



**Legislative Assembly
of Ontario**

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de l'Ontario**

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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Thursday 4 May 2000

Jeudi 4 mai 2000

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 4 May 2000

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 4 mai 2000

*The House met at 1000.
Prayers.*

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

JUDICIAL ACCOUNTABILITY ACT, 2000
LOI DE 2000 SUR L'OBLIGATION
DE RENDRE DES COMPTES
EN MATIÈRE DE JUSTICE

Ms Mushinski moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 66, An Act to make Ontario judges more accountable and to provide for recommendations from the Legislative Assembly for appointments to the Supreme Court of Canada / Projet de loi 66, Loi visant à accroître l'obligation de rendre des comptes des juges de l'Ontario et prévoyant que l'Assemblée législative fasse des recommandations de nominations à la Cour suprême du Canada.

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): I move second reading of Bill 66.

I would first like to thank the members for Cambridge, Etobicoke North, Guelph-Wellington and Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford, who will also be speaking on this bill this morning.

It is my pleasure today to rise in the House to ask my colleagues on both sides of the House for their support for my private member's bill, the Judicial Accountability Act. There is no question that issues of crime and justice are important to the people of Ontario. North or south, urban or rural, Conservative or Liberal, crime concerns all of our constituents. Throughout the first term of this government, and now in the second, improving safety in our communities has been a priority for the Mike Harris government. We have said before that we must ensure that law-abiding Ontarians feel safe in their neighbourhoods, on their streets and in their own homes.

Our government has taken many steps and introduced many new initiatives designed to strengthen our justice system. However, our constituents are still fearful. They still have many concerns with a justice system that they feel is failing to protect them. My colleagues and I heard the issues during the election, ranging from the Young Offenders Act and the parole system, to a court system that has completely failed law-abiding citizens. I heard it personally at a town hall meeting less than a month ago: Our courts are too lenient. No one in the room disagreed.

Our law enforcement officers have been vocal critics of a soft court system. Toronto Police Chief Julian Fantino has been actively pursuing the concepts of truth in sentencing and of placing policy-making powers back in the hands of elected representatives.

When I was reading the newspaper yesterday, I came across yet another illustration of what Chief Fantino has been talking about. Sam Calladine was convicted of manslaughter in the stabbing death of his wife. He was sentenced to 13 years in prison. Despite the fact that he had previous assault charges, jail escapes and weapons offence charges, Calladine's sentence was reduced to 10 years on appeal. Despite his criminal history and the fact that he took the life of another human being, he was released on parole after serving two thirds of his sentence. Since his release earlier this year, he has already fled a halfway house, stolen a pickup truck and two rifles and is on the run from authorities. This is the type of preventable crime from which we expect our justice system to protect us. When the court system fails to protect the interests of victims and law-abiding citizens, the public loses faith.

Our court system has not only failed to use stiff sentencing as a tool for protecting law-abiding citizens and punishing criminals, it has also created an environment that makes it difficult for our police officers to perform their duties effectively. Supreme Court decisions have thrown obstacle after obstacle in front of our hard-working law enforcement agencies. The most minor violation of court-created criminal rights can result in a guilty person walking away from drug trafficking, sexual assault or even murder without having to face justice.

An inspector with a police division here in Toronto recently shared this anecdote with me to illustrate the absurdity of some of these court decisions. Officers were responding to a "shots fired" report. When they arrived on the scene, they began searching the street. Very near the shooting site, they found a car on the street. Through the car window the officers could see the handle of a semi-automatic handgun sitting on the back seat of the car. It took officers over six hours to follow the court-created procedures necessary to obtain a search warrant for the vehicle.

Stories like this have created public distrust in the court system. There is a widespread feeling that courts are no longer a place for justice. Instead, their purpose is to ensure that the rights of criminals are protected above all else.

The Judicial Accountability Act begins to address some of these concerns. Bill 66 will create a public

registry of sentences handed down in serious criminal cases. This is not unlike existing sunshine laws such as the Public Sector Salary Disclosure Act. The registry will encompass each criminal case that goes to trial for a crime that carries a maximum sentence of five years or more in prison. The registry will be detailed with the name of the judge, the maximum sentence for the crime, the actual sentence the judge handed out and any reasons the judge gave for handing out a sentence less than the maximum. Cases that have been plea bargained will be exempt from the registry, because judges have little if any influence over the length of sentence handed out in many of those cases. It would be unfair to hold judges accountable for those sentences. In addition, a provision has been included in the bill to allow judges to explain why they gave out a sentence less than the maximum. This acknowledges the fact that the circumstances of each case are different and therefore the sentences will be different.

The bill also allows the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to recommend the appointment of future Supreme Court justices. Hopefully, this will force Jean Chrétien to abandon his policy of appointing interventionist judges. The values of the Supreme Court must reflect those of average Canadians.

The bill will provide us with empirical evidence in the debate over sentencing. Instead of speculation, we will once and for all be able to know whether sentences in Ontario are too lenient. The information gathered in the registry would be available in the future should the people of Ontario demand that their government introduce performance reviews for judges. In some instances, the registry will result in public pressure being placed on judges. Public pressure has already proven successful in certain cases. The newspapers attribute to public outcry the refusal of a judge to grant Karla Homolka prison passes. I was pleased to have played a small role in that with my petition on behalf of Scarborough residents. However, judges who sentence reasonably and responsibly need not worry. They can continue their practices.

This bill has received a great deal of attention. Of course, organizations representing defence attorneys are vehemently opposed to any legislation that could result in longer sentences for criminals. However, the overwhelming majority of attention has been positive. I have had countless constituents contact my office to express their support for the bill and their appreciation for my efforts.

Law enforcement agencies and officials are delighted. Edie Newton, executive director of Against Drunk Driving, had this to say: "The Judicial Accountability Act will be very instrumental in gauging how judges weigh criminal cases as serious as impaired drivers. For some time now my colleagues and I have had grave concerns with the apparent disregard for the victims and their families when it comes to punitive sanctions handed down by our provincial court justice system. You may count on our support for a very courageous and timely bill."

In conclusion, our courts are public institutions. They were created by the will of the people to serve the people. Their proceedings are open to the public. Results of those proceedings are public knowledge. It is time to make that information available for the public. I encourage all members to support the Judicial Accountability Act for the protection of law-abiding Ontarians.

1010

Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's): I rise today to speak on this bill on behalf of the official opposition. We do not support this bill. This bill is an abomination. This bill is unprecedented in its attempt to bully the judiciary into rendering judgments in a manner that is not offensive to the neo-conservative ideology of the government of the day. This bill is offensive to our system of parliamentary democracy, although I suspect that this characteristic makes it a virtue in the eyes of its supporters.

In the first century AD, a Byzantine emperor, Justinian I, established what we now refer to as Roman law in the Justinian tradition. Roman law system in the Justinian tradition worked pretty well for civil actions and for ordinary criminal cases, but its downfall came with respect to the judiciary. According to the legal scholar Norman Cantor, the judges' "excessive ambition" was "to climb higher in state or church by making decisions that would please those in authority, eroding the quality of the system." He goes on to say that "the flaw in the Roman law system was the lack of independence of the judiciary, which became very evident when the defendant in a criminal action ... was in disfavour with the government for ideological or other reasons.... A Roman law court could easily become an engine of royal policy."

And so it is here, 2,000 years later in the province of Ontario, or so the supporters of this bill, who seek to turn our courts into the engine of their political revolution, would have it. The Common Sense Revolution would thus produce common-sense judges, as dictated by the emperor from North Bay and rendered by common-sense judges who dare not displease the emperor from North Bay. Those unwilling to bend to the emperor's rule presumably wouldn't advance through the ranks of the judiciary. They would find themselves subject to the scorn of the public and the rants of their political opponents in the Legislature until such time as they too bent to avoid disfavour from the emperor of North Bay.

Hyperbole? I wish it were so. I wish it were. It has long been established in our jurisprudence that our Constitution demands an independent judiciary. Not only must justice be done, but it must be seen to be done. If Ontarians believe that judges are in any way influenced or motivated by what the government is doing, then there's no independent judiciary.

I will be reading letters from the treasurer of the Law Society of Upper Canada, the president of the Canadian Bar Association of Ontario and retired judges and lawyers, and they all say that this bill violates judicial independence. So there is a reasonable apprehension. But we don't even need to get into the abstract debate as to whether there is interference with judicial independence

here, because the very intention of this act is colourable. The member for Scarborough Centre has already blurted out the purpose behind the bill. These are her words: "To motivate lenient judges to give out tougher sentences." Well, that's that. She calls a spade a spade, the emperor has no clothes, the overlord is cheerfully exposed and the judiciary is sought to be an engine of the emperor from North Bay's royal policy. This is contrary to every principle of fundamental justice known to every commonwealth nation, particularly this nation and this province.

Chief Justice Lamer of the Supreme Court of Canada said in the Lippé decision that the principle of judicial independence has traditionally required that the courts be independent of government. This principle is established under two grounds.

First, under the constitutional convention of the separation of powers, each branch of the state must be independent from the others. Don't believe me, believe the Supreme Court of Canada, *Fraser v. Public Service Staff Relations Board*. They said what we all learned in high school and we all know is true. In their words, "There is in Canada a separation of powers among the three branches of government—the Legislature," here, "the executive," the front benches there, "and the judiciary," the courts far away from Queen's Park. "In broad terms," the Supreme Court of Canada said, "the role of judiciary is ... to interpret and apply the law; the role of the Legislature is to decide upon and enunciate policy; the role of the executive is to administer and implement that policy."

So if you don't like the sentences that judges are handing out, you pass legislation which changes the sentences, and the courts interpret those laws. If you cry foul because you say you don't have any jurisdiction to do so, then you presumably, politically, talk to your federal cousins, talk to Tom Long, whom you long to be prime minister, or you run for federal office. With all due respect, there is business in this Legislature which we have jurisdiction over and that we wish to do. But if this is your *raison d'être*, I say to the member of Scarborough and other members who support this bill, I encourage you to run federally. If you want to be the official opposition critic for the Canadian Alliance, then please go and do so. But here in this Legislature, we have provincial laws to pass, not abominations that interfere with the judiciary as this does.

The second ground of constitutional protection is under our Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Section 11(d) of the Charter provides for the right to a fair trial before an independent tribunal. Again, the appearance of judicial independence is as sacrosanct as its operation. Public confidence is critical. They need to know that their judiciary isn't being bullied by anybody, any government, into handing down a decision it would not otherwise hand down. That makes our principle of judicial independence even more "integral and important in our constitutional system," says the Supreme Court of Canada, in *Beauregard*, "than it is in the United King-

dom," from which the constitutional convention I spoke of earlier derived.

Either way, on its face, this bill has an unseemly, despotic connotation to the effect that the province is engaging in explicit or benign interference in the judicial branch.

Interjection.

Mr Bryant: The explicit interference? By their own admission, they're trying to motivate judges. By their own admission, they're trying to pressure judges into handing out longer sentences. That's explicit interference.

Benign interference is where you lump judges together with another branch of the state, and the member for Scarborough Centre admitted as much in her speech. She said that public servants are subject to "performance reviews," therefore judges should be subject to performance reviews. The problem is, public servants are accountable to ministers, who are accountable to this Legislature.

Interjection: Notionally.

Mr Bryant: Notionally. Judges are not democratically accountable, because they are a separate branch of the state.

So, by their own admission, there is both explicit and benign interference, and a more blatant case of interference I cannot imagine.

But we know this already. A similar bill was introduced by the member from Oshawa under the previous administration. It was referred to by then Attorney General Charles Harnick as unconstitutional, and it died on the order paper.

1020

So there's no excuse for the position taken by the Attorney General, the Honourable Mr Flaherty, in this case. He said in the *National Post* and other newspapers on April 20 that "releasing such a list might not" even "require passing a new law, and his staff is looking into ways it could be done under current legislation"—so not only forget about judicial independence but forget about democracy. You don't even need to pass the law. He then said in his words, "I think it addresses a need which people have to get some kind of accurate reading on what sentences are done."

This is an infamous occasion in the history of this critical and *sui generis* ministry. After all, the Attorney General has special legal and constitutional duties. On his own Web site, the minister says he "has unique responsibilities to the crown, the courts, the Legislature and the executive branch of government. ... the office has a constitutional and traditional responsibility beyond that of a political minister," in his Web site's own words.

He's vested under the Ministry of the Attorney General Act with special responsibilities to safeguard judicial independence. Section 5 of that act says that he must "superintend" the administration of justice, that he must "superintend" the operation of the judiciary. Well, some superintendent, this Attorney General—more like an absentee landlord, although that may give absentee landlords a bad name.

We all know that the Attorney General is in flagrant violation of his duties under the act and under the constitution. He's the one who's supposed to stand up in cabinet and say: "I stand aside from cabinet on this point. This act is in violation of the constitution." Mr Harnick had the courage to do that, and I can assure you that the Honourable Chief Justice of Ontario Mr McMurtry would have done that, Ian Scott would have done that, Ms Boyd would have done that—but Mr Flaherty did not do that.

I will also remind—and it gives me no pleasure to do this. Mr Flaherty has an obligation as a member of the bar, as do all, not to judge-bash, under rule 11 of the rules of professional conduct, and we are walking up to that precipice with this bill. The path you are clearing, Attorney General, is not an honourable path, and I urge you to return to the path, cleared by your predecessors, of wisdom and justice.

Look, don't take my word for it. There's a letter of May 2, 2000, to the Attorney General from the president of the Canadian Bar Association—Ontario: "By requiring judges to forward to the government their reasons to justify why a lower sentence may have been given would seriously erode judicial independence.... We are completely opposed to this proposed legislation. As chief legal officer of the crown, we respectfully ask that you reconsider your support for Bill 66"—Susan McGrath, the president of CBA-O.

The treasurer of the Law Society of Upper Canada also wrote the Attorney General, and it's dated May 3, 2000. If I have time I'll read the whole letter.

"Any suggestion that the Legislative Assembly might provide for some form of review of the judges of the Superior Court of Justice and the Ontario Court of Justice raises the spectre of unwarranted interference with the independence of the judiciary.

"We hope that you and your colleagues on all sides of the Legislature will be able to persuade the sponsor of the bill, Ms Marilyn Mushinski, to withdraw it from the legislative agenda."

It's signed Robert P. Armstrong, QC, treasurer of the law society.

The Ottawa Citizen can hardly be accused of being liberal, with all due respect. An editorial states: "That Ontario Attorney General Jim Flaherty reacted positively to this is shocking. No government should single out certain judges for public pressure tactics."

Retired judge John Osler: "The response of Ontario's Attorney General to some of the latest outbursts has been to state his intention to establish a system for scoring judges with respect to their sentencing practice. The proudest act of the government he supports in recent times has been to make it easier for the police to punish squeegee kids, a proportion of the population so small as to be almost unmeasurable."

David Scott writes to the Globe and Mail, "I don't know Ms Mushinski or whence she came, but the identification of the Attorney General of Ontario with this sort of attitude is alarming."

I urge the Attorney General and the members on the other side of this House not to support this bill and head down the path of despotism. It's time to stop blaming everybody, including judges, for what's going on in Ontario. Stop blaming other politicians. Stop blaming those unable to defend themselves, as all the counsel here in this chamber know cannot in public, and start being accountable for your own administration.

Yet even as the emperor from North Bay plays the political game of friends and enemies, mindlessly stealing the pages from Thatcher and Gingrich, it is this attack upon judicial independence that takes this debate out of the realm of ideology and into the realm of despotism. If I overstate that, then this is without a doubt the most unsubtle attempt to interfere with the judiciary ever visited upon this Legislature.

Have you ever seen that statue of Justice? There is one of the goddess of Justice, Justitia, outside the Supreme Court of Canada. The Attorney General would have seen it on the way into the court the other month. The kids may have seen it in Judge Dredd. There is a statue of justice, holding the scales of justice. Can you look in her eyes? No, you can't; she's blindfolded. Justitia cannot see race or creed or colour or class. She's supposed to be blindfolded. This act attempts to rip off the blindfold and expose the judiciary to the glare of public opinion and accountability. I urge all members of this House, as we do, to not support this bill.

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): My first response to this was to dismiss it as just a wacky backbench private member's bill. Lord knows private members' business on Thursday mornings has seen its share of good bills, mediocre bills and outright wacky ones. My first response was that this is not going to have any sort of substantial support here. There'll be 15 minutes of Warholian fame for its sponsor and the matter will be over and done with.

But then the Attorney General, Mr Flaherty, endorses this proposition. That moves it beyond just another wacky backbench private member's bill during private members' business on Thursday morning. Then it became something that wasn't just wacky but downright scary. I beg to differ with the comment made earlier that this is unprecedented. I think you'll find this sort of standard, this sort of approach in any number of tinpot dictatorships in Third World countries and totalitarian regimes where there is a direct relationship between the regime in power and their so-called judiciary.

My God, Speaker, we are the envy—have been—of the world for some of the very basic democratic principles that guide the division of powers, that give rise to this observation of the independence of the judiciary. Here we've got a bill that would not just erode but quite frankly directly attack the independence of the judiciary. The motivation is to exploit and carry on this so-called "Get tough on crime." I don't think this government is serious about getting tough on crime.

This government, as has been noted, wants to blame Ottawa. Heck, I'll join them in blaming the feds. I have

no qualms about bashing federal Liberals. I've no qualms about bashing provincial Liberals. I'm in a unique position. As a New Democrat I can criticize both the Conservatives and the Liberals and I do so readily. From time to time I criticize my own party or my own leadership. God bless.

We've got a judiciary in this province, in this country that, I put to you, is acknowledged internationally as being outstanding in terms of its skill and its competence and that is heralded for the clear independence they have from political power, from government, from the state. That's as it should be.

