial writer observes, "There can be no objection to a careful, objective, intelligent examination of ambulance service for the city and county, and we are getting that, but given the service we

have been receiving, the best advice we could give our municipal leaders is, 'If it ain't broke, don't fix it.'"

There is a concern among health care professionals, among community leaders and others that we are going to be very hard-pressed to keep the level of integrated, coordinated ambulance service that we've had over the past number of years in an area like Pembroke and Renfrew county. I personally think it is fundamentally wrong for any provincial government to transfer as essential a part of our health care delivery system as ambulances down to a local government and to expect that such an important part of our health care delivery system be paid for on a property tax basis.

People older than I, in the Ottawa Valley, can well remember a day when we had a much less integrated, much less effective ambulance system than we have had in the last 15 and 20 years. I think successive Ontario governments and ministers of health and area reps for the ambulance service deserve a lot of credit. My friend Mr Lalonde has pointed out the dangers that constituents in rural communities face if there is not a quick and timely response from the ambulance service.

I repeat: If, for example, you live in Bissett Creek or Deux-Rivières in the northeastern part of Renfrew county, you are 40 or 50 kilometres from the Deep River and District Hospital. You may be another 100 kilometres down to the regional hospital in Pembroke. If you're out in the Palmer Rapids, Whitney, Barry's Bay area, you're anywhere from 30 to 60 kilometres into St Francis Memorial in Barry's Bay.

Algonquin Park, often with tens of thousands of people in it during the summer, sits to the north and west of communities like Barry's Bay and Pembroke and Deep River. There are all kinds of examples of young people and older people who require emergency care, often involving an ambulance, in Algonquin Park, particularly in the summertime.

This new policy of downloading ambulance services is going to raise very serious cost and administrative issues for my municipalities, my taxpayers and my citizens in communities like Pembroke and Eganville and Renfrew and Deep River and Barry's Bay.

That's one concern. But the other concern is, are we going to be able to put a program in place that is going to maintain the service we have had? It is interesting that we have had, at the county level in Renfrew, together with others in communities like Lennox and Addington, Prince Edward, Frontenac, Hastings, Leeds and Grenville, a municipal co-operative formed where five or six upper-tier governments have hired a consultant to see how they are going to best be able to keep it together and hold it together.

What we're talking about here is an integrated, coordinated, effective and efficient ambulance care system for a very large rural portion of southeastern Ontario. I was struck again by a report in the Pembroke Observer of December 13, wherein the consultant working for that municipal ambulance co-operative simply makes the

obvious point: "This," he said, "is going to be a very complicated undertaking." I don't doubt that at all.

1020

The tragedy for me is that I know something about the blood, sweat and tears that have gone forward in the last two or three decades, under the leadership of the Ontario government, to give us what is a rather good system now. It's not perfect.

The Ottawa Citizen, as a matter of fact, has an editorial this week as well, talking about problems with ambulance services in the national capital area. So I'm not here to say it's perfect but I'm telling you we have worked—that is, the Ontario government, a lot of very good people in the Ministry of Health, centrally and regionally—long and hard to develop a good coordinated integrated ambulance system, especially in rural Ontario. There is reason to believe that we are taking that apart.

I can imagine a set of circumstances, quite frankly, where we end up spending more money to get about 75% or 80% of what we had. I hope I'm wrong, but the bill before us today, ably advanced by my colleague from Rockland, the member from Prescott and Russell, reminds us that there is a real and palpable concern in rural communities like Alfred, like Casselman, like Alexandria, in his part of the world, and certainly all of those communities in the upper Ottawa valley that I've enumerated. There is a real concern that because of the downloading in this particular area, rural folks are going to have less of an ambulance service than they once had and they may end up, through their property taxes, paying more for less, with the net result that their health care delivery system, particularly in this vital respect of a quick responsive ambulance service, may not be there when they need it.

Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Southwest): I'm pleased to rise in the House today to speak on Bill 29, An Act to amend the Ambulance Act to provide for the minimum staffing and equipping of ambulance stations.

While the amendment proposed by the member for Glengarry-Prescott-Russell has good intentions, it presents a number of serious drawbacks to the delivery of ambulance services in Ontario.

For instance, Bill 29 fails to recognize the wide diversity of demographics, community needs and local resources available in towns and communities across Ontario. This bill, if passed, will not only arbitrarily place a significant financial burden on many rural and northern communities across Ontario, but it will do it without allowing those communities the opportunity for any input.

I'd like to remind the member that the government has a 100% municipally funded—with the province paying 50% of approved costs—cost-sharing arrangement with the municipalities and a forum where issues are dealt with on a continuous basis to ensure a smooth transfer of services with the land ambulance steering implementation committee. I'm a co-chair of that committee, along with Brian Coburn, the MPP for Carleton-Gloucester, who is also the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of

Municipal Affairs and Housing, and the municipal co-chair is Roger Anderson, the chair from Durham region.

At the same time, Bill 29 will result in the disbanding of the many volunteer ambulance groups that currently provide service in many of the communities across Ontario. Most important, the bill will provide little or no improvement in current ambulance response times. For these reasons, I cannot support Bill 29.

The member for Glengarry-Prescott-Russell spoke about his community, and I applaud him for that because that's what private members' hour is about. It's to bring forward issues that are important to the people who sent us here. Keeping that in mind, Bill 29 has implications far beyond his riding; it has implications across our entire province.

Currently, 98% of ambulance stations are staffed at least 12 hours a day in urban and suburban areas of the province. The remaining 2% of communities that do not fall under this category, such as West Carleton and Gananoque, are the exceptions, due to the close proximity of ambulance services, population size and low call volumes within these areas.

In other words, Bill 29 would have the most impact on rural and northern communities in Ontario, for example, Sudbury, Cochrane, Thunder Bay and Kenora, and I'm interested in what the members from those parts of the province have to say about this issue. Another community that would be affected by this bill is the community of Nipissing.

In trying to impose an urban-based model of ambulance staffing requirements on these communities, Bill 29 fails to appreciate the unique character and local needs of many of these communities. In many rural areas, especially in southern Ontario, ambulance stations are currently staffed on-site for eight or 10 hours per day, while coverage is provided during the remainder of the day through paid standby personnel.

In many rural and northern communities, an ambulance station may respond to as few as one or less emergency ambulance calls per week. In low-call-volume ambulance stations, the staffing is provided by either volunteers or paid part-time staff. Such staff are called in from their place of residence or their place of employment, similar to volunteer or part-time fire service personnel, to respond to a request for ambulance service. These volunteers provide a high level of quality service that ensures health and safety standards are being met.

Currently, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and over 100 rural and northern communities in Ontario rely on approximately 500 local volunteers to provide ambulance services across our province. For instance, communities such as Tobermory, Amherstburg, Wolfe Island, Elgin, Exeter, Clinton, White River, Nakina, Mattawa, Beardmore, Moosonee, Ear Falls, Ignace, Chapleau, Richards Island, Nestor Falls, Apsley, Denbigh, Northbrook, Markdale, MacTier, Barry's Bay and Marathon rely on volunteers to deliver this critical service.

I want for a moment to just acknowledge that there are many volunteer ambulance attendants across the

province. I know the member from Oshawa's sister, Charmaine Lerch, who lives in Rivers, Manitoba, is a qualified volunteer ambulance attendant and qualified to serve right across the province. If she was in Ontario at any given time—crossed the border into Ontario—she would be able to serve the people of those communities. That would be very important, I know, to the member for Algoma-Manitoulin to know that fact.

But the proposed amendment in Bill 29 would necessitate replacing most, if not all, of the volunteers in the ambulance system with paid workers. Replacing these volunteers for up to 12 hours a day with paid staff will not only drive up costs, but will also lead to the erosion of volunteerism in these communities. These are communities that rely on volunteers to provide such important services. I want to acknowledge the hard work that these volunteers do on behalf of the people of Ontario.

Just ask Dan Ciona, the chief administrative officer for the county for Brant. That's a different Dan, Mr Speaker. He says: "Volunteers are the lifeblood of the ambulance system in many rural and northern communities across Ontario. Allowing Bill 29 to pass will result in killing off these volunteer services and set a dangerous precedent for other types of services provided in local communities by volunteers."

In addition, this bill will mean paid staff or paid standby personnel will have to be provided for the remaining 12 hours each day, a period of time that is currently covered by volunteers. In other words, this bill will lead to significant increases in costs to local taxpayers.

A very conservative estimate of the financial impact of this proposed legislation is between \$20 million and \$25 million per year. Specifically, the local taxpayers in Thunder Bay, for example, can expect costs in their region to increase by more than \$1 million per year. In Sudbury, the cost would increase by more than \$600,000 per year. The people of Kenora would see the costs increase by more than \$1 million. Cochrane would see its costs increase by more than \$1 million. In Bruce, it would go up \$500,000. The county of Peterborough would see an increase of more than \$300,000. The counties of Leeds and Grenville would see a cost increase of more than \$500,000; Haliburton, a \$200,000-per-year increase; Nipissing, the same amount, a \$200,000 increase; and Timiskaming as well, a \$200,000 increase. That's just the beginning, because many more communities across our province can expect to see a substantial increase in costs associated with providing ambulance services if Bill 29 was passed by the Legislative Assembly. We know that increased costs mean increased property tax bills.

1030

It's important to realize that these increased costs will produce little or no improvement in ambulance response times. As I already mentioned, some communities in Ontario only receive one or less emergency ambulance calls per week. More specifically, under the changes proposed in Bill 29, communities with as few as 30 ambulance calls per year will need to hire five to six full-time

paramedics, plus additional staff to cover the remaining hours of the week.

There are a number of other costs associated with Bill 29 that we should be aware of. For instance, the replacement of paid standby staff and volunteers with paid on-site staff, coupled with the need to maintain current response time standards, will place extreme pressure on the ambulance manpower supply.

As a result of low workload and opportunity to use their skills, paramedics in affected areas will require extensive re-education and skills maintenance programs in order that they can maintain competency in their patient care skills. Furthermore, due to the low workload, full-time paramedics who see the need for skill maintenance could be tempted to leave rural and northern service areas for busier areas. As a result, we'll end up in the province of Ontario with continual high attrition rates and possibly a risk to the continued provision of ambulance service in many parts of the province should replacements not be readily available.

Maybe it is these reasons and the need to allow local communities across Ontario the flexibility to provide ambulance services tailored to the specific needs of their constituents that have prompted many municipal leaders to come out this week against Bill 29.

For instance, Roger Anderson, the chair of Durham region and, as I mentioned, the co-chair of the land ambulance implementation steering committee, wrote to all MPPs this week on behalf of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, stating: "Municipal government cannot support this legislation in that it sets a prescriptive and arbitrary service standard and abrogates local decision-making to meet local constituent needs. Municipalities want to stay focused on performance, rather than unilateral standards."

Ron Kelusky, general manager of ambulance services for the city of Toronto, said: "Bill 29 restricts the flexibility that municipalities have in deploying their ambulance staff to suit their local needs. By limiting the deployment of ambulance staff to purely geographical considerations, Bill 29 ignores many other key factors that go into deciding staff requirements in providing ambulance services, such as the level of demand for service."

John Cunnane, director of the public safety division at the region of Niagara, said: "This bill takes away the ability of municipalities to contain costs and the flexibility to tailor the delivery of their ambulance service towards the needs of their local constituents. Volunteers already do a good job in providing ambulance services in many communities across Ontario; Bill 29 will only serve to limit the choices that municipalities have in promoting volunteer-based delivery of services."

Brian MacRae, the city manager in Thunder Bay, said: "Bill 29 is problematic in that it is not 'standard' based. Where stations are serving low-density population areas, implementation of Bill 29 could result in unnecessary increases in costs. To avoid unnecessary and inappropriate cost increases, Bill 29 could result in the need to

close stations, thereby decreasing service levels in rural and semi-rural areas of the province.”

There's one further comment that Brian MacRae made, and I think it's important to the debate we're having today on Bill 29. He said, “Bill 29 moves the province from its stated policy role with respect to land ambulance to an inappropriate involvement in municipal service delivery decisions.”

Indeed, when the government of Ontario transferred responsibility for the delivery of land ambulance services to upper-tier municipalities and designated delivery agents in 1998, the primary objective of the transfer was to allow municipalities across Ontario the flexibility to deliver this critical service based on the local needs of their constituents. I can tell you today that our government is committed to this objective. That is another reason why I cannot support Bill 29.

In keeping with this commitment, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, along with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, established the land ambulance implementation steering committee, a provincial-municipal partnership to ensure the smooth transfer of this critical service.

In trying to ensure the smooth transfer of this service, one of the issues that was referred to the committee for review was the level of ambulance standards across the province. As the provincial co-chair of that committee, I can tell you that the committee has been very busy over the last couple of months in looking at current ambulance standards and whether there is a need to update them.

It is at this committee where the debate over ambulance standards belongs, where both the province and the municipalities, now joint partners in land ambulance service, can mutually come to an agreement over how the system ought to be governed. I believe we should be working with our municipal partners as opposed to unilaterally forcing decisions upon them. Yet this is what Bill 29 does. I don't think that's what the member intended when he brought forward Bill 29, but that's the reality of Bill 29.

I want to reassure all members of the House on all sides that the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care continues to monitor the demand for service and for response times for all communities, including those served by volunteer and standby crews, to ensure there is a reasonable balance between the demand for service and the resources that are available.

Having said that, I wish to add that the current ministry system of closely monitoring the need for ambulance service on a community-by-community basis and responding to each need will be much improved over the next year as municipalities and designated delivery agents begin to take direct responsibility for assessing their needs and implementing ambulance service that fits their specific local needs and resources.

In closing, let me take this opportunity to wish the regions of Durham, York and Niagara well as they prepare to assume responsibility for the delivery of land ambulance services on January 1, 2000. To the other

municipalities that are preparing to take over this service during the year 2000, the government of Ontario is committed to working with you to ensure that the transfer of land ambulance service goes as well for you as we hope and expect it will for Niagara, York and Durham.

Finally, I'd like to say to the member for Glengarry-Prescott-Russell that I commend him for exercising his right to bring forward a private member's bill for consideration by the House, and although I do not support Bill 29, I want him to know that my opposition is not based on party lines. I want him to know that I would have risen in the House today and spoken against this bill if it had been tabled by a New Democrat or a colleague within my caucus.

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): I'm more than pleased to rise and speak in support of the bill put forward by my colleague from Glengarry-Prescott-Russell. I want to make it abundantly clear that this bill has one intent, and that is to ensure that everyone has on-site ambulance service available a minimum of 12 hours a day, seven days a week.

This bill is concerned about equity in access to emergency services provided through our ambulance services. This member happens to believe there should be equity whether you live in an urban area or a rural area, whether you live in northern Ontario or southern Ontario. My colleague actually had the nerve to believe that the Ministry of Health might support its own principle, established in March 1998, so established by this very government which is now prepared to vote against his resolution calling for equity, a principle in which the government says all residents of the province are to have equal access to ambulance service regardless of socio-economic or demographic status, and I would hope they would consider within that geographic location.

It's obvious that anybody who has the kinds of concerns about what's happening to constituents in his riding that my colleague has is going to bring forward these concerns about inequitable access, particularly when we're dealing with truly life-threatening situations. My colleague has brought forward specific cases, cases like M^{me} Martin, who, as he indicated, suffered some eight heart attacks and fortunately is doing well but who went through a great deal of anguish and whose family went through a great deal of anguish before she could get access to the care she needed.

I want to commend my colleague for bringing forward these very real concerns and dealing with them in a constructive way by presenting legislation today.

1040

I hope it was political staff who drafted the Ministry of Health's response given by the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health, because it was breathtaking in its ability to suggest that there was a commitment on the part of the—

Interjection.

Mrs McLeod: I hope it wasn't bureaucrats, because I cannot believe bureaucrats would have been able to

stretch to support the government's agenda to the extent that the parliamentary assistant—

Interjection.

Mrs McLeod: If the parliamentary assistant wrote it himself, so much the better, because it's clearly a purely political statement. It has nothing to do with the delivery of health care in this province. The representative of the Ministry of Health has made a statement of commitment that sounds very fine but is in fact representing a total abdication of ministerial responsibility for the provision of ambulance services or the assurance of equity in ambulance services. No wonder the Association of Municipalities of Ontario is concerned about anything which might establish some kind of standard.

Let me say to the parliamentary assistant, first of all, that this bill would do nothing to change the system of delivery which is currently in place in the best part of my riding, which allows for 24-hour coverage, land ambulance and air ambulance, backed up by first-response teams in small rural areas and unorganized townships, but it might just have some implications for a part of my riding that's too far away from the site where we have 24-hour coverage, too distant for the air ambulance to reach it quickly, and can't rely on first response. Maybe the Ministry of Health would have some responsibility to provide access to ambulance service in that particular part of my riding. Even though there aren't a lot of people there, I think they still deserve access to emergency care.

Yes, this bill does have implications for the rest of the province, but I understand why the association of municipalities might be concerned about the cost to them. Mr MacRae, who is the city administrator for the city of Thunder Bay, whom the parliamentary assistant has quite wisely in political terms quoted today, suggests that the problem with the bill is it doesn't establish a standard. The Minister of Health's representative in the House today assures us that the government is going to establish standards because, after all, that is something it has left itself.

I have the Ambulance Act, and the Ambulance Act still says that the Minister of Health has the power to establish and operate ambulance services, but also the duty and the power to ensure the existence throughout Ontario of a balanced and integrated system of ambulance services. So the Minister of Health still has the responsibility to set a standard. The only problem is, this government has decided that setting standards and monitoring enforcement is the extent of their responsibility, while the cost of putting those standards into place now rests with the municipalities.

The parliamentary assistant has talked about "smooth transfer" of the ambulance service. In our view, there should be no transfer of the ambulance service. The minister who retains the responsibility, as she should, to ensure equity of access to health care services in this province should also retain through her government the ability to pay fully to ensure that the standards of equity

and access are maintained for our health care services, ambulance and otherwise.

I can't believe the parliamentary assistant would suggest that the focus of their task force group now is to look at—and I wrote the words down—"reaching a mutual agreement on how to govern our ambulance system." If you ask the municipalities, they'll tell you how to govern it. They'll say: "Take back 100% of the funding. We didn't ask for, first of all, the 100% downloading that you offered us. We didn't ask for retaining 50% of the cost of funding our ambulance services."

If you were serious about reaching mutual agreement, fund it 100% and AMO will agree with you 100%, and AMO will be more than willing to support my colleague's bill because AMO certainly wants to make sure that in every municipality of this province citizens have access to ambulance service.

The problem is that this government wants to dump costs on to the municipalities. That's why they defend volunteer services. Yes, there is a role for first-response volunteer teams. Coming from an area with unorganized townships, I understand that full well. But they've got to be backed by ready access to professionally trained paramedic services, and the Ministry of Health has a responsibility to provide those in every part of this province. They have a responsibility to provide them in a way that ensures residents can feel confident that they are going to get access to emergency care when they need it and in time to make a difference.

The Ministry of Health has a continued responsibility to ensure the standards, to monitor the standards, and to pay the costs of ensuring that the kind of equity of access my colleague proposes can in fact be delivered.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): Further debate?

The member for Glengarry-Prescott-Russell has up to two minutes in response.

Mr Lalonde: I want to thank my colleagues from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke and Thunder Bay-Atikokan for their kind words.

Listening to the member for Scarborough Southwest, I could see that he hadn't done his full research on this, because he referred to the additional cost that Barry's Bay would have. I have the list. Barry's Bay has two vehicles on site for 24 hours a day so it wouldn't add any cost to Barry's Bay. He referred to all those people in Durham and Niagara Falls. They all have the 24-hour service.

In your own riding, we read in the Toronto papers that when it takes 15 minutes to get to the hospital, everybody is screaming and crying. I have a message here from St-Isidore, the manager of the arena, and it took an hour and 10 minutes to get an ambulance for a seriously injured hockey player.

I don't know what we're talking about when we say we want to go against this bill. They say it wouldn't improve the service taking the people from standby and putting them on site. It's impossible. Staying on standby, the people are at home. When they're been called, they

go to the ambulance station and pick up the ambulance vehicle. Are you going to tell me that it won't improve the service? I think somebody has to live the experiences we have gone through.

Once again, the North American standard for ambulance service in the urban sector is seven minutes and 59 seconds and in the rural area it's 19 minutes and 59 seconds. You're going to tell me that an hour and 10 minutes is according to the standards? I don't think so.

The Acting Speaker: We will deal with this ballot item further at 12 noon. This House will stand in recess until 11 of the clock.

The House recessed from 1047 to 1102.

Hon Margaret Marland (Minister without Portfolio [Children]): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Because private member's business is a little less formal, I want to, on a point of order and speaking as minister responsible for children, welcome this wonderful class of children from the C.D. Farquharson public school at Brimley Road, Scarborough, and hope they enjoy their visit to this hallowed place of the seat of the Parliament in Ontario.

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

ASSESSMENT AMENDMENT ACT
(AIR TRAFFIC NOISE), 1999
LOI DE 1999 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR L'ÉVALUATION FONCIÈRE
(BRUIT PROVOQUÉ PAR
LA CIRCULATION AÉRIENNE)

Mr DeFaria moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 19, An Act requiring the consideration of air traffic noise in the assessment of residential property / *Projet de loi 19, Loi exigeant la prise en compte du bruit provoqué par la circulation aérienne lors de l'évaluation de biens résidentiels.*

Mr Carl DeFaria (Mississauga East): "Su Lalsingh and her family were up all night with it.

"Christine Solowy's two-year-old woke up screaming around 10 pm and it took her an hour and a half to get back him back to sleep.

"After 22 years in the community, Rita Palazzo is seriously considering moving for the first time because of it.

"Sara Kiss doesn't know how they expect people to get up and go to work after it happens.

"Irene Tywaniuk says she now knows what it must have been like to experience the 'blitzes' of the Second World War.

"Solowy lay down next to her son after he was awakened by the planes. It took 90 minutes for him to fall back asleep. 'All you needed was the bombs to start dropping,' she said. 'It was unbelievable, just one after another.'"

Yes, it sounds like a description of a war-torn region. But what I read to you is a description from the Mississauga News of a night in the life of residents of the Rockwood and Fleetwood communities in my riding of Mississauga East. "It" is the air traffic noise caused by the north-south runways at the Toronto International Airport. This is a community of peace-loving, hard-working people who moved into their homes mostly in the 1970s under the following assurances from their democratically elected governments.

I'll read to you a Privy Council order, 1973-3026, October 5, 1973, which stated, "Whereas the government of Canada has decided that Toronto international airport" ... "will not be expanded beyond its present boundaries in order not to further increase the degree of disturbance from flight operations to the people now living in the communities surrounding Toronto international airport."

The city of Mississauga official plan of 1978, which was approved by both federal and provincial governments, paragraph 5.14.1.2 stated, "The designation of land use is based on the assumption that there will be no expansion of the Toronto international airport beyond the three-runway configuration."

An environmental assessment and review panel commissioned by the federal government under the chairmanship of David Kirkwood, spent three years and \$13 million to declare, in November 1992, "The proposal to construct the runway 15R-33L as described in the EIS, should not be further pursued, as the adverse social impact which it would create would outweigh the modest increase in north-south capacity it would provide."

Let me tell you what has happened since the 1970s. This airport has become one of the busiest and, financially, one of the most successful airports in the world, but at whose cost? At the cost of the taxpayers and residents of Rockwood and Fleetwood communities of my riding of Mississauga East—quality of life cost and loss of their property value cost.

Let me read you a passage from the GTAA update from March 1999 so that you can see how the airport authority brags about their success: "Lester B. Pearson International Airport experienced another record year for passenger traffic in 1998.... The number of passengers going through LBPIA in 1998 was 26.7 million, an increase of 2.5% compared to 1997's total of 26.1 million.

"The total number of flights increased as well with a 6.7% growth over 1997. There were 423,200 aircraft movements through the airport last year."

That's equivalent to five plane movements per second. Can you imagine that, five airplanes per second, each and every second of the day, each and every day of the year? Try to imagine the impact of this kind of air traffic on the people living right under the runways.

1110

Let me read you letters from my constituents that will show the members who paid dearly for the airport's success. A resident who lives on Claypine Rise in Mississauga East, wrote, indicating as follows: "Flights come in at such a low altitude that I can't speak to my two-year-

old son, while standing on our driveway, without shouting to him.”

Another resident wrote to the airport authorities, saying the following: “I am sure you are aware of the negative impact the new north-south runway has had on our neighbourhood. The noise and distraction of the planes passing over our home has caused us as well as our neighbours to assess whether or not we’ll be able to continue to live here. This decision as you can imagine is causing us much anxiety.”

The GTAA, the airport authority, set up a hotline for residents to report noise. This is what one resident experienced with the hotline: “I am writing with regard to the Greater Toronto Airport Authority noise complaint telephone line.... My experience in dealing with the persons answering this line has been both frustrating and degrading.... Every week a new script is drawn up and read from.”

The residents were so frustrated, there were so many calls and so much frustration with lack of action—one resident kept calling so many times that he was charged under subsection 372(3) of the Criminal Code for telephone harassment. Can you imagine the level of frustration that would make a resident make so many calls so as to be charged under the Criminal Code?