We hear anecdotes from the sponsor of this bill. When did we hear any hard data? We hear her expressing what she says is the concern of, as she will put it, "oh, so many people" about what she calls light sentences. Well, I suppose. I read papers too and I see any number of reports. From time to time I see a sentence and I say, "My goodness, that seems a particularly light sentence." At the same time, I've read the papers and looked at reports of any number of judicial proceedings and I've said, "That's interesting; it seems like a pretty heavy sentence, a pretty heavy hit, a pretty heavy whack" for what I read.

1030

The author of this bill, the sponsor, would want this Legislature to have some sort of supervisory power over judges and their sentences. She doesn't understand. I don't think she understands that judges' decisions are carefully scrutinized by courts of appeal at both the provincial level and at the Supreme Court of Canada up in Ottawa. The federal government has criminal law jurisdiction—I think that's what lawyers would tell you—and the federal government has the power to set the sentencing provisions in the Criminal Code, and they do. So I had to pay some attention to the comments made with respect to this member, the author of this bill, that maybe she should be running for federal Parliament if she wants to write federal law. If she wants to write Criminal Code amendments, maybe she should be running federally. There's a federal election coming up very shortly. I have no doubt about that. I expect then to see her hat thrown into the ring.

The judges I have observed, have watched and know, and I believe they're representative of judges across this province at all levels, are extremely well trained, extremely hard-working—Mr Ouellette, please.

Mr Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa): What?

Mr Kormos: I can read your body language: Yeah, "What?"

The Acting Speaker (Mr Tony Martin): The member will know that you refer to members in the House by their riding, not by their name.

Mr Kormos: I apologize. The problem is, I can't remember the name of his riding since the Fewer Politicians—

Ms Mushinski: Oshawa.

Mr Kormos: Oshawa. Is that your riding, Mr Ouellette? OK. Mr Ouellette grimaces.

Interjection.

Mr Kormos: Wait a minute. Mr Ouellette, the member from Oshawa, grimaces when I talk about the judges of this province being hard-working, well trained and extremely competent. I suggest to him then that he should stand in rotation and name some judges who in his opinion are not well trained, not competent or not hard-working. Name some judges, if you're of that view, who don't take their responsibilities extremely seriously and who don't have regard for appellate decisions which guide their sentencing decisions. If Ms Mushinski, the author of this bill—where is Ms Mushinski from?

Mr Bryant: Scarborough Centre.

Mr Kormos: If the member from Scarborough Centre, who sponsors this bill, wants to talk about judges who in her opinion are incompetent or less than hard-working or less than committed or less than professional, then let's hear who they are. Let her report them to the judicial council if she can identify these judges. I beg to differ. I am not aware of judges in this province who meet anything less than the highest standards.

Do I, like any other member of the public when we read the reports and when we observe these things from a distance, agree? Of course not. Am I in possession of all the facts? Similarly, of course not. Do I have confidence in our appellate courts to overturn faulty decisions? Yes, I do. Do I have confidence in our appellate courts to set sentencing guidelines? Yes, I do.

We've seen some of the greatest minds, at our provincial appellate and at the Supreme Court of Canada levels, in terms of appointments. Justice Louise Arbour comes to mind most recently, as a new appointment. I don't think there's a single Canadian who has anything less than the highest regard for her capacity, for her judgment, for her legal acumen, for her skill. I shouldn't start naming names, but I could go on to appellate judges, present as well as past.

The author of this bill wants to talk about rights of victims. We've been trying to talk about them and we've been trying to tell this government that their Victims' Bill of Rights was deemed an absolute failure. This government had its own lawyers in court arguing that their Victims' Bill of Rights didn't provide any rights. Justice Day of the Ontario Court, when called upon to examine the Victims' Bill of Rights—this government was warned when it was passed, was warned during second reading, was warned during third reading, that this Victims' Bill of Rights was but a piece of paper. It took victims to take this government to court trying to seek redress or relief under that Victims' Bill of Rights to establish or prove or demonstrate to this government that their Victims' Bill of Rights amounted to a big zero.

Is there something hypocritical about a government member standing up and bemoaning the lack of rights for victims when this government's own Victims' Bill of Rights doesn't provide any rights and provides no relief or redress for victims, when this government's Victims' Bill of Rights is not worth the paper it's written on?

This bill attacks some very fundamental democratic principles. I suppose I shouldn't be astonished any more

at anything this government does. I suppose I shouldn't be astonished at the disdain this government shows for democracy in terms of what I've seen since 1995 coming from this government in any number of bills and policy directions. This government talks about law and order, but with this bill they're posing a direct attack on the rule of law. They want judges to be subjected to political scrutiny so that politicians can pass judgment on whether judges were doing their jobs properly or not. Clearly the bill is designed to try to intimidate judges. Clearly the bill is designed to erode and attack the independence of judges.

Are any of us pleased when we see an acquittal or a not guilty verdict based, rather than on the facts, as these guys have put it, but on perhaps some sort of technicality? Probably not. But let's understand that the rights the author of this bill condemns are the rights all of us share. I'm damned grateful to be living in a country where we have a Charter of Rights and Freedoms, because I enjoy those rights and freedoms as well. Do I have to share them with people who commit crimes? Yes. I have no hesitation in acknowledging that. But is it worth that to ensure that there are some basic and fundamental constitutional rights for every person in this country? You bet your boots it is. We've got people from all over the world risking their lives and any number of things to come here to share in those rights which are part of the very foundation of a democratic society, a democratic country.

1040

I think you've got the message that we're not going to be supporting this bill. I think you've got the message that we're awfully disappointed in a person who holds himself out as Attorney General who would condone this kind of legislation. I've got to tell you that I'm awfully disappointed in anybody in this Legislature who, for instance, may be a lawyer, who would not stand up and defend our judiciary and, more importantly, the independence of the judiciary, and understand, as members of this Legislature, that if you want to change the law, you go to Parliament in Ottawa. You get elected there and you influence changes that will effect changes to the Criminal Code of Canada. That's the way it's done. You don't lean on judges; you don't try to blackmail them; you don't try to coerce them.

I know where some of this stuff comes from. This is oh, so American. This is oh, so George W. Bush in its character and in its quality. That's not the sort of thing Canadians believe in. It's not the sort of thing Ontarians believe in. It doesn't work in the United States. It doesn't create justice there. I'll be damned if we're going to let it come here. We're going to protect the independence of the judiciary in this province and this country.

Mr Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge): I'm privileged to speak on this bill today as parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General and provide the position of the Attorney General on two very important legislative initiatives.

I appreciate my colleague the member for Scarborough Centre's interest in obtaining more information about criminal sentences in Ontario. Private members' business is an important part of our legislative process and I look forward to further debate on this matter.

This bill calls for statistical information to be compiled concerning criminal offences for which the maximum punishment is imprisonment for five years or more. This bill requires an annual report to be tabled in the Legislature each year for all cases in which the maximum punishment is five years or more and for which a sentence of less than the maximum is imposed.

Some of this information is already publicly available. It may be possible to achieve the same result without passing a new law. Throughout the legislative process we will be looking seriously at this bill to make this determination.

The Attorney General has had the opportunity to appeal every criminal sentence that may not be appropriate in the public interest. This has been and remains a key accountability mechanism in the criminal justice system.

We cannot underestimate the effect sentencing practices have on Canadian society as whole. That is why the Attorney General recently issued sentencing directives to crown attorneys which emphasize that conditional sentences are not appropriate for serious crimes and crimes of violence or attempted violence. This directive was issued in response to the federal Liberal inaction to amend the Criminal Code so that conditional sentences can never be handed out for serious and violent crimes.

Introduced by the federal Liberals in 1996, conditional sentences permit offenders who would otherwise be imprisoned for up to two years to serve their time in the community. The Supreme Court of Canada found earlier this year that because of the wording of the federal government's addition to the Criminal Code, conditional sentences could not be ruled out even in cases of serious violent offences. As a result of this decision, the Attorney General wrote the federal Minister of Justice almost three months ago urging her to make the necessary changes. To date, there has been no legislative action by the federal Liberal government.

The people of Ontario will not tolerate responding to offenders who should be in jail by allowing them to serve their sentences in the community. Public safety is too important. We believe that the public should be made aware of the type of sentences that are being handed down. Ontario's court system belongs to the public and the people of Ontario have a right to know.

The bill calls for the Legislature to make resolutions to the Governor in Council of Canada, nominating people for appointments to the Supreme Court of Canada. Ontario is responsible for the administration of justice as set out in the Constitution. However, the province has no input in the appointment of judges to the Supreme Court.

Fundamental issues have been raised with the advent of the charter. We believe it is important for the province to have input into who will be making these important

decisions that affect the fundamental rights and freedoms of all Canadians. Consequently, we support this initiative to provide the province of Ontario with meaningful input into the process.

I know the concern that underlines my colleague's bill is also public safety. The legislative process will permit members on both sides of the House to have their input to ensure that the best interests of Ontarians remain at the forefront and public safety is paramount. This bill will benefit from input and refinements, and we look forward to further discussions.

Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke North): Thank you very much for allowing me to present my views and support the member from Scarborough-Ellesmere in today's debate on judicial accountability.

It is absolutely fascinating and bizarre to listen to the criticisms across the way on this particular bill. If you introduce the concept of change into the courts, automatically the folks across the way go on pilot and construe it as an attack on somebody. Does that suggest then that we're probably dealing here with a group of people who think the status quo is perfectly acceptable? If that's their case, it would be interesting to hear what—some of the judges, provincial or federal, should come and have a look, visit, go with the police, whatever they want to do, and see what is happening in terms of violent crime on our streets.

In my own riding, we just had two murders in the last three weeks. That's nothing to be proud about. But what do we hear from the member for St Paul's? He construes it that if you'd presented an act that would have banned toy guns, we wouldn't have had those murders. If you take the Rock Liberal approach, the gun registry law would have prevented that. So I ask people, why is it that we still have murders in Toronto? We have Statistics Canada reporting that crimes are going down, but in point of fact, if you look at the actual reality, violent crime isn't going down in the city of Toronto, much as the folks across the way want to display a sort of, "Oh, everything is OK," as they have in unreal Ottawa.

I would suggest that these folks across the way, the courts and the clerks, everybody get out into the streets and see for themselves, as some of us have gone to the courts to see what is happening in the way of sentencing, how we deal with violent offenders. Why do you think we've established support for victims who have to be subjected, after 15 years, to the "faint hope" clause? It sure isn't much faint hope for the victims who had members of their families murdered, but over there that's great. What are we into in terms of society? We need a turnaround.

This is not any attack on judicial independence. If separation of powers under the great strict constitutionalist argument presented by the member for St Paul's is so effective, why does he tolerate, accept, as the member for Niagara Centres does, interference in how legislatures across this country deal with social policy issues? We see the Supreme Court always being an activist there. But that seems to be OK, enjoining separation of powers, but

you can't have legislatures ever talking about what happens with the judiciary. Everything is just okey-dokey fine.

I support the member's intent. I think it's a good first step.

1050

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford): I'm pleased to join in the debate of this private member's bill brought by the member from Scarborough.

I just want to talk about our track record with respect to safe communities. During our first term, our government created strict discipline facilities for young offenders, introduced the Victims' Bill of Rights, provided funding for over 1,000 new police officers, toughened parole standards so that fewer than 50% of applicants are now receiving early release, expanded Ontario's DNA crime lab and increased the number of applications to have criminals declared dangerous offenders.

Since our election in June, our government has—and in my former role as Chair of the justice committee, I was there for the passing of the Sergeant Rick McDonald Memorial Act, which dramatically increased sentences for drivers who flee police officers, the passage of the Safe Streets Act that outlaws aggressive panhandling and other behaviour, and the introduction of Christopher's Law, the first sex offender registry in Canada, and there have been numerous other measures that have been taken.

Let's focus on what the member is trying to accomplish here. The bill will create a registry of sentences handed out for serious crimes. It will list the judge's name, sentence given, maximum sentence and any reason the judge gave for handing out a sentence less than the maximum. This will give the public, law enforcement agencies and politicians better access to information. The bill also allows the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to make recommendations on Supreme Court appointments through resolution of the House. This is important. The courts are public, so we should not be denied access to the information. A registry of sentences will help us determine whether our court system is sentencing leniently or whether it is merely a perception created by the media. This transparency is needed.

I do not understand why the opposition parties are not in favour of this. They're basically just paying lip service. They're really not getting at the substance of this. Quite frankly, you've got to question whether they're in favour of safe communities and trying to make sure our public is protected and victims are given fair treatment.

The federal government refuses to get tough on crime. They will not act on a number of measures. There's the faint hope clause that lets criminals out after serving only 15 years of a life sentence. In the past 20 years, over 25 convicted killers have reoffended while out on parole. They have not acted on the discount law that allows criminals to receive parole after serving only two thirds of their sentence. They will not act on Corrections Canada's plans to release 1,600 more convicted criminals on to Ontario streets every year. They will not act on the

Young Offenders Act. Changes to the Young Offenders Act still do not recognize crimes like aggravated assault, sexual assault and drug trafficking in the definition of serious crimes.

I support the member's intent. I know that what she's trying to accomplish here is to bring transparency and accountability to the public with respect to the crimes she's dealing with, so I support it.

Mrs Brenda Elliott (Guelph-Wellington): I'm very pleased to have the opportunity to rise this morning to speak in support of this bill, and I'll read the title again: An Act to make Ontario judges more accountable and to provide for recommendations from the Legislative Assembly for appointments to the Supreme Court of Canada.

I found it interesting to listen to the comments of the opposition across the way, who are essentially attacking this bill as somehow interfering in the judicial process. My riding of Guelph-Wellington is, for the most part, a very safe and very lovely community. We're not plagued, as some of my colleagues are here in Toronto and surrounds, with crimes of great import, and murders are not headlines frequently in our newspaper. As a consequence, I don't get a lot of letters in my constituency office or calls from constituents specifically concerned about crime and safety issues. What I have received, though, is a great number of letters from time to time, usually in response to certain newspaper articles or certain actions in other jurisdictions, where constituents are concerned about sentencing.

The thrust of this bill is very clear. It's essentially contained in subsection 1(2), "The local registrar or clerk of a court shall keep a record with respect to all sentences imposed at the court when," and it goes on to give the details of sentencing. This is about keeping a record.

In my riding, the constituents I represent want fairness. They want separation between political roles and judiciary roles. They're very clear about that. What they do want is fairness in sentencing and they want accountability. What I hear from my constituents is that there is a concern, there is an uneasiness that the sentences given out by judges for very serious crimes are in fact not appropriate.

I, like so many others, share their concerns. What I see this bill doing is making a very clear opportunity for a record to be kept, to be reviewed. I think that in so doing we will have an opportunity, as legislators, as citizens, as law enforcement officers, to see if there is a problem. And if there is a problem with sentencing, if their sentences are too light, if they are uneven, if it happens to be one particular judge or another, we will then be very clearly aware of that and appropriate steps can be taken.

This bill before us today is very clear. It's about getting information on which further decisions or opportunities could be made for change. I am proud to stand in this House and say that this is a bill that my constituents, for the most part, would support because they do want to have confidence in their judges, they want to have confidence in the justice system, and right now, quite honestly, that confidence is disturbed.

I would like to compliment my colleague from Scarborough Centre, Ms Mushinski, who has brought this bill forward. It is a bill worthy of consideration for this House. I will be very pleased to speak and to vote in favour of this bill.

The Acting Speaker: Two-minute reply, the member for Scarborough Centre.

Ms Mushinski: The debate certainly has been very spirited this morning. I want to first of all thank my colleagues for their words of support.

I would say to the member for St Paul's, who I know is a lawyer and a very eloquent defender of the judicial system, that my bill really deals with the defence of truth in sentencing. It was interesting, I heard a 10-minute speech on the defence of that judicial system, but most certainly I didn't hear a lot about the defence of victims.

As for the member for Niagara Centre, who is always very eloquent, he gave me what I considered to be a somewhat patronizing pat on the head about my lack of understanding of the judicial system. But I can assure the member that I have a great understanding of democracy, and my interpretation of democracy is always of the people, by the people, for the people, which is why I'm speaking in defence of my bill today.

Crime is a great concern to all of us. It reaches beyond our duties as politicians. It can and does touch our daily personal lives and the lives of those we care about. I know the Judicial Accountability Act doesn't solve all of the problems of the justice system. As provincial representatives, we don't have direct control over many of the system's major aspects; however, we must do what we can and we must have the courage to be innovative.

Once again, I ask my colleagues on both sides of the House to stand in support of the Judicial Accountability Act. Together we must create a province where law-abiding citizens feel safe in their neighbourhoods, on their streets and in their homes.

TARTAN ACT, 1999

LOI DE 1999 SUR LE TARTAN

Mr Murdoch moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 49, An Act to adopt an official tartan for Ontario /
Projet de loi 49, Loi visant à adopter un tartan officiel
pour l'Ontario.

Applause.

Mr Bill Murdoch (Bruce-Grey): Thank you for the applause from both sides of the House and I'm sure all sides of the House will certainly support this act.

Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's): I will even though I'm a Celt.

Mr Murdoch: Yes, all right. That's good.

I see one of your members over there even has a tartan tie on, which is nice to see today. I don't know whether that's his tartan or not, but maybe we'll find out later.

1100

It's with great pleasure that I open the debate in the House on my private member's bill, Bill 49, An Act to

adopt an official tartan for Ontario. This proposed bill will, if passed, establish an official tartan design or pattern as one of Ontario's provincial symbols, similar to the trillium or the amethyst, which we adopted a few years ago.

Symbols are an important part of our public as well as our private lives. Symbols represent our identity and how we represent ourselves and our values, both now and in history. The tartan is one of those symbols.

Just to give you a bit of history, the tartan is an ancient form of dress used by the Scottish Highlanders. A tartan is made up of repeated patterns of threads. It was, and still is, worn by members of Scottish clans for the purposes of identification of both the clan and the clan's territory.

Tartans were first recorded in history by Julius Caesar in France, where he first observed Celtic tribes. The tartan "kilt" is a play on the word "Celt." While looking like a type of skirt, it is actually a descendant from the early battle garb that was worn by Roman soldiers. I know Mr Palladini will be interested in that.

The tartan can also be worn in the form of a dress, a sash, a scarf or a tie. The tie itself was once just a large bandage that crusaders wore around their necks in the event that they were wounded.

There are also many different forms of tartans. There's a mourning tartan, a hunting tartan, a clan tartan and a district tartan.

This tartan that we hope to adopt for the province is in fact a district tartan. A district tartan is one that identifies a person's residence in a certain district, whether that person is a member of the dominant clan or not. So anyone can adopt a district tartan. This tartan would identify someone as being from the province of Ontario.

There are many unofficial tartans for Ontario and also many tartans worn by groups in this province. The Ontario Provincial Police have their own tartan which they have worn since 1968 for the pipes and drums band. That tartan is a clan tartan. It identifies members of that group. The RCMP have their own clan tartan, as well as do hundreds of families whose ancestral roots can be traced back to Scotland. I personally have my own tartan, which is the MacPherson tartan. The Murdochs were accepted to the MacPherson clan, so we adopted the MacPherson tartan which I have on today.

But some may ask, why does Ontario need to adopt a Scottish symbol to represent the province? How can the tartan, the ultimate Scottish symbol, be relevant in this multicultural province?

The answer to these questions is that an official tartan pays tribute to many of the varied contributions of Canadians of Scottish ancestry to both Ontario and Canada. Scottish leaders have made many significant contributions in history, culture, law and government. As a matter of fact, many communities in Ontario have been named after Scottish leaders, communities such as Fergus, Wallaceburg, Glengarry county and Cambridge, just to name a few.

We have had many leaders of Scottish background in education. The University of Toronto, formerly King's College, was established by a Scot, as was the Agricultural College of Ontario in Guelph, by Sir Fergus.

Alexander Graham Bell, the inventor of the telephone, was a Scot. Colonel John McCrae, the author of *In Flanders Fields*, was a Scot. Many of our political leaders, including the first Premier of this province, were Scots. It is on the tartan of this first Premier, Sir John Sandfield Macdonald, that this proposed Ontario tartan is based.

I would like to take a minute to tell you about what I propose to be Ontario's official tartan. It will be comprised of four colours: blue, green, white and red. The tartan represents what we love about our great province and it's also a reflection of our history. The tartan reflects the diversity of our province. In the tartan the shades of green represent the forest and agriculture of Ontario. The red represents the First Nations of Ontario. The shades of blue represent the waters of Ontario. The white represents the sky over Ontario.

I have a sample of our tartan. I will pass it around so people can have a look at it. If this is adopted, this would be our official tartan in Ontario. We were pleased to have that sent to us today.

This tartan was designed by Mr James MacNeil of Toronto, in conjunction with the chair of Scottish studies at the University of Guelph. The colours of this proposed tartan truly reflect the spirit of natural harmony of our marvellous history and geography, as a district tartan should. As I explained before, we have clan tartans and district tartans, and this will give anyone in Ontario who is proud of our Scottish heritage, or proud just to be an Ontarian, a tartan to wear.

Ontarians, if this bill is passed, can wear a tartan wherein all colours and stripes combine to create an atmosphere of harmony and prosperity, a tartan designed with a phrase in mind that is well known to Ontarians: "Keep it Beautiful."

In 1991, by way of resolution, I introduced Tartan Day in Ontario. On April 6 of each year we proudly wear our tartan to honour the contributions of Scottish settlers in the province, and I wear it to honour our settlers in Grey and Bruce counties. The resolution was passed unanimously in the Legislature with the support and approval of all three parties. April 6 was chosen, by the way, because it marks the anniversary of the declaration of Scottish independence in Arbroath Abbey in 1320.

I'm sure some of you watched the movie *Braveheart*. That was part of our history and part of our culture. When they make movies they sometimes change a few things, and I understand the movie was mostly made in Ireland, but our Irish settlers also have tartans, and in my area of Bruce-Grey we have many Irish settlers also, as well as the Scottish and the English.

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): They need independence too.

Mr Murdoch: They have St Paddy's Day. As one member said, St Patrick's Day is celebrated all over the

world, and I'm proud to wear green on that day also. This year on St Patrick's Day I was in Havana, Cuba. They have independence days down there, but out of the whole crowd there was one little fellow with a green hat on, drinking green beer, in Havana, Cuba.

Mr Kormos: Smoking a green cigar.

Mr Murdoch: He didn't have a green cigar, but he was right from Ireland and he was supporting it and showing the Cubans how to drink green beer. That was a great day we had in Havana.

Mr Kormos: Cerveza.

Mr Murdoch: Cerveza, right.

Mr Kormos: Cuba si, Florida no.

Mr Murdoch: Well, we won't get into that one today, Peter.

The resolution had support of all three parties. An official tartan for Ontario also shared the same support when it was first introduced into this House by my former colleague Lillian Ross in 1997. Her bill went through two readings and the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly. Unfortunately, the 36th House finished sitting before third reading. Lillian Ross worked hard on that bill. It went through here and, as I say, it was really unfortunate it didn't come back and wasn't done. So I'm doing this on behalf of Lillian Ross also, because she's not here now. She's from Hamilton. I'm sure she'll be proud to see this bill go through, so I hope all three parties can work with us on that.

During second reading, Mrs Ross's bill had an unusual effect on members of the House. I would like to read a quote for you from the Ottawa Citizen about that day: "What was notable when second reading debate occurred was the tone of this normally testy place." I can't see where they'd get that idea. "Stories got personal. Members tried to explain something of themselves and their parts of the province to colleagues from elsewhere. The search for what they had in common replaced the focus on what divides."

So when this went through last time we had a nice House and hopefully today it will stay that way. Maybe even later on; I'm not sure. I think that is what an official tartan can do for this province. If adopted, the symbol of the tartan could bring us all together in this province. It will bring us a community of interest that we all share as Ontarians.

Passing this bill is simply not enough, however. The tartan does not become official until it is registered with the Lord Lyon King of Arms in Scotland.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Tony Martin): Further debate.

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): I'll be sharing my time with the member for Davenport.

I'd like to congratulate the member for Bruce-Grey for his initiative. I think it's very important that we do what we can to reflect the cultural diversity of this province, and this initiative is most important. My own ancestry is not Scottish. I'm Ukrainian and very proud of my heritage. The member made reference to the tartan I'm wearing today. It's the Bruce tartan. I'm proud to wear

the Bruce tartan, which originated with the Bruce clan in the name of Sir Robert de Brus, a Norman knight who escorted William the Conqueror to England in 1066. The folk legend and hero of Scotland was Robert's son and was entitled Robert, seventh Lord of Annandale and second Earl of Carrick, and was popularly known as Robert the Bruce. Robert the Bruce was born in 1274 and fought to victory in the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314 and won the independence of Scotland after a fierce struggle with England in 1328. The Earls of Elgin are descended from the Bruces of Clackmannan.

1110

This past weekend Lord Elgin, the 11th Earl of Elgin and Kincardine, was visiting my riding in Elgin county. I had the opportunity to visit with Lord and Lady Elgin as they celebrated their 41st wedding anniversary here in Canada. It's important to also recognize that the county of Elgin, named after a descendent of Lord Elgin's, has adopted the Bruce tartan as the official tie of the county of Elgin. It was from the county of Elgin that this tie was presented to me.

I also want to recognize the 31st combat engineer regiment, the Elgins. The Bruce tartan is also the official colours of the Elgin regiment. It was great to have Lord Elgin visiting the 31st combat engineers this past week.

I'd like to speak a little bit about some of the Scottish heritage that exists within my own county. In Elgin county, the Scots were known as the Highlanders. Between 1816 and 1818, Scottish settlers came to what was known as the Talbot Settlement. Colonel Thomas Talbot arrived in 1803 on the north shore of Lake Erie and opened up vast tracts of land for settlement, hence the name the Talbot Settlement. The early Scots who arrived, the Highlanders, came to settle in the townships of Aldborough and Dunwhich in Elgin county. Some of these early settlers had come directly from Scotland, although many had come from New York state, where they tried to establish themselves but were unsuccessful.

Some of the other early Scottish settlers who arrived in our area came from the Canadian west. They originally had gone to the Red River and had travelled thousands of miles to the Selkirk Settlement only to find that they had been misled and deluded as to the nature of the land and the climate that existed there.

The first settlers arrived in May of 1816. These families, the Gillies, the Forbes and the Haggards, were all Highland Scots. It's interesting to reflect back and look at the hardships of those individuals, those early pioneers who gave us what we have in Ontario today. Their first homes were constructed places of shelter of bark, which were subsequently displaced by log structures with roofs of bark and chinks of clay filling the logs. Firearms were of antiquated type, and what they had in the way of ammunition was very limited. Times were tough, but the Scots persevered and settled, and their families have continued to live on in Elgin county today.

One of these families in particular has a story of great interest, the McKillop family, who arrived in 1816 from Quebec. They came from Scotland and travelled to the

Talbot Settlement along with the McNabb, McKellar and McDougall families. The McKillops, like their neighbours in that area, had been farmers and fishermen in Argyllshire. When Duncan McKillop first settled the land, he owned one cow. In order to survive, he had to go to work and find a job to help pay for the needs of the family. His wife, Mrs McKillop, also had to find a job, for which she was paid \$1 a week and given a cow as a bonus at the end of her winter's labour. By the next season, the hard-working pair was able to raise enough corn, potatoes and oats to ease their needs, but it took several years before their farm was able to supply a good supply of wheat. These were not only difficult harvest times but the settlement suffered from disease, which killed and crippled many of the early settlers.

Scottish settlers had brought blankets, clothing and utensils with them. Otherwise, though, they were very poor in these early times. Money was scarce, and it was difficult to sell anything but labour. Only a great deal of spirit and co-operation helped make them successful in these early times. In this respect, the Scottish had few equals.

As I said earlier, I think we need to be proud of the heritage and the contributions that individuals have made to our country. One of the individuals I'd like to speak of today is a gentleman who is renowned across the United States and across the world. He had a distinguished career as a Harvard professor, an ambassador and a public servant. That individual is John Kenneth Galbraith. John Kenneth Galbraith was born in my riding, outside the village of Iona Station. After Professor Galbraith spent time at the Ontario Agricultural College, he distinguished himself with a remarkable career, a career that we should all be very proud of. I had the opportunity this past February to meet Professor Galbraith at his home in Boston. It was a wonderful day to spend a couple of hours with Professor Galbraith. I had to apologize to the Premier that day because I stood the Premier up on a visit to St Thomas, because I felt it was important to spend that time with Professor Galbraith.

One of the publications Professor Galbraith is well known for is a book he published in 1964. It's known as *The Scotch*. It tells what it was like for him growing up in west Elgin and what the early lives of the Scotch were like. I wanted to read an excerpt from this wonderful publication, a publication that I would recommend anybody read.

"... on the first of July of 1914 or 1915 when I was approaching the age of either six or seven. We had gone to Dutton to celebrate Dominion Day, the Canadian Fourth of July, and to attend the Caledonian games. There had been running and broad-jumping, and throwing of weights for distance and height, and a great deal of sword dancing and piping. Some of the dancing we found tedious but the rest was wholly fascinating. My father, one of the officials of the West Elgin Caledonian Society, had looked very grand in a modified kilt of the McDonald tartan—not many of the clansmen owned a complete kilt so they made do with what they had."

To the member for Bruce-Grey, congratulations on your initiative. You have my full support, sir.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate.

Mr Kormos: I insisted on being the only caucus member to engage in this debate. I wanted all of the 15 minutes. After much arm-twisting, I convinced caucus that none of them could have any time in this debate, that I was going to have all 15 minutes.

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): No fights?

Mr Kormos: There were fights. You bet your boots there were fights. There was weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth and pulling of hair. There were people in caucus far more influential than I am, far more powerful than I am, the heavyweights in the caucus, who are close to the centre of power, but I prevailed. It doesn't happen often, but for once I got my way in caucus. It has been many, many years since I've had my way in caucus and it'll be many years before I'll have it again.

I say to Bill Murdoch, the member for Bruce-Grey, up in Owen Sound territory, our man in Havana, as we've discovered—he speaks about the Irish patriot wearing the green on St Patrick's Day in Havana. I trust that we can rely upon the member for Bruce-Grey to wear the tartan in Havana next time he visits there. Especially once you get into March and April, where it starts getting incredibly warm and humid, I suspect it might be a relief.

We're supporting this legislation, as we did the legislation by Mr Murdoch's colleague from the last government. Ms Boyd spoke at length to it. She spoke at length about her own Scottish roots. I don't have any Scottish roots. I'm a Slovak-Canadian. My family is from Slovakia, from a very small peasant village, which is still there and very much like it was 50, 100 years ago—200 years ago. The people are incredible, and I'm incredibly proud of my personal cultural heritage.

1120

But I'm equally proud of the cultural diversity and the ethnic diversity that exist throughout this province. I caution Mr Peters not to dismiss this too readily. I believe there is sufficient blue in this tartan that any Ukrainian could identify with it.

I have no qualms about anything, as we indicated a couple of weeks ago when we spoke to yet another part of our cultural mosaic, the German community. I have no qualms. As a matter of fact, I'm enthusiastic about supporting any initiative which helps to celebrate the cultural history of this province, of this country, and the incredible diversity. While I am not blessed with any personal Scottish lineage, I know that a large number of my constituents are and would applaud the existence of this district tartan—Mr Murdoch, had you had a tie made, I might have worn it today—which entitles anybody from the province of Ontario to wear it.

Having said that, let me tell this Legislature the great concerns I have that I spoke about a couple of weeks ago and that I want to address again, because we have this rich cultural heritage. It's huge and it's a growing diversity. Every time new Canadians come to this country, come to this province, we see that diversity expanding

and growing. One of the means by which so many of those groups of people celebrate and maintain their culture within any given community, like communities in Niagara, like communities across this province, is in their cultural halls—down in Welland, Thorold, Pelham, St Catharines, across Niagara—be it the Casa Dante, be it the Polish hall, be it the Ukrainian hall, be it the Slovak Hall, be it the Hungarian Hall, be it the Club Social for the francophone community, just on and on. These halls have been maintained for decades and generations by members of those ethnic Canadian communities and are true non-profit organizations. They survive on volunteer work. In many of them, the people engaged in that volunteer work are aging and becoming fewer in number.

What happened two years ago, as a result of a policy statement issued by the government, was that these halls were denied their non-profit status across Ontario. What that meant was that they've all been reclassified as commercial for the purposes of tax assessment. We've seen the property taxes of these non-profit halls double and triple to unconscionable levels and, quite frankly, unsustainable levels of property taxation. It isn't a result of a change in legislation; it's a result of an interpretive memo that was sent out by the government to the assessment offices. It's highly discriminatory against these cultural groups. It endangers the survival of their homes, be it the Croatian National Home or any other. These homes are critical to the survival of these communities in a real way and critical to the function of them sharing their unique cultures with people of other cultural backgrounds here in Ontario and across Canada.

I wanted to use this opportunity, as I join in celebrating the Scottish heritage of this province, to ask government members to please join with me—Jim Bradley, from St Catharines, and I have been working quite a bit on this issue, but we need the support of other members because these cultural halls are at risk and those communities are going to suffer and all of us are going to suffer.

So, Mr Murdoch, I'm telling you that I applaud your celebration and the entrenchment of that by way of legislation in the creation of an official tartan, a district tartan for the province of Ontario.

I'm asking you to join with me in persuading your Minister of Finance to readdress the issue, the policy statement that came from the government which has caused assessment offices across this province to reclassify these non-profit cultural halls. Sadly, the memo specifically identifies cultural halls as being exempted from the non-profit status. It says Lions Clubs, Rotary Clubs etc, and of course they are. I don't quarrel with the fact that those groups maintain their non-profit status, hence residential assessment. But it's happened across the province.

Why it hasn't impacted as much some other parts of the province as it has in Niagara is because the tax increases have been subjected to the 10-5-5 capping. They really haven't seen the whack yet. What happened in Niagara is that they weren't reclassified until the

threshold for the 10-5-5 capping became effective. They weren't the beneficiaries of the 10-5-5 capping, so they got the whack this year. Trust me, it's going to happen across the province. Again, Polish halls, the Italian community halls, the whole gamut is going to enjoy, if I dare say it that way, these 100%, 200% and 300% increases in property taxes.

We've got to talk to the Minister of Finance and persuade him. It doesn't require legislation. It's an interpretive memo that came from the ministry to assessment offices telling them that cultural halls, even if they're non-profit, are still exempted or removed from the non-profit status—very unfair, very discriminatory, very prejudicial to the well-being of these halls and to the great contribution they make to our communities.

Like I've told the folks down in Niagara, these halls are not just places to celebrate culture. They also serve the community, and if we don't have these volunteer-based, non-profit cultural halls serving the community for people's weddings, for celebrations of all types, and we rely totally on the commercial sector, people are going to get whacked when it comes time for one of your kids to have their wedding reception, any number of things, when you start paying commercial rates instead of the very generous rates that you pay for excellent services at these cultural halls.

I say to you, again on behalf of any number of them—and if I start naming them I'm going to get in trouble because I'm going to omit some, but be it Club Rheingold, be it Club Social, be it the Slovak Hall, be it the Hungarian Hall, be it the Croatia National Home, the Croatia hall, the Polish hall, on and on and on—we've got to move quickly or else these places are simply going to be shut down, boarded up, and we'll have lost a great part.