During the 1993 election, local federal Liberal MPs promised the residents that there would be no new north-south runway built. “Over my dead body,” a local MP said. Well, no sooner than the election was over, the construction of a new north-south runway was commenced and completed in 1997—a complete betrayal of residents by local federal Liberal MPs.

I’m not making this an issue because all federal parties did not respond to the residents on this issue. I sponsor this bill to let the federal Liberal government know that the residents of Rockwood and Fleetwood are not alone in their fight.

I was prepared to bring this bill, knowing very well that the government’s ministry bureaucrats are not in favour of it. I wanted to make a statement.

I know the airport and its operation are under federal jurisdiction but I want this issue to be debated in this Legislature, since local federal Liberal MPs refuse to bring a bill to the House of Commons to debate the noise and pollution problem that affects residents of Mississauga East.

I kept my word to the people who elected me to this House, Mr Speaker, and your word.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I was trying to figure out where in this bill the federal government bashing would come in and I finally got it near the end, so I’m satisfied that that finally did happen, because every bill has that aspect to it.

But the problem the member brings to the attention of the House is indeed a problem which people who live near airports anywhere experience, and particularly airports which have a very large volume of traffic and the kinds of aircraft coming in and leaving which make a good deal of noise.

I know that there are those out there who will say: “Well, you know, when the people moved in, they knew what they were getting into. They knew they were near an airport.” I think what those people don’t realize is that very often things change, that the volume of noise that was there originally changes substantially as there are new runways or a greater frequency of traffic.

There are others who will say that there’s also an advantage to living near an airport because you have easy access to it. I don’t think that really makes people who live near the airport and have to experience this excessive noise feel any better than they would otherwise.

One way of tackling the problem is dealing through the assessment base, taking into consideration assessment; in other words, how much one pays in taxes municipally, ultimately. That seems to me to be fair. I know the member has a difficult time dealing with his own ministry of revenue of Ontario because they tend to not look favourably upon these new categories. We’ve had eight bills in this Legislature which have dealt with property tax. Every time the government thought it had it right and rushed through one of its bills on property tax the government would have to, again, deal with yet another bill to correct the mistakes in the last bill.

I can be sympathetic to the member because I have all kinds of constituents, particularly those who are in businesses in the downtown area of the city of St Catharines who have written many letters to the Minister of Finance and others about problems with property taxes. Now the former member for Lincoln tells them the real problem is that they have too much local government. It has nothing to do with that, of course. It’s due, as the member aptly points out today, to specific problems with assessment.

How can one assist people in these circumstances? The member offers one solution, and that is to be able to at least take into account the fact that there is excessive noise and give them a break in terms of their municipal property taxes.

We know that when we change the assessment base, because that’s what the government wrestled with with its various property tax bills, when one group of people pays less, another group or another category pays more. However, I go back to the fact that the kind of noise—and I’ve been by the airport. I don’t live near that airport but I’ve been by the airport and I know that when you’re going down the highway and listening to those planes coming just over the highway, there’s a tremendous amount of noise there that does affect the people. I can certainly believe all the contents of the letters that have been directed to the member by constituents when they say that they have a difficult time hearing one another in a yard, when they’re in a conversation, as one of those jumbo jets goes over that particular property, either taking off or landing, particularly probably taking off.

I wish the member well in being able to convince his own ministry of revenue that this would be an acceptable change in terms of a category because the individuals who are justifiably complaining about their property taxes as a result of the circumstances in which they find

themselves join literally thousands upon thousands of others in the province who've been adversely impacted in the other cases by the fact that the provincial government keeps changing laws, bringing in new laws that cause huge changes in property tax assessment. I say to all of those who have said through the local St Catharines Chamber of Commerce, their faxes to me and letters to me, that I'm extremely sympathetic to the points that they make and to the fact that they thought they had a pattern established. They thought they had a significant shift in assessment taking place only to find that the Harris government implemented and passed—rushed through the Legislature, because they rush all bills through the Legislature—through yet another piece of legislation which had an adverse impact on them.

There was some talk of a tax revolt. There was some talk—and there was a very heated meeting I attended. I know the provincial government smiles at this, but unfortunately the venom was directed at city hall and at the regional government as opposed to the provincial government which had made these changes, which then put some caps later on on changes they had made.

So there are people getting bills from two years ago. They're asking for clawbacks going back a year or two, to get taxes that they thought they had lowered. I think one can agree that the property tax or the assessment problem in this province is at a crisis level for many people. I think the member has pointed to yet another category of person: those who live near an airport.

1120

In my own area we only have a small airport, Niagara District Airport, in our part of the province. I had people who were complaining about some exercises taking place in the air with small airplanes. The noise was bothering them within their homes or within their yards and they were phoning to complain to various levels of government, without much satisfaction, I might say. If those people were complaining about small aircraft engaged in certain activities above their homes, I can imagine the justifiable complaints of those who live adjacent to a major international airport, in this case Pearson International Airport. I can certainly be sympathetic to that situation. The planes don't quit landing at 7 o'clock at night; they go well into the evening, and early in the morning they're going.

I guess where others understand it and perhaps can be a bit sympathetic would be when one has to stay in a hotel near an airport. A person who has never experienced that kind of noise before sure recognizes very quickly what people who reside near an airport go through, because they are usually awakened, sometimes in the middle of the night but very often early in the morning or in mid-evening, by the noise of aircraft landing and taking off.

I'm very sympathetic to the circumstances faced. I will be supporting this particular measure because I think it's about the only way they're going to get some redress. A deep recession I guess means fewer flights. Nobody wants to see a deep recession. On the highways now we

have huge volumes of truck traffic across the country, and certainly here in Ontario. When you have an economy which is booming as a result of low interest rates, the low Canadian dollar and the booming American economy, when you have that kind of economy in a province or a country—the whip smiles and knows what I'm saying is true, that that is the reason for the strong economy—you have a greater volume of transportation, a greater volume of traffic at airports, on highways, and one would hope on rail.

That is certainly a problem that must be addressed. The member has probably selected the only solution we have that's going to be practical. We'd like to look at some other solutions, but you have to deal with the situation you've got and how you can at least provide some relief to people who are confronted with these circumstances.

I know that the people in St Catharines and the Niagara region who are confronted with the huge sways in the amount of assessment they have, just as they are looking for redress—and I hope the provincial government can find redress and not simply point at the local government and say, "If only you'd get rid of the local government, there wouldn't be a problem." We all know that's not the case. There was significant downloading of some \$18 million net. The member from Scarborough would know that; he keeps track of these facts.

In the Niagara region when there was an exercise of changing, which is a legitimate exercise, of saying, "Let's look at who should have responsibility for what," the minister of the day said it would be revenue-neutral. I can tell members of the House it wasn't revenue-neutral. For our regional municipality of Niagara there was \$18 million additional in terms of obligations downloaded to the local municipality. That had to be reflected in one of three ways: one, increased taxes; two, increased user fees; or three, even further chops in services which were essential to the people in our area.

Just as I support the people in my own area who are confronted with this, who would prefer to point their finger locally at their local governments, when I know and many of them in their heart of hearts know that it's the Mike Harris government that's the problem, just as I'm prepared to support them, I'm prepared to support this member.

Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale): It's my pleasure to join for a few moments and speak on Bill 19 from the member from Mississauga. I compliment him on this issue to the extent that I understand this is a very significant issue in his riding. I know this because although I now represent a downtown riding, which has its own airport as well where airport noise from time to time causes concern for constituents, I grew up in close proximity to Pearson International Airport.

I lived in Etobicoke. My father operated a trucking company on Torbram Road underneath a flight path of Pearson airport. I lived for a time in Brampton. All of those communities have been affected over time by noise that emanates from Pearson airport.

I must say that, notwithstanding recognition that this is an issue of concern to the constituents in the member's riding and in other ridings in and around Pearson airport, I think the redress that is suggested in this legislation is a dangerous one. I will not be supporting it, principally on the basis that I think it's incumbent upon us not to begin to create variances in tax situations which begin to take into consideration all kinds of activities which might, from time to time, have affect on our enjoyment of property.

We have a system of assessment that's based on market value. In the city of Toronto, as an example, in my riding, would members opposite support a piece of legislation, were I to bring it in, that was determined to offer lower taxes for people who live in close proximity to a variety of social services? Shelters, as an example, come to mind. I think not. For those reasons, I think members would be advised to vote against this bill.

I make one other point, rather significantly. In Mississauga, in Peel region, and I would say parts of the city of Toronto such as Etobicoke, a great prosperity has come to those areas in large measure as a result of Pearson airport. It has an extraordinarily huge economic impact on those communities. I think you can make the point that the city of Mississauga's tremendous situation, their financial state, emanates in some part from the desirable location they have as a centre point for transportation. It's not just Pearson airport, but also the 400-series highways and of course the Queen Elizabeth Way as well. Do the residents of Mississauga seek to have those positive attributes that stem from their proximity to Pearson airport considered as influences that might actually be brought into consideration to raise the level of assessment? I think members opposite would be loathe to support it on that basis.

We see an increasingly important role in our economy for air travel. We also see extraordinary evolution in technology as it relates to the noise that aircraft make. I think the member would agree that over time efforts to modernize the fleets, particularly by our main airlines—some of the charter airlines tend to follow suit a little more slowly—will offer benefits to people living in those neighbourhoods.

The Greater Toronto Regional Airports Authority is undergoing a massive \$4-billion reinvestment in Pearson airport, throwing off extraordinary benefit to the city of Mississauga. Over \$400 million in provincial taxes emanate from that facility.

For all of these reasons, and principally the ones that include economic activity, the importance of that place and the benefits that Mississauga has received over time, I think this is a piece of legislation members should oppose.

1130

Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Southwest): It is an honour to stand here today in the Legislative Assembly to address it on an issue that I believe is quite important.

I want to thank the honourable member for Mississauga East for bringing his concerns regarding airport

noise to the attention of the House. It is my hope that the House, in its wisdom, will pass this legislation and take the important first steps to making this amendment law.

I will be the first to admit that the issue of airport noise is one that I don't run across very often in Scarborough Southwest, at least airport noise coming from Pearson International. There are a lot of other noise issues that I, as the member for Scarborough Southwest, have to deal with. Indeed, Scarborough Southwest being in the southern part of the Scarborough, my constituents aren't directly under the flight path of any jumbo jet landing at or taking off from Pearson airport. They do pass over my riding. They tend to be taking off from Pearson, but they are at a much higher altitude when they go over Scarborough, so it's not an issue that directly affects my constituents. We tend to see smaller planes coming and going from Toronto City Centre Airport along Lake Ontario.

But having said that, there are noise concerns brought forward by my constituents. I remember in the last Parliament when I was the MPP for Scarborough Centre, I had several constituents whose homes backed onto the Scarborough rapid transit line who had great concerns about assessment and how it affected their homes. Back in 1984, they had worked with their local alderman at the time to ensure that the issue was addressed in their assessments, and they were successful in that. I continue to work hard for them on that issue.

Living above a subway or right beside a major highway or a set of railway tracks, for example, does indeed earn you, I believe, at least the right to be considered for lower assessment. This adjustment for homes in close proximity to a nuisance is called "nuisance variable," yet under the current Assessment Act there can be no adjustment made for the nuisance of living right under a major flight path.

That's what the member from Mississauga East is bringing before us today. I indeed sympathize with the member's concerns in the bill that he's brought forward today. It's my belief that amending the Assessment Act is only fair, since every member of this House can attest that living under the roar of a jumbo jet must be as disturbing as living beside the Scarborough RT line or right beside a major highway in our province.

I think it's important to note, as the member from Mississauga East noted, that part of the responsibility for major flight noise must lie at the feet of the federal government. In an article from the Mississauga News dated September 23, 1998, regarding the issue of airport noise, federal Transportation Minister David Collenette, who I might add is the minister responsible for the GTA, said, "Because of short-sightedness on the part of all of us, including the federal government 35 years ago, we now have a problem with too many residences too close to the airport."

So we even have the federal government admitting a mistake was made by allowing residential development too close to Pearson International Airport. What did they do? As the member indicated, they built a brand new

north-south runway, taking jumbo jets closer to people's homes and, I would say, closer than was ever originally intended.

It's important to note that between 1996 and 1997, noise complaints to the Greater Toronto Airport Authority doubled, and between 1997 and 1998 those noise complaints doubled again. Clearly, the federal government does have a responsibility to the residents of the constituency of Mississauga East or, for that matter, any of the neighbouring constituencies.

I'll be the first to agree that Pearson International Airport is an essential service to Ontario's economy. I know the member for St Catharines spoke about the booming economy in Ontario, and I thought he would have wanted to mention the 99 tax cuts that have been brought forward by this government. But as someone once said: "One mile of roadway will take you one mile. One mile of runway will take you to the entire world." I think they're absolutely correct in that. In today's global economy, I don't think you'd be able to find anyone who doesn't believe that Pearson International Airport is an essential element in helping to make Ontario one of the best places to work, live and raise a family.

Unfortunately, one of the trade-offs with having a busy, successful airport is a lot of noise. While I do not believe the federal government has done all they can in order to help reduce noise to the innocent residents around Pearson International, I commend the member from Mississauga East for bringing this issue before the Legislative Assembly today.

By implementing the tools necessary for property tax assessors to attach a fair market assessment price to a residential property, I believe this act will help boost the realty sector in the affected areas. By attaching a fair value to assessment rather than an artificially high assessment, people will be more willing to purchase a property due to the lower assessment and ultimately the lower property taxes on their property.

Indeed, this act truly levels the playing field on this issue. Right now, special consideration can be given in a property tax assessment for living beside a highway, special consideration can be given for living over a subway line, and special consideration can be given for living beside railway tracks. But special consideration cannot be given for living underneath a major flight path. Hopefully, if passed, this legislation would address this major inequity.

The increase in our global economy and the subsequent increase in air traffic and air transportation is an issue that will affect all of us as members of provincial Parliament. I understand the federal government is considering putting another regional airport in Pickering. Air traffic at the Toronto City Centre Airport is increasing and there has been some consideration given to expanding the role of the Hamilton International Airport. Indeed, as our population grows and expands, so will the number of airplanes in our skies. I don't think it's fair to the people who must live directly underneath the roar of

a jumbo jet 30, 40 or 50 times a day that they somehow cannot be compensated for that inconvenience.

That's an inequity that I commend the member for Mississauga East for addressing, and it's an inequity that I will do my part to help eliminate by supporting this legislation today.

Hon Frank Klees (Minister without Portfolio): I am pleased to rise to speak to this important piece of legislation being brought forward by my colleague the member for Mississauga East. I want to commend him on two counts: first for bringing this concern that clearly is of great importance to a number of his constituents before the House, but more importantly the fact that he is showing that he is an individual who follows through on his commitments to his constituents.

On October 27, Speaker, you will remember that the member for Mississauga East made a statement in this House. At that time he said, and I quote from Hansard:

"During the election campaign, I had the opportunity to listen" to constituents' 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." The member goes on to say, "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..."

That brings us to this place of debate. The member has introduced his bill into the House and we're now engaged in second reading of this bill. I will be supporting it, and the reason for that is that I believe it is imperative that in this House we do what we can to provide redress to people in our constituencies who are dealing with issues beyond their control.

Clearly the jurisdiction here is one at the federal level of government. It is also clear that the federal level of government has chosen not to act, and for that reason we must do what we can.

There are really two issues at stake. One is financial; the other is quality of life. On the financial side, as the member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale has indicated, we do have an assessment system in the province that takes into account property values.

There's also no doubt in my mind that the value of someone's property situated close to an airport is going to be affected by the noise, by the circumstances, and so in one respect the amount of property tax that an individual pays on a house that's located close to an airport will already be reflected in the fact that the value of that home is going to be adjusted simply based on its market value. However, I do think it goes beyond that.

I think that to provide a signal here that there should be some compensation, some measure of redress, to people who perhaps have purchased a home before the level of noise at that airport in the surrounding area was what it is today—and I understand there was a new run-

way constructed at Pearson which now is affecting people who purchased their homes under one set of circumstances. They are now having to live with another set of circumstances, and I really do believe it's incumbent upon us to ensure that these people's rights are recognized.

1140

The other is quality of life. That's a much more complex issue. Again, who do people go to if their quality of life is negatively affected? If they can't go to a member of provincial Parliament or a member of Parliament and expect that their issues are taken up, where do they go? In this case they've gone to the member for Mississauga East. He has brought this matter before us, and I think we have a responsibility to act.

I too, in my riding of Oak Ridges, am affected by this. I'd like to refer to a letter that I received from a constituent by the name of Frank Lung, who lives in Richmond Hill. I'll read one paragraph, as he refers to the issue of airport noise around the Buttonville airport, just outside of my constituency. He refers to two major concerns: "(1) low-altitude flying above our residential area (ie, many planes flew below 200 feet, yet the aviation restriction is 500 feet above ground), and (2) midnight flying in our residential area." He refers to the fact that people were awakened by noisy planes in the middle of the night. "The aircraft noise disturbance affects more than a thousand families in this subdivision alone," according to his letter. He goes on to refer to a number of incidents—October 7, October 12, 17 and 19, where he reported to Transport Canada these instances of disturbing their family in their sleep in the middle of the night, 2 o'clock or 3 o'clock in the morning.

I want to read into the record the response that he received from Mr Joseph Szwalek, acting regional manager, aviation enforcement, Ontario region. This is dated October 18, 1999: "We have reviewed the radar tapes, and have found that all aircraft were operating within legal limits at those specified times."

The letter goes on to say, "The department can only encourage you to work with the local airport authority and local air operators in an attempt to resolve your problem. Aviation enforcement can only inform you, at this time, that no further action will be taken."

What encouragement is that? Where, now, do these constituents go to address this issue? I would suggest that we, as a House, after we pass this bill, make it a commitment as well that we will implore the federal level of government to address these issues that are clearly within their jurisdiction. It's simply not acceptable that we tell people, "This is the law. These airplanes are flying within the appropriate restricted hours," and have no regard to the quality of life.

Interjection.

Hon Mr Klees: What I do think is important is that some compromises be made. In this particular case, at Buttonville, for example, the same individual writes that the airport is a 24-hour operation and currently does not have a late arrival or departure curfew. It is therefore

conceivable to have aircraft movement in the early morning hours—again, within the rules and regulations, but unacceptable.

If we in this House don't take some initiative to try to bring some restrictions and compromises between the economic factors and the quality-of-life factors, who will? I believe it is our responsibility. I look forward to working with the member for Mississauga East to bring this matter to its logical, positive conclusion, to help the residents of his riding and also to work with him with the federal government—

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): Thank you. The member for Mississauga East has up to two minutes to respond.

Mr DeFaria: I would like to thank the member for St Catharines, the member for Scarborough Southwest and also the member for Oak Ridges, the chief government whip, for their support.

Our local federal Liberal MPs broke their promise to the residents and, in doing so, broke a sacred bond. In doing so, they also broke hearts. There have been casualties in this fight against airport expansion. I know that Lorrie Mitoff, who led this fight as president of Rockwood Homeowners' Association and chair of the Council of Concerned Residents, died of a broken heart. Lorrie Mitoff was a big man with a big heart. Lorrie Mitoff was a man who cared dearly for his community. He died a few days before the 1999 election and only a couple of days after a public debate on airport noise. It was on that day that I promised Lorrie Mitoff that I would introduce this bill.

I dedicate this bill to the memory of Laurie Mitoff. This is the Lorrie Mitoff bill. I ask all members of this House to support this bill. This will give a message to all governments that residents must be respected and that their rights and their interests must be protected, because it's through this House and through the House of Commons that residents require protection.

The Acting Speaker: We will deal with both ballot item number 11 and ballot item number 12 at 12 o'clock. This House will stand in recess. I will return to the chair at noon.

The House recessed from 1147 to 1202.

AMBULANCE AMENDMENT ACT
(MINIMUM READINESS), 1999

LOI DE 1999 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LES AMBULANCES
(DISPONIBILITÉ MINIMALE)

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): Mr Lalonde has moved second reading of Bill 29, An Act to amend the Ambulance Act to provide for the minimum staffing and equipping of ambulance stations.

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

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

ASSESSMENT AMENDMENT ACT
(AIR TRAFFIC NOISE), 1999
LOI DE 1999 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR L'ÉVALUATION FONCIÈRE
(BRUIT PROVOQUÉ PAR
LA CIRCULATION AÉRIENNE)

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): We will now deal with ballot item number 12 and then we will ring the bells.

Mr DeFaria has moved second reading of Bill 19, An Act requiring the consideration of air traffic noise in the assessment of residential property.

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

Pursuant to the standing orders, the bill is referred to committee of the whole.

Call in the members.

The division bells rang from 1204 to 1209.

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

AMBULANCE AMENDMENT ACT
(MINIMUM READINESS), 1999
LOI DE 1999 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LES AMBULANCES
(DISPONIBILITÉ MINIMALE)

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): Mr Lalonde has moved second reading of Bill 29, An Act to amend the Ambulance Act to provide for the minimum staffing and equipping of ambulance stations.

All those in favour will stand and remain standing until their name is called.

Ayes

Agostino, Dominic	Cordiano, Joseph	McLeod, Lyn
Bartolucci, Rick	Di Cocco, Caroline	Parsons, Ernie
Boyer, Claudette	Duncan, Dwight	Patten, Richard
Bradley, James J.	Gerretsen, John	Peters, Steve
Bryant, Michael	Gravelle, Michael	Phillips, Gerry
Caplan, David	Kennedy, Gerard	Pupatello, Sandra
Christopherson, David	Kwinter, Monte	Ramsay, David
Churley, Marilyn	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Ruprecht, Tony
Colle, Mike	Levac, David	Smitherman, George
Conway, Sean G.	Martel, Shelley	

The Acting Speaker: All those opposed will stand and remain standing until their name is called.

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Guzzo, Garry J.	Mushinski, Marilyn
Baird, John R.	Hastings, John	Newman, Dan
Barrett, Toby	Johnson, Bert	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Clark, Brad	Klees, Frank	Spina, Joseph
Cunningham, Dianne	Marland, Margaret	Tilson, David
DeFaria, Carl	Maves, Bart	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Dunlop, Garfield	Mazzilli, Frank	Wood, Bob
Gill, Raminder	Munro, Julia	

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 29; the nays are 23.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Pursuant to standing order 95, this matter is referred to committee of the whole House.

Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): I would ask that Bill 29 be referred to the general government committee.

The Acting Speaker: Shall this bill be referred to the standing committee on general government? Agreed?

All those in favour of this question will please rise and remain standing.

All those opposed will please rise and remain standing.

A majority of the House being in agreement with the request of Mr Lalonde, the bill stands referred to the standing committee on general government.

All matters relating to private members' public business have now been completed. I do now leave the chair and the House will resume at 1:30 of the clock.

The House recessed from 1211 to 1330.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

KINGSTON AGRICULTURAL OFFICE

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): The city of Kingston at its council meeting on Tuesday approved the following motion:

"Whereas the OMAFRA office located in the city of Kingston, which presently serves the county of Frontenac and the county of Lennox and Addington is to be closed; and

"Whereas agriculture in Ontario is the second-largest industry; and

"Whereas agriculture and rural affairs assistance will now only be available in Kemptville or Brighton;

"Therefore be it resolved that the city of Kingston request that the OMAFRA office remain in the city of Kingston to benefit the large rural area surrounding Kingston."

I also have a letter addressed to the Minister of Agriculture from Dudley Shannon. He's the chairman of the Frontenac Federation of Agriculture, the voice of agriculture in Frontenac county. He states: "When I listened to your address at the OFA annual convention last month, I had no idea that you intended to change OMAFRA as it is reported you will be doing. We are very disappointed that you will be virtually plundering the ministry."

We all know that since 1995 the government has instead cut agriculture. In the first three years alone, the Mike Harris government cut \$18 million from research, lab and field services, cut \$44 million from its own contribution to safety net programs and cut \$10 million from marketing and food processing programs.

Now you have cut the only source of unbiased opinion and information to the farmers. Our agricultural industry is a world leader, and we demand that the ag offices be kept open in our province.

SARAH ROSE BLACK

Mrs Tina R. Molinari (Thornhill): With great pleasure, I congratulate Sarah Rose Black on her winning first place in the "Care to Brag" Go Neighbour campaign. Sarah Rose's first place win in the 11-to-13 age category brings with it a \$500 scholarship towards post-secondary education, a \$500 donation to a charity of her choice, gift certificates and an all-expense-paid trip to Vancouver for an awards ceremony.

The award is from the Youth Volunteer Corps of Canada, which is a proactive, national youth service program which encourages team volunteers, age 11 to 18 years, to develop important citizenship skills and gain a deeper understanding of their roles in the community. The youth serve their community while working on real and meaningful projects. The Youth Volunteer Corps recognizes that all youth can be valuable and giving members of their community.

Sarah Rose definitely is a clear example of a giving member in her Thornhill community. Though only 12 years old, she has more than six and a half years of volunteer service with the Canadian Cancer Society. In her own words, Sarah Rose said: "I volunteer because I want to help others learn how to avoid cancer. Education and research are key to cancer prevention, so I also help raise funds for cancer research." Her volunteer work has led others in becoming involved with the cancer society.

I take great pleasure in congratulating Sarah Rose and wish her continued success in her future volunteer endeavours.

HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): I'm pleased to have the opportunity to comment on the Ontario Hospital Association's report card for Thunder Bay Regional Hospital released earlier today.

As you know, Thunder Bay's hospital system has gone through an extraordinary upheaval since the late, but unlamented, Health Services Restructuring Commission first came to our community in 1996. Their insensitive and harsh directives, as well as the government's sharp reduction in funding support, put intense pressure on the staff at Thunder Bay Regional to maintain a quality level of service. With that in mind, today's report card by the OHA is surprisingly positive, which is nothing more than a reflection of the hard work and devotion of the doctors, nurses and other hospital staff who believe patient care is the number one priority.

But what is clear from the report card is that where there are identifiable shortcomings in the hospital's performance, they are directly related to the bizarrely short-sighted directives of the restructuring commission. Just this past week, Thunder Bay Regional needed to utilize 396 acute care beds, even though their funding allocation is for only 350 beds. The acute care bed needs in my community must be agreed to by the government, regardless of the HSRC recommendations, because clearly the

problems identified by patients revolve around getting a bed. Once they are actually in the hospital, patient satisfaction increases.

This report card is a vital tool that I hope the government will use to acknowledge and correct the mistakes they've made, so that patient care in our hospitals can once again be something people count on.

CHRISTMAS IN SAULT STE MARIE

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): I want to take this opportunity today to wish you and everybody in this place—my friends across the way, O'Toole, Sampson, Tilson, Arnott; some of my friends from the Liberal Party, the member from Sudbury, the member from Kingston and the Islands, Thunder Bay-Superior North; my own colleague from Hamilton West, Mr Christopher—son—the best of the season. I hope you have a wonderful Christmas and a wonderful holiday.

Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale): What did I do?

Mr Martin: And Mr Smitherman. To the pages and the people who work here, I want you to know that it's snowing in Sault Ste Marie today. It's snowing in northern Ontario, and you're all welcome to come up and do some skiing. Jimmy Hilsinger's been working his head off out at Searchmont, the mountains of the midwest. The ski hills are full of snow. There's opportunity for everybody to recreate, have a good time. Come up after Christmas, take the snow train, bring your snow machine and experience for yourself the wonders of the north in the winter, the snow, the fresh air and the cold, and everything we have to offer by way of hospitality.

In Sault Ste Marie, we consider ourselves naturally gifted. We have some things to offer you, some opportunities to offer you. We want to talk to you about it. We want you to come up. We want you to enjoy our hospitality.

Interjections.

Mr Martin: Do you want to see the tie? That's Santa Claus skiing at Searchmont. He was there last week. There was a sighting. So come on up. Enjoy Christmas, enjoy the winter, enjoy the north.

Hon Frank Klees (Minister without Portfolio): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I ask for unanimous consent to give the honourable member some more time. He's doing such a wonderful job at this time of the season.

1340

ONTARIO COLLEGE OF TEACHERS

Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls): I want to bring to the Legislature's attention concerns I have over recent decisions made by the College of Teachers discipline committee.

The most recent edition of Professionally Speaking, the official magazine of the Ontario College of Teachers, details four cases before the discipline committee. In one case, a teacher with 15 years experience was found to

have “engaged in an inappropriate sexual relationship with a 16-year-old student.” The discipline committee’s decision? A suspension of the teacher’s certificate.

Next, the college discipline committee revoked the certificate of a teacher found guilty of possessing crack cocaine for the purposes of drug trafficking. This teacher already had a long criminal record for convictions such as theft, possession of stolen property and possession of narcotics between 1980 and 1998.

In a third case, the college heard that a teacher resisted arrest by a police officer and was charged with assault of a police officer. The college’s decision? To allow an undertaking between the teacher and the college.

While I can applaud some of the college’s decisions in revoking certificates, I’m deeply troubled by these three cases. A teacher convicted of sexual exploitation and serving a jail sentence should have their certificate revoked, not suspended. A teacher with many prior criminal convictions should have been weeded out of the system much earlier. Finally, a teacher who assaults a police officer is a poor role model. In three cases, the college should have acted more decisively.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): I rise in the House today to put on the record the double standard of the Harris Tories. I’ve been listening to the Harris government mantra of cutting costs in every sector such as health, education, the environment, heritage and culture. All sectors have had to do more with less and cut costs. I would like to present the facts about the Harris government’s double standard in not cutting costs but actually increasing them.

In 1995, the cost of salaries to the Premier, cabinet ministers and the PAs was \$751,946. This was when we had 130 members in the Legislature. Today in 1999, the extra cost of the salaries of Harris, cabinet ministers and PA has ballooned to \$1,052,003. Let us all take into account that this cost has skyrocketed while we have downsized the Legislature to 103 members in 1999. This basic salary cost does not include the doubling of staff in the Premier’s office, the extra staff for ministers, the extra drivers, cars and 30% salary raise for these staff.

These are the facts. Mr Harris, you clearly have a double standard: one for you and one for the rest of the people of the province. The message I have is: You can fool some of the people some of the time but you can’t fool all of the people all of the time.

CHARITY GOLF TOURNAMENT

Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton): I’d like to take this opportunity today to address an issue that both is exciting and rewarding for my constituents and myself. In the past week, I have had the pleasure of presenting three cheques, each for \$3,700 to three seniors centres in Halton. The funds were raised through the efforts of a lot of hard-working people who helped organize the annual Ted

Chudleigh Charity Golf Tournament. Acton, Georgetown and Milton seniors recreational centres were the happy recipients of these cheques. After four successful years, the tournament has raised a grant total of \$36,000 for seniors in Halton.

I’d like to extend my greatest appreciation to the many participants, including my colleagues the Honourable Frank Klees, Marcel Beaubien, John Hastings and Joe Spina and renowned jockey Sandy Hawley, who all played in the tournament. Former Minister of Transportation James Snow and former MPP Doug Kennedy have also helped make the day memorable.

Special thanks goes to the Honourable John Snobelen. The minister has excelled as the tournament’s auctioneer for the past three years, raising bids and dollars where perhaps many people thought that none existed.

As I have stated in this House before, seniors in Halton and across Ontario have made tremendous contributions to our province. Through tournaments and fundraisers such as this golf tournament we have the means to recognize these contributions and give something back to those who helped build our communities and our province into one of the best places to live, work and raise a family in the world.

I believe sincerely, along with the rest of my colleagues, that Ontario’s best days are ahead of us.

HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): Earlier today, the Ontario Hospital Association released its Canadian in-patient survey of all hospitals in the province. Windsor was the first community in Ontario to enter into restructuring, some seven years ago. At that time, the people of Windsor were promised that two outstanding health care facilities would be left after the process was finished.

We’ve got the results for those two hospitals. In one case, under patient satisfaction, every indicator is found to be below average. In the other hospital, most of them are found to be under.

The government will say it’s the nurses’ fault; it’s the doctors’ fault; it’s the administration’s fault. We say it’s not their fault. It’s not the fault of doctors; it’s not the fault of nurses. It’s the fault of a government that has continually underfunded our hospitals and broken repeated commitments to our hospitals in terms of quality care and excellence.

Officials at those hospitals have indicated to me that there is even more information behind this. We’re going to get that information too. I’m confident that it too will show that the lack of patient satisfaction, that the critical situation in our emergency rooms, is not the fault of anyone other than the Mike Harris government, who have set us on this dangerous course that’s undermining and has undermined one of the finest health care systems in the world and left our true professionals out in the cold with no meaningful support.

WALTER BEAN GRAND RIVER TRAIL

Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington): In the 19th century, the Grand River drew waves of pioneers to Waterloo region and Wellington county. Today, on the cusp of the new millennium, the Grand River continues to be a major attraction for tourists visiting our area, and it will be even better with the completion of the Walter Bean Grand River Trail.

Based on the guidance of the Grand River Conservation Authority, the trail will wind along the river's shores for almost 75 kilometres, offering a spectacular experience in wildlife appreciation, historical discovery and recreational fun. The trail will connect Cambridge to North Dumfries township, to Kitchener-Waterloo, and on through Woolwich township. Outdoors lovers, students or families will have plenty to see as they hike, bike, canoe or cross-country ski their way along this beautiful and historic river.

To quote Doug Letson, president of the Walter Bean Grand River Community Trails Corp, from his recent article in the Kitchener-Waterloo Record, "A stroll along the trail ... can be a walk back into history as well as an introduction to the environment we share with the flora and fauna which populate the river's shores."

I commend the volunteers of the trails corporation, especially Doug Letson and the 14 board members, as well as the planning work of the Grand River Conservation Authority staff and the generosity of corporate sponsors like the Economical Insurance Group, who have paid for a park along the trail, and private sponsors such as the Marsland and Simms families.

I encourage everyone to consider pledging support to this very worthwhile initiative.

1350

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

TALPIOT COLLEGE ACT, 1999

Mr Colle moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr16, An Act to incorporate Talpiot College.

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

TENANT PROTECTION AMENDMENT ACT (TOWARDS FAIRNESS FOR TENANTS), 1999

LOI DE 1999 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA PROTECTION DES LOCATAIRES EN VUE DU TRAITEMENT ÉQUITABLE DES LOCATAIRES

Mr Caplan moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 36, An Act to ensure fairness and reasonable access to justice for Ontario's tenants by amending the Tenant Protection Act, 1997 / Projet de loi 36, Loi visant

à assurer aux locataires de l'Ontario un traitement équitable et un accès raisonnable à la justice en modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la protection des locataires.

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

Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East): If passed, this bill will do several things. First, an application to terminate a tenancy for arrears or for eviction will automatically go to a hearing, and written disputes will no longer be obligatory. All applications and notices will be given to individuals directly by the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal rather than being served by the applicants.

This bill also prohibits above-guideline increases where there are outstanding work orders present.

This bill, if passed, would ensure the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal would update the credit records of tenants when payments have been made or eviction orders have been withdrawn, contrary to today's practice. Eviction orders that have not been executed will expire after six months.

Finally, additional catch-up increases that exceed the guideline, often called maximum rent, will no longer be permitted.

I am pleased to be able to introduce this bill that protects tenants' rights. These are sensible and needed changes to make the process work. I've had tremendous input on this bill from people all over the province, but I'd specifically like to thank the members of the Tenant Advocacy Group—Joe Myers, Ken Hale and Elinor Mahoney—as well as Jennifer Ramsay of CERA and Howard Tessler of FMTA for their invaluable contribution in drafting this bill.

I urge the government to call this bill as soon as possible and give it speedy passage.

COLLECTION AGENCIES AMENDMENT ACT, 1999

LOI DE 1999 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES AGENCES DE RECOUVREMENT

Mr Runciman moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 37, An Act to amend the Collection Agencies Act / Projet de loi 37, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les agences de recouvrement.

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

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations): I'm pleased to introduce amendments to the Collection Agencies Act, amendments which remove restrictions on foreign ownership of Ontario-based collection agencies. These changes would reduce red tape, attract foreign investment, create jobs and contribute to improvements in Ontario's competitive position.

GENOCIDE MEMORIAL
WEEK ACT, 1999

LOI DE 1999 SUR LA SEMAINE
COMMÉMORATIVE DES GÉNOCIDES

Mr Wood moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 38, An Act to proclaim Genocide Memorial Week in Ontario / Projet de loi 38, Loi proclamant la Semaine commémorative des génocides en Ontario.

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

Mr Bob Wood (London West): This bill proposes to designate the week beginning the third Monday in April of each year as Genocide Memorial Week in this province. It is hoped that as more Ontarians consider how and why genocide has occurred, we will be able to make a greater contribution to the worldwide cause of making sure that genocide never again happens on this planet.

UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA
HEART INSTITUTE ACT, 1999

LOI DE 1999 SUR
L'INSTITUT DE CARDIOLOGIE
DE L'UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA

Mrs Witmer moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 39, An Act respecting the University of Ottawa Heart Institute / Projet de loi 39, Loi concernant l'Institut de cardiologie de l'Université d'Ottawa.

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

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): This bill would permit the University of Ottawa Heart Institute to provide cardiac services to the patients of the Ottawa Hospital in accordance with the service agreement entered into between the institute and the hospital.

The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care is authorized to pay grants, make loans and provide financial assistance directly to the institute on the same terms and subject to the same requirements that are applicable to public hospitals under the Public Hospitals Act.

ORAL QUESTIONS

JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the Chair of Management Board. You've got to give Mike Harris credit—
Applause.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. The leader of the official opposition.

Mr McGuinty: I guess that's what's known as a dangerous pause.

If there's one thing that your Premier is particularly adept at it is looking after himself and looking after his

friends. Yesterday he managed to do both when he appointed his long-standing friend, party stalwart and former Tory candidate to the job of Environmental Commissioner. Today we learn that the Premier is at it again. This time he wants to appoint another good, close and personal friend as the new judge in his hometown of North Bay. But there is a problem. The members of the non-partisan, objective, arm's-length Judicial Appointments Advisory Committee are refusing to fix this appointment for the Premier and as a result the appointment of a judge in North Bay is on hold and court backlogs have doubled.

As a government that is ultimately responsible for the administration of justice in Ontario, tell me, Minister, do you not agree that it is entirely wrong to bring politics into the appointment of our judges?

Hon Chris Hodgson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): Let me be clear on this. If the member opposite is alleging that there's been any interference by any member of this government in the judicial appointment process, I challenge him to make that statement outside the Legislature where he's spared the parliamentary immunity that he enjoys in this House to throw around reckless allegations. I also want to state categorically and for the record that the integrity of our Premier and our Attorney General is absolutely without question.

As for his other preamble part about the Environmental Commissioner, he knows full well that no political party put forward a recommendation; that came through another process, and if he has a question on that, I know our House leader is more than willing to answer that.

Mr McGuinty: This government feels that the best defence is to be offensive. What we're talking about here is an arm's-length judicial appointment process that has been on the books in our province for 10 years. There has been a tradition to make those appointments within two to four weeks of receiving the list from that group of people who on a voluntary basis select the very best candidates and put them on a short list. That short list was delivered to your government in June, six months ago. No appointment has been made, and as a result, there is a very real risk right now that criminals who are facing criminal trial will be set free because they are waiting so long for a judge to be appointed in North Bay. The reason behind the delay is that the Premier's close and personal friend has not been made part of that list.

I will ask you now, Minister, do you really think it is appropriate to reintroduce politics into the matter of judicial appointments in Ontario?

Hon Mr Hodgson: The Leader of the Opposition talks about offensive; that's the most offensive statement I've heard. As the member opposite surely knows, as everyone in this House knows, there is a process by which judges are appointed in this province and it's a process that was put in place in 1988 by the Liberal government of the day. Under that process, the Judicial Appointments Advisory Committee brings forward a list

of qualified applicants for review by the Attorney General. It would be inappropriate for me, the Premier or any member of this Legislature, with the exception of the Attorney General, to have any knowledge of the specifics of any vacancies or applications to these vacancies currently being considered. He knows that full well.

Mr McGuinty: For the first time in 10 years since this objective, arm's-length, impartial committee has been established, we are witnessing a case where it has taken your government six full months. You've been applying the brakes for six full months. You've been putting a freeze on this appointment process for six full months, when it comes to the appointment of a judge in the city of North Bay.

The judicial appointments committee did its job. They put forward the names of six qualified, competent candidates. For some reason, your government, a government that has for the first time in 10 years done so, has decided they don't like the names that are on that list. It's perfectly obvious, because the list does not contain the name of one personal friend of Mike Harris. That's what this is all about.

I ask you again: Do you really think it's appropriate to reintroduce politics into the appointment of our judges in Ontario?

1400

Hon Mr Hodgson: Today's report in the Globe and Mail and the Leader of the Opposition's question do concern me, both as a member of this Legislature and as a citizen of the province because, as most people know, this is an independent advisory committee. This independent advisory committee's work, and the privacy under which they operate, appears to be violated.

I'm aware that other governments in this country follow different processes in appointing judges. If the member opposite is suggesting that we look at a different process, I'd be more than willing to pass those suggestions on to the Attorney General.

MAGNETIC RESONANCE IMAGING

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Minister of Health. You aren't just presiding these days over the decline of health care in our province; you are presiding over the dismantling of medicare itself.

People today in Ontario are now paying cash to jump the queue for MRIs. And they're not just shuffling off to Buffalo; they're buying them right here in Ontario. All they need to jump the queue today in Ontario is a note from their doctor and a certified cheque for \$1,000. If you've got a thousand bucks, you get your MRI in two or three days. The rest of us have to wait seven or eight long months.

If that's not two-tier health care today in Mike Harris's Ontario, what is it?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): As the Leader of the Opposition knows, we are fully committed to a publicly funded

health care system and the provisions of the Canada Health Act. However, I will tell you that third party usage of MRIs actually was introduced by the NDP in 1992 by the passage of a regulation. This third-party passage and usage of MRIs does not violate the Canada Health Act nor the Health Insurance Act.

However, I can assure you that the Ministry of Health is investigating the matter to which I believe you are referring, and if it is discovered that the hospital is illegally doing this then it will be directed to stop.

Mr McGuinty: This is not about corporate third parties or insurance companies. This is now about private citizens jumping the queue if they have available to them \$1,000 in extra dollars.

A patient, a doctor and a reporter all called a private company and they were all told the same thing: If they had the cash, they could get an MRI within days without leaving Ontario, and the MRI was going to be done at a hospital in Mississauga. This is a direct violation of the Canada Health Act. That act says that we are all entitled to quality health care in a timely way. That act says nothing about if you've got an extra \$1,000, you get to jump to the head of the line.

Minister, this is a direct violation of the Canada Health Act. It is giving preference to citizens in our province who have an additional \$1,000 to spend on their own health care. What are you going to do about this violation of the Canada Health Act?

Hon Mrs Witmer: I guess the Leader of the Opposition had his second question ready, because I've already responded.

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): You didn't answer, Elizabeth. What are you going to do?

Hon Mrs Witmer: I have indicated that the Ministry of Health is investigating the matter, and if the hospital is found to be charging patients illegally, then it will be directed to stop.

Mr McGuinty: Minister, let's take a moment to understand why this is happening. This is as a direct result of your government cuts made to health care. Why are hospitals today in Ontario selling MRI services? Because you cut funding to hospitals. They are now cash-starved. They're running deficits and they are in desperate financial straits. They're selling MRI services for the same reason they're turning away ambulances from our emergency departments: because they are cash-starved. This is all the result of you and your unhealthy obsession with cuts to health care.

Minister, tell me one more time, how could you possibly cultivate conditions such that hospitals today in Ontario are charging for MRI services, charging a charge to private citizens in Ontario which is obviously in breach of the Canada Health Act?

Hon Mrs Witmer: I'm actually very proud of our health record on MRIs. We are the province in Canada that has almost half of all the publicly funded MRIs in Canada. In fact it was our government that increased the funding for MRIs from \$150,000 to \$800,000 per year, and we are the government that is making the MRIs

available for people throughout Ontario. We will have about 35 up and running. As I say, that is about half of all the MRIs in Canada. We have increased funding substantially from what the NDP were paying. They were paying \$150,000, we're paying \$800,000, and we will continue to ensure access.

JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Acting Premier. We learned today that your efforts to put political friends of the Premier in positions of high influence doesn't end with the Environmental Commissioner, it also goes into the judiciary. I want to ask you a question about the Judicial Appointments Advisory Committee. This is a quote from their 1997 annual report:

"The committee has established criteria and proceedings that have resulted in a fair and impartial process for the appointment of judges to the Ontario Court (Provincial Division), one that it hopes has assisted in removing any perception of unwarranted political bias or patronage in appointments to the judiciary."

That's what the annual report says. That's the work they've been doing. Can you tell me why your government has refused to appoint the individuals put forward by this committee? Can you tell me why months have gone by and the names of individuals selected and put forward by this committee haven't been appointed by your government?

Hon Chris Hodgson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): As the leader of the third party knows, and everybody in this Legislature knows, the process was put in place in 1988. I think your quote is accurate and our government has done nothing but support that process. In regard to supporting that process, you would know that it would be inappropriate for me or the Premier or any member of this Legislature, with the exception of the Attorney General, to have any knowledge of the specifics of any vacancies or applications for these vacant positions currently being considered by this independent advisory committee.

Mr Hampton: Acting Premier, what this is about is the fact that where you've got something that sets out that judges should be independent, that there should not be any indication of political interference, your government is trying to find a way to stonewall around this.

I want to read you another piece. This is from the policies and procedures manual of the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario, section 7.2: "The high conflict of interest threshold is more stringent for offices of the provincial Legislature, such as the Environmental Commissioner, which performs an independent review of the provincial government." The threshold is higher for the Environmental Commissioner.

Can you tell me why, if the threshold is higher—and it's actually set out in the manual—your government believes that it's OK to appoint someone who has such obvious political connections, who is so obviously a

political friend of the Premier, who obviously can't meet this threshold? Does independence here not matter, just like independence of the judiciary doesn't matter to you?

Hon Mr Hodgson: I think the leader of the third party knows that questions on the Environmental Commissioner were ruled by the Speaker to be out of order yesterday. He's trying to get away with a little bit of political licence here. However, in regard to the judicial appointments process, I would agree, we have a process that's been in place since 1988. It's supposed to be impartial, it brings forward a list of candidates and only the Attorney General should know the specifics on that.

If he's suggesting that this process needs to be changed or improved, I'm aware that other governments in the country, as I've mentioned to the Leader of the Opposition, have different processes for appointing judicial appointments. If he has any suggestions on that, I know the Attorney General would be more than willing to look at them.

1410

Mr Hampton: I believe the Acting Premier used the term "the process supposed to be followed." That's what we're asking your government to do: Follow the process that's been put in place. Follow the process that's going to guarantee some fairness and is going to guarantee there isn't political interference. That's what you've failed to do.

The fact is that the judicial appointments committee has put forward names. They've gone out there, they've done the interviews, they've talked to the candidates and they have put forward the names of candidates who in their view are qualified to serve. Your government refuses to appoint them.

We just went through an appointments process with the Environmental Commissioner, and what came out of it? Someone who ran for the Conservatives in 1995, who ran in 1997, is president of the Premier's own riding association and has a list of connections with the waste disposal industry and the worst side of the forest industry in the whole province. What this is about is this: Do you believe that every position around here should be a political appointment for your friends, or do you believe in the independence of judges and do you believe in the independence of the Environmental Commissioner? If you do, stop your process, stop meddling in a good—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): The member's time is up. Chair of Management Board.

Hon Mr Hodgson: This is obviously the leader playing politics. He knows I can't answer questions on the Environmental Commissioner, yet he persists in mud-slinging. He knows there are other venues for him to make his point. He had the opportunity to put forward candidates.

In terms of the judicial appointments process, yes, it does concern me. It should concern every member of this Legislature that the privacy of this independent advisory committee appears to be violated, that you and the Leader of the Opposition pretend to know inside details which should be confidential. So if you're saying that

that process has been violated, I would express my concern about that as well and I know the Attorney General will have to look into that.

TEXTBOOKS

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My next question is for the Minister of Education. I'd say to the Acting Premier that it's pretty obvious what you're trying to do around here. You don't have to rely on any secrecy.

To the Minister of Education: You will know that the new curriculum for Grade 9 French requires a new textbook, but the textbook will not be ready until May of next year. But your ministry and you have set a deadline to have the books ordered by December 15. The Ottawa board of education has asked the government to extend this. Why? Because the only textbook that is there now is not suitable. It's not suitable for the core French program. But you've gone out and said that they must order a textbook despite the fact that the textbook that's being designed for the new curriculum isn't ready yet.

Can you explain to me, Minister, why your government has money to waste on this kind of political propaganda, but when people want to do a good job of ordering textbooks, you tell them, "Don't worry about it, order what's there."

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education): First of all, this government has over \$500 million dedicated just to the purchase of textbooks. Now I know some school boards have used some of that money for other purposes. Those trustees are elected to do that; that is their judgment call. But we have put forward over \$500 million specifically for textbooks and learning materials. There are over four million textbooks alone, not counting all the other learning materials that have got to go out there and have gone out there for teachers. Are more needed? Yes, absolutely, and we'll be putting out another RFP call for further materials next year as part of our rollout of the curriculum.

If anything inappropriate has occurred in terms of deadlines put on or textbooks that are put on that list, the ministry doesn't do that; it's experts in the field that make recommendations about what the appropriate materials should be, and if there's anything that's inappropriate on that, I'd be very pleased to look into that to ensure that these materials are out there for teachers to use.

Mr Hampton: Minister, you can try to swing that line. The fact is that it is your ministry and it is your office telling the Ottawa board that they must order the textbooks, even though the textbook that is designed for the curriculum won't be available until May. That is your doing—not someone else, not some invisible bogeyman out there. It is your doing, and it is your government that is sending this kind of propaganda nonsense into the schools when students don't have the French textbook they need, don't have the math textbook they need, don't have the science textbook they need.

Just a very simple question: Will you get on the telephone today, call the Ottawa board, call the other boards that are concerned about this, and tell them that you will give them the time they need so they can order the textbook designed for the course? Don't force them to spend money, as you have, on books that are inappropriate for the school, on books that students don't want, don't need and don't teach the course. Will you do that simple thing to fix the problem you've created?