Here we are. We're trying to say something about recognizing and preserving part of our cultural heritage—and again I support this. The NDP caucus supports this. Of course we do. Ms Boyd supported it enthusiastically when Ms Ross had her bill before the House. But let's put this in the broader picture. I hope, Mr Murdoch, you don't think it's unfair that I use this opportunity to raise that issue, but it's an issue that's a source of a whole lot of anxiety for me, I know for Mr Bradley, and I know for any number of ethnic cultural groups across the province who have seen their property—that's not fair, is it, for these non-profit halls to be classified commercial for the purpose of assessment so that their property taxes double and triple? Is that fair, Mr Murdoch? Of course it isn't. I want you to join me with the same enthusiasm you have for this district Ontario tartan, to join Mr Bradley and me in fighting to keep these ethnic cultural halls alive and vital.

Mr Ruprecht: And me too.

Mr Kormos: Mr Ruprecht's on side too. You bet your boots he is. Mr Ruprecht's going to be speaking in just a few minutes. So folks who are interested, don't change that channel. I know we've got competition. Rosie's on,

or Oprah—Oprah's not on in the morning. I don't know whether she's on in the morning.

Interjection: Regis.

Mr Kormos: Regis is on. Regis and Kathie Lee, I guess, yes.

Mr Ruprecht: This is more exciting, isn't it?

Mr Kormos: We're trying to make it more exciting, Mr Ruprecht, but sometimes we falter. I can just see those people reaching for their clickers now. It's only the prospect of Mr Ruprecht speaking in short order that's keeping people tuned in. You know Mr Ruprecht, don't you, folks?

I want you to join me in saving those cultural halls. I join you and I applaud you. You've a person that's very cleverly, very uniquely—again, I can identify a little bit of Ukrainian in here. I can't find the Slovak in here yet.

I've got to tell you, I'll spend some time reflecting on it. I'll talk to folks. Maybe John and Margaret Hudak down in Welland can help me with the Slovak content, or Bruno Galat and his wife, Gita. I don't know. I'll search for some Slovak content in here and I'll encourage my Hungarian colleagues and my Ukrainian colleagues and my Polish colleagues, all those great people in Niagara, from this diverse background, this incredibly rich background.

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We don't enjoy often enough and celebrate often enough the diversity of our community. I'm not talking about tolerance. I don't accept tolerance as the standard. We shouldn't just be tolerating diversity; we should be celebrating it and sharing it. We should be enjoying the fact that in this democratic country and province, in this free country and province, in a country and province where one hopes things like the independence of the judiciary remain a paramount hallmark or foundation stone for that democracy, we can share and celebrate these diverse things.

I would ask Mr Murdoch, is there a protocol? You had a colleague once who wore outrageous tartan jackets into the House. I suppose, in your response—

Interjection.

Mr Kormos: Please. You had a former colleague who brightened the place up, who was luminescent when he arrived sporting the tartan, in his jacket. Is a discreet pocket hanky sufficient, or does one have to sort of go all out and let 'er rip and be decked from head to toe in the brightest? Now, I don't know if there are going to be other speakers here. He might—I anticipate he's going to speak because he seems dressed for the occasion, or at least sweated for the occasion—consider how this is a somewhat more sober and less alarming tartan than the one he sports today. At the very least, sir, it's far more conservative than what you happen to be wearing this morning.

Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough): I like fiery things.

I'm pleased to speak on Mr Murdoch's bill, the member from Grey-Bruce's bill, An Act to adopt an official tartan for Ontario. As I stand before you I am proud to

wear the Irish Royal Stewart tartan to emphasize the importance of this bill.

Many of us who represent areas in the province with a heritage that is connected to a country or an organization that has a tartan are fiercely proud. In my case, my heritage originates in county Monaghan in Ireland, from whence the Stewarts immigrated to this great province back in 1826. In fact, my six grandkids are the seventh generation to live in this great province.

We will continue to retain that heritage and those traditions. We will continue to remember and honour the traditions of the past, but there comes a time when we must pursue the new. We must establish new traditions that represent Ontario's history, culture and traditions.

Ontario is one of the few provinces in Canada that does not have an official provincial tartan. The Ontario tartan could be worn by all Ontarians, no matter what their heritage may be. I believe it will help all Ontarians come closer together. The selected tartan represents the diversity of our great province. It represents our environment and it represents our aboriginal communities.

An Ontario tartan will contribute to provincial culture and pride. It could be a symbol of a province that has established its importance in a very changing world.

Ontario athletes of all ages, in competitions outside or inside the province, could proudly wear the tartan to identify their province. This tartan will provide distinctive marketing opportunities for tourism. It will contribute to products such as special gifts, souvenirs and keepsakes. It will identify visually our name, the great name of Ontario, globally. The tartan will establish a marketing tool for Ontario that will be known around the world.

I hope that all members of this House will support this new and important initiative.

Mr Ruprecht: I am delighted to join in to support Bill 49, An Act to adopt an official tartan for Ontario as a provincial symbol. Symbols are important in both our public as well as our private lives. Symbols represent our identity and how we understand ourselves and our values. As such, they're not simply a point of reminding us of our past, but they're more dynamic ideas that can inspire our imagination with pride and guide us on how we continue to face the challenges of the present and, indeed, the challenges of the future.

Why a tartan as a symbol for Ontario? A tartan, as we know, is an expression of Scottish culture—a symbol for all Ontarians, when we think about the multicultural nature and context of our culture in our nation and especially here in Ontario. Today I'm wearing this tartan, which was given to me by Mr Murdoch, and the multicultural colours of Ontario. Are they exclusive? No, both the tartan and the multicultural symbols are inclusive. It is those symbols of inclusivity that we're trying to embrace even though we're Conservatives or NDP or, in our case here, Liberals. Yet when we look at the symbols of the tartan, this specific one, and the multicultural items which I'm wearing we know we speak distinctly about inclusivity.

That also means that as politicians we have to look after people who are sick, those who are weak and those who need our help. That is just as important when we are thinking about the tartan today as questions of, who do we include, who do we think about, who do we serve as politicians in Ontario? The whole idea of tartan inclusivity, multicultural inclusivity, is very special and must be looked on, especially today, as a symbol of caring for all of us. I'm delighted to be in support of the official tartan.

Second, and just as important, I also remind you of the great contribution of the symbol of the tartan, of the symbol of the Scottish nation in a way, that Scots have made not just to Ontario and Canada. We know their impact in Nova Scotia when they first settled in the 18th century, in fact in the 17th century, but I also remind you of the great impact they've had right here in Toronto.

While it is true that the co-founder of Toronto came from a German background, it is just as true that the symbols and the very foundation, the very block of the growth of Toronto, comes from the Scottish heritage.

I am reminded—and I will quote from a book called Toronto's Many Faces, which many of you—

Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington): Who is the author of the book?

Mr Ruprecht: The author is Tony Ruprecht; that's me. I thought the members received copies of it. If you didn't receive a copy, please let me know.

Mr Murdoch: I don't have a copy.

Mr Ruprecht: You didn't get a copy? I will certainly provide you with one.

There is a very important chapter in here about the Scottish contribution to Toronto.

"A strong Scottish legacy has shaped Toronto's cultural, religious, political, and economic history. Toronto's oldest church, Little Trinity Church on King Street East, was built in 1842 under the patronage of" none other than "Scotsman John Strachan, the first Anglican bishop of Toronto and founder of King's College. On the lawns of Queen's Park"—right here—"sits a bronze bust of the city's first mayor, Scotsman William Lyon Mackenzie ... along with a statue of George Brown ... founder of the Globe"—the Globe and Mail—"newspaper. And at Queen and Yonge streets a plaque at the former Simpson's building (now The Bay) is a reminder of the achievements of Robert Simpson," for the first high-rise department store.

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"The Scots have been in Toronto," and first of course in Canada, "since 1621, when the Kingdom of Scotland established one of its earliest colonies—New Scotland ... men from Orkney who arrived here in 1720, recruited by the Hudson's Bay Co.

"In the late 1700s, Scottish merchants—many of them United Empire Loyalists—settled in Quebec," and then of course they came to Toronto.

"Scotsman Sir John A. Macdonald was Canada's first Prime Minister, and Toronto's first mayor, William Lyon Mackenzie, began the Colonial Advocate newspaper ...

and led the Rebellion of 1837 against the city's oligarchic government. His grandson, William Lyon Mackenzie King, served as Prime Minister of Canada for 27 years."

Then, of course, we had 80,000 Scots coming here in 1871 to 1901, and 240,000 more arrived before the First World War, followed by another 200,000 after 1919. So now today we have about a half a million Scots living in Ontario. The community's cultural activities in Toronto have centred around the St Andrew's Society, the Caledonia Society and the large number of clan societies connected with a worldwide organization.

These societies are very famous. They bring in people from all over the world. As all of us know, when we turn on our television, sometimes we see the Highland Games and we are proud as Canadians of their contribution to this country, and especially, I'm reminded, the contribution that Scots have made to Toronto.

So I'm delighted to support Bill 49 in the name of Mr Murdoch, MPP from Bruce-Grey. I'm also reminded that we will most likely have unanimous agreement because of the importance of the tartan becoming a symbol of Ontario.

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford): I'm certainly pleased to join in the debate on the private member's bill by the member from Owen Sound, An Act to adopt an official tartan for Ontario.

Obviously what we're doing here today is celebrating Ontario's Scottish heritage. I want to reflect on that somewhat. It was during the reign of the famous High King of Scots, Robert the Bruce, that the Scottish people announced to the world their ancestral identity and national independence in the Declaration of Arbroath.

Since that time, April 6 has been an important date for all Scots. In the 17th century King Charles I passed on his own Scottish heritage to what was to become the royal province of Nova Scotia, especially through its coat of arms. April 6 is a provincial day in Nova Scotia, otherwise known as Tartan Day.

The intent of this bill is to have a tartan for the province of Ontario. Most provinces in Canada have an official tartan in this way, except for the province of Ontario. Ontario has about seven unofficial tartans which have been used over the last 150 years, including the Red Ensign tartan. Bill's proposed private member's law would put an end to this confusing variety and establish one official Ontario tartan for all time.

A similar bill to establish an Ontario tartan was previously debated in the Ontario Legislature, with former Hamilton MPP Lillian Ross leading the charge. At that time I was chairman of the Legislative Assembly committee and I was fortunate enough to be in that role when we debated that in committee. It came out of that committee, but it did not proceed forth from there, obviously.

During that debate members of all three parties stepped forward, many wearing their family tartans, to give their unanimous support for the Ontario tartan. Beside me here today, and who spoke earlier, is the member for Peterborough, Mr Gary Stewart, who is

appropriately dressed for the occasion. I would say as chairman that it was very important for us at that time to have recognized the significance of the bill.

Among the many aspects of Ontario and Canadian life that continue to be heavily influenced by the heritage of the Scots is our monarchy. Let us remember that the Canadian monarchy is an English-Scottish one, formed after the royal union of the two kingdoms under King James VI of Scotland, James I of England. Scottish royal traditions persist to this day in Scotland, where Her Majesty the Queen is referred to as Queen Elizabeth I and is addressed as Her Grace.

Certainly we have our traditions also in this country. As you know, we have an oath of citizenship. Every immigrant must say the pledge aloud as the final step in becoming a Canadian citizen. The oath was created by the government of Pierre Trudeau in 1976 and became a fixture in citizenship courts a year later.

I'll just quote the oath for the record: "I affirm that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, Queen of Canada, her heirs and successors and that I will faithfully observe the laws of Canada and fulfill my duties as a Canadian citizen." That oath of citizenship, which every immigrant must say and pledge aloud before becoming a Canadian citizen, is part of our Scottish heritage.

I'm very pleased to join the debate today and I look forward to this bill going into committee for debate and back to the House. I commend the member from Owen Sound for his work.

Mr Arnott: I am very pleased to rise this morning and participate in this important debate on Bill 49, An Act to adopt an official tartan for Ontario, standing in the name of Mr Murdoch, the member for Bruce-Grey. I still think of it as Grey-Owen Sound. He was the member for Grey-Owen Sound for almost 10 years.

I also want to pay tribute to my former colleague the member for Hamilton West, Lillian Ross, who brought forward Bill 132 in 1997, which I believe was a similar bill to this which was passed by the House but unfortunately didn't pass into law. It was not ordered for third reading, which was its final status.

I'm very proud to be wearing my kilt in this House today for the very first time. My wife gave me this kilt for a Christmas present this past year. I must say that for a boy from Arthur to walk down Wellesley Street this morning wearing this kilt took some nerve. I elicited quite a number of looks and stares, a few smiles but no whistles, I'm afraid to report. I am very proud as well of my Scottish heritage. My name, Arnott, of course, is a Scottish name. My ancestor Henry Arnott came to Ontario from Crieff, Scotland, around 1880. I've had the privilege to visit Crieff. There's a whole slew of Arnotts still living there. It's quite a thing to visit your ancestral homeland, and it's something I was really pleased to do. We Scots are known for our frugality and our stubbornness, and Bill and I are known for those qualities. The Premier's office knows about that, so we don't have to remind them.

I'm also very privileged to be a resident of the town of Fergus, now the township of Centre Wellington. My family moved to Fergus after redistribution took place. The village of Arthur in my old riding of Wellington was cut out of the riding, so we moved to Fergus. Fergus hosts the annual Highland Games and Scottish Festival, the biggest Highland Games in Ontario, held every year in the month of August. We're very proud of our Scottish heritage there.

This bill will adopt an official tartan for the province of Ontario and bring forward another symbol to the people of Ontario, similar to the amethyst and the trillium, which were adopted a few years ago. The Tartan Act recognizes Scottish heritage in this province and the leaders who brought significant contributions in history, culture, law and government. As a matter of fact, many communities in Ontario have been named after Scottish leaders.

It hasn't been said, but this member has already brought forward a bill to recognize Scottish heritage in Ontario by bringing forward a private member's bill, which was passed into law, designating Tartan Day for April 6. As we know, we have important debates in private members' time, but quite often the bills unfortunately do not pass into law. But this member has had the honour and privilege of bringing forward a bill that was passed into law.

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In the time I have, I want to talk about our Scottish heritage. Just to give you a bit of history, tartans have been an ancient form of dress used by Scottish Highlanders. There are many different forms of tartans. There are mourning tartans, hunting tartans, clan tartans and district tartans. The tartan Mr Murdoch hopes the province will adopt is in fact a district tartan, used to identify a person's residence in a certain district, whether or not that person is a member of a dominant clan. Anyone can adopt a district tartan, and that's what this tartan is.

There are quite a few tartans associated with Ontario, currently as many as eight, and the Ontario Provincial Police have their own tartan, as do the RCMP. If this bill is passed, this tartan does not become an official tartan of the province until it is registered in Scotland, and we certainly hope that will take place.

This tartan consists of four colours—I know it has been passed around—green to represent the forests in the province, blue for the province's water, red to acknowledge the aboriginal communities in Ontario and white for the sky above us, although the sky is blue most days, so I'm not sure what that means.

The tartan is a reflection of the province we live in, and is not based on any particular group or country. If this bill is passed, Ontarians may proudly wear a tartan wherein all colours and stripes combine to create an atmosphere of harmony and prosperity.

In the time I have remaining, I want to talk to some degree about the contribution the member for Bruce-Grey has made in this Legislature. As I said earlier, I have

served with him in this House for almost 10 years. I am now his seatmate, and we're both wearing the same garb today. Bill has been a great friend to me and a terrific member of this House over the 10 years he has served.

Mr Kormos: Outspoken.

Mr Arnott: He's been outspoken. He tells it like it is.

Mr Kormos: Brave.

Mr Arnott: He's been brave. He tells it like it is. We need members who tell it like it is and who have the courage to bring forward the views of their constituents, even if on occasion it varies from the official line our party may hold at any given time.

Bill has fought for the extension of Highway 410, which was recently announced, along with the extension of Highway 10 to four lanes north to Orangeville.

In terms of the OMAFRA offices that were threatened with closure, due to Bill there will be an OMAFRA presence in Walkerton in the future. This office was previously slated for closure, but due to Bill's efforts there will still be a presence, as well as continued OMAFRA presence in Markdale and Owen Sound.

Bill had some problems with Bill 25, a municipal affairs bill, which was brought forward in the Legislature last fall. Bill fought against the provision in the bill that if a petition with 75 residents was submitted to the minister a commission might be ordered, and he received a commitment from the minister that that would be deleted from the legislation as soon as possible. In fact, Bill 62, which is presently before this Legislature, having passed second reading, actually deletes that provision from the Municipal Act, which was a commitment the Minister of Municipal Affairs made to Mr Murdoch.

Bill lobbied for more than \$100,000 for fish and wildlife improvements in his riding last year alone. Due to Bill's lobbying, funding for most fall fairs across the province will probably remain intact. That is something that has certainly benefited my riding, and something on which I have been pleased to support his efforts.

It is my understanding that, largely due to Bill's efforts, a new courthouse is going to be built in Owen Sound. I understand there have been some problems in recent months, but he has brought forward the views of his constituents in a very effective way, and that is now back on track.

We have a tremendous water conservation issue that we have to attend to, and certainly there has been a problem in Grey county. Bill has lobbied the Minister of the Environment to bring in a moratorium on further water-taking permits until further study can be conducted.

So Bill has been very active representing his constituents in this House and has done a superb job. I'm certainly proud to be one of his colleagues in the House and proud to call him a friend. I want to congratulate him on bringing this forward, and I encourage all members of this House to support it.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate? Mr Murdoch has two minutes for reply.

Mr Murdoch: I want to thank all the members who spoke in favour of this bill. The member for Elgin-Middlesex-London has a Bruce tartan tie on today. I'm sure the people in Bruce will be happy to hear that. As you know, part of my riding now is Bruce. The member for Niagara Centre had some good ideas and some solutions he wants us to look at, and I'm sure he'll send me a memo on what we can do about that. He also mentioned that he would wear a tie if I got him one made of this tartan, which I will do in the future. I will see that he gets a tie made in this tartan.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Broadview-Greenwood): You have to give it to him.