Hon Mrs Ecker: First of all, I've already said if there's anything that's inappropriate that has happened in this process—and it's not my office that runs this process, and he knows that very well. He's again trying to play politics here. It is the curriculum clearinghouse, it is officials, it is educators, it is teachers. They are all involved in developing and writing materials. They're all involved in recommending what materials boards need.

If he is so concerned that somehow or other the textbooks should reflect the curriculum, maybe he should look to his own government's record. They didn't have materials that were written for curriculum. They didn't have a comprehensive curriculum from grade 1 to grade 12. It had never occurred to them to do that.

We are the first government in decades that has had a comprehensive curriculum from kindergarten to grade 12, and we have materials written specifically for that. They never thought to do it. They didn't think it was important. We think it's very important and we've got over \$500 million out there to help do that so our kids get a better curriculum and our teachers can teach it better so that we can have better students out there and their certificates, their diplomas, when they go out there to the employers, mean something—

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

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): My question is for the Minister of Health. The report card on hospitals came out today and it backs up what the president of the Ontario Hospital Association said on CBC Newsworld this morning and what we've been saying for the past two years: The main problem with our hospitals is the difficulty of getting into one. We've seen how true that is when it comes to getting into emergency care. Now I want to draw your attention to one of the areas in the report card that is very troubling.

The report tells us that fewer people are getting into hospital with conditions like asthma, pneumonia, heart failure, intestinal bleeding and stroke—all emergency conditions. It says, "Hospitals have been able to reduce the length of stay in hospital for patients ...; however, re-admission rates are higher, and complication rates have increased for some conditions."

That's what your efficiency drive has led to. There aren't enough beds, so people can't get in, they get sent home early, they come back sicker. Once again, this is all about not having enough beds to meet the need. When

will you commit the funding to reopen at least some of the acute care beds you have closed?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): If the member opposite also takes into account what has been said by the Ontario Hospital Association, I think personally that they were quite pleased with this very first report. It is the most comprehensive look at hospital performance and patient satisfaction done anywhere in Canada, and I want to congratulate the Ontario Hospital Association for undertaking this look at performance and satisfaction.

Presently, at the Ministry of Health we are reviewing the report, and we're very pleased to see that, overall, hospitals are performing very well. In fact, patient satisfaction is above average in Ontario hospitals. Obviously, this is a blueprint which will enable hospitals and the Ministry of Health to take a further look at, where there are changes that are needed, they can be made.

1420

Mrs McLeod: Minister, you cannot keep refusing to deal with the most obvious need in our hospital system. You have simply cut back our hospitals too far.

David MacKinnon said this morning that hospitals should never be operating at more than 90% occupancy. Now they're always 95% full. He said that has never happened before. Our hospitals are doing their best because of the efforts of front-line staff, but doctors and nurses are working under incredibly stressful conditions.

Minister, 92% of nurses said that they have seen a decline in health care since you launched your reforms; 88% of them said that understaffing has reached the level of unsafe conditions; 91% said that the current nursing workload is unsafe for nurses themselves.

In the meantime, hospitals are going into debt trying to manage your cuts and keep up a standard of care. Your Premier said this week that there would be more money if it's needed. It is needed. I ask you, when will our hospitals see the more money they to meet patient needs?

Hon Mrs Witmer: As the member opposite knows, our government, despite the fact that we have seen tremendous cutbacks by the federal government, continues to provide additional money for health care. In fact, the increase, as she well knows, has been from \$17.4 billion to \$20.6 billion. If only your federal cousins had lived up to their obligations and recognized the increase in needs of people in Canada and in this province.

We have continued to meet with the hospitals in the province of Ontario. We met with the Ontario Hospital Association yesterday, and I think we've made it abundantly clear that in the past we have responded to needs. We have made additional financial resources available, and our plan is to do so in the future.

HEALTHY FUTURES FOR ONTARIO AGRICULTURE PROGRAM

Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton): My question is to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Members on all sides of this House are well aware that this

government, and you personally, Minister, have made getting a fair share of federal safety net dollars for our food producers a key issue. Farm organizations province-wide and in my riding are certainly fully behind this initiative.

These same organizations are aware that in the spring budget this government made a commitment to a Healthy Futures program as well. This morning, some of them were present when you launched the Healthy Futures program in my riding at the farm of Marion and John Glasgow, where many of my constituents go to pick apples, fish in a well-stocked trout pond and purchase exceptionally delicious fruit pies in the fall. Pardon the advertisement.

This program will be of interest not just to the farmers but to the consumers and rural residents as well. Can the minister outline the objectives of this initiative, please?

Hon Ernie Hardeman (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs): Thank you to my colleague from Halton for the question and for his hospitality this morning, as we made the announcement about the Healthy Futures program for agriculture in Ontario. I would agree with my colleague that the Healthy Futures program should be of interest not just to the agriculture community but to rural residents as well. Not only that, but it will also create jobs in the province.

The Healthy Futures initiative will focus on three areas: rural water quality, field-to-fork safety and quality, and a Healthy Futures innovation component.

The rural water quality component will focus on implementing best management practices and technologies in the agri-food sector to safeguard water quality and quantity in rural Ontario.

Field-to-fork safety will help the agri-food sector maintain and expand our domestic and export market opportunities with regard to food safety and quality.

The Healthy Futures innovation component will support applied research, new product development, expanding market access and adapting development to new technologies to enhance food safety and quality.

Mr Chudleigh: Back in the spring budget this initiative was announced as a one-year, \$35-million program. This morning I noticed the minister had some extra good news for those in the industry, who believed that such a far-reaching program needed more than one year.

I also noticed that the minister was successful in more than just extending the time frame, which will be for more good news for our farm and food sectors. Can the minister give some particular details on the initiative we announced this morning?

Hon Mr Hardeman: I want to take this opportunity to thank my caucus and cabinet colleagues for their support in seeing the value in this initiative. The Healthy Futures initiative that I announced this morning is now a four-year, \$90-million program. We worked closely with the agri-food industry to identify what the industry and consumers needed.

As the member knows, Ontario has a \$25-billion agri-food industry, the largest in the country. The agri-food

exports are \$6.2 billion, again the largest in the country. We're confident that through initiatives like healthy futures, our industry will be better prepared to secure those markets.

Information about the program is up on the ministry Web site. In the coming weeks I hope to announce the names of the industry panel which will be responsible for making recommendations for funding the best projects of those received. Again, I thank you very much for the question.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): I have a question for the Minister of Health, and I'm referring to the Canadian in-patient survey that was released earlier today by the Ontario Hospital Association, with specific reference to the Windsor hospitals. In 1994 my community was promised two centres of excellence when we completed the restructuring process. That promise was repeated again by your immediate predecessor in the Harris government and it has been repeated by yourself. Interestingly enough, today the hospital findings for Windsor are that patient satisfaction at one hospital is below average on every count; it's below average in a number of other counts as well. In the second hospital it's below average on 50% and at average in the others.

Minister, the clear commitment has been made by you. The nurses, the doctors, the front-line administrators and our community are all working together for the best possible health care, yet our hospitals are left with a \$10-million deficit. What are you going to do to ensure that the next time this survey is done our hospitals are above average? Because the only reason they're below average now is due to your inaction and your inability to deal with our situation. What are you going to do to help our hospitals and help our front-line professionals?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): As I said in my initial comments, I think we have to congratulate the Ontario Hospital Association for having the courage to take a comprehensive look at hospital performance and patient satisfaction, because I think we are all interested in ensuring that our hospitals are performing as well as they possibly can. We want to have an effective and efficient hospital system. I think that by reviewing the report and doing everything we can, we can ensure that further improvements are made to improve the quality of care in the future. As I've said before, our government certainly has been very responsive to the needs of the Ontario Hospital Association and we will continue to support them with the funding that is required and that is needed.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Supplementary.

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): Minister, let's get perfectly honest here. You're inferring by your answers to Mrs McLeod and Mr Duncan that it's the hospitals' fault. It's not the hospital administrators' fault, it's not the nurses' fault, it's not the doctors' fault, it's not the cleaning staff's fault—it's your fault, it's Mike Harris's

fault. In Sudbury, over the course of the last two years, we've run deficits of \$7.5 million and \$8 million, respectively. Minister, that's your fault, not our fault, not Sudbury's fault.

Commit today to ensure that the Sudbury Regional Hospital gets its cheque for \$8 million so that its deficit is erased and we can hire more nurses, open more beds, hire cleaning staff to clean our hospitals. They're working as hard as they can. You have to make a commitment. Make that today.

Hon Mrs Witmer: First of all, for the record, I'd like to make it abundantly clear that I made no assertions of blame whatsoever. The members opposite seem to be indicating that someone's at fault. The reality is that we all need to work together. Our health system in this province needs the co-operation of each and every individual, including yourself, and the first step you can take is to work with your federal cousins and get back the transfer payments that have been taken away from the people in this province.

Let me tell the member for Sudbury that in Sudbury we have increased—

The Speaker: Answer.

Hon Mrs Witmer:—health spending by over \$70.4 million since 1995. In fact, if we take a look throughout the health system—

The Speaker: Order. The minister's time is up.

1430

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough): My question today is for the Minister of Labour. The Greater Peterborough Safe Communities Coalition is celebrating the announcement of funding for the Peterborough Passport to Health and Safety pilot project. They have been delivering the program to area schools and colleges for the past two years and have been making significant progress in ensuring that our youth become aware of the dangers in the workplace.

Minister, can you explain to my colleagues what this program is all about?

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour): I'd be happy to. I want to first say that—

Interjection.

Hon Mr Stockwell: How can you heckle that? All I said was, "I'd be happy to."

I would like to say first to Mr Stewart from Peterborough that he's the biggest advocate and supporter of this program and he deserves a big round of applause for his work in Peterborough on this project. He took me to Peterborough and allowed me to meet with the coordinator of the program, and I was very impressed with the program. Today there's going to be a cheque delivered, I guess, for \$130,000 for the community program to be put in place. The program's goal is to educate young workers about workplace health and safety, and we can all agree on that, I'm sure. The partnership is with business, community groups and the education sector, and

students complete various health and safety courses. You get a documented passport when you actually pass the process. You then present that to an employer when you apply for a job.

This program is so good I think the Liberals may like it.

Mr Stewart: Thank you, Minister, for your comments. I would like to give a very sincere thank you and congratulations to a lady by the name of Mary Jane Smith, who has been the driving force, through the Peterborough Chamber of Commerce, behind this program. Congratulations, Mary Jane.

Minister, can you tell this House what your ministry hopes to accomplish by the program and what long-term effect it will have on all business and industry?

Hon Mr Stockwell: Just a brief synopsis of the program: It's basically to educate young people to the accidents and injuries that are possible at work sites. It's to increase awareness.

In Peterborough, the program was designed primarily to eliminate workplace injuries. The students become aware of how to work safely. The employer gains safety-conscious young workers, which is obviously a good goal as well. The community gets to promote the area with a positive safety record.

The success of this pilot project gives us an opportunity to put this province-wide. I think everyone in this House would agree that an educated young worker who is going into a new job who has a knowledge of how to work safely is a very important thing for us. It obviously helps us financially, with WSIB.

Mr Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale-High Park): Have you mentioned Mike Gravelle?

Hon Mr Stockwell: Oh listen, Mr Gravelle brought forward his private member's bill last week. He's trying to implement the same kind of program in Thunder Bay that we have operating in Peterborough. I agree it's a wonderful idea. I wouldn't suggest for a moment that it's a unilateral program that can only work in Peterborough. It can work around the rest of the province. I have worked very well with Mr Gravelle to try to help him put together a process that would put it together—

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

EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Minister of Labour as well. Your government is now on record as coming to the aid and assistance of millionaire NHL hockey players. You have engineered a \$16-million tax subsidy for NHL millionaires. I want to ask you about someone else who works in professional sports. I want to ask you about someone named B.J. Birdy, who for 20 years has given dedicated service to the Toronto Blue Jays. During that 20 years, even though he was often on call, attended charity events and went way above and beyond the call of duty, he was never rewarded with a permanent employment contract,

always only seasonal contracts, never any employment benefits.

Given that your government is so anxious to help NHL millionaires, would you be willing to lend your services as the Minister of Labour to call up the Toronto Blue Jays and ask them if they could engage in some fair treatment of B.J. Birdy?

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour): I'm not actually aware of the contract that Mr Birdy has or doesn't have, but I'd be very happy to receive any information that you have so he could be properly represented according to labour laws in this province. If anyone has abrogated any labour laws, of course, Mr Birdy would have every opportunity to appeal that before the proper tribunals we have.

Other than that, I certainly don't have any advance knowledge that the Toronto Blue Jays have, in fact, breached or abrogated any of the laws, particularly in this case.

Mr Hampton: This is the reality. Under the labour laws that you have now established in the province, under the employment laws that you have established, under the patterns of employment and work that you are encouraging in this province, B.J. Birdy is another one of those workers who is working two or three jobs: part-time, contract, temporary; never really has full employment status, never really has employment benefits. He is an example of the growing gap.

You've got money to subsidize NHL millionaires, but when it comes to someone who is working odd hours, extended hours, on call—"Whenever you ask me, I'll be there"—he can be ushered out the door with no severance pay, no benefits whatsoever.

What I'm asking you, since you were so willing to interfere in NHL hockey: Would you be kind enough to call up those people who run the Toronto Blue Jays and say to them, "In the interests of fairness, don't you think you could treat somebody who has given 20 years of dedicated service a little more fairly, a little more justly?" Do you think you could do that?

Hon Mr Stockwell: I want to thank the member opposite for the question and the helpful interventions as well. Let's be clear. We did not give millions of dollars of grants to the hockey teams. That is just not a fact in how it's stated. We've made that very clear.

Leader of the third party, your complaint is that a person like B.J. Birdy has an opportunity—or is forced as you say—to work two or three jobs. He has had a seasonal contract, as I understand, with the Blue Jays that gets renewed year after year for the past 20 years. The difference between your government and this government is—

Ms Marilyn Churley (Broadview-Greenwood): Here we go.

Hon Mr Stockwell: That's right.

The difference between your government and our is, Mr Birdy has an opportunity to work at two or three jobs in Ontario. When you were in power, he couldn't work at any job in the province. If you want to accuse us of

creating so many jobs that people get an opportunity to work at two and three—when you were in power they didn't get to work at all and the game plan was to put everybody on welfare—guilty as charged.

HOSPITAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale): My question is to the Minister of Health. Under Bill 23, powers which were previously administered by the Health Services Restructuring Commission are now yours. As Ontario's hospital crisis swirls around you, the HSRC's decisions threaten to intensify the health risk for Torontonians, especially the decision to close the Wellesley hospital site by 2001.

Minister, will you commit today to reverse the HSRC decision to close these important acute care beds? Will you stay the Wellesley's execution.

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): As the member knows, the commission did put forward recommendations. We are continuing to implement the recommendations of the commission and have the responsibility to do so. We have made some changes recently to some of the timelines for Runnymede and some of the other hospitals in the province. We continue to respond to requests in order to ensure that there is the accessibility within the system.

Mr Smitherman: It's clear that this House has granted you new powers and that, in the face of a crisis, you have an opportunity—in fact, you have a responsibility—to act. I'm going to give you one more chance to get it right. You know that the Wellesley emergency ward handles 33,000 cases a year, that the Wellesley houses a busy psychiatric ward that has already endured countless nights of redirect, that the required physical plant improvements at St Michael's Bond Street site are not complete and that St Mike's is currently enduring a budget shortfall that threatens to accelerate the closure of the Wellesley site and this health care crisis in Toronto.

Minister, you have a choice. Commit today to protect the health of our citizens. Give us your word that you will not shut any open hospitals nor close any open beds in Toronto.

Hon Mrs Witmer: As the member opposite knows, we are expanding the capacity for emergency room visits within the city of Toronto, and presently there is ongoing expansion in 56 hospitals in the entire province, and certainly within the city of Toronto the capacity will be increased by more than 15% when these constructions are complete.

1440

FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): My question is directed to the Minister of Natural Resources. Minister, you recently announced new fees for resident hunting and angling licences. In your announcement you clearly

stated that all of these new fees would provide more funding for fish and wildlife management.

In my riding I have many constituents who take a real interest in fish and wildlife management. Minister, could you provide us with details on these new fees, and could you also guarantee all anglers and hunters that all fees will be used exclusively for fish and wildlife resources?

Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Natural Resources): I want to thank the member for Northumberland for the question. He's quite right. At the urging of the Fish and Wildlife Advisory Board, we have increased some of the fees for hunting and fishing. I can point to a few of these: The Outdoors Card remains unchanged at \$6, the annual fishing fee goes from \$15 to \$20, the annual conservation fishing fee goes from \$7.50 to \$12, and the one-day fishing fee remains unchanged at \$10. Those are the kinds of increases that have been contemplated.

The point, as the member points out, is that all of these fees go to a special purpose account for better science, better enforcement and improved habitat for wildlife in the province, and better fishing opportunities for everyone.

One thing that became very clear in this process is that the hunters and anglers in Ontario know the need and they're willing to help to pay for that need because they're the finest conservationists in North America.

Mr Galt: It's certainly great news to know that our government is committed to the conservation of fish and wildlife and that you are therefore spending the appropriate funds necessary for their management.

Minister, in the great riding of Northumberland fishing is certainly a very important sport and contributes significantly to tourism there. As a matter of fact, in Northumberland we have some of the best fishing in Ontario, particularly in the Ganaraska River in the west and the Trent River in the east, Rice Lake in the north, and on the south Lake Ontario and the Bay of Quinte.

Minister, as this is the first change in these fees since 1993, did you make this decision by consulting with your stakeholders, and how have they reacted to the fact that more funding will be provided to fish and wildlife management?

Hon Mr Snobelen: Having travelled the province for the last 24 months and talked to a number of anglers, I can assure the member that there are great fishing opportunities in Ontario, and if the anglers in Northumberland are anything like the other anglers I've met in Ontario, they won't like it that the member has now let everyone else in Ontario know how good the fishing is there.

That said, the Fish and Wildlife Advisory Board, which administers the special purpose account and helps us make spending to improve hunting and improve fishing in Ontario, gave this advice to us after consulting with anglers and hunters across the province. I had the privilege of meeting with that board in Thunder Bay a week or so ago, and I know that on their agenda was a meeting with several conservation clubs from that local area so they could get to know the issues for hunters and

anglers in that part of Ontario, as they are now doing across Ontario. So I can assure the member that we have done this with full consultation with some of those great conservationists we call Ontario's anglers and hunters.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): My question is to the Minister of Health. Last week we pointed out to you that on average for six hours per day, we have four Hamilton hospitals turning patients away from the emergency departments, a crisis you have created. What we now have seen this week is the Hamilton hospitals trying to deal with this crisis. You know how they're doing it, Minister? They're now admitting patients into hallways. They're now admitting patients to sunrooms. They're now placing patients next to nursing stations. There were 32 patients awaiting admittance from emergency departments, Minister. What is happening now with—these patients are in the hallways. They've been admitted. There is no nursing staff there. There's no equipment for them, Minister. There are no bells for them to call the nurse.

What they have done, clearly to try to deal with your crisis—we now have another crisis situation. We have patients without adequate care being admitted to the hospitals right now. Minister, there are 130 patients in long-term-care beds in our hospitals in Hamilton. The problem is that you promised 600 beds; not one single one of those beds has been delivered yet to date.

Minister, do you believe it's acceptable for patients who get admitted to hospitals in Hamilton today to be in hallways, to be admitted next to nursing stations, to be in sunrooms, and to be waiting without adequate care and protection?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): As the member knows, our government is very, very committed to improving the health system for people in the province of Ontario. We have taken some very significant steps to ensure that the emergency room system is more effective. We were the very first government to recognize the pressures. We did undertake and set up a task force that made recommendations. We responded to all of the recommendations. We have flowed \$225 million.

We also recognized that there was a special need for assistance in Hamilton. As the member knows, Hamilton received part of \$90 million in transitional funding for emergency room relief. They, along with Ottawa and London and Toronto, did receive the additional funding. As you also know, we are presently meeting with the Ontario Hospital Association and with the ambulance services in order to take further steps to ensure that measures can be taken to improve the access.

Mr Agostino: Minister, you are so wrong. You don't understand the problem. These hospitals have a 98% occupancy rate. They cannot put patients there. They don't have the money to staff. They have a deficit in the range of \$30 million.

Let me tell you one of the answers. You talked about hiring 10,000 nurses. Let me read you a memo of December 7 from the chief operating officer of the continuing care complex at Chedoke in Hamilton. They have 148 patients. They have to reduce their budget by \$1.3 million. You know what they're doing? They're eliminating 24 full-time positions, most of them nurses, Minister. The 10,000 you promised—this facility is letting off 24. That is the reality.

I don't know what world you're living in, I don't know what fantasy you're in, I don't know what dreamland you're in, but it isn't the real world of health care in this province or in Hamilton. Do you not understand that? Twenty-four more nurses are going to lose their jobs—less nursing care, patients in hallways, patients getting turned away. How can you justify, Minister, with all the good news you've given us and supposedly all the wonderful things you've done, that this facility is now going to be laying off 24 more nurses and more patients will be waiting and there will be less adequate health care? Frankly, you are endangering the lives of Ontarians with your bull-headed and ignorant health care policies. What are you going to do to make sure these 24 nurses don't get laid off?

Hon Mrs Witmer: Again I would remind the member that it was our government that listened to nurses. In fact, we set up the task force, and the task force made recommendations. As you know, we are in the process of hiring more than 12,000 nurses. We are contributing an additional \$300 million-plus.

If we take a look at Hamilton, we have provided \$7.8 million in additional funding for nurses since 1995. In fact, health funding in Hamilton-Wentworth is up by \$215 million.

1450

YOUNG OFFENDERS

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): My question today is for the Minister of Correctional Services. Ontario residents have repeatedly expressed concern about high rates of young offending for young offenders. Many parents feel the Young Offenders Act does not deter criminal behaviour. The public feels that young offenders must be held more accountable for their actions.

In 1997, our government started Project Turnaround in my riding of Simcoe North, a strict discipline program for 16- and 17-year-old offenders. It focuses on education, treatment and community work programs, all within a strict discipline framework. Our government's throne speech announced that this model would be expanded, not only in the young offender system but also in the adult system.

Minister, what steps will the Ministry of Correctional Services be taking to act on this decision?

Hon Rob Sampson (Minister of Correctional Services): I thank the honourable member from Simcoe North very much for his question. I know he has quite a

bit of interest in the way in which we are attempting to deal with the young offender challenge in this particular province.

We initiated the strict discipline model at Camp Turnaround just about three years ago so that we could pilot in Ontario a made-in-Ontario approach that dealt with the rehabilitation of young offenders in this province using a strict discipline correctional model. In contrast, of course, to the country club correctional model that the federal government chooses to use in its institutions, we believe that establishing respect and responsibility in an institution is the appropriate forum in which to provide rehabilitative services and training to the young offenders in this province.

Mr Dunlop: I'd like to thank the minister for his comments. Recently in the news there was mention of the operations of a boot camp in Maryland being suspended because of allegations of abuse. I was concerned to see a CP24 News story which said that Ontario's boot camp was modelled after the Maryland boot camp. It is my understanding that this is not true, and that this government in 1994 had appointed a Task Force on Discipline for Young Offenders to review Canadian and international strict discipline models for application in Ontario. Minister, could you please assure my constituents that this government did not Project Turnaround after the Maryland boot camp?

Hon Mr Sampson: I certainly want to assure the member that the particular project we are piloting north of Barrie is indeed a made-in-Ontario approach to how we deal with young offenders in this particular province. It's a made-in-Ontario approach, because it applies, within the environment of a strict discipline context, the appropriate rehabilitation programs for young offenders so they can learn to have some respect for themselves, respect for society, respect for the people who live in society and carry the responsibility for their actions. That's contrary to where the federal Liberals stand on issues such as young offenders, where they want to place the blame for young offenders violating the law on the shoulders of the victims—totally inappropriate.

We say in Ontario that strict discipline is the appropriate environment to provide the appropriate rehabilitation program for young offenders. We've modelled that in Barrie and we intend to expand that.

CANCER TREATMENT

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Minister of Health. Earlier this session, I raised the issue of cancer patients from northern Ontario who have to travel long distances to the Thunder Bay Cancer Treatment Centre but do not have their travel costs covered, yet someone coming from southern Ontario to the Thunder Bay Cancer Treatment Centre has all of their costs covered.

I want to ask you about Gladys Whelan. You would have received a letter from Gladys Whelan. She has cancer. She's had to travel three times from Fort Frances

to Thunder Bay. The cost of those three trips is now \$1,000 out of her own pocket. Her cancer specialist asked her to come to Thunder Bay again a fourth time, and she said: "I can't. I don't have the money. I can't come."

Minister, this is another example of someone who cannot receive the treatment they should receive because you treat cancer patients from northern Ontario like second-class citizens. Can you explain why you would pay the costs of someone who comes from Toronto, but someone from northern Ontario who has to go to the Thunder Bay Cancer Treatment Centre is told, "Pay your own, and if you can't pay your own, tough luck."

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): Since 1995 our government has increased funding for cancer services and cancer care by approximately \$155 million. During that same period, we also put in place Cancer Care Ontario to ensure that coordination of services would be provided to people throughout the province of Ontario. At present, Cancer Care Ontario is the agency that coordinates standards and guidelines for the treatment of patients who require services, and it is Cancer Care Ontario that has made the decisions regarding the funding.

VISITORS

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West): On a point of order, Mr Speaker, an important point of order: The page from Windsor West, Caroline Dennis, has family members here today in the House—a sister named Natalie Cakebread and her brother-in-law, Andrew Pitt. They're here to visit their sister and page, Caroline Dennis.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): That's not a point of order, but we do welcome them.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Speaking of the pages, I also understand there may be some pages who won't be able to be here next week, so I would like to take this opportunity for all the members to thank all the pages for their fine work here.

PETITIONS

MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke): I am very pleased this afternoon to present a petition signed by literally hundreds of residents of Osgoode township, which petition reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Bill 25, the Fewer Municipal Politicians Act, will see the amalgamation of all the municipalities of the region of Ottawa-Carleton as one city, we, the residents of the rural municipality of Osgoode township,

herein request the opportunity to determine our own governance model.

"We, the undersigned residents of the rural municipality of Osgoode township of the regional municipality of Ottawa-Carleton, do petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the residents of the rural municipality of Osgoode township be allowed to determine their own model of governance, and therefore request that the Minister of Municipal Affairs initiate a process, including local negotiations, in line with the concessions granted to West Carleton township and the town of Flamborough, to determine whether the township should join the new city of Ottawa."

KARLA HOMOLKA

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): On behalf of my friend and good colleague the MPP for Peterborough, Mr Gary Stewart, I have received a lengthy petition which he has circulated in his community, and it is again respecting Karla Homolka. I would like to read it as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Karla Homolka and Paul Bernardo were responsible for terrorizing entire communities in southern Ontario; and

"Whereas the Ontario government of the day made a deal with the devil with Karla Homolka resulting in a sentence that does not truly make her pay for her crimes; and

"Whereas our communities have not yet fully recovered from the trauma and sadness caused by Karla Homolka; and

"Whereas Karla Homolka believes that she should be entitled to pass to leave prison with an escort; and

"Whereas the people of Ontario believe that criminals should be forced to serve sentences that reflect the seriousness of their crimes;

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

"That the government of Ontario will:

"Do everything within its power to ensure that Karla Homolka serves her full sentence;

"Continue to reform parole and make it more difficult for serious offenders to return to our streets;

"Fight the federal government's plan to release up to 1,600 more convicted criminals on to Ontario streets; and

"Ensure that the Ontario government's sex offender registry is functioning as quickly as possible."

I am pleased to affix my signature to this petition.

MEDICAL LABORATORIES

Mr Monte Kwinter (York Centre): I have a petition to the Parliament of Ontario:

"Where the Ontario government has recently imposed a retroactive cap on revenue earned by medical labora-

tories for services provided under the health insurance plan; and

"Whereas the Ontario government has also required these businesses to refund revenue for services rendered in previous years where the amount of that amount revenue exceeds the retroactively imposed cap for those years; and

"Whereas this legislation amounts to expropriation of economic rights without adequate compensation or due process of law; and

"Whereas the greatest incentive to the provision of efficient and quality services and products by the private sector is competition and the ability to make a profit; and

"Whereas the removal of these incentives by government negatively affects all of society and particularly patients in need; and

"Whereas this type of legislation also unfairly discriminates against one sector of the society;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

"That adequate protection of property rights is needed to ensure that government cannot erode the property rights of certain sectors of society without fair compensation and due process of law."

I have affixed my signature to it.

1500

MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr Brad Clark (Stoney Creek): I'm very proud to present this petition on behalf of my constituents:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas on February 8, 1997, the citizens of Ancaster, Dundas, Flamborough, Glanbrook and Stoney Creek voted 95% against a supercity of Hamilton being imposed upon them;

"Whereas the only two elected government Hamilton-Wentworth MPPs both campaigned against a supercity of Hamilton being imposed upon their constituents;

"Whereas the duly elected councils of Ancaster, Dundas and Flamborough have voted to merge into the city of Wentworth and the duly elected councils of Glanbrook and Stoney Creek have voted to merge into the city of Stoney Creek;

"Whereas opinion polls have consistently confirmed that the majority of residents of Ancaster, Dundas, Flamborough, Glanbrook and Stoney Creek are strongly opposed to a supercity of Hamilton being imposed upon them; and

"Whereas the government made pre-election commitments not to impose a supercity on the residents of Hamilton-Wentworth;

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

"The government of Ontario must keep its pre-election promises and accordingly not impose a supercity of Hamilton on the residents of the current region of Hamilton-Wentworth."

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): The subject of this petition concerns the school closures in Toronto. It's addressed to the Assembly of Ontario and reads as follows:

"Whereas the Ontario government's decision to slash education funding could lead to the closure of many neighbourhood schools, including one of the most community-oriented schools like F.H. Miller Junior School; and

"Whereas the present funding formula does not take into account the historic and cultural links schools have with their communities nor the special education programs that have developed as a direct need of our communities; and

"Whereas the prospect of closing neighbourhood community schools 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 dollars from our schools; and

"Whereas F.H. Miller Junior School is a community school with many links to the immediate neighbourhood, such as a family centre, after-school programs, special programs from Parks and Recreation, and a heritage language program;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned citizens, demand that the Harris government changes the funding formula to take into account the historic, cultural and community links that F.H. Miller Junior School has established."

Since I agree with this petition, I'm signing my name to it.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): I continue to receive petitions from Cathy Walker on behalf of the tens of thousands of auto workers in the province of Ontario.

The petition reads as follows.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas this year 130,000 Canadians will contract cancer and there are at minimum 17 funerals every day for Canadian workers who died from cancer caused by workplace exposure to cancer-causing substances (carcinogens);

"Whereas the World Health Organization estimates that 80% of all cancers have environmental causes and the International Labour Organization estimates that one million workers globally have cancer because of exposure at work to these carcinogens;

"Whereas most cancers can be beaten if government had the political will to make industry replace toxic substances with non-toxic substances;

"Whereas very few health organizations study the link between occupations and cancer, even though more study of this link is an important step to defeating this dreadful disease;

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

"That it become a legal requirement that occupational history be recorded on a standard form when a patient presents at a physician for diagnosis or treatment of cancer and that the diagnosis and occupational history be forwarded to a central cancer registry for analysis as to the link between cancer and occupation."

My NDP colleagues and I continue to support these petitioners and I add my name to theirs.

KARLA HOMOLKA

Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Southwest): I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and it reads as follows:

"Whereas Karla Homolka and Paul Bernardo were responsible for terrorizing entire communities in southern Ontario; and

"Whereas the Ontario government of the day made a deal with the devil with Karla Homolka resulting in a sentence that does not truly make her pay for her crimes; and

"Whereas our communities have not yet fully recovered from the trauma and sadness caused by Karla Homolka; and

"Whereas Karla Homolka believes that she should be entitled to pass to leave prison with an escort; and

"Whereas the people of Ontario believe that criminals should be forced to serve sentences that reflect the seriousness of their crimes;

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

"That the government of Ontario will:

"Do everything within its power to ensure that Karla Homolka serves her full sentence;

"Continue to reform parole and make it more difficult for serious offenders to return to our streets;

"Fight the federal government's plan to release up to 1,600 more convicted criminals on to Ontario streets; and

"Ensure that the Ontario government's sex offender registry is functioning as quickly as possible."

I've attached my name to this worthwhile petition.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Mr Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale-High Park): I have a petition to the Legislature of Ontario.

"All children are able to learn; all children are unique in the way that they learn. Bishop Allen Academy is a community that welcomes, accommodates and celebrates our diversity.

"We, the undersigned, are concerned about the impact of the new funding formula on our students' well-being and on our community's values. We specifically object to a funding formula that requires teachers to describe students who have high learning needs as a composite of negative characteristics. Children and teachers are diminished in this process; a teacher's ability to see a student's

strengths and teach to that potential is undermined by this process.

“As there are better practices that ensure accountability to funders and parents, we respectfully request that the honourable Minister of Education replace the ISA funding formula.”

I'm happy to affix my name to this petition and to note that this group of parents met with me the other night and are very concerned about the funding of special services for their children.

KARLA HOMOLKA

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Karla Homolka and Paul Bernardo were responsible for terrorizing entire communities in southern Ontario; and

“Whereas the Ontario government of the day made a deal with the devil with Karla Homolka resulting in a sentence that does not truly make her pay for her crimes; and

“Whereas our communities have not yet fully recovered from the trauma and sadness caused by Karla Homolka; and

“Whereas Karla Homolka believes that she should be entitled to pass to leave prison with an escort; and

“Whereas the people of Ontario believe that criminals should be forced to serve sentences that reflect the seriousness of their crimes;

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

“That the government of Ontario will:

“Do everything within its power to ensure that Karla Homolka serves her full sentence;

“Continue to reform parole and make it more difficult for serious offenders to return to our streets;

“Fight the federal government's plan to release up to 1,600 more convicted criminals on to Ontario streets; and

“Ensure that the Ontario government's sex offender registry is functioning as quickly as possible.”

This is presented on behalf of the MPP for Scarborough Centre, Marilyn Mushinski, and I'm pleased to sign it on her behalf.

DOCTOR SHORTAGE

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

“Whereas patients requiring eye care in Niagara are faced with a shortage of ophthalmologists and as a result, are compelled to wait several weeks to secure an appointment with an ophthalmologist;

“Whereas, while the shortage of ophthalmologists is in existence, the removal of the billing cap on these medical specialists provides a temporary but essential easing of the health care crisis;

“Whereas the solution of the Ontario Ministry of Health removing the exemptions of the billing cap and

forcing patients from Niagara to travel along the very busy Queen Elizabeth Highway to receive treatment in Hamilton;

“Be it resolved that the Ontario Ministry of Health remove the cap on billing for ophthalmologists in Niagara until such time as Niagara is no longer an underserved area.”

I affix my signature as I'm in complete agreement with this petition.

PROTECTION OF MINORS

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas children are exposed to sexually explicit material in variety stores and video rental outlets;

“Whereas bylaws vary from city to city and have failed to protect minors from unwanted exposure to sexually explicit materials;

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

“To enact legislation which will:

“Create uniform standards in Ontario to prevent minors from being exposed to sexually explicit material in retail establishments;

“Make it illegal to sell, rent, or loan sexually explicit materials to minors.”

I affix my name to this as well.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

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

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the community of Sarnia is witnessing many women developing mesothelioma and asbestosis as a result of the asbestos brought home on their husbands' work clothing; and

“Whereas similar cases are occurring in other areas of the province;

“We, the undersigned, ask the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act to allow compensation for family members who develop occupational illness as a result of workplace toxins inadvertently brought home.”

As I support this petition, I add my name to it.

1510

KARLA HOMOLKA

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Karla Homolka and Paul Bernardo were responsible for terrorizing entire communities in southern Ontario; and

“Whereas the Ontario government of the day made a deal with the devil with Karla Homolka resulting in a

sentence that does not truly make her pay for her crimes; and

“Whereas our communities have not yet fully recovered from the trauma and sadness caused by Karla Homolka; and

“Whereas Karla Homolka believes that she should be entitled to pass to leave prison with an escort; and

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“Fight the federal government’s plan to release up to 1,600 more convicted criminals on to Ontario streets; and

“Ensure that the Ontario government’s sex offender registry is functioning as quickly as possible.”

In agreement, I affix my own signature to it.

TIME ALLOCATION

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I rise with respect to standing order 46, specifically standing order 46(e), and please permit me to indicate what my point of order is.

Government resolution 26 calls for debate on time allocation, on closure, on stifling the debate on the municipal restructuring bill this afternoon, with a vote this evening at 6:45.

Standing order 46(e) reads and I quote, “A time allocation motion may not be moved on the same calendar day that any of the bills that are the subject of the motion have been called as government orders.”

My understanding is that we would in effect be dealing with the same matter being called twice by the government on the same calendar and that therefore the standing order itself is out of order. I would ask the chair’s ruling on whether we could do both, that first we could do the debate on time allocation, and if we do that in the afternoon session, if we can in fact vote on it, and I again refer you to standing order 46(e).

Hon Frank Klees (Minister without Portfolio): On the same point of order, Mr Speaker: I really believe that the House leader for the official opposition is making presumptions as to when the government is going to call this, which I don’t believe he’s in a position to do, and therefore, his point of order is out of order.

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): On the same point of order, Mr Speaker: On behalf of the NDP caucus, two very brief points.

One is that we would agree with the submission made by my counterpart from the Liberal Party with regard to the meaning of 46(e). I won’t repeat those in the interests of time.

As a second point, let me also comment on the remarks of the chief government whip. The fact of the matter is that we had been informed, at the House leaders’ meeting just this morning, that indeed it is the government’s intention to call the same bill this evening. Therefore, unless the government is telling us that what they told us earlier is now no longer the case, why would we not believe the word of the chief whip and the government House leader as to what their intentions are today?

Therefore, the point of order is entirely relevant and we would like to have a ruling from you prior to getting into this afternoon and this evening’s proceedings.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour): Mr Speaker, speaking directly to the point of order that’s just been offered, the Speaker would have no knowledge of what takes place at a House leaders’ meeting, and therefore couldn’t possibly begin to rule on what did or didn’t take place. Never has the Assembly come forward to a Speaker and asked him to determine what deals are made outside of this Assembly. So on that point of order, it’s completely out of order.

Secondly, the ordering of this House is done by the government. If there is a point of order, and I’m not sure there is even then, it can only come to the Speaker’s attention when the motion or order is called. It hasn’t been called, so therefore how can it possibly be out of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Tony Martin): I’m going to, with all due respect, suggest that in fact that is correct. In the order paper of the day it simply says “to be announced.” We don’t know what’s coming this evening. You’ve had discussions at the House leaders’ meeting. You may have another meeting some time as the afternoon unfolds; I’m not sure. But we will deal with this point of order when and if that order is called, and we’ll hear your arguments at that point and make a decision.

Mr Duncan: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The time allocation rule says very clearly that we will have to deal with this. There is no deferral. Therefore, it must be dealt with today, this calendar day. If that’s not the government’s intention, then would the government amend the motion with consent to defer the vote until tomorrow, if in fact the government doesn’t intend to call the vote this evening, subsequent to the debate this afternoon.

The Acting Speaker: I’ve ruled that we’ll deal with this when and if this order is called.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: When the rule changes were developed by the government, because that’s who does it essentially, their original intention was to allow the same piece of legislation to proceed both in the afternoon and the evening. Only after relentless pressure by the opposition and the news media, who are very interested in these matters of democracy in this House, that the government relent and indicate they would not be bringing forward—in fact, the rules say it cannot bring forward the same bill in the afternoon and in the evening.

This time allocation motion is of course to do with the bill and deals with the bill. So we are simply alerting the chair and the Speaker's chair to the fact that the government may be pulling a fast one on this and that you should be cognizant of that. I think the House leader's interpretation is absolutely correct in this matter.

The Acting Speaker: I say to the member that I appreciate the heads up and whoever is in the chair at the time that order is called will probably hear the arguments and will rule at that time.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon Frank Klees (Minister without Portfolio): I move that, pursuant to standing order 46 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 25, An Act to provide for the restructuring of four regional municipalities and to amend the Municipal Act and various other acts in connection with municipal restructuring and with municipal electricity services, when Bill 25 is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further—

Interruption.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Tony Martin): Order. Clear the gallery, please.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Please clear the gallery for five minutes.

The House recessed from 1521 to 1526.

Hon Mr Klees: I'll continue where I left off:

That no deferral of the second reading vote pursuant to standing order 28(h) shall be permitted and, in the case of any division relating to the second reading stage of the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes; and

That the order for third reading of the bill may then immediately be called; and

That, when the order for third reading is called, two hours and 30 minutes shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill after which the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That no deferral of the third reading vote pursuant to standing order 28(h) shall be permitted; and

That, in the case of any division relating to the third reading stage of the bill, the division bell shall be limited to 10 minutes.

The Acting Speaker: Mr Klees has moved government notice of motion 26.

The member for Carleton-Gloucester.

Mr Brian Coburn (Carleton-Gloucester): Over the last few days there has been considerable discussion in this House with respect to the restructuring of four of the

major areas in Ontario. That discussion has been going on for 20, 25 and 30 years in these four regions. The debate, like any other debate when you talk about communities and you talk about change, certainly becomes emotional, it becomes one of personal preference, and it becomes very gut-wrenching when you look at change. However, one of the things we must do as a society and what this government is working towards is preparing Ontario and our communities and our municipalities to meet the challenges of a new millennium so that you're better equipped to meet those challenges, whether it be in health care, education or local governance.

The time has come. The time has come for the Legislature to make a decision on the Fewer Municipal Politicians Act. The people of Haldimand-Norfolk, Hamilton-Wentworth, Ottawa-Carleton and Sudbury have debated this long and tenaciously over the years, and in many cases have waited too long for better, more efficient local government. They do want fewer politicians, they do want lower taxes, they do want more efficient programs and delivery of services, and this legislation delivers exactly that.

The debate so far in this chamber has indeed been useful. We always welcome the opportunity to discuss the merits of the Fewer Municipal Politicians Act. But there comes a time in every discussion when further discussion serves not to enlighten but to merely delay. The residents, the businesses and the people of the four affected regions know that better than most. They have been discussing the merits of their regional systems and the need for change almost since the day the regions first came into existence.

In 1973, Haldimand-Norfolk was established. They've been looking for ways to make it better since the Gilbertson report in 1982. The debate has continued ever since. More debate is indeed not the answer.

In Hamilton-Wentworth, which was established in 1974, the first review was conducted only four years later, in 1978. The recommendation then was one-tier government. The debate has raged ever since. More debate is not the answer.

Ottawa-Carleton was established in 1969, some 30 years ago. Over the years since then, Henry Mayo, David Bartlett, Katherine Graham and Graham Kirby, to mention but a few, have each written extensive reports on how to make it better. Local reform has been the subject of heated ongoing public discussion for 30 years. There have been 27 studies or reports since 1976. More debate is not the answer.

In Sudbury, established in 1973, local governance had been an issue since at least 1980. Ongoing study and minor tinkering was done over the years, and it has done nothing to alleviate taxpayers' concerns about the efficiency and the cost of the regional system. More debate is not the answer.

The taxpayers and the local politicians in each of these four regions want closure. The years of study that I just mentioned have demonstrated just how difficult it is for local politicians to achieve closure in their own back-

yards. It is difficult decisions that require strong leadership, that require a vision for the future. So after years of studies and fruitless discussions, this government appointed special advisers for each of the four regions in September. We asked them to take the public pulse one more time. We asked them to sift through the results of the earlier reviews. We asked them to recommend changes that make sense and that have local support. They did that. They had extensive consultation, and there was ample opportunity for anyone to make their views known. We have read their reports, we have considered them, and then we introduced this legislation.

The Fewer Municipal Politicians Act, if passed, will mean 203 fewer politicians and more than \$120 million in annual savings for taxpayers. The number of municipalities and their councils and administrations would be reduced from 34 to five. This would represent a clear benefit for the taxpayers of these regions.

We've debated the proposed changes here in this Legislature for many hours. Surely there is no opinion that hasn't been heard, no idea that remains undiscovered, and no point of view that hasn't been expressed. More talking won't move these communities forward, and more talking won't necessarily save taxpayers money.

In each of these communities there are local politicians who want to make a positive contribution, who want to help lead the new municipalities that are being proposed. They do want to get on with the job of making these new municipalities successful and prosperous and streamlined and efficient. They are anxious to begin their fundraising and get on with their election campaigns. We had promised to have changes in place in time for the elections in November 2000, and that there would be enough time devoted to the transition to get it right.

According to the provincial law, the 2000 municipal election campaign begins in less than three weeks. These local leaders and those interested in running in the next municipal election need to know the rules. They need to know the local structure: how it will be structured, where their wards will be located. They need to be able to make plans and look to the future.

The same goes for local politicians in Toronto. They need to know about local wards as soon as possible so they can make plans and begin their campaigns. The process to let the people of Halton elect a chair of Halton region won't be able to start at all until this bill becomes law.

Local government reform isn't just an issue in Ontario's regional municipalities. It's important in counties, separated municipalities and northern municipalities as well. Part of this legislation applies to them. That's another reason it's important that this legislation be passed quickly.

There are a number of municipalities that have had ongoing discussions and are developing agreements on how they should restructure and reform so that they can better provide the services for their taxpayers. This legislation enables us to assist them to achieve their goals.

Across the province, counties, separated municipalities and northern municipalities have indeed been streamlining their operations and reducing the number of local politicians and keeping taxes down. Since 1996, the number of municipalities has been reduced from 815 to 586, and projected taxpayer savings are estimated at more than \$220 million.

But there are many municipalities who haven't yet taken that next step. Many of them are on the verge of moving forward. This legislation will continue and enhance the Bill 26 provisions which have already allowed many municipalities to restructure on their own. It will extend and improve the current provisions that allow local government to reform in counties, separated municipalities and in the northern municipalities.

We do want taxpayers in these municipalities to share in the benefits. We want them to have the benefit of fewer politicians, lower taxes, better services, and more efficient and accountable government.

There are a number of other measures in this bill that are also important to the people of Ontario. There are important measures to stop the potential unfairness of a municipality expropriating a gas company's infrastructure in order to turn it into a municipally owned gas distribution company. There are measures to make it easier for the regional municipality of Waterloo to improve its public transit system, a first step on the road to municipal reform.

This government is committed to very specific goals for local government in Ontario. Our aim is to lower the taxes, to have fewer politicians and to make government more efficient, effective and accountable. This bill is an important step in that direction. Any delay is not in the best interests of the majority of Ontario taxpayers who support these goals. The time has come to move ahead. The time has come for many of us to put our differences aside and to ensure that the model of governance that has been selected works and works efficiently to the benefit of the taxpayers, who expect nothing less than the best.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale): I usually stand in this House and start by saying what a great pleasure it is to talk about a bill. I think that the proper name for the government bill that's before us and this time allocation motion ought to be "the bill to give politicians an even worse name," because all the talk from the member who just spoke and others in this House is to discredit the role of politicians.

The politicians in this chamber stand and talk about municipal politicians around this province as if they don't play a valuable role in helping people. Is that something that is akin to the work that you do on that side, that at the end of every single day you don't feel that you've accomplished something in helping the people who call and write and e-mail your offices asking for help, for you to play the role in assisting them to understand government, to make it work better for them, whether it's for a birth certificate or the family responsibility act or the ODSP or for help with housing?

Our municipal councillors play the same role. If you were back home in meetings tonight in your ridings, as I'll have the opportunity to do during the break, you would run into municipal politicians—

Hon Margaret Marland (Minister without Portfolio [Children]): We can hear you.

Mr Smitherman: Margaret, you may hear my voice but you don't get the point. I'll be as loud as I darn well feel like. That's one privilege, I believe, that you haven't had a chance through the standing orders, to trample upon quite yet.

Earlier, there was a louder voice up in the gallery. It's a voice I'm rather familiar with, because in the last election campaign I had the chance to run against John Sewell. Do you know what? Lots of times we disagreed. But I'll tell you something: The message that he sent to you, that fell upon your deaf ears like all others when it comes to democracy, is a very important one.

1540

Why do I speak with a loud voice, member from Mississauga South? It is because I'm trying to get energized in a place that too often leads one to be disillusioned because the government opposite practices the politics of entrapment. The member from Scarborough heckles back, and I'm delighted to hear from her. She played a role once in municipal government. In that level of government I think she knows that she worked hard on behalf of her constituents, and yet she stands strongly in support of this bill that says, "Local politicians are bad."

We have a bill before us and a tactic by a government that so closely mimics what happens in the United States Congress. You get a piece of legislation that some people like and you slap some elements to it to make it unpalatable, impractical for them to support it. But in that case, the rules are balanced. There are checks and balances where the President can say, "I'll veto that legislation," and negotiation begins. Over time, the standing orders here have been diminished to such a great extent that no such role exists. The relevancy of this place is put at risk by the government opposite.

Omnibus bills, which all governments have relied upon, become the norm. Time allocation has not been used by anyone like it has been used by you guys opposite. Over the Christmas break and over the period when this House is in recess, members opposite, and particularly those in the back rows, really ought to ask themselves, "What is my relevance?" What is the relevance of this place other than—this is not some great debating society obviously. It has become a television studio. Members opposite, particularly those in the back row, ought to go and take a look at that.

Who has the greatest disdain for this place? Who demonstrates on a daily basis that he's not in the game any more, that he's missing in action, that this place is irrelevant? It's your leader. It's the Premier of this province. He has taken lack of attendance to the highest level yet. I know that some members will be bothered that any discussion goes on around that, but we begin to wonder

whether he's getting an attendance fee from you guys that goes up if he comes here less often.

There is in the history of this place a role where the opposition and others, working through committee, were able to take legislation, go out and talk to people about it and come back and actually determine that the legislation they had been proposing was wrong and that governments don't necessary know it all nor do they get it right all of the time. That's gone.

The bill that is before us lumps together all kinds of municipalities to the point where you're working on this made-in-Toronto solution. That Haldimand-Norfolk, at something fewer than 100,000 people, and the city of Toronto, at 2.3 million people, ought to be lumped together should send shock waves through municipalities included in this bill and the others that will follow. It ought to hold cold comfort for the residents of other places who are yet to come.