Mr Murdoch: I will certainly give it to him. I'll do that here in the House.

The member for Davenport has a multicultural ribbon on his lapel, and that's excellent. Multiculturalism is what this is about and a symbol we need, so I certainly appreciate that.

The member for Peterborough is outstanding today. The former member from Simcoe East, Al McLean, a former Speaker, used to come in here quite dressed up, and maybe Gary is taking his place.

The member for Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford has the name Joe Tascona but has Scottish heritage and spoke well of this bill.

I also have to congratulate my friend Ted Arnott, from Waterloo-Wellington, who sits beside me and who talked about different things I have done. I'm certainly proud of those things and will keep fighting in this House to make sure we get fair and equitable treatment for my citizens.

I'd also like to thank my staff—one of whom is still sitting here—Melissa Elder and Tony Ambrogio, who helped me research this and get things ready for me. I certainly appreciate their help.

If everyone can support this, we'll have a tartan in Ontario. Thank you.

JUDICIAL ACCOUNTABILITY ACT, 2000

LOI DE 2000 SUR L'OBLIGATION DE RENDRE DES COMPTES EN MATIÈRE DE JUSTICE

The Acting Speaker (Mr Tony Martin): Mrs Mushinski has moved second reading of Bill 66, An Act to make Ontario judges more accountable and to provide for recommendations from the Legislative Assembly for appointments to the Supreme Court of Canada.

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

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

The division will take place after we deal with the next item on the ballot this morning.

TARTAN ACT, 1999

LOI DE 1999 SUR LE TARTAN

The Acting Speaker (Mr Tony Martin): Mr Murdoch has moved second reading of Bill 49, An Act to adopt an official tartan for Ontario.

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

Pursuant to standing order 96, the bill is referred to committee of the whole House.

Mr Bill Murdoch (Bruce-Grey): Mr Speaker, I would like all-party consent to put this bill on the order paper for third reading, as it has already gone through committee. It's exactly the same bill that Lillian Ross had in here, and I'd like to see that happen.

The Acting Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that the bill be moved to third reading? Agreed. The bill will be ordered for third reading.

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

The division bells rang from 1158 to 1203.

JUDICIAL ACCOUNTABILITY ACT, 2000

LOI DE 2000 SUR L'OBLIGATION
DE RENDRE DES COMPTES
EN MATIÈRE DE JUSTICE

The Acting Speaker (Mr Tony Martin): Ms Mushinski has moved second reading of Bill 66.

All those in favour will please rise.

Ayes

Baird, John R.	Klees, Frank	Palladini, Al
Barrett, Toby	Maves, Bart	Spina, Joseph
Clark, Brad	Mazzilli, Frank	Stewart, R. Gary
Elliott, Brenda	Murdoch, Bill	Tascona, Joseph N.
Galt, Doug	Mushinski, Marilyn	Wetlaufer, Wayne
Hastings, John	O'Toole, John	Wood, Bob

The Acting Speaker: All those opposed will please rise.

Nays

Agostino, Dominic	Duncan, Dwight	McLeod, Lyn
Bryant, Michael	Gerretsen, John	Peters, Steve
Christopherson, David	Guzzo, Garry J.	Ruprecht, Tony
Churley, Marilyn	Kormos, Peter	Smitherman, George

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 18; the nays are 12.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Pursuant to standing order 96, the bill is referred to committee of the whole House.

Ms Mushinski: Mr Speaker, I'd like to move that it be referred to the standing committee on justice and social policy, please.

The Acting Speaker: Shall this bill be referred to the standing committee on justice and social policy?

All those in favour please stand.

All those opposed will please rise and remain standing.

A majority of the House being in agreement with the request of the member, this bill stands referred to the standing committee on justice and social policy.

It being 12 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1207 to 1330.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

YOUTH ASSISTING YOUTH

Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's): I'm proud to have, in the riding of St Paul's, Youth Assisting Youth. It's a community-based program that matches youth volunteers aged 16 to 24, and up to age 30 for males, in a one-to-one relationship with children who are experiencing social, emotional, behavioural and/or cultural problems. It serves the entire GTA, and they're working on expansion sites in Windsor and Vancouver.

The goal of the organization is to provide for positive role models and peer mentors. Potential problem kids are referred from social agencies, schools and otherwise. Since 1976, Youth Assisting Youth has helped more than 8,900 children and youth. They have a 98% success rate at keeping at-risk children in school and out of trouble with the law.

But 350 kids are on the waiting list for this program and their pre-match program had to be cancelled. Here is a perfect opportunity for this government to not just talk about crime but to also invest in the causes of crime. This is a prevention program that this side of the House and I, in particular, and the Ontario Liberals support. We need to start preventing crime and stop talking about crime. Here's a constructive way for this government to engage in that activity; that is, by supporting and providing appropriate investments in programs such as Youth Assisting Youth.

STRATFORD FESTIVAL

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): I rise in the House today to inform my colleagues that the festival season in Stratford has begun. Yesterday the Stratford Festival opened with its pre-season performances for the 48th year and began with Shakespeare's Hamlet. Hamlet is being played by Paul Gross, the Mountie from the popular TV show Due South. This year's playbill also includes plays such as The Three Musketeers and Fiddler on the Roof.

The Stratford Festival is a cultural icon in Canada, and I'm very proud to have the festival in my riding of Perth-Middlesex. I'm also pleased to be a member of a government that recognizes and understands the significant role the festival plays in terms of our culture and our economy. According to a report by the Conference Board of Canada, the festival in 1999 created 6,000 jobs, gen-

erated \$64 million in taxes for the government and had an industry output of \$350 million.

I want to thank my colleague the Minister of Finance who recently announced that the Avon Theatre, which is part of the Stratford Festival, would receive \$2 million from the SuperBuild Corp to help the theatre with its restoration project.

I look forward to joining many of my colleagues in Stratford for the gala opening on Monday, May 29. I encourage all members of the House to visit Stratford and take part in the festival experience.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): The government has introduced legislation that will amend the Mental Health Act to allow for the mentally ill to be treated through community treatment orders. The problem is, there are not enough resources in the community to provide the treatment and support that's needed, and this week's budget does nothing to change that reality. There is nothing there for mental health. The budget does not give mental health a single mention, even in the background paper devoted to health care.

It's hard to believe that the government could have completed two consultations on mental health, leading to a significant piece of legislation that they want to pass this spring, and yet not put anything in the budget to back up that legislation.

Every person who has knowledge of the needs in mental health, whether a supporter of community treatment orders or not, agrees that there must be more money for community treatment. The government will say they've funded assertive community treatment teams or ACTT teams, and these are a good thing, but Dr Ian Musgrave, the government's own director of the ACTT program, told the minister in April of this year that there would have to be three times the number of ACTT teams in place before community treatment orders could be effective.

The government's only clear direction for mental health is to close six of nine psychiatric hospitals. The minister has said there will be no closure until the community support is in place, but the legislation is coming first, well before the community supports are in place, and the plans for closure are progressing much faster than the funding for community programs.

There's only one place left where the government can get money for community mental health, and that's from the closure of 1,133 psychiatric beds. That's chaos.

CAMPBELLFORD DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR JAZZ ENSEMBLE

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): I rise in the House today to recognize a group of students from a small rural Ontario high school in my riding who are hoping to play at the Montreal International Jazz Festival later this month. Although it was only formed five years

ago, the Campbellford District High School Senior Jazz Ensemble has won gold and high praise at every festival it has entered in the last three years. They've enjoyed success at the Musicfest Canada national competition, southern Ontario regional festivals, and several others. Because of their highly polished performances, one adjudicator actually begged for an encore performance.

The CDHS jazz ensemble has been featured on numerous radio and television programs, including an appearance on TVOntario last year and again on Studio 2 later this month.

Individual members have been selected to the Musicfest Canada All-Star Jazz Ensemble for the past two years and are well positioned to succeed as music teachers and musicians in the future.

All of this success can be directed to their high school teacher and music program director, Dave Noble. He has made the high school band a cool thing to be part of, and for his efforts he was awarded the 1999 TVOntario Teachers' Award as high school teacher of the year.

For your listening pleasure, they are now completing their second compact disk.

Congratulations to their teacher, Dave Noble, and to the students of the CDHS jazz ensemble.

SHAW HOUSE

Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale): Today in the town of Blue Mountains in Grey county, my mother is celebrating her birthday and watching on TV. Hi, Mom. Happy Birthday.

Last weekend, several mainlanders from my riding joined a dedicated volunteer crew of Toronto Island community residents in the construction of new housing units for senior citizens. New life has been brought to the Shaw House, situated on the Ward's Island lakeshore. Vacant for more than 20 years, the Shaw House was built in the 1930s, and most recently served as the home of the island park superintendent.

Now, with youth project support from the federal government, materials donated by supportive businesses and a huge injection of labour from dedicated volunteers, six independent living units with common areas are taking form. The units will provide housing for seniors who are currently living on the island. Many of these seniors are unable to afford to purchase their lease, or perhaps living alone has become impractical.

Architects Ian Trites and Martin Liefhebber have incorporated exciting environmental features, with new ways of reducing carbon dioxide and serious pollutants into the city atmosphere.

My Community Action Team—Wendy and Dave Ground, Joyce Grigg, Kevin Machida, Roxanne Clarke, Tara Smalley, Andrew Hood, Kevin McGuire, Pam Westoby and I—literally worked in the trenches, mixing and pouring the foundations for the new Shaw House.

I congratulate this ambitious initiative, undertaken by the Toronto Island community. They are a very special part of the Toronto Centre-Rosedale constituency. We

look forward to returning to assist Graham Mudge and his team to help complete the Shaw House project.

CESAR CHAVEZ BLACK EAGLE AWARDS

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): I'm pleased to advise the House that this evening former Canadian Labour Congress President Bob White will be hosting a dinner, the first annual Cesar Chavez Black Eagle Awards, at the United Steelworkers Hall on Cecil Street here in Toronto. The guest of honour this evening is Richard Chavez—

Interjections.

Mr Christopherson: I notice heckling coming from the other benches. That's part and parcel of why we've got to take this government to the Supreme Court of Canada to give the farm workers in Ontario the rights they deserve.

Cesar Chavez, of course, is well known as the leader of the farm workers throughout the United States. His brother, Richard, will be here this evening, as I've already stated. His brother in 1966 gave up the security of his carpentry job and joined his brother, Cesar, as a full-time volunteer with the United Farm Workers, organizing and fighting for farm workers' civil rights.

I was proud to join the UFCW and Stan Rapper from the United Farm Workers earlier this week as they held a news conference on May Day reminding this government of the rights they retroactively took away from the farm workers in Ontario, having already been given those rights by the NDP government a number of years before.

The fight here in Ontario is just as desperate and just as important as the one going on throughout the United States. Tonight is a chance to celebrate those involved in that struggle.

BOWMANVILLE MAPLE FEST

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): This past week we heard Minister Eves announce brighter futures with a balanced budget.

There's more good news. As I walk down the street I see the green leaves are starting to bud on the trees; around here at Queen's Park it's the same. This weekend in Bowmanville we have the Maple Fest, which everyone should plan on attending. It's on May 6, and the downtown will be alive with people and music and, of course, maple syrup.

1340

I would like to congratulate all the members of the festival promotion committee, including Edgar Lucas, Lori Allin, Brian Purdy, Monica Scott, Kevin Anyan, Deanna Knight, Garth Gilpin and Ron Hooper.

This event will include a 16-by-28-foot working model railway, courtesy of the Soper Valley Model Railroad Club, and other displays, including woodworking, birdhouse building, antique dealers and many others.

This year's festival will be a bit different because they're going to introduce jazz on the main street. Differ-

ent groups will be performing throughout the day, including Herb Knox's Dixieland band and Bruce Gorrie's Evidence.

Of course, the Maple Fest wouldn't be complete without maple syrup. Mr and Mrs John Moore, who are local producers of maple syrup, will provide demonstrations of the sugaring off process assisted by many of the churches in the community. The Moores will offer children a treat with free samples of toffee, while Archibald Orchards and Estate Winery will provide treats for the adults with samples of their new award-winning apple wine.

I invite all my colleagues in the House to join me in Bowmanville this weekend for our annual Maple Fest.

COMMUNITY MUSEUMS

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): I have received a letter from Minister Johns declaring May 2000 as Museum Month. She writes: "Community museums contribute significantly to Ontario's diverse culture and enviable quality of life. They also attract visitors from across Canada and around the world, giving a major boost to the province's economy and providing employment and volunteer opportunities to many Ontarians."

Great words, but unfortunately the minister and her government, as usual, have contradicted themselves by saying one thing and then doing another. A bright future for museums? Not from this budget.

The Ministry of Culture has been cut yet again, and after struggling with a 40% cut, 27 community museums were removed from the 1999 operating grant program. The museums' level of excellence was not in question and some had even been assured by the Ministry of Culture that their grants would be forthcoming. Yet the minister still pulled the rug from under them.

The Hutchison House Museum in Peterborough, Ontario, is one example of how Minister Johns is slowly but steadily bleeding to death community museums in this province.

Brighter futures for museums? Not under this government. Brighter futures for culture and heritage? The sector has been reduced to an endangered species in this province.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant): I rise today to recognize a very successful National Mental Health Week, which began on Monday and ends this Sunday, May 7.

Since the 1960s, care for the mentally ill has moved from institutions to the community, and since 1995, our government has successfully continued this trend. In fact, the ratio of government funding for hospital and community mental health care has also changed from a 75-25 split in 1994-95 to a ratio now of 60% hospital and 40% community care.

These changes are possible because of an increase of more than \$150 million in community mental health care services since 1995. These increases include over \$7.3 million in mental health funding for south-central Ontario, which includes my riding. Ontario is now spending \$466 million every year to provide community-based mental health services.

Much of the work on mental health began with Dan Newman's consultations on our mental health strategy and has continued with the recent introduction of Brian's Law, which will help people with serious mental illness who pose a danger to themselves or others to get the help they need.

I am very pleased to say during this National Mental Health Week that Ontario is building the most modern, up-to-date mental health system in the country, a system that will meet the needs of patients and keep our communities safe and healthy.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

ONTARIO POLICE MEMORIAL TO FALLEN OFFICERS

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Solicitor General): This Sunday, May 7, is an important day for the people of Ontario. This is the day we will see the official dedication of the Ontario police memorial to fallen officers. This memorial is another example of our government's ongoing commitment to public safety and to Ontario's police officers. We will be acknowledging our heroes, officers who have lost their lives in the line of duty.

Too often we take for granted the bravery of our men and our women who each day help to keep our communities safe. We forget that at the end of the day these people have families to go home to: parents, spouses, children who rely upon them. When a life is lost in the line of duty, these people are left behind to deal with their grief. Their lives have been changed forever. This memorial will not only serve as a recognition of our fallen officers but will also honour their families. I might add that we expect hundreds of family members to be in attendance on Sunday, as well as many officers, thousands, from across Canada and the northern United States.

When the policing community approached our government about the possibility of a memorial for our fallen officers, we responded positively and quickly. This was the right thing to do. The police and community set up a special memorial committee, and we agreed to invest in this very important tribute. We provided a site adjacent to the Whitney Block where two bronze statues and a wall of honour now stand. That wall contains the names of 200 fallen officers who served in the province of Ontario.

For the past year, these committee members have been working diligently to ensure that Sunday's event will be

special for all the police, family and community members who attend. I would like to thank the Police Association of Ontario, the Ontario Provincial Police Association, the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, the Ontario Senior Officers Association, the Toronto Police Association and the Ontario Police Memorial Foundation for working with our government to make this memorial a reality.

I was in my portfolio as Solicitor General for only a little more than a month when I attended my first police funeral. I say "first" because unfortunately there have been a few since then. It was impossible not to be touched by the anguish expressed by the entire community as they said goodbye to one of their own. That officer was Sergeant Rick McDonald of Sudbury. Since that time, I've worked closely with his family and his fellow officers.

As you know, we have named a bill after Sergeant Rick McDonald, a bill that brings in tougher penalties for criminals who take flight from the police. I will never forget the sense of loss suffered by this family. But I was also struck by their bravery. They have since become advocates for justice. Despite their pain, they're willing to continue to believe and hope for a better future, and they will fight that fight to make things better.

I invite the members here and the general public to participate in the memorial dedication on Sunday at Queen's Park. Let us remember those who have lost their lives in the line of duty. But let us also salute the officers who continue to risk their lives each day to make Ontario one of the safest places to live, work and raise a family.

Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale): It's a great honour for me to stand on behalf of the Liberal Party and our parliamentary caucus in response to the statement by the Solicitor General today and to compliment him on his statement and on the move toward the dedication this Sunday of the Ontario police memorial. Indeed, there are many statues and memorials that adorn this building situated in my own riding of Toronto Centre-Rosedale and few hold as much significance as this one that will be dedicated this Sunday.

It's clearly something that is overdue and something that we are very proud to support. I know that many members of our caucus will be there alongside members from all parties at this dedication this Sunday. The recognition that some 200 officers will be named on that memorial gives rise for all of us to think long and hard about where the ultimate sacrifice lies in public service. We all work hard and recognize the phrase "public service is a higher calling." But the ultimate sacrifice is the one that has been made by people who have given their lives in the name of public service. As someone who is relatively young and comes from a post-war generation and time, this occurs less often in our society than it did for some of the older members of the Legislature, and the number 200 is a very strong reminder of the extent to which people who have provided so much important service have fallen in the line of duty. I know that all members will join in hoping that new

additions to this monument are awfully rare—non-existent, we hope. But reality and history point to the fact that the risk is inherent in providing the kind of community service that police do and that the likelihood that others will fall is still there.

1350

I think this Legislature has gone some way—and I compliment the Solicitor General—toward bringing in the tougher penalties that we hope will play some role in making sure that criminals who try to escape from police are appropriately punished, so that the element of risk can be diminished. We're proud to join in support of that legislation, to support the government in that way.