The member from Scarborough Southwest has done a particularly effective job at raising the level of rhetoric around how bad Toronto city council is. I speculate that he, along with a few others, probably the member from Etobicoke North, known for his commitment to serving all the people in his community, got together with the cigar boys from the Premier's office, did a poll and found that it would be popular to limit the number of councillors in the city of Toronto. But what's the net effect of that? What really matters to the citizens of Toronto? Surely to goodness, it's about the quality of service they receive.

I know that every single day I work with other city councillors who work hard to deliver important services to citizens, and yet you guys move in a punitive way to punish the city of Toronto because they stand up to you, because they dare to call a spade a spade, they dare to remind the taxpayers that you have downloaded a quarter of a billion dollars worth of costs on them. They dare to remind people that the increased debt of the city of Toronto is your responsibility, that services are diminished because you have backed away from participating in things like public transit and that the spate of new user fees is the responsibility of Mike Harris. What else do we know in the city of Toronto? We know that there is diminished community participation in councils, because that's democratic, and anything that's democratic is seen as being slow and biting into red tape.

What do we have going on this afternoon and tomorrow at the city of Toronto instead of discussion about the matters that are important to people, about integrating services as a result of the amalgamation? We have politicians instead focused on a debate about municipal boundaries. What we are left with in the city of Toronto is a municipality whose debt load is increasing to such a great extent that they are threatening to mimic this government in financial ineptitude in terms of selling off Toronto Hydro, selling an asset to pay off a credit card debt, a little bit like this government's approach on Highway 407.

The message ought to go forth from this place to those municipalities not yet affected and not contained within this legislation, because they're coming to get you next, because municipal governments will fail to continue to reflect the distinct nature of communities. What will be left three or four years from now? The new member for Carleton-Gloucester, if I got his riding name, talks about the municipalities that have been involved in the amalgamation in Ottawa. And what do we have to follow? In York region, as an example, will Aurora continue to exist?

I met earlier this week, on Monday, with the mayor of Halton Hills. She began to wonder what the future is of municipal amalgamation in Halton. Will Halton Hills, known by Georgetown and Acton, continue to reflect the nature of those communities or will they become part of some Halton supercity, lumped in with the much more established and urban municipalities of Burlington and Oakville? What will come of those? Will Stouffville be gobbled up by Markham with all of the prime farmland that is there turned into the kind of tract housing that the mayor of Markham so desires? Will Ajax become part of Oshawa?

Based on the record of this government, I think it's fair to say that those communities out there in the 905 region ought to be looking very closely at this, because this is a government that is intent to devalue the role of politicians, to diminish the distinct nature of communities and to roll over people without regard for their viewpoint.

We recognize that on June 3 a majority of Ontarians, by seats at least, elected that government, but the responsibility that is associated with making this place work does not mean you're granted a free pass. It means that you have a responsibility to lead a democratic government, one that believes in actual, real, meaningful consultation, that believes that the role of MPPs is to take a look at legislation and to offer suggestions, some of which may be acceptable and others which clearly would not be. Those are the modest tools that are at our disposal, and yet your government, more than any I think in the history of this province, refuses or chooses not to use them.

I say to you as a newly elected member, one who comes with a desire to do good on behalf of my communities, to work hard and to reflect the values of democracy, to make improvements and to participate in debate, to live and to learn and to give and to take, none of that is open to me as a member. This time allocation motion, like all of the others that came before and the many, it would seem, that will follow, ensures that my role as an MPP is greatly diminished. So who will stand and fight for these principles? Who will stand and begin to restore a sense of relevancy to this place—not just a machine to pass the legislation that the bright boys in the Premier's office write, but a place where MPPs representing 103 constituencies can come forward and debate and discuss and give and take and improve legislation to improve the lives of Ontarians?

I don't stand as someone who resists change. I live in the city of Toronto. I can tell you that some of the best prospects that come as a result of amalgamation are lost. They're lost because the focus of Toronto city council has been changed by your move on a punitive basis to reduce the number of councillors. Instead of having real debate about how we'll have a biotechnology strategy or a strategy to turn the brownfield sites that line the Queen-sway in Etobicoke and the former General Motors site in Scarborough and other brownfield sites like the port lands—instead of talking about strategies that will deal with those things and that will improve the lot of people, we have city councillors who are involved in the life-and-death struggle about where ward boundaries will be drawn.

Unfortunately, I say in closing, apparently democracy ends on election day with this government. I encourage all members, over the break, to take a long, hard look at your relevance in this place and to consider whether the move towards more time allocation motions, more omnibus bills, is in the best interests of this place and in the best interests of the province of Ontario.

1550

Mr Garry J. Guzzo (Ottawa West-Nepean): I too take some satisfaction in having an opportunity to address this issue. I take the comments of my friend the last speaker to heart about my relevancy in this operation, because I want to talk about the history of what we're dealing with as it applies to Ottawa-Carleton.

Twenty-six years ago, as a member of regional council in Ottawa-Carleton, I chaired a meeting, attended by the former mayor of Vanier, Bernard Grandmaître, a former member in this House; the regional chairman of the day, Denis Cooligan. The former mayor of Nepean and then later regional chairman, Andy Haydon, was there. I think Eugène Bellemare, who represents the federal riding of my friend the first speaker, the member for Carleton-Gloucester, was at that meeting. We discussed at that time regional government as it had been in effect for about three years in Ottawa-Carleton, and the changes that were necessary.

And here we are, 26 years later. Twenty-six years to get something done. But that's not surprising. That same year we had a similar meeting with regard to a four-lane highway between Prescott and Ottawa. I went to a meeting of the bench and bar that year with regard to a Unified Family Court, and we have a Unified Family Court in 65% of the province today. But it took until last year to get it—25 years.

At that time we were well into a lengthy debate on labour mobility across the Quebec-Ontario border as it affected workers in Ottawa-Carleton. I haven't seen it yet but I'm told that we have entered into an agreement. I don't know that it has been signed by the Quebec government and I don't whether it will be lived up to by that government. It's a sad question that the last speaker raised about relevancy when it takes 25 to 28 years to get anything done.

Let me say that on a couple of those issues, the previous government between 1990 and 1995 at least moved the envelope forward a little. If you want to talk about some slow years, if you want to talk about some dead years, we'll look back at 1985 to 1990.

Back then, 26 years ago, we knew we had too much area and too much land, and we knew we had too many municipalities. Only now are we moving forward to get something done.

A previous speaker, the member for Carleton-Gloucester, referred to the different reports that have come forward prior to this report from Mr Shortliffe, a report that is not perfect. As a matter of fact, it looked better the day I first read it than it does today. It's a federal reflection on a municipal problem and that creates some difficulties. But Mr Mayo, Mr Bartlett, Ms Graham and Mr Kirby all did exhaustive work and should be commended.

In 1994, we had the direct election approved and the mayors came off our regional council. In 1997, we had a citizens' panel. In 1997 and 1998 we had two private members' bills on Ottawa-Carleton. Interestingly, they were supported by Mr McGuinty, Mr Chiarelli on the first one, Mr Cullen on the second one.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour): He was an NDPer?

Mr Guzzo: He was then. By the time the second bill came forward, he had become an NDPer. You're right.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): Where is he now?

Mr Guzzo: Doing a very big job in Ottawa and doing it well, I might tell you, in the social services field. He's much happier than when he was here, I might tell you as well, at least when he was a Liberal.

Interjections.

Mr Guzzo: I don't know about his time and I don't know what he is now.

It is interesting that we're here now, and yes, we're in a rush, and we're making some changes as we go to the report of Mr Shortliffe. But it wouldn't have been necessary if we had dealt with this matter in a timely fashion by having either of my private member's bills come forward.

I want to direct a couple of comments with regard to the issue of the reserves and the assets. It's true that some municipalities have been frugal, some have been prudent, and others have not; some have major reserves, some have major assets other than cash reserves, and some have debt.

I want to speak to the debt of the city of Ottawa. I sat as a regional councillor because I was a member of the board of control in the city at that time. I was part of a government in the city of Ottawa that ran up some debt. I admit that. On my first day on regional council, the first money I spent was 89-cent Ottawa dollars; 89% of the cost of regional government in the early 1970s was paid for by the city of Ottawa. When I left seven years later, it was still at 73 cents of every dollar.

What did we do with that money in those early years? Did we squander it? I don't know. We put water and sewer to south Nepean, we put water and sewer through the rock in the west to form the new city of Kanata, and we put water and sewer lines to Orleans in the east so that the former mayor of Cumberland could have growth and development. Maybe we should have taken that money and spent it on the infrastructure of the city of Ottawa. But the whole purpose of regional government was to use the taxing power and the resources of downtown Ottawa to finance the extension of services to these areas that could never hope to do it on their own. Now Ottawa has—surprise, surprise—a debt. It also has tremendous revenue sources, and these revenue sources, from government buildings and from the industrial and commercial development in downtown Ottawa, are to be pooled, but the debt of the city of Ottawa is not to be pooled. Somebody has to take a serious look at the issue, and I know the interim transition board will do exactly that.

I'd like to take a couple of the minutes remaining to deal with a very controversial matter in Ottawa-Carleton, and that is the issue of bilingualism at the municipal level, official bilingualism as opposed to bilingualism. There's been a heated debate going on and much of what has been said is most unfortunate. You know, 1973 was an active year on regional council because that was the year we formulated the bilingual policy that has served that municipality so well for the last 26 years.

I go back. The mayor of Ottawa who sat on that council was Pierre Benoit. The mayor of Vanier was Ben Grandmaitre. Eugène Bellemare, the federal member for Carleton-Gloucester, was a member, as were Reeve MacQuarrie, Reeve Haydon and a number of individuals who have distinguished themselves in serving the people of Ottawa-Carleton.

That policy and program was not one of official bilingualism as outlined and described by the federal government. It had so much more to offer, because it was flexible. It allowed us to provide services in the east end of the region, to the city of Vanier and to the French-speaking population in Cumberland and south Gloucester, that we did not have to provide in the west to the people of Rideau and West Carleton where there was no demand per se, something that was impossible to do with a program of official bilingualism. I don't say the policy was perfect—it has been amended from time to time and improved as developed areas came along—but it has served the public of Ottawa-Carleton extremely well. When people now try to paint the picture that this government or indeed anyone in government in Ottawa-Carleton wants to make the new city unilingual English—I refer to page A23 of the Globe and Mail this morning, the former Solicitor General in the Trudeau government—I think they're doing a tremendous disservice. It's unfortunate that people attempt to fan the flames and create the havoc that has in some part been created in our area.

1600

Let me just go back a little on how our region changed in its development course. In 1969 Prime Minister Trudeau entered into a tripartite agreement with Premier Jean-Jacques Bertrand of Quebec and John Robarts of Ontario whereby it was agreed that the national capital area would become the focus of the government and the national capital region, and that would include certain parts of the province of Quebec. These three leaders entered into an agreement that that area which would serve as the national capital area would be bilingual—not officially bilingual, but would provide services in both the French and English languages.

That paved the way for some 30,000 federal civil servants to relocate from old buildings, older structures that were temporary in nature, actually, to have those torn down and move these departments to new buildings in Hull, Quebec. The basis of that agreement was that the area was going to be bilingual. Both sides of the river were going to be bilingual. That prompted the decision and the policy of our council of 1973.

We have lived up to the principle and the spirit of that agreement, and I am proud of that fact. But let's talk about the other side. Is the city of Hull bilingual? You can go to bars in Hull and you can't buy a beer in English, let alone go to city hall and attempt to do business. Do you think Hull was not part of the province of Quebec when Bill 101 was passed, when the language troopers a couple of months ago went into the village of Shawville a few miles up the river, and Campbell's Bay, and trampled on English minority rights?

You heard the outcry from the Prime Minister of Canada, from Minister Stéphane Dion, as they infiltrate their argument with regard to Ottawa-Carleton today. You heard what they had to say about Hull being unilingual French and about the language troopers going into Campbell's Bay and Shawville. The silence was deafening. It was the same response when the only English-language hospital in the townships, in Sherbrooke, was closed—not a whimper, not from Sheila Copps, not from Mr Dion, not from Mr Chrétien, not from Jean-Jacques Blais, the former Solicitor General in the Trudeau government who was so proud to have been there when the Constitution was brought home and misleads the public somewhat in his article on page A23 of the Globe today.

What are the people of my area to think? When are we going to see an extension of bilingualism into the province of Quebec? The Quebec Legislature last week passed a resolution arguing for the official bilingual status of the new city of Ottawa, the same Legislature that passed the French Language Services Act in Quebec, which makes it a crime for a business in Shawville that has been run by a family for over 100 years to have an English sign on the door, as they've had over that period of time. Nobody appreciates, nobody wants to believe, that this type of thing is happening in our country, and it goes on, item after item.

I spent a lot of my youth, unfortunately—I say “unfortunately” because I don't think it was all that good

for my health—in the province Quebec, playing baseball in Wrightville when it existed, and I played hockey in Hull. I'm proud to say that I'm very welcome in a couple of those clubs that still sponsor—something that might not be true in my own city for teams that I played for.

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): The Chaudière Club? The Chez Henri is still there, though.

Mr Guzzo: No, it's not. The Chez Henri has gone. Mr Campeau built a nice, big government building there and filled it with Ottawa civil servants. The Ottawa House, the same thing. It's gone too. The Chaudière Club—yes, I was a member of the Chaudière Club for five years. Best golf I ever played, and some of the best times I ever had. We lived over there. People don't go back and forth socially the way they used to. This divisiveness is growing, and it is not a positive development in our community.

I could speak on this issue for hours. I am limited—

Mr Gerretsen: Take your time; you have time allocation. We want to listen to you.

Mr Guzzo: Good point.

I want to say that we are at a watershed in Ottawa-Carleton. I don't know of anyone who would argue that there should not be bilingual services at the new city. I don't know of any institution where we do not provide that service. It's true that at the Ottawa Civic campus of the new Ottawa Hospital, the level of bilingualism is not as high as it is at the General campus downtown, which was a very heavily populated French operation, and still will continue to be. But the Civic provides a multicultural level of service that the other campus of the General hospital does not match.

When you go out further in my riding in Nepean, to the Queensway-Carleton Hospital, the level of bilingual service is not as high as it is at the Civic. But it's there and it's adequate and it will be maintained, just as the level of service that the people of our area have enjoyed over the past number of years under the policy of 1973 and prior thereto has been. Prior thereto, people received that level of service that was required. There have been blips, no question about it, blips on the board that have been corrected, and most of the time without any rancour and any opposition once they've been identified.

I think it's extremely unfortunate, with all the important areas and concerns in this bill that this interim transition team will be faced with, that we in Ottawa-Carleton have allowed the issue to escalate to what it has escalated to today. But it's at the feet of a very few people. When I see federal people intruding in provincial domain when they have never spoken out against much more serious violations in the province of Quebec, I have to wonder what the issue is in terms of politics as opposed to delivering services.

I thank you for the opportunity of having been able to address this bill. As I say, while it's not perfect, I'm very pleased to see it and very appreciative of the fact that it has been brought forward. I would have liked to see it come forward as a result of my private member's bill; I would have liked to see more time in the community. But

we have had 30 years of debate, we have had over 26 years of discussion with regard to how it should be done, and the time to act is now.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Bradley: I want to first of all say to the member for Ottawa West-Nepean that I enjoyed his remarks and his opportunity to make the remarks. I only wish—and I don't say this to be mischievous, but there's a good example: Whether one agrees or disagrees with what the member had to say, here's a member who has had a lot of history with this particular issue, who I would have liked to hear speak for 30 or 35 minutes or longer about some of the history, because he does know about it and he can provide some insights. Some people may disagree with what he has to say, but it's nice to be able to have that in the House, and we don't have it any more, we're simply so restricted now in the ability to make our points.

1610

There's an interesting survey. We were asked to comment on what motto should be put in certain places in this building. There's a motto under the Speaker's gallery that reads "Audi alteram partem," which means "Hear the other side." Unfortunately, far too often now the other side is not heard to the extent it should be. The other side isn't necessarily the other side of the House; it may be the other side of an argument that's advanced by a particular member. In this case, the member has some quarrels with the bill but supports the general thrust of it.

I want to say that I am extremely perturbed by this bill, first of all by the fact that it's an omnibus bill. In other words, it deals with five distinct and different municipalities. Second, it has within its provisions items which would affect all of the province of Ontario. There are some very anti-democratic portions to the bill that I wish we could take some time, come back in January and have some hearings on in the areas affected, and some hearings in Toronto. The government could pass the bill, ultimately, of course. I wish they wouldn't, but they are going to do so.

There is what we call the sledgehammer provision. That's the clause taking away the right of the Legislature to amend statutes. One of the fundamental rights that we should have in this Legislature is to have the elected members of this Legislature pronounce, debate and decide upon changes to the laws of the province. What this bill does is allow the cabinet, behind closed doors, to change any law in the province of Ontario that it requires to accommodate and implement the restructuring in these municipalities and in other municipalities. That is a very dangerous provision, a very undemocratic provision. Whether you agree or not with what the government is doing, that is a dangerous provision. I hope that editorialists across this province, even those who are favourable to the policies of this government, will understand what that means.

Secondly, 75 petitioners: Under Bill 26, which I thought was far too authoritarian, at least one municipality had to request that a commission establish a process of restructuring before the minister could begin the pro-

cess. Bill 25 lowers this threshold to just 75 petitioners. Therefore, the legislation allows the minister to initiate a binding restructuring commission even if no municipalities request the process. I can tell you that you're going to find some municipality somewhere which will initiate such a process, but to allow 75 people with an axe to grind to initiate such a process to me is undemocratic. It's allowing 75 people accountable to no one, unelected people, the opportunity to initiate a process of this kind. I think that's extremely dangerous as a provision of this bill.

Restricting the municipal referenda, or, as most people would call them, referendums: Already the government put a provision in that local municipalities, when they sent out their tax bills, could not put on the tax bill itself any explanation as to why the bill was going up. They knew it was because of downloading of financial responsibility from the provincial government to local governments. They wanted to state that on the bill, that they didn't want to raise the taxes, but they were prohibited from doing so by this government.

Now this government, which is supposedly a great proponent of having a referendum on various issues—Mike Harris and his cabinet, particularly Mike Harris and his unelected advisers—will decide the wording of every referendum at the municipal level in Ontario. Once again, ultimate control of those who might have something to say that might be critical of this government, just as when you fired the Environmental Commissioner, Eva Ligeti, because she was critical of the government, and want to replace that person with somebody who's a two-time Tory candidate and president of the Nipissing federal Conservative association, certainly somebody who's not going to be objective when dealing with this government, somebody who has to have the confidence of the entire House.

You extend the county commission restructuring process under Bill 26, and that is one that includes the potential for a commission to unilaterally decide and implement local restructuring proposals. This of course we opposed when Bill 26 was before this Legislature.

We do not have any provision for transition funding. They talk about Chatham-Kent. Chatham-Kent is where most areas were 30 years ago. They try to compare that, for instance, with Niagara. They say, "Chatham-Kent, Niagara, it's the same thing." No, it isn't. Chatham-Kent is a situation Niagara faced 30 years ago and they got transition funding, but what you find out is that once the transition funding's gone, the local municipal property taxpayer has to pick up the tab or you have to have further cuts.

The vindictiveness of this government against local government in Toronto is something to behold. In effect, what they're saying in this bill is, "We're going to force you to have 44 members of council and, by the way, if you misbehave we'll lower it even more." How undemocratic that is, how vindictive that is, but it certainly is typical of this government.

You talk about the cost of restructuring and how they're going to save. The Provincial Auditor said that the cost of restructuring hospitals is now well over \$1 billion over the estimate this government made when it started demolishing the hospital system in this province, including in my area of Niagara. This government has refused to have local hearings on this issue. I ask, what is the hurry? The only hurry I can see is that you want to allow people to start raising money for the elections coming up.

The last time we had this situation you simply postponed that date till April. Surely they can raise funds from April till November. They don't have to start in January. If we could have hearings in Flamborough and Stoney Creek, and in Glanbrook, Gloucester, Nepean and places like that, and in Toronto, Sudbury, Walden and Haldimand-Norfolk, people would at least say they've had their day in court and perhaps the government might make some changes to that legislation.

What we're going to have now is the government simply rush the bill through the Legislature and allow for no provision for amendments. Oh, there'll be an offer out there: "We'll allow you this or that." But we know there's a condition to it: "You've got to rush the bill through before Christmas."

What on earth is the hurry? Why don't you do it right instead of doing it quickly? Do it right for a change.

I was disappointed to hear the member for Carleton-Gloucester give his speech. While I expect the members who have been here as part of the Harris government for the past five years to make speeches about, "We have to rush things through, we've had enough debate," I must say it's sad, and I'm not being personal because I like the member for Carleton-Gloucester and I think he's a fair-minded person and quite open-minded, but you don't know how much it sinks my heart to hear a person who's new to the Legislature say, "We've had enough time for debate, let's get on with it."

You're seeing more and more of that happening. The opportunity to debate, discuss, make changes and have public hearings is disappearing.

You can do it well if you listen a lot more and if you take into account what others say and make those changes. In the end the government wins, but more important, the people win when you allow that to happen. If you just allow it to be pushed through the way this bill is going to be pushed through, that won't happen.

I wish I had more time to discuss some of the aspects of restructuring. I must leave by saying that I am one who is not convinced that bigger is better. I'm not convinced that we should abandon small communities and I represent a large urban community.

1620

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): I appreciate the opportunity to speak, given the limited amount of time that's now made available to us. I'll be sharing my time with my colleague from Trinity-Spadina, Rosario Marchese.

Obviously the essence of what we want to talk about is the fact that we're shutting down democracy yet again. Maybe it's the government's plan that if they've done this often enough and people are flipping around and catch the parliamentary channel for a few moments to see what's going—because we know the numbers are up. There are more people watching now than there ever has been in the history of the parliamentary channel. In large part that's because they want to try to get a handle on what Harris continues to do to them through this legislation and everything else that goes through here.

I'm sure that as people click on and hear those of us in the opposition standing up and complaining yet again about the fact that we've got another time allocation motion, that's there's closure coming, that democracy is being restricted, the hope on the government's side is "click," that people will just tune off. I suspect, to a large degree, that's probably true, but every now and then it's going to cause you a problem. Something is going to burst forth that rivets everybody: "Well, wait a minute, what's really going on? Why is this happening?"

An example of that is in the paper today. We have seen on the front page of the Globe and Mail today an article by columnist John Ibbitson, wherein Mr Ibbitson talks about the implications of a bill that was hustled through here: Bill 23, five pages. Of course the bill we're shutting down today is not just five pages, it's 167 pages. That's the bill on which we're shutting down debate, democracy, public input, opportunities for amendments. Bill 23 and Bill 25. This is the merger bill, the bill that democracy is being shut down on today. This is the bill that Mr Ibbitson makes reference to in his article.

I want to take just a moment to put this on the record, because at some point the only way the government is going to stop these incredibly anti-democratic, damaging procedures is if the public says enough is enough. We've said it. We say it almost daily because we're forever debating closure motions. But the only way the government is going to listen is if backbench MPPs in particular get enough complaints and hear enough from their constituents about how these bills are being rammed through this Legislature with no time for proper consideration.

With your permission, Mr Speaker, I would like to read a couple of excerpts from Mr Ibbitson's article on the front page of the Globe and Mail today.

"The unseemly haste with which the Mike Harris government pushes bills through the Ontario Legislature has generally caused only aficionados of Parliament to despair. But now it should alarm you.

"The Legislature passed a law earlier this week giving the Ontario health insurance plan the power to sue you if you fail to shovel your sidewalk and your spouse comes to harm. It might even be able to sue you if you harm yourself."

It goes on to say:

"Late yesterday, a senior bureaucrat in the health Ministry, speaking for purposes of background, confirmed that the new law contains those powers," and there are other powers mentioned in the article, "although this was

not the legislation's intent, and would never be used for that purpose. Not today, perhaps.

"The government might even be able to sue you if you injure yourself, if you break an arm in-line skating even though you knew the roads were slippery, if you dive into a shallow pool and end up paralyzed. If you smoke."

Mr Ibbitson goes on to say, in referring to Mr Potter, who is a lawyer out of Montreal, "Mr Potter doubts that the government intended any of this." You know what? For the record, that's entirely possible. It's entirely possible that, even from an opposition member's perspective, the government may not have intended that the law could be used in this way, the point being that without taking the time to look at these bills and study them in the way that Parliament has evolved to do that means you could end up in this situation.

There are a lot of lawyers who make a lot of money finding out new interpretations of laws that weren't necessarily intended by governments. Rushing them through the House, like this government does, only aids and abets those who make a really good living out of playing with the laws and trying to defend their clients using, shall we say, creative interpretations of laws. At the end of the day, that costs people money because we have to pay for that court system. Anyway, I digress.

"Mr Potter doubts that the government intended any of this. The bill, he suspects, is simply badly worded. Its flaws could have been easily remedied, had there been sufficient time for examination and debate.

"But we don't do that any more at Queen's Park.

"Like all other legislation they bring before the House, the Tories imposed time allocation...." That's exactly what we're debating right now, time allocation on Bill 25.

To pick up where I was, "... the Tories imposed time allocation—a form of closure—on Bill 23, permitting only seven hours and 37 minutes of debate, and prohibiting public hearings or amendments. Opposition MPPs had no time to figure out what they were looking at. On Monday, the bill passed third reading and awaits only the Lieutenant Governor's signature."

That column by Mr Ibbitson points out one or two different interpretations of this bill that could be problematic for the public. I mean, the Tories tend to forget this but we are here on the people's business. It's not your law. Once it's passed, it's the people's law.

This example is based on a bill that has five pages. That's the whole bill, but it's a feature story on the front page of *The Globe and Mail* about how there may be problems because this was rushed through. Here we are now debating the closure of a bill that's 167 pages long, for God's sake.

Look at this thing. It's mammoth. Does anybody really want to bet anything significant that it isn't possible that something in here inadvertently may be a problem? We'll, of course, argue that there are problems with this bill that are deliberate. Right up front, we have problems with some of the intent. We don't get an opportunity at those things, but further to that, it's the notion that you

could pass laws that are flawed. Why? You can't say that it's an honest error, not when you're the government, deliberately passing a motion, as we're in the midst of doing right now—and the government will use their majority to ram it through. You cannot argue that it's an inadvertent mistake when the government itself uses a process that shuts down the very mechanisms in our parliamentary process that provide for an opportunity to look at bills to prevent that sort of thing. How many times have we had to deal with bills in this place because they are corrections to earlier bills that the government has screwed up?

1630

There were six bills in the last Parliament that had to be introduced by the government to repair the first bill that was so badly flawed in the first place. They were told, "Slow down, take some time, look at this." They rammed it through and we had to deal with six more bills—this is a government that doesn't like waste?—wasting an awful lot of taxpayers' money to operate this place to repair things that likely wouldn't have needed repairing if the government had used the procedures that are built into our parliamentary tradition. For those of us who are living in the communities and represent the communities that are affected by Bill 25, it makes us even angrier that this government is refusing to listen to anyone.

That's not the only example. There are so many of them. That's why it's so frustrating. The government so far knows that they can do these things, and most people see it as inside baseball and it doesn't really matter. They've got a majority, they've got a mandate, they can do what they will. That's not the case, that's not what we're talking about. We're talking about a government that gets elected in a certain parliamentary tradition and then totally ignores and abuses that tradition and then passes laws that aren't in the best interests of the people. They did it to the volunteer firefighters when they rammed through Bill 99, the anti-worker piece of legislation, another one of them, that savaged the WCB, because they used time allocation on that and rammed it through. They found out afterwards: "Gee, we've hurt some volunteer firefighters. We didn't mean to do that."

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): It just happened.

Mr Christopherson: My colleague says, "It just happened." That's the way the government put it: "Gee, it was inadvertent." If they'd taken the time to let the volunteer firefighters have a look at it—most provincial organizations have parliamentary committees or political committees or legal committees, call them what you will, and the sole purpose of those committees under the auspices of umbrella organizations is to take a look at every piece of legislation that goes through here to see if it affects their members. But what's the point in doing that or believing that we truly have a pluralistic society when the opportunity to make that comment is denied?

It's really not that big a leap—some would argue the leap's already been made—in my opinion to go from

where we are in terms of this kind of democracy under the Mike Harris government to pure dictatorship.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Oh, come on.

Mr Christopherson: I expected there would be reactions and moans and groans on the other side. But I can say that if the Minister of Labour were sitting over here—and I was in this place when he did—you'd be peeling him off the ceiling. He'd be apoplectic about what's happening here, and now he sits back and says, "Oh, come on." It really does depend on whose ox is being gored here. I would have thought that as the Minister of Labour, who now has to be concerned about fire-fighters and other working people, when examples are shown to him where innocent working people have been hurt, he'd show a little more sympathy and a little more compassion, given the fact that's now his ministerial responsibility.

But that's not the only place where this government is showing its true colours. We saw in question period today the whole question about the judicial appointment. There's a backlog with judges being appointed and there are those in the know in legal circles who are saying it's because there's a certain friend of Mike Harris, a supporter of the Premier's, who was not on the preferred shortlist, which is the procedure that has been used for the last decade. Therefore, their way of retaliating is just to refuse to make any appointments and we've got a standoff. We're now hearing concerns that there are some cases that may be turfed out because there aren't judges there to hear them in an acceptable period of time.

I say to the Minister of Labour that this has to do with the attitude of you and your government towards democracy. That's what it has to do with, given the fact that we're in a debate about closure, about time allocation, about shutting down democracy. Is that the only example? No. There's another example that's right here in front of us today in terms of the Environmental Commissioner. We're at the point now where we have someone who, to the best of my knowledge, withheld from the committee initially the information—

Interjection.

Mr Christopherson: Well, that's what I have been told, and we'll wait and see what things show in the long run. I'm told that until questions were asked, this information didn't come out. Nonetheless, the fact of the matter is that for a position of this importance—and let me talk about how important it is. It's not like any other political appointment. It's not unusual for governments to appoint people they know or people they've worked with, people they trust or who they believe have the same philosophy as them. We always have this to and fro about it, but it's not unusual. I think every government to make it a little better.

But when we talk about the Environmental Commissioner, we're talking about a job that ought to be so far removed from patronage that it qualifies almost as Caesar's wife, because this is a position that is there to protect the interests of the citizens of Ontario and this individual, the Environmental Commissioner, reports not

to the Minister of Labour, not to the Premier, but to this House as a whole. Any notion that someone could be appointed to that position by virtue of a majority government using their power is very disconcerting and ought to scare an awful lot of people, and not just environmentalists but anyone who wants to make sure that the proper watchdog positions are being filled by people who will fulfill that mandate.

The Tory majority on the committee reviewing this and making the recommendation to the House have used their majority numbers to put forward the name of a candidate, or it's expected this is the candidate who's going to come forward, and now we've got somebody who just happens, purely coincidental, to have been a Tory candidate in Mike Harris's riding federally and provincially and—that's not enough—is currently the president of the federal Tory riding association.

The government know that if this person were being appointed to any position we'd raise these concerns, but the fact that it's the Environmental Commissioner makes it so much more serious. It takes it out of the realm of a political debate between the government and opposition benches and to a much higher level, as does the notion that there may be political interference, or at least a change through political interference, with the arm's-length process that's been used in the last decade to appoint our judges.

If we get to the point where nobody bats an eye when time allocation motions are passed at the drop of a hat, and that extends to the point where—well, guess what?—judicial appointments, people who are being appointed to be judges, are becoming more and more political, and that becomes OK, and the Environmental Commissioner who's there to protect the health of our communities and of our families becomes more and more politicized, and that becomes OK, where does it stop?

Where does the notion that parliamentary systems, as opposed to other systems, provide for the opportunity for the opposition to play a meaningful role, the public to play a meaningful role and for people to be appointed to positions of extremely important responsibilities in our province become mere political candies and goodies handed out after an election? Where does that end?

I don't think it's unreasonable to expect that at some point the person who oversees elections—it's now one person, a commissioner—would suddenly become a patronage appointment. Why not? This government unilaterally changed the rules of the last election both in terms of how the election is run and how it's financed. They did that unilaterally. I mean at some point there's got to be a recognition that this sort of thing is not just about opposition members having a chance to stand up and take shots at the government. But at some point, surely to God it will reach a level of severity where there will be enough people in the province who will say, "Enough is enough."

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You don't own the province of Ontario just because you win an election. You don't have the right to act as if

you're the rulers of this province. You don't have the right to act as if you never have to listen to anyone again until the next election. You do not have that right. You may have the power. I expect that this motion will pass, so you've proven that you have the power. That does not, by any stretch, give you the moral right to do it.

The House is meeting less and less. Committees are grinding to a halt. Anybody who lives outside Toronto sees parliamentary committees less frequently now than they ever did. I know that's not the be-all and end-all of democracy, but it's another part of it. People who live in different parts of this huge province have as much right to participate in the laws that govern them as do people who live here in Toronto or in my own community of Hamilton, just an hour down the road. Speaker, you know yourself, representing the riding of Sault Ste Marie, that we don't do that much any more.

The government will say it's to save money and all that, but the reality is, there is enough stink and complaint raised by the government backbenchers because when they went out into these communities they got beat up badly.

Interjection.

Mr Christopherson: It's absolutely true. Take a look at the record of what happened any time you took a significant piece of legislation out on the road, into communities and asked people what they thought. I was there. A number of us have been there when this has happened. There are too many people in the room—do you know, we couldn't stay at one particular facility in Hamilton in terms of where the committee would meet because at the time we didn't have available in Hamilton proper—even though that's where the meeting was or supposed to be—a meeting room that was contained in the same hotel the members would be staying in. They were worried about their security. They would only meet in a hotel where they were guaranteed to only have to worry about going from their hotel room to the elevator, to the meeting room, back in the elevator and back to their hotel room.

I have no doubt in my mind that what happened was that there were enough backbenchers who said, "I'm not going out there any more," and as a result of taking away the per diem that at least was some kind of an incentive to offer the backbenchers, it makes it very difficult for the government to find members who are willing to go out.

What's the answer? Is the answer to say to the backbench government members, "Sorry you don't like it; we'll do the best we can to provide you with support people and media people and other researchers to help you while you're there"? But at the end of the day, part of the job of being an MPP, particularly in government, is going out into communities and facing the people on whose behalf you are supposedly ramming legislation through.

Did they do that? No, that's not what they did. The government turned around and said: "Rather than go down that road of tell our backbenchers what they ought or ought not to do, we're just going to stop holding

committee meetings. We won't go out and travel and we won't let people meet any more."

What we're doing here is seeing democracy being denied. I've only been here since 1990, and there are members who have been here longer, but I know there was a time when any government of the day wouldn't dream of taking a bill this big, affecting the number of people that it does, in the most significant way that it does in terms of local governance, and ignore any kind of input.

Based on the motion we're dealing with here, there will be no amendments to this bill, absolutely none.

Interjection: We offered it.

Mr Christopherson: We're not even going to go there, it's such a joke. You offered it. You offered one hour, with two changes that ought to be made, but not nearly enough. If you think that somehow you're going to get any kind of even tacit support for this process, you're crazy. Because you're just so far off the beam in terms of where you ought to be in terms of giving people input. No one's going to be conned by it. It's almost insulting, I say to the government House leader through the Speaker, to suggest that people would believe that obvious spin.

The fact of the matter is that either the government House leader or the Minister of Municipal Affairs or probably the Premier himself has sent down the word that there are not going to be any public hearings, period, and then whatever they can do to mitigate that by finding different little moves and dances and sliding, that's what they'll do. But the reality is—

Mr Marchese: They can't dance.

Mr Christopherson: My colleague says they can't dance. Unfortunately, in this place they've gotten pretty good.

But the reality is that they don't want the public to be involved. They don't fundamentally believe that anybody has anything to say that's relevant after they've made up their minds. They are going to govern from Mount Olympus, and it's not laws and democracy that come down but edicts.

You can bet there are going to be problems with this bill. Again, there are obvious political problems. We've addressed some of those in what now constitutes second reading, a couple of days, and we'll get a couple of hours—what a joke—on third reading. So we've dealt with what we think will be problematic in those areas, like telling Flamborough, although there's no reference in the bill, they can vote as to whether or not they want to be in the new city of Hamilton. But no reference is made to what happens to the other municipalities that might feel they would like that same opportunity. Those kinds of things have been pointed out. They are going to be a problem.

All the power you've given to the transition board, the fact that each of our communities has to eat all that cost, that these people are not elected but appointed—they've been given incredible powers, and the regulations under Bill 25 allow the transition board to be given whatever

more powers the government, through cabinet decisions, wants to give them. All of those things are legitimate, but my point to you right this moment, Speaker, is that I assure you there are going to be other problems with this bill.

You cannot expect from any kind of rational, reasonable point of view that a bill like this, Bill 23, with five pages, could cause the major questions and concerns that it now is. By the way, there are other concerns now coming out about this bill because there are some organizations, health professionals, that are just finding out about what's going on. It does take time with all the information that we're being bombarded with these days for messages to penetrate through, and not all these organizations have paid lobbyists who are here every day to watch the proceedings. It takes a while for them to be informed of it. They are just now finding out what's going on and the implications for all of us in terms of Bill 23 and how it affects health care in Ontario, and it's already law. Done. That's five pages.

I don't think any reasonable person could suggest that if you follow the same procedure for this bill with five pages that you're about to follow for this bill with 167 pages, we aren't going to run into some serious problems that are going to cost the people of Ontario money. If nothing else, it's going to cost them the time and effort, if not of the cabinet, perhaps this whole place. But there could be challenges in courts, and we've got to pay for that. And since these are governance issues, it could affect the ability of local governments—on and on and on.

How could all that be avoided? I would like to think that most people casually reviewing these arguments would say: "All right, it sounds to me like you may have a point. How would we go about doing something about that?" You don't have to do anything extraordinary. There's nothing creative, new, to be done: no rabbit to pull out of the hat, no law to pass. What do you have to do to prevent that kind of nightmare scenario, that likely nightmare scenario? Follow the rules that are already here. Give committees an opportunity and give the public an opportunity to be heard. Allow the process, as was meant to be done, to be followed.

Here we are at their favourite time of the year, and not because it's the season to be jolly but because it's the season they hope the least amount of people are watching. You will recall that it was in 1995, right about the same time, when you pulled the same stunt with Bill 26. Remember that? Remember how many amendments had to be made, when we finally pushed you into public hearings, because you were forced to deal with what was in Bill 26? Here we are again with Bill 25—almost the same number—and we're going to have the same problems.

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I say in closing that unless a lot more people than so far have shown an interest in this stand up and say, "You're not going to continue to do this to me, to democracy, to Ontario"—if that doesn't happen, we're going to

continue to see more and more of this, and we're going to continue to see this place become less and less relevant and people across the province feeling further and further removed from their government. That cannot be good.

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Government House Leader): I want to say at the outset that we have debated regional-city municipal restructuring in the Ottawa-Carleton area for a long period of time, and I know my colleagues Mr Guzzo and Mr Coburn have talked about some of the past history. You know, I've been elected to represent part of the Ottawa-Carleton area for some 22 years, and I think I've got to know some of the areas pretty well.

This whole motion towards going away from a two-tier system to a one-tier system started in 1994, when the then NDP government forced upon the region the withdrawal of the local mayors from regional council. That was really the beginning of the end of the two-tier system of government at the regional level in Ottawa-Carleton, because essentially what happened was that a lack of trust built up between the 11 lower-tier mayors and the upper-tier council. As a result of that, along with the direct election of the regional chair, giving him much more power in a political sense in terms of who was behind him, we really saw at that point in time the death of the lower-tier governments in Ottawa-Carleton.

At that point in time, the lower-tier municipal politicians, and actually the upper tier, recognized the conundrum they were put in by the former government and started a very long and involved process of consultations with their constituents, with the people of Ottawa-Carleton. So really, over the last five years we have had a continual discussion, public hearings—I don't know how many sets of public hearings there have been with regard to municipal restructuring in Ottawa-Carleton, but a great number of them. This of course culminated after the last election in June, when we were re-elected to Queen's Park as government, when the Premier said he wanted to put this issue to bed, deal with this issue before we got into the next year and into the coming elections, which are in the year 2000.

The Premier was careful. He basically took the timing that was suggested by the Leader of the Opposition, Mr McGuinty, as to how the process would be lined out, because we were seeking the support of the party opposite. Mr McGuinty had suggested that we have a very short consultation period and then we go ahead with some legislation, and he said it should be done before January 1, 2000. That's what he said in August of this year. Of course, he has flip-flopped and changed his position at this time. He is now wanting to vote against this bill. He's voting no against a single city, the city of Ottawa, Ottawa-Carleton, at this time. I think he should justify that to his residents, to his voters, because that's certainly not what he said in the last election.

We've heard arguments here that we should have this bill separated out. I want you to know, Mr Speaker, that I attempted to separate out this bill, to negotiate with the other parties that it be separated out. I will give this: I did

require that we deal with this matter in all of the various different regions and cities before we rose at Christmas. That was the condition I put on it, but the opposition refused that offer.

This morning I offered to the opposition that we could go into committee of the whole for a short period of time. As you know, one of the time allocation motions filed yesterday allowed a very short period of time in committee of the whole in order to put forward motions so that we could change some of the sections the opposition was objecting to, some of the sections where they've talked about large regulatory power for the government, the 75 electors. We were willing to stand back on those two particular issues.

I said to the opposition as well: "You may put forward a few amendments yourselves. Pick out some of the key amendments so that we can have you on the record and us on the record on a number of various issues." I also offered to go beyond the one hour if we could negotiate some kind of deal, that we could extend that for maybe two hours, perhaps even a little bit longer. I realize that's a very short period of time to deal with the number of issues we are dealing with, but it would have given some opportunity to make some corrections to this bill, to improve this bill, to allow the opposition to put some issues on the table, and have the members of the Legislature express their opinion on those sections of the bill. No, the opposition refused to do that.

I have come to the conclusion that the opposition made up its mind a long time ago that this was a political issue and a political issue only, and that their desire to improve this legislation, their desire to in any way be constructive in this debate, was long ago forgotten. They have come and shown, at least to me in terms of this bill, that they want to vote no. They want to vote no so that they can say to everybody who complains about this restructuring, "We voted against restructuring in your area."

When you do these kinds of things, you have to take some leaps of faith, you have to do some things which some of the constituents, some of the people in the various municipalities that are affected, won't like. That's what happens in municipal restructuring, no matter what you do in terms of moving boundaries, changing the structure or whatever. I guess it's much easier to say no than to show the leadership to come forward and say, "Yes, in general we support this bill."

That's what second reading debate is all about, that you believe in the general principles of the bill on an overall basis, that you believe in one city in Hamilton-Wentworth, that you believe in the restructuring in Haldimand-Norfolk, that you believe in the restructuring in Sudbury and that you believe in the restructuring in Ottawa-Carleton, and the changes in Toronto.

You may disagree with one of those things, but that happens in every piece of legislation we have in front of us in this Legislature. I don't agree with all the provisions of every piece of legislation, nor would I expect any member of this Legislature to do so, but if you believe in

general with the thrust of this restructuring, you should vote for it. If you don't, then I believe you can be blamed for voting against it, that you were against the general principles. I believe that is the case with Mr McGuinty.

When this matter was brought to the cabinet table I made a pitch that part of West Carleton township have the option to have a referendum on whether they would join the new city or join an adjacent county. The Ottawa Citizen today in its editorial criticized me for meddling in this matter, because they believe Mr Shortliffe, the appointed commissioner, has more right to be involved in this issue than I, the elected representative.

I make no apology at all for putting this proposal forward and I'm very proud that our government has accepted my suggestion that we give this rural area, small in population but very large in geography—West Carleton makes up 47% in geography of the total area of Ottawa-Carleton—the opportunity to opt out. Interestingly enough, this was the only township council whose representative came to ask for this particular option. I met with that township council on Sunday after the report came out and that was their request and therefore we carried it out.

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I believe that what we have done is try to take the best from Mr Shortliffe's report in Ottawa. We have changed a few things with regard to his report, but that's what politicians are about. I think they understand municipal government better than Mr Shortliffe, I believe I understand municipal government a little bit better than Mr Shortliffe and I believe the people and the representatives of West Carleton—incidentally, none of the people who went to Mr Shortliffe's hearing in West Carleton supported one city. That was not true in the other rural areas where he had hearings. There was significant support for one city in the other rural areas. This one area was perhaps more strident in that view than others.

I support this particular bill and the intentions of the government. I believe it's a long time due. It's progress that's been looked for for a long a period of time and this is the only government that has had the intestinal fortitude to move ahead with it.

Applause.

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): Thanks for the ovation. I appreciate that very much.

It's almost like déjà vu standing here again this evening because less than 24 hours ago we were debating a time allocation motion for Bill 27, to ram that piece of legislation through, and we are standing here again this evening dealing with Bill 25, dealing with time allocation and ramming through another piece of legislation.

In my opinion, one of the things that the government really loses sight of is the ability for the democratically elected politicians in a local area to make decisions. This government is very bent and determined that they're not going to let local politicians make decisions, that they're going to decide the fate of local government for this province of Ontario.

I think it's very scary, the direction of what we're seeing happening. We saw it first with Chatham-Kent. We saw that happen. We saw it happen in Toronto. Now we're dealing with four more in front of us tonight. What scares me, and I think what every citizen in this province needs to be concerned about, is that this isn't the end of it, it's going to continue. The government is going to continue to ram restructuring proposals down the throats of citizens of this province without allowing those citizens to have input into that decision.

I would just like to use an example of how things can be done the right way. For seven and a half years I was the mayor of the city of St Thomas. We developed a very good working relationship with the county of Elgin. One of the things we recognized was that we had to change the way we do business. I think every politician realizes that. But we were very determined to make sure it was a decision that was made at a local level and it wasn't going to be a decision that was rammed down our throats by the provincial government. We were able to achieve a decision that was in the best interests of the 75,000 citizens of Elgin county and St Thomas, a decision that allowed St Thomas to maintain its separate status and allowed the county of Elgin to maintain its status. I want to talk a bit about that and how things can be done at a local level without having a gun put to your head by the provincial government.

The plan in Elgin county and St Thomas resulted in a 53% reduction in the number of municipalities, from 15 to seven; a 45% reduction in number of locally elected representatives, from 79 to 43; and a 64% reduction in the size of county council, from 24 to nine members. Over the next two years, the city and the county have jointly worked together implementing a proposal, finding economies of scale, reducing staff complements and investing in infrastructure to meet the needs of the restructured organization. They've worked hard in planning and investing heavily in the assumption that the restructuring initiatives in Elgin and St Thomas were going to be accepted by the province.

I heard the government House leader speak tonight and I recognize that politics is a bit of give and take, but we're not about to give up everything just to get a couple of things out of it. I'll come back to that point in a bit.

I'm quoting right now from a letter that was written to the Premier by the warden of Elgin county, Rien Van-Brenk. I'll also be quoting from a letter written by the mayor of St Thomas, Joanne Brooks.

Interjection.

Mr Peters: That wasn't my letter, by the way. That's fine. You have your opinion and I have mine.

I just want to point out that the county of Elgin states in its letter:

"We have met your government's test of efficiencies ... we now have fewer politicians, lower taxes, better and more efficient service delivery, less bureaucracy and clear lines of responsibility and better accountability at the local level."

But more important, that was developed at the local level. As evidence of the restructured services, again developed at the local level, the city and the county have decided who will deliver Ontario Works, who will look after social housing, who will look after child care, land ambulance and the health unit. Again, this was all done by locally elected officials who are accountable to the citizens.

"Accountable municipal politicians representing the majority of electors should be permitted to recommend local solutions to meet your government's broader policy mandate."

I like this line from the warden of Elgin county: "We doubt that your government would allow 75 non-elected and unaccountable electors to request a review of the Ontario Legislature. We ask you to give municipal government the same consideration."

The city of St Thomas has also written to the Premier expressing concern over this legislation, because what can happen is all that good work and effort that was made locally can be turned around and dismantled by 75 electors, and that's a real shame. It's incumbent on all of us to recognize the abilities that local politicians have and that these decisions are important to be left in the hands of local politicians.

In conclusion, I think it's a real shame that the public has not had the opportunity to have public hearings on this. The Premier talked about giving the public an opportunity to have public hearings. Then we hear the flip-flop from the government that public hearings aren't going to be allowed. That's a real shame, because these decisions being made are affecting millions of citizens of this province, and they have not had the opportunity to have any input into those changes.

Mr Marchese: Speaker, I've got to tell you, I was waiting for the next round because I really wanted to hear the Minister of Labour speak on this issue. But I guess he's waiting for me because he wants to hear what I have to say on this issue, and that's OK.

I want to tell you, Speaker, that yesterday I spoke on Bill 27. You may have been here—I don't know—for that particular debate. I don't remember. But they put the noose to that bill yesterday and they're putting the noose to this bill today.

Can you picture that? That's exactly it, Joe. This is what happens to these bills. They put the rope around and say, "You're gone," essentially. But it's not a matter of putting somebody to sleep forever. What they're doing is putting an end to debate on bills. That's the order of the day with this government, day in and day out. They're getting away with it because they can. Essentially, they're doing this because they can, because they have the power to do so. Isn't that a frightening thing? "We can do this because we can." It's a frightful power.

Hon Mrs Marland: Isn't that what you did with 61 members?

Mr Marchese: If we can be accused of anything, speaking to the minister of children's affairs, the New Democrats consulted the public to death. What these

people are doing is ending debate and putting the noose on any debate; what we did was the opposite and we got beaten up over that.

We were tripping all over each other saying: "Two weeks, three weeks? Do you think we should do it? If we don't do this they're going to get angry on the other side. Maybe we should give the four weeks." Do you remember those debates? We were debating as to whether it should be two weeks, three weeks or four weeks.

1710

These boys, and women—I apologize if I don't include you in the same breath; I did include you, but I think it's largely the boys in the Premier's office determining these things—they're deciding that consultation is not good. Where do they learn that from? The previous experience of New Democrats. Because if you give people an opportunity to speak, they beat you up. We, being so democratic, Speaker—as you know, because you were here at that time—we thought people need to have a say.