My own riding of Toronto Centre-Rosedale is one that I have had the opportunity to speak to the minister about many times, calling and advocating for more officers on the street because of the extraordinary need for policing in the communities I represent. The move toward community policing is something I have had such an extraordinary opportunity to be influenced by. My riding is made up of many neighbourhoods, and on a regular basis in the evening we attend meetings where regular constables providing service in those communities come, relate to the communities and try to make sure the needs of the community are being addressed.

As the son of a trucker—my father owned a trucking company—I spent lots of time on the road. Having attended too many accident sites and scenes in my life, I'm easily reminded of the issue of road safety and deaths related to accidents and the carnage on our highways, and the risks associated with that for our officers.

I would like to repeat that we look forward on Sunday to joining with other members of this Legislature, alongside the families who have made such an extraordinary sacrifice, in recognizing the public service, the highest calling, indeed the ultimate sacrifice in bravery that has been made by these officers. This is long overdue. We're proud to join with the government in recognizing this and, again, in paying tribute to the families who have given so much.

My colleague the member for Elgin-Middlesex-London would like to add some comments.

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): I want to pay tribute to the initiative that is taking place here. On May 7, 1934, 66 years to the day that this monument is being erected, Colin McGregor, a police officer from my community, was killed in the line of duty. Colin McGregor's name will be appearing there, and his sons Roy from Peterborough and Colin from London will be present. But what hit closer to me is a friend I went to school with in 1991, Scott Rossiter, a police officer in Ingersoll, was killed in the line of duty. I think it's sad that that happened, but I think it's good that this monument is being erected, so that the memory of Scott and those 200 other individuals who have given their lives will be remembered. I know that Scott's mother, Marilyn, and his family will be there too. Again, I commend the government for this initiative.

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): On behalf of my colleagues in the NDP caucus, let me say to the Solicitor General that this is a most fitting action that is being taken on behalf of police officers. We are pleased to see it happening. On a personal level, as a former Solicitor General myself, let me say to the current Solicitor General that I was struck when he made the statement that he was in his new portfolio as Solicitor General for just a little more than a month when he had to attend his first police funeral, and then the fact that unfortunately he had to attend others. I've been there, and it wasn't that long after I assumed office that I had that fateful phone call also, and I also attended far more funerals—understanding that one is too many. I think what strikes one the most the first time is the sense of grief that exists in the entire police and emergency response community. It really is a sense of a family member lost. I can remember speaking with police chiefs at a time when they had lost an officer, and we had tears in our eyes talking about what it meant to lose an officer in the line of duty who was placing herself or himself in harm's way in order to protect the public.

It wasn't that long ago that I was on my feet commenting on the national day of mourning, April 28, where we mourn or remember all workers who are hurt on the job or die on the job, and police officers are workers. But there's something special that we hold to be true for people who are in the emergency response service on behalf of the people of Ontario because of the fact that they move themselves from being safe to in danger deliberately to protect the public. It means the most to us when it is someone innocent, vulnerable, without whom, the police being absent, we could have another fatality of an innocent citizen.

During my tenure I also attended the opening, if you will, of the peace officers memorial in Ottawa. That was a very fitting tribute to all officers who are involved in keeping the peace, and that includes correctional officers. So when we speak of emergency response personnel, we are talking about police, firefighters, paramedics and correctional officers. All of these individuals commit themselves professionally to a life of protecting the public, in most cases people they don't even know.

I would wrap up, and this is maybe the only time I've ever stood on my feet in response to anything a Harris minister has ever said without slamming you for something. But in this instance that would be entirely inappropriate. I want to clearly join in the tenor that has been offered by not just the minister but also the official opposition in saying that we as citizens, particularly as parliamentarians here, need to continue to do everything we can, yes, by way of laws, but also by way of funding, by ensuring that we're listening to the police officers when they talk to us about the tools they need to do the job and the fact that we continue to push, and I believe we have all parties in agreement on this, toward more and more community policing, because that is indeed the wave of the future. In terms of fallen officers, communities now are feeling almost the same immediate grief

that other officers and chiefs and parliamentarians feel, because more and more police officers are becoming a part of the immediate community, the immediate neighbourhood. When an officer is down, which of course is the most frightening call one can hear over the radio, it touches all of us.

Let me again say that we're very pleased to see this happening. It is most appropriate. On as many issues as we can, I think we ought to work toward all three parties trying to find grounds that we can agree on when it comes to public safety, as opposed to constantly trying to find the issues that we're different on.

1400

ORAL QUESTIONS

COMPUTER VIRUS

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West): This afternoon my question is for the Chair of Management Board. At our offices in the Liberal caucus this morning we came in to an array of "ILOVEYOU" e-mails. What was so surprising today, and where we knew there was something wildly wrong, was that the government came in this morning to the same sort of e-mails. What we find now at this hour of the clock is that it's actually a very serious circumstance for business and government. In fact, today the British Parliament has been closed because of this very same virus.

My question for the Management Board Chair is, what is the status now of the plan you've implemented to deal with this virus? In the short term, while today we may have lost a business day for many businesses and for some levels of government, in the long term we may well have shaken some confidence in the Internet, in e-mail, e-commerce trading. Could you suggest what moves you've taken today to address this very serious problem?

Hon Chris Hodgson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): As the member of the opposition mentioned, this is a very serious issue. We are aware that this is an international problem, and the early assessments indicate that this problem is isolated to the e-mail systems and has not affected the government's critical computer systems.

Specifically, we have implemented a number of measures through the information and information technology strategy. For example, for the first time we have a co-ordinated approach to protecting our systems that are in place. All ministries are required to implement security measures, and a set of security tools has been provided to help ministries analyze and protect their systems. We use state-of-the-art anti-virus software and firewall protections.

As soon as our government was aware of the virus, we took immediate steps to rectify the problem. The e-mail connection between the government and the outside systems was terminated immediately. The IT technical staff began purging all the e-mail systems that were

infected and staff are also working with the government's anti-virus software vendors to begin downloading the appropriate patch, which is how these problems are solved internationally. I would also like in my supplementary to thank the media.

Mrs Pupatello: We know there's software available to detect that there was in fact a virus. What all of government was struggling with today, even at 1 o'clock, was how to stop it and clean it. So my concern is that while today we see it has affected the Pentagon, yesterday right across the continent of Asia—it shut down banking institutions in Hong Kong—this becomes very serious. In terms of us having confidence in our system—and we believe that the Internet and e-mail are the way of the future, that e-commerce is the way—the public has to view the government as being in charge. We'd like to see, if there is an emergency plan in place, that you could table it so we, in this kind of issue, can work together to see that it's a plan to stop it at its initiation so it doesn't go through the whole day, as has happened today.

I'd like to ask the minister, if there is a plan, would he table that plan so that we can work co-operatively to see that it's at absolutely the cutting edge of technology?

Hon Mr Hodgson: I can assure you that this government takes the security of our systems very seriously. We have set up a central information and information technology office to try to coordinate a government-wide approach to all IT investments and implementations. Right now, though, as you know, moving from the old system to this new set-up, ministries themselves are responsible for their IT and we coordinate it through the IT sector under Management Board.

We are committed to implementing policies and operational initiatives that address the IT security. As I mentioned, some things have already been implemented in our policies and procedures. We are helping program managers to devise ways to protect against threats, and we're also monitoring what's going on around the world so that we can be part of the solution on how to make sure that e-commerce and the Internet are there to serve the needs of the people of Ontario as we move more and more transactions on to the Web.

Mrs Pupatello: To the Chair of Management Board, you lead me to final question, and that is, exactly what kind of monitoring is happening here with the Ontario government? This particular virus started yesterday, so when we woke up this morning, had monitoring been done, had an emergency plan been in place, then this morning the virus wouldn't have affected all of our systems. We knew it was sweeping the Asian continent yesterday and that the banking institutions yesterday were being affected; that having started in a small town somewhere in the Philippines, with such rapid movement across the world, it was going to arrive here this morning. In fact, what happened this morning is that in government offices on both sides of the House, in all of our ministry offices, we all woke up to turn our computers on to find the "ILOVEYOU" bug waiting for us to open our computers and have the virus affect us. So a plan was not

enacted that actually prevented what may well have been preventable.

So I ask you again, Minister, in an issue that could well have been an emergency, before the next virus comes along that could potentially affect our hospital plans, our 911 system and our planes flying, we'd like to know there is an emergency plan in place and that it's absolutely at the cutting edge of what we expect. We knew about the virus yesterday, and in such an instance that plan could have been implemented this morning for prevention and not after the fact, once it had arrived here. Could we have a look at the plan, and are you prepared to work with us to improve that plan?

Hon Mr Hodgson: I think that is a good suggestion. But I reiterate that we are aware this is an international problem, and the early assessments we have done of our systems indicate it is isolated to e-mail systems and has not affected the government's critical computer systems. We have technical people right now working on rectifying the problem internally.

I would like to thank the media, who have done an excellent job of informing the public of this problem that affects e-mail systems, and of making the public aware of the problem that exists today with this virus so that more people like yourself won't come in, open e-mail and spread this virus. I thank you for the suggestion, and we'll be working on that.

RAVES

Mrs Sandra Papatello (Windsor West): We're going to move from the "love bug" to the "hug drug." My next question is for the Solicitor General. As he knows, yesterday our party introduced a bill called the Raves Act. It's a very timely bill because, as the minister knows, raves have become a phenomenon not just in Toronto, but in cities like Windsor, Niagara region and the Ottawa region.

I ask the minister today to stand and suggest to us that he is going to support our bill.

Let me tell him a little bit about the bill. It allows municipalities to set the tone for what kind of rave, if any, will happen in their city or town. It makes a permit required to hold a rave, and allows the city or town to set the conditions for issuing that permit. Those conditions could be the geographic area in the town, the age limit or the time limit. It lawfully allows police authorities on the site to determine that those conditions are being met. This is what the cities and towns requested of you at a summit on March 14 at Toronto police headquarters, which I also attended.

I ask the minister today to stand and, in a very timely fashion, tell us that he will be supporting our bill.

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Solicitor General): Indeed, both the member and I attended a conference on March 14, I believe, which was arranged by the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations, Bob Runciman, who showed a great deal of leadership in trying to address what we believe is a very insidious problem.

I have to compliment the member as well, in terms of the leadership she is showing. She has shared her bill with me; in fact, the ministry is right now in the course of reviewing the bill. I have agreed to sit down with the member and discuss her bill with her, and if somehow we can find a way to combat what I think is a growing and difficult problem. The fact of the matter is that there's a lot of misinformation out there, particularly dealing with the drug ecstasy. The police community has told us this, the municipalities certainly are concerned and we as legislators in Ontario are concerned. So we do have to address it. I have a commitment to work with you to review your bill, to sit down and discuss what good things we can do to stamp out this type of problem.

Mrs Papatello: Here is my concern: When the government sets its mind to it, it can make a bill law in three days—and the government has a precedent in making a bill law in three days. I'm asking that this be that kind of bill, that you move forward quickly.

Let me tell you a little more about the content of the bill. It holds the property owners responsible for a permit being issued before the property is leased or rented to those who are operating a rave. The conditions then have to be met in order for that permit to be issued. The bill allows the police to shut down or vacate the rave when those conditions aren't being met. Any city can refuse to have a rave at one of their own facilities, but in order for a city to have control in private commercial properties, they need this bill. That's why it is critical to have your support here.

1410

What I'm asking you is that in a very timely fashion you would just stand and say you'll support this bill so that we can move forward very quickly, as you have done on other issues. I have worked with the government offices, with police authorities and with municipal officials, not just here in Toronto but across Ontario, so that we know the content of the bill is what the municipalities themselves need to effect good regulation in this area. I'm asking you once again to stand and say that you'll support this bill.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: I know the member's intentions are all good, so I'm not going to try to refer to the bill she has provided at this point in time, and to any of the terms in—the goodwill with which she has approached this.

We are reviewing this. The government has acted quickly on a number of bills before and, yes, we have passed bills in three days, but the three days is a culmination usually of months of work to get to the point where we have the proper language so that we address the problem correctly. As I've said to the member, we are reviewing her bill with a great deal of interest at the ministry to see if it actually does address the problems that are out there.

This is a problem we're all concerned with; we are concerned. As I've said to the member already, we are going to sit down and discuss her bill later on today, and yes, I have a commitment for our ministry to work with her. These are problems we are all concerned with. Certainly we over here on the government side are

concerned about raves. That's why Bob Runciman instituted this particular convention, to get people together so we can address the problem properly and get all the partners working together.

Mrs Pupatello: We've already had a couple of months. The summit was held on March 14. That was two months ago. From our little office up here on the third floor we've managed to draft a bill and take into account many of the requirements and requests from different authorities involved in this issue. What's so important to know, and especially for parents to note, is that these raves have often been the sites for the drug ecstasy being used by young people.

The funny thing about this particular designer drug is that young people think it's safe, and parents often have never heard of it. The Ontario coroner told us that in 1997 there were no deaths by this drug, in 1998 there was one, in 1999 there were nine ecstasy-related deaths and in the four months since we started working on this issue, Solicitor General, there have been four more deaths of young people.

We are now in the month of May, spring, and summer is around the corner. The urgency of this matter is clear: The more raves we have as summer approaches, the more likelihood of the use and spread of ecstasy at these sites because we're not able to regulate and control them. That is why I'm asking for speed of passage of this bill, because it is a serious matter.

It's not a matter of thinking about it some more until we get it right. We've done a lot of work to ensure that it has been well written and done right. I appreciate that you know we've put work into the bill, but what is so critical is that it really depends on safety for our young people. We're counting on you to support the bill.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: If the member across wouldn't mind, I would certainly like to make sure that our ministry believes that it is right. Part of the consultation that we do within our ministry is with the Ontario coroner's office, who certainly is very interested in this problem. We all are. I've talked at length with our police partners on all of this, I've talked at length with our members who are concerned about this issue as well, and with Minister Runciman, who took the lead to try to address this problem.

I will point out that in one of our budget documents, the one entitled Building Strong and Safe Communities, which was released just earlier on this week, it says, "The government will build on its innovative approach to dealing with youth crime by expanding existing programs targeting youth crime and violence." We have a commitment to work to reduce youth crime. We have a track record of trying to address this. We have great credibility with our police partners, and yes, we will work with this member to see whether or not we can advance the best solutions possible.

HOMELESSNESS

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): My question is to the Deputy Premier. Minister, today I attended a

news conference where local activists displayed the personal effects of a homeless woman, whose name was Jennifer Caldwell, who burned to death in mid-March in the Don Valley. She's one of 21 confirmed deaths of homeless people that have occurred in this city in just a few weeks. In my view we have to respond, and we need to respond to this crisis not as taxpayers but as citizens. How many deaths does it take until we get people like you and your government to respond to this housing crisis?

Hon Chris Hodgson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): I know that the Minister of Community and Social Services would like to share some information with the House.

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for francophone affairs): I certainly want to indicate to the member opposite that all of us on this side of the House share the concern over any tragedy, particularly the one the member spoke of earlier. It is simply unacceptable in the province of Ontario.

Homelessness is an issue which demands the attention of all levels of government, including the province of Ontario. By working together, I believe we can make a difference. This government has made a substantial commitment through the more than \$100 million in our provincial homelessness strategy, building on the more than \$2 billion a year we spend to help people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless in terms of shelter. But indeed we can do more.

Through the homelessness initiatives fund, we're spending more than \$10 million to help our municipal partners right across the province on projects such as Eva's Phoenix project in the riding of the member opposite, where I had the opportunity to visit and learn about some of the exciting projects they're working on. We have a rent supplement that we are beginning to be able to roll out across the province.

Mr Marchese: Minister, in your budget you found \$4 billion for corporate taxes and not a single cent for housing—not one penny for housing. The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp says we need 16,000 new rental units to be built annually. I don't say that; they say that. We have problems of tragic proportions. In many, many cities, towns and regions in the province, including Brampton, Muskoka, Peterborough and Peel region, they're opening up shelters, conducting studies and convening task forces. It's all over Ontario.

Yesterday, M. Eves said that your so-called Super-Build millennium partnership fund will be available to redevelop Toronto's waterfront. I'm assuming—and you might refer back to the Deputy Premier—that you agree that it's important to have communities on the waterfront and elsewhere that are not just playgrounds for the rich but house the homeless and other people in society without much money.

Minister, will you commit today to just one quarter of that billion dollars you're spending on urban centres and put it into housing for the homeless and low-income workers?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): We will do better than that. We will commit to continuing the government program designed to invest in people rather than in bricks and mortar, in people rather than making sure that architects get paid for boondoggle projects, in people rather than in making sure that lawyers get paid for boondoggle projects. I know it's different from what the honourable members did, but I want to assure the honourable member we are investing in people. The \$50-million fund that Minister Baird and I created last November to help an additional 10,000 families have access to rent-geared-to-income units—that is what we do on this side of the House: We invest in people. This is a serious issue, there is no doubt about it, but our approach is to invest in people rather than bricks.

Mr Marchese: I talk about housing and he talks about horseradish. How long can this minister and this government continue to blah-blah-blah their way through question period? How can he so well belittle the issue of homelessness and housing so dismissively? How can he do that when the tragedy of the boondoggle is the fact that the homeless people are dying? Skyrocketing rents for ordinary people are just shooting through the roof and no affordable housing is being built by anyone—not the federal government, not the provincial government and not the private sector that he's courting to build, because they're not building. No one is building. How can he say, "We're going to do better than that." It boggles the intelligence of the people in this place.

1420

Minister, there's something you could do. I know you don't want to do much, but there is something you could do. Earlier this week, my leader proposed a lottery to fund Olympic infrastructure, including affordable housing. We estimate it will raise \$1 billion over seven years. Will you adopt our idea of an Olympic lottery and take just one quarter of what you would raise and put it into housing for the homeless and low-income workers? It's a suggestion. I know you won't do anything else—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Minister.

Hon Mr Clement: I don't mean to belittle anybody. I can assure the honourable member that we saw a problem that had accumulated over a series of years, and the hundreds of millions of dollars of spending purportedly to help solve that problem was not solving the problem; the problem was getting worse. In fact, the honourable member should know that the not-for-profit housing these honourable members supported meant profits for lawyers, profits for architects, profits for planners and profits for builders, but it did not help the people it purported to serve to the extent that the honourable members try to put on the record in terms of their rhetoric.

Our solution is to help the people through rent-geared-to-income, through ensuring it is possible to build units in our province by eliminating the PST for construction materials, something the federal government has also tacked on to their last budget in terms of the GST. That is the approach that will get solutions. Will they happen

soon enough? We all want it to happen tomorrow, but we are working on rebuilding what they destroyed—

The Speaker: New question.

TAX REFUND

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): My question is to the Acting Premier. Congratulations to you and your government. You've now won the heart and soul of the Liberals in Ottawa by putting tax cuts far and above investment in health care and education. In fact, Prime Minister Chrétien called your budget a copycat version of his own budget and the "best form of flattery." I'm sure you and your colleagues are still blushing from all that praise.

But it turns out that your \$200 "the cheque is in the mail" gimmick comes with a high price tag. It's going to cost taxpayers \$3.5 million to send the cheques in the mail. Now you're crying poor to your Liberal friends in Ottawa and asking them to help you out with the mailing costs. Minister, have you forgotten that there's only one taxpayer, whether it's the Liberals or Conservatives, to pay this unnecessary \$3.5 million? It's still the taxpayers who are going to foot the bill.

Hon Chris Hodgson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): Coming from the NDP who never saw a tax they didn't want or didn't like, I find this absolutely hypocritical, to say the least.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. The Chair of Management Board will withdraw that word, please.

Hon Mr Hodgson: I withdraw that. Sorry, Mr Speaker.

It's a good question. The people of Ontario overpaid last year \$1 billion too much in taxes. If the government were to sit on this \$1 billion until next year at the prevailing rate of 6.3% interest, it would accrue about \$64 million in interest.

While we know the opposition politicians, because of their addiction to unfairly picking Ontario's pockets and enriching themselves and the government at the expense of the taxpayers, would choose this route, we refused. It would be patently unfair for the government to make an additional \$64.3 million by sitting on this \$1 billion in taxpayers' over-contributions. Therefore, we're taking steps to mail it back as quickly as we can. Unfortunately, despite this direction, it will still take the government about three months to organize the mailing.

The Speaker: Order. I'm afraid the minister's time is up.

Mr Christopherson: Minister, let me share with you comments that have been reported widely about how Ontarians feel about your \$200 "the cheque is in the mail" gimmick. Leslie Étienne said, "It should have been spent elsewhere, especially in health care." Michael Stewart said, "What they should have done is spent the money to prevent tuition fees from going up." Moira Carriere said, "I'll probably put it toward my student loan, but I really think it should be put toward education

and health care.” It’s clear to these people and other Ontarians that we can do a lot more by spending this money collectively, rather than \$200 each. They’re looking for your government to show some leadership.

I’ll quote to you what the finance minister said in the papers: “You don’t have to be a socialist to have a social conscience. But you do have to have the financial means to be able to help.” Let me say, if your government has half the social conscience that your finance minister says you have, there’s \$1 billion already identified that you could put toward helping the broader good in terms of health and education. Minister, why didn’t you put the \$1 billion where it will do the most good for the most people?

Hon Mr Hodgson: As I was saying, the three months of interest will be \$14.5 million; the mailing costs \$3 million to \$5 million. That’s more than enough to cover this mailing cost. The concept that you don’t understand is that it’s the taxpayers’ money. It’s not ours, it’s not this Legislature’s, it’s theirs. The beauty of this is that they can use it how they wish. If they wish to spend it on tuition, pay off their student loan, pay off their debt, spend money—we’re a pro-growth economy. If they make those purchases that employ small business people, they can hire more people. There’s more growth, there’s more revenue for the government. They overpaid and they deserve to get their money back.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East): I have a question for the Minister of Health. It’s in regard to the operational review of Cambridge Memorial Hospital. Minister, you are aware of this review; it was prepared for your ministry by PricewaterhouseCoopers. The audit was clear: The underfunding of this hospital is a result of your actions and you are putting patient services in jeopardy. Let me quote the report: “Cambridge Memorial Hospital cannot balance its budget on its own without jeopardizing the range and scope of services that it should provide to its community.” Your own experts have called for immediate additional funding of \$10.8 million to meet the current needs.

Minister, we know you were made aware of this report by the media over a week ago. People in Cambridge have called me looking for answers, wanting to know when this money is going to be flowing to their hospital to protect much-needed health services in Cambridge.

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I hope the member is aware of the fact that our government takes very seriously its responsibility to hospitals. The member may not be aware of the fact that we actually increased funding for hospitals last year by \$600 million, and this year we will be adding an additional \$300 million to the base budgets of hospitals throughout the province. I can certainly assure the member, as I’ve already assured the members of the Cambridge community since the operational review was undertaken by the ministry and Cambridge

hospital, that it certainly is our intention to move forward with the recommendations.

Mr Caplan: Very interesting. The minister alludes to it, but she will not make a firm commitment on when that’s going to happen. That’s not good enough. Let me remind you, Minister, what your study says. It says that this hospital, the only one in Cambridge, is beyond efficient; it’s stretched to its limits. Let me remind you that Cambridge Memorial Hospital is not allowed to go on redirect or critical care bypass. Cambridge has 25,000 to 30,000 families who have no access to a family doctor. They turn to the hospital for their primary care. If they don’t get this almost \$11 million from you, they’re going to have to further slash their bedside operation.

Minister, it’s not in the briefing notes; you don’t have to look at them. Just say yes. When is Cambridge Memorial Hospital going to get the money? When are you going to stand up and protect the people of Cambridge for these very-much-needed health services?

Hon Mrs Witmer: The member opposite knows full well there has only been one government that has cut health funding, and that is the federal government. Despite the fact that we’ve lost \$1.7 billion, this year we’re going to be funding health care to the tune of \$22 billion.

I am certainly well aware of the efficiency and of the outstanding service that is provided by the Cambridge hospital, having visited the hospital on numerous occasions. I’m also well aware of the report because we worked on the operational review together, and I can assure you we will be following through, and we are, on the operational review. We’re quite well aware of the situation.

1430

LANDFILL

Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough): My question is for the Minister of the Environment. It relates to ministry approval for a new landfill in my riding of Peterborough. It has been brought to my attention by some of my constituents. The Peterborough landfill is considered to be a high-risk, site-specific design which depends on complex piping, pumps, and a forced main to capture leachate and pump it to the city’s sewage disposal plant. It is without liners and was designed to reduce capital costs. It’s my understanding there is no specific evidence or long-term operating experience to verify the proponents’ claim that toxic leachate will be contained and controlled for over 100 years.

Ontario’s new landfill site standards detail the use of clay and high-density liners to control toxic leachate. I understand that this new landfill can be granted approval by your ministry even though it does not incorporate any clay or composite liners. Minister, is there a loophole in the legislation which allows landfill proponents to reduce capital costs by eliminating protective liners?

Hon Dan Newman (Minister of the Environment): I’d like to thank the member for Peterborough for his

question. The ministry is currently reviewing the environmental assessment submission from both the county and the city of Peterborough for the expansion of the Bensfort Road landfill site. Although no technical applications have been made by the city or the county for this landfill, pumps, pipes and forced mains are not uncommon in modern landfill design. Further, the Environmental Protection Act requirements for landfill typically include monitoring provisions and contingency measures to ensure the environment is protected.

My ministry recognizes the site-specific characteristics of the Peterborough landfill and has identified proposed conditions of approval in the review of the environmental assessment application surrounding groundwater protection.

There is no loophole in the legislation. It is through the next phase of applications under the Environmental Protection Act process that site-specific engineering and design details will be reviewed to ensure that they meet current regulatory requirements, including those for groundwater protection and leachate treatment.

Mr Stewart: Minister, does your ministry have any future plans to upgrade the standards of landfills that will ensure protection of our environment?

Hon Mr Newman: On August 1, 1998, this government toughened Ontario's landfill standards to ensure Ontario landfills offered state-of-the-art environmental protection. The new standards include stringent requirements for groundwater protection. The new standards include two design approaches for achieving groundwater protection.

The first approach is a site-specific design approach. This approach is a performance-based approach and it allows a proponent to design the landfill to suit the local environmental setting. It must meet the ministry's reasonable-use limits for groundwater protection set for the site.

The second approach is the generic design approach. The generic design approach allows the landfill owner to select one of two generic designs specified in the standards, provided that the conditions on further use are met. The designs incorporate single- and double-liner systems, depending on the site size, and have been developed using conservative assumptions to ensure that they will meet the ministry's reasonable-use limits. The use of the site-specific design approach is shown to be suitable and fully protective of the—

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

SULPHUR IN GASOLINE

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have a question for the Minister of the Environment. I attended your disastrous press conference this morning at which you tried to divert attention from the latest round of devastating cuts to the Ministry of the Environment's budget by starting a phony war with Ottawa over sulphur in Ontario's gasoline. Unfortunately, the media was far

more interested in the slashing of the environment ministry by 40% since the Harris government took office in 1995 and the firing of one third of the ministry staff.

The ability of the environment ministry to catch and prosecute polluters through the use of technical, scientific, enforcement and legal staff has been crippled by a series of damaging cuts to your budget, and you meekly apologized for this hatchet job on your ministry. After your ministry has been devastated by enormous cuts to its budget and staff since the Harris government came to office, how can you possibly justify yet another \$16-million reduction found in the most recent budget of the Harris government?

Hon Dan Newman (Minister of the Environment): This morning I gave a press conference at the ministry site at Islington and the 401. What I was there to do today was to call upon the federal government to take some real action on sulphur in gasoline.

Waiting until January 2005, five years from now, is far too long to reduce the sulphur content in gasoline. I hope the member opposite was there to support me in that regard, because the federal government is the one that has jurisdiction over the level of sulphur in gasoline. It's the federal government's current regulations that would allow sulphur levels in gasoline in Ontario to actually double without any repercussions, and that's wrong. The Liberals are missing in action; that's where the Liberals are.

I also sent Environment Minister David Anderson a letter today, calling upon him to take some real action on the part of the federal government with respect to sulphur. I said to him, "Reducing sulphur levels in gasoline would be a good"—

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

Mr Bradley: I can understand your reluctance to talk about the latest huge cuts to the Ministry of the Environment. Your response to that today was pathetic.

Let me call your bluff on sulphur in gasoline. British Columbia has a regulation which regulates the cleanliness of gas in that province. Ontario regulates sulphur from boilers and outboard motors. We've had a regulation dating back from the late 1980s that deals with volatile organic compounds in gasoline. You have the power. You, Minister, have the power to regulate sulphur in gas at the retail pump.

I know your government fought hard alongside the oil industry to try to prevent this when negotiations took place, and then when it looked like the feds were going to move drastically, you tried to get out in front of the parade.

But let me ask you this question: Will you tell the House and the people of Ontario that your government will pass a regulation, as you can, under the Environmental Protection Act to require the oil companies to produce gas that meets the 30 parts per million of sulphur by the year 2002? I'm calling your bluff. Will you do that, Minister? Will the Harris government act?

Hon Mr Newman: I take from that question that the member opposite was there at the press conference today to support the reduction in sulphur in gasoline. I thought that's what I just heard today.

What I mentioned today was that the federal government controls what goes into gas tanks and, ultimately, into engines. If you have high-sulphur gasoline going into tanks and engines, you have high quantities of sulphur coming out of tailpipes. That's what the provincial government has responsibility over, the emissions.

If the member opposite had been listening carefully at the press conference today, he would have also heard that I said I've asked my ministry officials to see what else can be possibly done to reduce sulphur in gasoline. That's what I have asked, and I'd hoped he would bring that forward.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): My question is to the minister responsible for children. Being a father of two daughters, I am very concerned about children's well-being and their future.

Minister, recently our colleague the Honourable Ernie Eves, Minister of Finance, announced many new initiatives for children and youth in the Ontario budget 2000. Could you please tell us what this great news will mean for children and families across the province?

Hon Margaret Marland (Minister without Portfolio [Children]): I'd like to thank my colleague Raminder Gill, the member for Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale, for this important question.

Our government has demonstrated a tremendous commitment to the health and well-being of children, especially in this year's budget. For the first time ever, we have singled out children with a separate budget document, which is our full, complete commitment to the children of this province, in writing, with the dollar numbers right there for everybody to see that are assigned totally for children.

We are taking our responsibility, which ranges from new funding for child health and strengthening child safety—we have an additional \$6 million annually for preschool speech and language. We have a new infant hearing screening program—

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

Mr Gill: Minister, that sounds wonderful, but how will this budget provide more opportunities and support for low-income families with children and also strengthen child safety across the province?

Hon Mrs Marland: All these programs are for all children who have those specific needs. We have \$2 million more annually for the Canadian Living Foundation for children's nutrition programs in schools, and specifically, to recognize the special circumstances faced by working single parents, the government will introduce a new benefit for single parents as part of the Ontario child care supplement for working families. It is expected that

this new benefit will assist some 63,000 single parents with 77,000 children. We are committed to the children of this province. We continue to invest in all areas in terms of priority of outcomes to improve these children's lives.

One final thing I must put on the record is that \$2 million to develop local strategies to address the—

The Speaker: I'm afraid the minister's time is up.
1440

PRIMARY CARE REFORM

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-East York): My question is to the Minister of Health. I want to return to primary care reform, Minister. You know that I have been very skeptical about your government's political will to actually implement primary care reform. You keep saying all the right things, but I don't see them in action. Again in the budget you made a great announcement about your commitment to primary care reform. So I thought that maybe I would take another tack. If we're saying the same things and if we really agree we want to get there, then maybe the "You say, I say" approach doesn't make a lot of sense.

I'd like to ask you to show me some of the details of how you are going to implement it, so I can believe and work with you to get this job done. You say you are going to get to 80% of Ontario doctors in four years. You say you are going to spend \$100 million over four years to do that—that's \$25 million a year. Yet in the OMA agreement you say that the formula for conversion has yet to be negotiated.

Will you tell me how the \$25 million a year is going to be spent? Is it just for physicians? Is it part of the formula for conversion? Does it deal with the nurses, the nurse practitioners, the social workers, the nutritionists, the others in primary care clinics? Would you please give us some detail of how that is going to accomplish your goal of 80% in four years?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I am pleasantly surprised and quite looking forward to the statement by the member that she wants to work with us. We certainly would appreciate her support in wanting to move forward with us on primary care reform. I know that her party has supported this initiative, although I know at the same time that it has been your position that physicians and patients should be coerced into this program.

As you know, our proposal is that we would allow for voluntary enrolment of both physicians and patients into the program. I can assure you that we will be rolling out all the details on this issue and the other issues contained in the budget in the next few weeks and months.

Ms Lankin: The condition upon which you get my support is that you actually answer the questions and give us some details. What I asked you specifically was: How is your \$25 million a year over four years going to accomplish getting us to 80% of the physicians in primary care clinics?

Specifically, does that money cover the other health professionals who will be involved in primary care clinics? Specifically, is that money yet to be negotiated, as it says in the OMA agreement, with respect to the formula for conversion from fee-for-service to new primary care clinic funding? We would like some specifics here.

I guess the most important question is: If, over the course of the next three to four years, you are not reaching your goal of 80% of physicians in new primary care clinics, what are you going to do at that point in time? Will you then finally say you will make it mandatory to have primary care reform in this province?

Hon Mrs Witmer: I think it's been proven time and again that it would be inappropriate to force patients or physicians, or any other member of the primary care team, to participate in this program. Our government does not believe in coercion. We believe in voluntary enrolment of patients and physicians.

I'd just like to quote from the Hamilton Spectator. The Hamilton Spectator says, regarding primary care reform, and I think that probably their comments were directed at the third party, "The opposition parties didn't risk the wrath of the OMA by mandating primary care reform when they were in power." I would say to the member of the third party, why did you not undertake primary care reform and move the people in this province forward—

Interjections.

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

ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex): My question is to the Minister of Agriculture. Minister, your government delivered a budget Tuesday that gave the farmers of Ontario absolutely nothing. There is not one red cent of new spending for farmers, who are facing their biggest crisis since the Dirty Thirties. You missed the boat, Minister. You had a golden opportunity to give the farmers a break on the retail sales tax that would have put \$30 million into farmers' pockets. Instead, Mike Harris gave \$635 million to wealthy folks to play in the stock market.

Why didn't you fight for them, Minister, at the cabinet table? You failed them. Farmers need an expanded retail sales tax exemption today, not some time in the future. Will you promise that, here and now?

Hon Ernie Hardeman (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs): I find it very curious that the member opposite would suggest that there's nothing in the budget for farmers and for rural Ontario when in fact the budget for the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, to look after the needs of rural Ontario and all farmers, has been increased by 50%. It's the highest increase of any ministry in the budget.

On the issue of helping farmers, because they are in difficult times, the budget includes \$40 million more for the farm safety net program.

Incidentally, I want to speak to the member opposite. Just a few months ago, the media reported we shouldn't be going after the money for a fair share for Ontario's farmers; we should spend our time at home and make do with what little we were getting from Ottawa. We didn't listen to him. We went to Ottawa and got \$40 million a year more for our farmers. He has a nerve to stand up and say we're not doing enough.

Mr Hoy: Minister, there was nothing for agriculture. You're playing the same old shell game over and over again. Eighty million dollars is unspent and reannounced money. Everything else is repackaged infrastructure money from other ministries to hide the cuts in your agricultural portfolio.