Hon Mr Stockwell: That's the way it is.

Mr Marchese: Because it is that way and ought to be that way. People need to have a say, whether in agreement or disagreement. It is a right of citizens to participate.

What are these people, these men and women doing? They're saying: "We don't need citizens. We just need consumers. We don't need a citizenry, because we are the principal citizens who determine for them what is good and what is bad. We'll market it in whatever way is deemed appropriate to sell it to the public." In effect, what these people are saying is, "There are no citizens in Ontario, because we are the ones who are omnipotent and we'll decide because we are all-knowing."

Those of you who are watching who see yourselves as citizens ought to be offended by the modus operandi of this government, because what they are doing is excluding you, not just the New Democrats as we lose our opportunities to be able to say what we want to say, but they are giving you less opportunity to understand what is contained within those bills and giving you less of an opportunity to have a say than they normally would have, as you normally would have had under previous New Democrat ways of doing things.

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): They don't want to go back.

Mr Marchese: Now focus in on this member on the other side. We're talking about how we allowed debate and consultation. What you're saying is they don't want to go back to debate and consultation.

Hon Mr Stockwell: On what?

Mr Marchese: On what, Minister Stockwell? On everything. Minister Stockwell will say now—

Hon Mr Stockwell: The social contract.

Mr Marchese: He'll find an example, sure enough. Fair enough. He'll find an example where we may not have consulted perhaps on some issue because we had their support possibly? I don't know, but all in all, by and large, 99% of the time we consulted bills to death.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Social contract.

Mr Marchese: And Minister Stockwell, blah, blah, blah, with the social contract example. OK, you'll have your opportunity. Mercifully, the deputy leader has left you seven minutes so you're going to get your break. That's good.

The member from Hamilton Mountain made some good comments earlier on, you will recall.

Interjection.

Mr Marchese: Hamilton West. Hamilton nonetheless, within that region.

He showed the bill to the public and said, "Look how thick it is." I believe you said it was 167 pages, wasn't it?

It's a thick bill but not for this government. The thickness of bills does not deter this group of people, because again, you are all omniscient and omnipotent so that everything you want is contained therein.

Hon Mr Stockwell: You told me size doesn't matter.

Mr Marchese: Minister Stockwell, you will recall all those bills, the municipal tax bills. In the last session, seven bills were presented in the Legislature, each to fix the problems you caused before. You remember that, member from Etobicoke-Humber? Seven bills. You couldn't get it right the first time, couldn't get it right the second, couldn't get it right the third. It goes on. Do you get the picture?

Members of the public that are watching these debates because we're on live, do you get the picture? These people screwed up seven times. You know what? To prevent those potential screw ups, they've given themselves a special power that permits cabinet to determine whatever it is that may or may not have been in this bill, to correct or to add or to introduce something that normally would be presented in this Legislature. It's a legal opinion that I think it useful to have.

Hon Mr Stockwell: A legal opinion in the paper?

Mr Marchese: A legal opinion by this person. This is the National Post, buddies of yours. According to Ed Morgan of the University of Toronto law faculty, an expert in constitutional law, there's a fundamental reversal of the way things are supposed to work in our system of government and would be open to constitutional challenge, he argues. He continues that if the bill passes, the Legislature may itself be acting illegally by unconstitutionally delegating to the cabinet its authority to make laws.

It's just an opinion. Please disregard it, because you guys know everything. I just offer it for the benefit of those who are watching, but not for you folks because you guys know everything. He's definitely wrong. Disregard this constitutional lawyer because, good God, you guys have been through this before.

Mr Frank Mazzilli (London-Fanshawe): He said "may."

Mr Marchese: You're right. Don't be deterred by these words—"may." What do they mean? Unless they are somehow infallible, and no one is infallible except the pope, "may" should not deter you from anything. It's just an opinion. You're quite right, it's just an opinion. Please disregard it. It means nothing.

They're putting the noose on all debate everywhere. That's my fear. This bill makes profound changes to our society. I've got to tell you, I'm not a fan of reducing cities into one. I argued from the very beginning, big is not better. In fact, a number of studies that we quoted in the past say that when you make it bigger, it becomes more expensive, contrary to the opinion of Tories, who say we're going to save money. Bigger is not better. Bigger in fact is more expensive.

But you guys are right. You could almost be declaring yourselves infallible. You literally are declaring yourselves infallible. It's a big word, Minister Stockwell, I know. I know that in the Premier's office they know what that means, and I know that trickle-down theory, and I know you boys pick it up too.

Hon Mrs Marland: "You boys"?

Mr Marchese: And women. I just think there are a lot of boys in the Premier's office who run the show. I could be wrong.

I've got to tell you that in Toronto here, when we had mon ami M. Gilchrist speaking about its reduction—because that's what this bill does, right? It reduces them from 57 to, what, 43? My friend Minister Gilchrist, when he was minister, had this to say: "We gave the city the power to make those changes in Bill 103 so it's quite appropriate for the councillors themselves to be using that power if they see fit."

Poor Steve, eh? He must have gotten a whacking by the Premier or the office or other ministers, I don't know, but he was certainly put into place. You remember, this is the guy who was there to crunch a few bones, but may have relented and got soft, possibly. He may have gotten soft when he said: "This is the power they got. They should determine it. They should use it if they want. We're not about to get in there and mess things up."

Hon Mr Stockwell: You're paraphrasing.

Mr Marchese: No, no. I quoted it. I'm paraphrasing from the quote. I quoted it for you.

So then comes mon ami M. Clement, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, who says: "That is not the case. He was wrong. We're going to change the way we are about to proceed with the other minister because we know what's better for Toronto, because we need to protect the interests of Ontarians."

I remember at the press conference Minister Clement said, "We want a partnership." That was, I think, Thursday morning. He said, "We want a partnership with the city to work things out." Asked by reporters how this would unfold and how long the city had to be able to respond or work in partnership to give effect to these changes, he said, "Saturday, around 5 o'clock, that should do it."

Does that give you a clear sense of what partnership means to those men and women on the other side? It means: "Partnership is whatever we decide. We can change things, because we can." It's a powerful thing to have such power. I'll tell you, it can corrupt. It can put a few hairs on your chest if you don't have them. It can corrupt. It's a scary thing. But I hope it doesn't grow too

many hairs on a number of individuals on the other side because it could be a frightful sight. I wouldn't wish it on anybody.

The point I make here about Toronto is, why are they downsizing these people? Because if municipal politicians are worried about scrambling for survival, they're going to leave Minister Stockwell and other ministers from the Toronto area and generally this government alone. They won't have the energy to fight against anything this government has done with respect to the issues of homelessness, child care, transportation and poverty.

1720

All these people have done is to download responsibilities and costs, while they say: "We fixed things there. We're protecting the taxpayer. We're cutting back because the taxpayer is tired of paying the bills."

You remember, member from Hamilton West, we talked about that millennium book? Minister Clement said the other day: "We don't sleep. We spend night and day, seven days a week, 24 hours a day, finding ways to cut waste." He fell asleep for a little bit. He took a little nap. This is a \$3-million dollar nap. The Minister of Culture said, "The money doesn't come from the Minister of Education," but I say, "There is only one taxpayer." Do you remember that line? Mike Harris uses that line frequently. There's only one taxpayer. Which taxpayer paid for this? Does that individual have a name? Or are there different kinds of pockets I cannot identify?

Help me out, Minister Stockwell. You're about to speak, and I want you with lucidity to give some thought to this bill, to which I say: "You are not giving people an opportunity to debate and to give clarity to issues that are otherwise confusing."

We were discussing the pension bill and seniors would like to debate that bill, and you refused to give them that opportunity. Each and every time, you're excluding the public from the debate, not just excluding the opposition. And I will be voting—sit down, there's only a second left. I guessed it.

Hon Mr Stockwell: It is always entertaining to hear from my friend Mr Marchese.

When you get into these time allocation debates there is a certain degree of synthetic indignation offered up from all sides. I've got to say that when we first talked about rule changes, my friends the Liberals were in power. They changed the rules and they began the process of increasing time allocation motions.

When the NDP came to power they jumped in and changed the rules, and we supported it. Check the record. We supported the rule changes you put forward. They included a lot of time allocation motions. In fact I remember sitting in this House and in one week they had three time allocation motions come through the House on three separate pieces of legislation. To be fair, the most co-operation that could be offered by any opposition party was by the Conservative caucus when they voted in favour of the NDP rule changes.

Where the synthetic indignation does come in is that every government comes into power and offers some rule

changes. Wherever you happen to sit is where the synthetic indignation kicks in. I understand the politics of it. But with great respect to my friends in the NDP talking about committee time, talking about going out and talking to the people, probably the largest act they brought in to these good and hallowed halls here was the social contract. The social contract was an omnibus bill in the highest order. It overrode every collective agreement that the government had entered into right across the broader public sectors.

After hearing from my two learned colleagues, Omnipotent One and Omnipotent Two, you might ask yourself, "How many days did we go out on public hearings for the social contract?" which overrode every collective agreement in the history of the province of Ontario and which probably resulted in one of the major faux pas that accounted for their downfall. Well, we didn't. We went to committee of the whole twice. Committee of the whole is this place here. We didn't go to any cities, didn't go out to committee. We went to the committee of the whole and passed it in this House.

I've got to tell you, as a caucus we said, "You want to introduce the social contract," and we voted in favour on the first reading to get it on the record and get it going. But nobody was standing in their place screaming blue murder because you didn't go to committee. That's the way the place works sometimes, and I appreciate it. But it is synthetic indignation now for you to stand there, my friend Rosario, in this place and suggest for a moment that the omnipotent Conservatives are the ones who began this horrendous downfall away from democracy. You, my friend, a good NDP card-carrying socialist, brought the social contract in and really stuck it to your brothers and sisters.

Interjection: He whacked them.

Hon Mr Stockwell: He didn't just whack them. I can't say what he did to them; this is a public place. It was shameful. I feel contempt some days when I hear from him, or over here, of the total lack of democratic principles when you yourself, you, my friend Rosario, mon ami M. Marchese, when you yourself began the process with the social contract.

So listen. I understand that where we sit tends to make up a large portion of the debate and how we view things. I appreciate that and I understand the politics. But it is tough some days. It is tough some days when watching the sky fall, democracy slip into Lake Ontario, because we moved a time allocation motion. That's been done by every government in the past four terms and on numerous occasions and the sky did not fall. We didn't slip into Lake Ontario. We had a general election. The people spoke. God forbid, my friend Rosario, mon ami, there are but nine left. My heart bleeds.

Now we must talk about the council itself. In my few moments left I want to talk about that. I did that job. So did my friend Ms Marilyn Mushinski in Scarborough. I appreciate the fact there may be opposition. And Mr Hastings was on local council. Ms Mushinski sat with me on Metro council. There is some reason to this: 44 ridings

built into the federal-provincial boundaries, common voters' lists, common returning officers, common polling stations—savings, savings, savings. Fewer politicians: Agreed.

Who here thinks that 44 people can't make up a legitimate council representing all streams and views in a city the size of the city of Toronto? I say they can, my friend M. Marchese, mon ami. I think the people agree. I talked to lots of them. They weren't saying 44; they were saying 22. I said: "Twenty-two? Let's be reasonable. Let's take the middle ground." We are a government. If I chose 22, they'd say, "Too hard." My friend Rosario would just pillory us in this place. Forty-four isn't bad; 44 is good.

Thanks for listening. If you could tell the other eight in your caucus, I'd appreciate it.

1730

Mr Gerretsen: That sure is a tough act to follow. And I'll say something else. In this House, we hear so much justification as to why one party that happens to be in government is doing it because somebody else did something else so many years ago. Then we go back 15 years; we go back a whole generation. The bottom line is, we're dealing with the here and now.

We heard, for example, from the member from Gloucester today and from the government House leader that there have been 15 years of study into all of these amalgamations and annexations. Yes, there may have been 15 years of study, but there was a very short period of time in which these commissioners had to do their work. Then when they came in with their report, the government didn't even accept what they had to say and make some changes in all of these various acts.

The bottom line is that this act was introduced on December 6, 11 days ago. That's what we're dealing with: 175 pages. We've had three days of debate here, period, and debate is being shut off without any kind of public consultation on this document. That's what it's all about. That is undemocratic, and that you can't justify.

Then the House leader in this House says today, "Well, you guys can vote for it because it's only second reading." I noted down very carefully what he said. He said, "It's only second reading and then we get to the real work." Well, your own time allocation motion says that when it's called for third reading, it will be debated for two and a half hours and then the final vote will be taken. How much work is going to be done in two and a half hours? Certainly not public consultation. This is totally undemocratic in every way, shape or form.

There are large regulatory powers in the act that will give the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing the unfettered discretion to basically change any act at all as it affects this particular piece of legislation. It is kind of like a face-safe mechanism. You may recall all of the different property tax bills we had here. I'm sure Mr Eves, by this point in time, is probably saying to himself: "By golly, why didn't I think of that two years ago when I brought in the first act? If I'd had that kind of power, I could have just changed whatever needed to be changed

without ever going back to the House.” Instead, he had to come back here six time because he kept making mistakes in the process. This time it won’t be necessary. The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing will simply have those powers, period.

All that basically talks to process, and the process in this particular situation hasn’t worked at all.

But there is a much larger issue as well, and that deals with the reality of the situation and with the content of the bill. The thing that I’ve talked about, not only in the last two or three weeks but for the last five years, is that municipalities are formed as a result of common interests that people have, common concerns that they have in a particular area. To lump large rural areas in with urban centres, rural areas which in some cases are 20 or 25 miles away from the urban centre, is just totally and absolutely wrong. The voice of those rural people, who may in some cases take up 10% to 20% at most of the total population, is going to be forgotten. If they have one or two councillors on those particular councils, no matter how good those councillors are, their voice is going to be forgotten, because the main emphasis of all of those councils is going to be centred around urban issues, and the suburban issues, the rural issues, will be totally forgotten.

That’s the problem the member from Stoney Creek has, that’s the problem the member from Wentworth-Burlington has, and that’s the problem that probably some of the other members have here as well, that there is no community of interests.

If these commissioners had looked at it in such a way whereby they did away completely with all the artificial boundaries that are out there and said, “Let’s take a look at these communities and see how they really fit together,” I am positive in my own mind they would have come up with a better system, a better community of interests and a better realignment of the municipal services that were going to be delivered in these different municipalities. That’s what this is all about.

The process that has been followed in this case absolutely stinks; there’s no question about it. But the even larger issue is that the voices of these rural areas of our province that are involved in these large amalgamations—and there will be others to follow—by and large, in the future, as a result of this government’s action and future government actions in the same way, are going to be totally lost. That’s why I recommend on both scores that we defeat this bill and start again. There’s no need that it has to be rushed through before Christmas. When we dealt with the Toronto megacity bill, and we were involved in exactly the same election cycle—I know there are municipal elections next November—we didn’t finish that process until April of the year when the elections were held. There’s absolutely no reason why we can’t follow that same approach now and have some public hearings on this process in January and February and come up with the best solutions for the people of Ontario and the people who are affected in these areas.

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke): Mr Speaker, I will conclude the remarks for our party. I want to pick up where my colleague from Kingston, the former mayor of Kingston, finished off. I want to say at the outset that this is always a difficult challenge for any government and any Legislature. I want to say up front that there is no doubt in my mind that most of the communities being spoken of in this particular round of municipal restructuring do attract an argument for change. I know and would like to speak to Ottawa-Carleton, and to some degree to Haldimand-Norfolk, in my remarks. I don’t know Haldimand-Norfolk as well as I know Ottawa-Carleton, and I certainly don’t know the national capital region as well as my friend from Carleton-Gloucester, or my leader, or others who represent the constituencies in the national capital area.

It is really important that we recognize that we are going to have change, we are going to have reform. The question is, is it going to be an evolutionary change or is it going to be a more radical and revolutionary change? I certainly understand the pressure for the latter brand. If you are in the Ottawa-Carleton area, you will know that there has been a debate for, lo, these many years; there have been several commissioners who have looked at this. Members in this House, present and past, will understand the pressure that’s there.

I like to make the point, for example, as a rural person, that within the bosom of the national capital area there is a village that has had its own local government, as my friend from Carleton-Gloucester will know better than I. It is the village of Rockcliffe Park. I’d get a call from the press in Ottawa a few years ago to say: “Conway, you’ve got a lot of small municipalities up there in Ottawa Valley, up in Renfrew. We don’t understand why there can’t be a restructuring.” I used to be a bit mischievous and say, “I understand the question. Can I answer the question with a question? I have the map of Ottawa in front of me and I see two separate and distinct municipalities: the city of Vanier and the village of Rockcliffe Park, cheek to jowl, in an eastern part of what we call Ottawa. How is it possible you could have a city of—what, 40,000 in Vanier, Brian? Eighteen thousand. And what’s in the village? Twenty-four hundred.

I think it’s a wise person who asks that question and thinks about the answer. Rockcliffe Park is a very interesting, very special place. I’m not going to use my relatively few minutes tonight to explain the history of Rockcliffe Park, but I just want to say to people, there is a village in the bosom of old Bytown, and you would do well to understand what that village is, where it came from and what some of the rhythms of local community instinct might be. Far be it from me to say to those people what they ought to do. I simply make the point that as we go forward we have to ask ourselves as legislators, accepting change and accepting the need for change, what are the problems we want to fix?

1740

I'm interested in Haldimand-Norfolk and Ottawa-Carleton. Let's take Haldimand-Norfolk for the moment. Do you know what we're trying to fix? We're trying to fix what thoughtful people on the ground in that part of southwestern Ontario said, 25 or 30 years ago, was a non-starter. Thoughtful people said, "The Queen's Park design for the new regional municipality of Haldimand-Norfolk never made any sense." And guess what? Some 25 or 30 years later we are here to say, "You were right; it didn't make any sense," and now we are trying, probably wisely, a different approach.

But we were wrong. The all-knowing intelligence of the provincial government, circa 1969, 1970, 1972, whenever that was, about Haldimand-Norfolk was basically wrong. So now we are coming along and saying, "Well, they got it wrong, but we at Queen's Park 1999, we've got it right." I hope we're more right in 1999 than we were 30 years ago, but I think a thoughtful and prudent person, with our batting record on some of this stuff, would be very careful about a rigorous top-down solution when we are just admitting that the last effort to do that produced not nearly what we were advertising.

Ottawa-Carleton? My concern with Ottawa-Carleton quite frankly has to do with those rural communities. There are other issues, and my colleagues Mr McGuinty, Mr Patten, M^{me} Boyer and others have spoken to those far more intelligently than I could. I'm one of the few rural members left in this assembly, and I look at the Ottawa-Carleton part of this bill and I'm reminded of what Mr Shortliffe, the Ottawa commissioner, a very distinguished commissioner, told us when he released his report some weeks ago: "I must state that no issue gave me greater difficulty than the sensitive one of rurals in/rurals out." I simply want to say that today I presented a petition signed by hundreds of people in the rural part of Ottawa-Carleton praying that the government keep its solemn promise made by the now minister, the acting Minister of Municipal Affairs, that there will be an opt-out provision for rural people, at least in west Carleton.

I don't know where you draw the line, but I do know this, that if I lived in Galetta or Fitzroy, I don't think I would see my destiny with an urban municipality of 725,000 people anchored someplace around Parliament Hill. I might look to Arnprior or Almonte and see a more natural community of interests. Someone said it earlier, my friend Gerretsen, that one of the absolutely core issues here is, what is a reasonable community of interests?

I accept change. I accept change, and there's going to have to be some change in my county of Renfrew. I'm not standing here saying that we can live with a municipal architecture of 1960 or 1930 or 1910. But just because there is an impulse for change is no argument to impose, in some high-handed way, some kind of grand scheme concocted by bright theoretical people hundreds of kilometres away from the communities to be affected.

One of the values that I think is central to good municipal reform is a good community of interests. Another value that I think is very important is the role of the local politician. I personally reject and resent the high-octane rhetoric of the current Conservative Party of Ontario that has as one of its core values a relentless attack on politicians, whether they be local, provincial or national. I understand the fleeting appeal of that, but I have to tell you that my experience over the years is that the men and women who offer themselves for local government do so with the best of intentions. Yes, we may have too many, and I'm quite prepared to look at that, but I resent the argument that this is all about reducing politicians as a primary objective. I resent it, particularly when I know—and all I have to do is read John Barber's article in the *Globe and Mail* of November 1, 1999, "The Handyman Can," the story about consulting and lobbying.

Let me say this: We may have too many local politicians, and I'm quite prepared to argue that in Ottawa-Carleton we do. I don't know what the number is, but I tell you there are too many there now. But I am not going to be drawn into what John Ralston Saul calls "the hypnotic clarity of false choices," because the real choice is for every publicly elected politician you will retire, you are going to have a very well-paid lobbyist working for special interests behind closed doors. That is a real danger. That represents a serious contamination of politics.

The *New York Times*, a few months ago, wrote a splendid series of articles called, "What's really going on on K Street?" Let me tell you, we've got our own K Street at work here in Toronto, in Ottawa, in London and in a lot of other places, Hamilton, and we're going to be encouraging more of that. Make no mistake about it. You may not like that local ward politician, but you you're going to be able to get at that person, both in terms of an election or a retirement from politics. You will not know, you will not see and you will not always understand the very careful working of the high-paid lobbyist who'll be out there working for the special interest.

And there's more. Let there be no confusion about the nature of the change that we are making in places like the larger cities. What are we doing in the big cities? We are turning local politics over to big-moneyed interests. You're not going to be able to run now. You can't run now. If you want to challenge Mel Lastman, you better be able to come up with a million bucks. If you're going to run for the new top job in Ottawa, you're probably going to need for 400,000 or 500,000 bucks. Where are you going to get that? You're not going to get that at the Salvation Army. You're not going to get that at the local candy store. You are going to get that from the special interests, and you're going to be getting it from special interests that you probably regulate or deal with on a very regular basis. That's the story that's been made plain by analysis in this country and elsewhere.

I simply make the point, if you think the commonweal is going to be advanced by trading publicly elected politicians for private, big-moneyed special-interest lobbies,

you are living in a dream world and a dream world that is very dangerous. People are going to get hurt. People are going to get badly hurt in this exercise. I suspect it's going to be politicians, the ones who are left who are going to be hurt.

A final point I want to make is, we have had over a long period in our Ontario, I think, relatively good local government. I can think of stories in places like North Bay, Kingston and Windsor where we have had some very colourful, not always appropriate, local government, but in the main our local government has been very—

Interjection.

Mr Conway: Kingston township, I should add, where we've had a good local government because people have felt connected to it. There was, generally speaking, a good bond between the governed and the governing. It was good; it was relatively clean. I wonder what we're trading now. The heritage of the Baldwin Act has been a good and positive heritage, and I'm deeply concerned that we're turning a sharp and negative corner and heading in a different and not very inviting direction with some of the underlying policies that are contained in this government's agenda with respect to municipal restructuring.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Mr Klees has moved government notice of motion 26. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

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

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1750 to 1800.

The Speaker: Order. All those in favour of the motion by Mr Klees will rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted
Baird, John R.
Barrett, Toby
Chudleigh, Ted
Clement, Tony
Coburn, Brian
Cunningham, Dianne
DeFaria, Carl
Dunlop, Garfield
Ecker, Janet
Elliott, Brenda
Eves, Ernie L.
Flaherty, Jim
Galt, Doug
Gilchrist, Steve
Gill, Raminder
Guzzo, Garry J.
Hardeman, Ernie

Harris, Michael D.
Hastings, John
Hodgson, Chris
Hudak, Tim
Jackson, Cameron
Johns, Helen
Johnson, Bert
Kells, Morley
Klees, Frank
Marland, Margaret
Martiniuk, Gerry
Maves, Bart
Mazzilli, Frank
Molinari, Tina R.
Munro, Julia
Murdoch, Bill
Mushinski, Marilyn
Newman, Dan

O'Toole, John
Palladini, Al
Runciman, Robert W.
Sampson, Rob
Snobelen, John
Spina, Joseph
Sterling, Norman W.
Stewart, R. Gary
Stockwell, Chris
Tascona, Joseph N.
Tilson, David
Tsubouchi, David H.
Turnbull, David
Wettlaufer, Wayne
Wilson, Jim
Witmer, Elizabeth
Wood, Bob
Young, David

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

Nays

Boyer, Claudette
Bradley, James J.
Bryant, Michael
Caplan, David
Christopherson, David
Churley, Marilyn
Clark, Brad
Colle, Mike
Conway, Sean G.
Cordiano, Joseph

Curling, Alvin
Di Cocco, Caroline
Duncan, Dwight
Gerretsen, John
Kennedy, Gerard
Lalonde, Jean-Marc
Levac, David
Marchese, Rosario
Martel, Shelley
Martin, Tony

McGuinty, Dalton
Patten, Richard
Peters, Steve
Phillips, Gerry
Pupatello, Sandra
Ruprecht, Tony
Skarica, Toni
Smitherman, George

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 54; the nays are 28.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

It now being 6 of the clock, this House will stand adjourned until 6:45.

The House adjourned at 1803.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-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 civiques, 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.

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