Infrastructure only benefits farmers indirectly. Why did you even bother to consult with the Ontario Federation of Agriculture? You gave them nothing. They've said you neglected agriculture and your budget missed the mark.

Minister, the federal government provides this exemption. Other provinces provide this exemption and field services. On top of the cuts you have already made, you're adding insult to injury. You must put farmers on an equal footing with other jurisdictions to keep them competitive. You must give them the RST enhancement today. Will you do it now?

Hon Mr Hardeman: It's quite obvious that the member opposite has done a good job of listening to the president of the federation of agriculture, who suggested that the only thing he wanted for our farmers was to have a tax exemption on the sales tax on farm input. I want to point out that that's a very important issue, that we should find a way to reduce farm input costs by \$20 million or \$30 million a year. But I find it much more important to make sure that we put \$40 million more in the budget so we can help those farmers who are truly in difficult times.

The sales tax exemption would be very beneficial to our farmers, but it is only beneficial to farmers who are making purchases, not to the farmers who no longer have enough money to pay for those purchases. We have a program in place to look after our farmers.

I also want to point out that the federation of agriculture brought forward many proposals that we improve rural economic development—

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

1450

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls): My question is for the Solicitor General. Minister, constituents in my riding have consistently told me that they take the issue of community safety very seriously at local events, on radio open-line shows and going door to door. People I've talked to in Niagara all believe that we should be able to live in our communities free from the fear of crime.

Recently you participated in a crime prevention conference in Niagara Falls. Could you please tell the House and the people of Ontario about the success of this conference.

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Solicitor General): I thank the member from Niagara Falls for a tougher question than the one from Chatham-Kent over there.

First of all, I must say to the member from Niagara Falls that his commitment to the public safety is second to none in this province, and to his community as well. Last week I attended a conference to deal with crime prevention and tourism in Niagara Falls. This was a partnership between the city of Niagara Falls, the Niagara Falls police, the merchants, in fact, in Niagara Falls. That's what made it so significant. It was all parts of the community coming together to try to address what they saw not necessarily as a problem, but to try to take some preventive actions in terms of crime prevention.

Originally they were afraid that the wrong message might get out, that people might think that somehow there was crime on the streets of Niagara Falls. But Niagara Falls is a very safe city, and I commend them for saying and trying to do something to make the streets of Niagara Falls safer. During that, they looked at the design of their communities, working with the communities, how they can all partner together to increase tourism and make sure we have the right message that tourism is safe and visitors are safe in Niagara Falls.

Mr Maves: Minister, everyone in Ontario has the right to be safe from crime. We should be able to walk in our neighbourhoods, use public transit, live in our homes and send our children to school free from the fear of criminals. Our government has made a commitment to the people of Ontario to improve the safety of our communities, for instance, the Partners against Crime initiative, which invested \$150 million into putting up 1,000 new front-line police officers on the streets. More police officers on our streets and providing police with the tools they need is one of the ways our government is helping to make our streets safer. But specifically, Minister, could you tell my constituents what you are doing in the Niagara area to help make our streets safer?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: Once again, the member from Niagara Falls started off his question by talking about one of our best programs we have, and that's the community policing program. That's an investment, as he mentioned, of about \$150 million to get 1,000 net new police officers on the streets of this province.

What does this mean? In Niagara Falls this means that 55 brand new officers are now available to help make Niagara Falls safer. You know, we thought this was such a great program that in our recent budget we've indicated that \$35 million will be allocated toward community policing. I think this is significant, because it says to the communities of Ontario that we, your government, feel it's important for us to have police officers there because we believe that's the best way to combat crime in this province.

In addition to that, we've also given over \$150,000 for the RIDE program for Niagara Falls and over \$1 million through our Partners in Community Safety program as well.

OAK RIDGES MORaine

Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence): I'd like to ask a question of the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Today your ministry put forward a corridor map for the Oak Ridges moraine through Richmond Hill and it delivered this corridor map to the Ontario Municipal Board. Minister, when will the public, the thousands of citizens across the moraine, especially in Richmond Hill, who are very interested in protecting the moraine, get a chance to see this map and be able to have input in this map that your ministry presented today? When will we see it? When will we have a chance, especially the citizens, to at least have their input in the corridor you presented today to the OMB?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I thank the honourable member for the question.

Interjection: And the answer is?

Hon Mr Colle: The answer is, it's a public map.

Mr Colle: Minister—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): The member take his seat. Stop the clock, please. Start the clock. The member for Eglinton-Lawrence.

Mr Colle: Minister, it's about public input. Your ministry gave this document to the Ontario Municipal Board. You have to be a lawyer or a consultant to be at the Ontario Municipal Board. The public wants a say on this map your ministry presented. I asked you, will you make your map public? Will you allow for input on this map on the Oak Ridges moraine?

Laughter.

Mr Colle: I know the members there think it's funny, but this is about the public having input. I know you don't like public input—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Member take his seat. Order. Stop the clock. There was some heckling. We're going to stop the clock so you can continue with the question. Sorry for the interruption. The government was rather loud. I will start the clock and you can continue.

Mr Colle: Minister, again, it's about input. You have delivered this proposal to the Ontario Municipal Board: a corridor across the moraine. It is before the Ontario Municipal Board. When will the public, who live and work and love the moraine, have a chance to have a say on the map: its makeup, what's included, what's excluded? That's the question. When do we see the map and when does the public have input into it?

Hon Mr Clement: In all seriousness, as I said, obviously the map is a public document because it's before a public board. The public board is engaged in public hearings. So if there are any members of the community

who wish to participate in the public hearings, there are ways for that to happen.

Let's be clear, because I don't want any ambiguity on this issue. We were asked by the OMB to produce a corridor that would be consistent with the provincial policy statement and the 1991 guidelines. We have complied with the request of the OMB. We have consulted with, I'm sure, the best scientists in the province. We've consulted with the Ministry of Natural Resources. We've consulted with the conservation authorities. There has been lots of consultation on this document. But it is a scientific document and I support my ministry's position that this document should be presented to the board, as per the board's request. After it is presented, I'm sure the board, through its public hearings, can engage in the public consultation the honourable member and I support.

PROVINCIAL PARKS

Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant): I wish to question the Minister of Natural Resources. In March 1999 Premier Mike Harris announced Ontario's Living Legacy. This innovative strategy was the greatest increase in the history of Ontario's system of parks and protected areas. We know that Ontario has some of the most beautiful scenery in the world and this strategy greatly increases the amount of protected land in our province. Ontario's Living Legacy is by far one of the best initiatives by any government to safeguard and protect our natural heritage for generations to come.

Minister, in support of this major parks expansion, again the largest such increase in history, what opportunities exist for young people in delivering the government's Living Legacy objectives?

1500

Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Natural Resources): I thank the member for the question. Certainly Living Legacy is an announcement that we all can be proud of: 378 new parks and protected areas across the province; some six million acres of land protected for future generations.

I am pleased to inform the member today that we recently made an announcement that our support for youth in this province from this ministry will almost double this year to \$10 million. That includes support for the Ontario Ranger program, which I know many people have enjoyed being part of for many years in the province of Ontario. That program will continue. We have tripled the size of the conservation rangers, a new program that allows for some conservation efforts in parts of the province where they haven't previously taken place.

In addition to that, we have a new internship program, so some of our young graduates from post-secondary and people who are involved with post-secondary can come into the ministry with new ideas, new skills, and help us create all of these new parks. It's a win-win.

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: It is now two days in a row

following the budget that neither the Premier nor the finance minister has been available to respond and be publicly held accountable to the budget. I would ask you to get involved and ensure that the Premier and finance minister are here—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): The member will know that is not a point of order. The Speaker does not control the schedule of anybody coming in here.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon Frank Klees (Minister without Portfolio): I have a statement of business of the House for next week.

On Monday afternoon, we'll continue the budget debate.

On Monday evening, we'll debate Bill 69, the Labour Relations Amendment Act.

On Tuesday afternoon, we'll debate Bill 69, the Labour Relations Amendment Act.

On Tuesday evening, we expect to do Bill 72, the Taxpayer Dividend Act.

On Wednesday afternoon, we will debate Bill 62, the Direct Democracy through Municipal Referendums Act.

On Wednesday evening, we expect to do Bill 72, the Taxpayer Dividend Act.

On Thursday morning, during private members' business, we will discuss ballot items number 23 and 24.

On Thursday afternoon, we expect to do Bill 72, the Taxpayer Dividend Act.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Just before we have petitions, in the members' gallery we have Mr Declan Fearon, who is the chair of the South Armagh Farmers and Residents Committee—I believe that's from Ireland—joining us today.

PETITIONS

DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontarians with a developmental disability are in growing danger of inadequate support because compensation to staff of not-for-profit agencies is, based on a recent survey, on average, 20% to 25% less than compensation for others doing the same work in provincial institutions or similar work in other settings; and

“Whereas there are hundreds of senior parents in Ontario who saved the Ontario government millions of dollars by keeping their child with a developmental disability at home, and who are still caring for their adult child; and

“Whereas there is no place for most of these adults with a developmental disability to go when the parents are no longer able to provide care; and

“Whereas these parents live with constant anxiety and despair; and

“Whereas these adult children will end up in Ontario nursing homes and hospitals if there is no appropriate place to provide care;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario as follows:

“To significantly increase compensation for workers in not-for-profit agencies so that it is comparable to the compensation of government-funded workers in identical or similar occupations; and

“To provide the resources necessary to give appropriate support to Ontarians with a developmental disability who at present have no place to go when their parents are no longer able to care for them.”

I have signed that petition.

PESTICIDES

Ms Marilyn Churley (Broadview-Greenwood): I have a petition signed by 6,000 Ontario residents from Alliston to Woodstock on the elimination of the cosmetic use of pesticides. The petition reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the following cities in Ontario—Toronto, Waterloo, Ottawa, Kitchener and Cambridge—already have in place restrictive policies for the landscape/cosmetic use of pesticides on publicly owned land; and

“Whereas synthetic chemical pesticides and fertilizers now routinely used for landscape/cosmetic use are harmful to human health and the environment; and

“Whereas these products are unnecessary because sustainable, healthy and effective lawn care alternatives are available,

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

“The province of Ontario phase out the landscape/cosmetic use of synthetic chemical pesticides on both public and privately owned land by the year 2001 and immediately develop and implement a comprehensive public education program to the efficiency of sustainable lawn and garden maintenance practices.”

I will affix my signature to these petitions as I agree with them wholeheartedly.

LORD’S PRAYER

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

“Whereas the prayer, Our Father, also called the Lord’s Prayer has always been used to open the proceedings of municipal chambers”—and I can say that for Clarington—“and the Ontario Legislative Assembly since the beginning of Upper Canada under Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe in the 18th century; and

“Whereas such use of the Lord’s Prayer is part of Ontario’s long-standing heritage and a tradition that continues to play a significant role in contemporary Ontario life; and

“Whereas the Lord’s Prayer is the most meaningful expression of the religious convictions of many Ontario citizens;

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

“That the Parliament of Ontario maintain the use of the Lord’s Prayer in its proceedings, in accordance with its long-standing established custom and do all in its power to maintain the use of this prayer in municipal chambers in Ontario.”

I’m pleased to sign and endorse this petition on behalf of my constituents of the riding of Durham.

OAK RIDGES MORAINÉ

Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Oak Ridges moraine in Richmond Hill is the headwaters for the east Humber, Rouge River and the east Don River watersheds, as well as being a critical recharge area for huge aquifers on the Oak Ridges moraine; and

“Whereas the Oak Ridges moraine in Richmond Hill contains five areas of natural and scientific interest (ANSI) including Bond Lake and bog ANSI, Wilcox Lake wetlands ANSI, Jefferson Forest ANSI, White Rose bog ANSI and Simeon Forest ANSI; and

“Whereas this area has the largest concentration of kettle lakes and kettle bogs in the GTA supporting numerous fish species and regionally rare plants; and

“Whereas this area supports the highest biodiversity in the GTA with 925 plant species, 99 breeding bird species, 16 reptile and amphibian species and 15 mammal species; and

“Whereas the natural water aquifer recharge functions of the moraine will be replaced by storm water management and infiltration ponds resulting in the concentration of pollutants from urban streets and lawns; and

“Whereas now is the last opportunity for the creation of a major natural park on the Oak Ridges moraine along the east-west Yonge Street corridor;

“We, the undersigned, petition the provincial government to immediately enact strong measures to protect the Oak Ridges moraine corridor in the town of Richmond Hill within an established kettle lakes park.”

I’ve happily signed my name to the petition.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Harris government’s plan to force the sale of subsidized housing in Hamilton-Wentworth will create a crisis for 700 local families; and

“Whereas in addition to these 700 families there are 3,700 other families on waiting lists who will be left without affordable accommodation; and

“Whereas the Harris government’s housing sell-off is mean-spirited and targets the poorest families who are now threatened with possible eviction;

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

“That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario direct the Harris government to save these affordable housing units for low-income families, and support new affordable housing to help the 3,700 families on waiting lists in our community.”

I add my name to those of these petitioners.

KARLA HOMOLKA

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): I have 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

“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.”

It’s my pleasure to attach my name to it.

1510

HIGHWAY SAFETY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I have affixed my signature to it.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): I have further petitions from Cecil Mackasey and Rick Roberts of CAW Local 222. 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 known as carcinogens; and

“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 carcinogens;

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

“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;

“Therefore, 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.”

On behalf of my NDP colleagues, I add my name to those of the petitioners.

LORD’S PRAYER

Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant): The member representing Durham read a petition to keep the

Lord's Prayer in the Legislative Assembly, and I have an identical petition:

"Whereas the Lord's Prayer, also called Our Father, has been used to open the proceedings of municipal chambers and the Ontario Legislative Assembly since the beginning of Upper Canada in the 18th century;

"Whereas such use of the Lord's Prayer is part of Ontario's long-standing heritage and a tradition that continues to play a significant role in contemporary Ontario life; and

"Whereas the Lord's Prayer is a most meaningful expression of the religious convictions of many Ontario citizens;

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

"That the Parliament of Ontario maintain the use of the Lord's Prayer in its proceedings, in accordance with its long-standing established custom, and do all in its power to maintain use of this prayer in municipal chambers in Ontario."

I affix my signature to these petitions.

OAK RIDGES MORAINÉ

Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East): I have a petition. It is to the Ontario provincial Legislature.

"To protect and maintain the natural features of the Oak Ridges moraine in the town of Richmond Hill for future generations.

"Whereas the Oak Ridges moraine in Richmond Hill is the headwaters for the East Humber, Rouge River and East Don River watersheds as well as being a critical recharge area for huge aquifers on the Oak Ridges moraine; and

"Whereas the Oak Ridges moraine in Richmond Hill contains five areas of natural and scientific interest, including Bond Lake and bog area of natural and scientific interest, Wilcox Lake wetlands area of natural and scientific interest, Jefferson Forest area of natural and scientific interest, White Rose bog area of natural and scientific interest, and Simeon Forest area of natural and scientific interest; and

"Whereas this area has the largest concentration of kettle lakes and kettle bogs in the GTA supporting numerous fish species and regionally rare plants; and

"Whereas this area supports the highest biodiversity in the greater Toronto area with 925 plant species, 99 breeding bird species, 16 reptile and amphibian species and 15 mammal species; and

"Whereas the natural water aquifer recharge functions of the moraine will be replaced by storm water management and infiltration ponds resulting in the concentration of pollutants from urban streets and lawns; and

"Whereas now is the last opportunity for the creation of a major natural park on the Oak Ridges moraine along the east-west Yonge Street corridor;

"We, the undersigned, petition the provincial government to immediately enact strong measures to protect the

Oak Ridges moraine corridor in the town of Richmond Hill within an established kettle lakes park."

I wholeheartedly agree with this petition and I have affixed my signature to it.

KARLA HOMOLKA

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It's a continuation of the one that was read by my colleague from Brampton.

"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 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'm pleased to affix my signature to this petition.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

2000 ONTARIO BUDGET

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 3, 2000, on the amendment to the motion that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): I'm pleased to be able to take part in this budget debate. Let me at the outset add some recently breaking news. I listened to some of the Liberal speakers yesterday and I understood that they were opposed to this government's budget, but I find today that Prime Minister Chrétien—I understand he is a Liberal—in reference to the Harris government's budget says that the "best form of flattery is when another government is copying" you, referring to the federal Liberal budget. The Liberal finance minister says that the Conservative finance minister, Ernie Eves,

simply borrowed the Liberals' playbook for their tax-cut budget.

I want the Conservative members to know that the Liberals like your budget. There is a reason why they like it.

Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale): Do you still have a party nationally?

Mr Hampton: I see some of the Liberals are reacting to this a bit.

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): You've touched a nerve.

Mr Hampton: Yes, I've touched a nerve here. There is a reason why they like it. The reason is that the budget that was presented by the Harris Conservative government is in fact a carbon copy of the budget that was presented by the Liberals some two months ago in Ottawa. I want to point out the glaring similarities so that people across Ontario will know how identical the agendas of the Liberals and the Conservatives really are.

1520

Both the Liberals in Ottawa and the Conservatives here are dealing with a budget surplus situation, budgets that have been balanced on the backs of working families who are worried about the crumbling quality of their health care, their community hospital, the schools, the colleges, the universities, protection of the environment, affordable housing; families who are worried about the rising cost of living, about higher housing prices, higher tuition fees, more and more health care user fees. Both the Liberals in Ottawa and the Conservatives in Ontario ignored the concerns of real people and focused on rewarding corporate Canada, corporate Ontario and the wealthiest of the wealthy.

Just a few examples:

The Liberals in Ottawa put 40% of their budget surplus into tax cuts for corporations and the well-off. The Conservatives in Ontario blew \$5.2 billion in tax cuts for the wealthiest of the wealthy and for Bay Street corporations. Some \$3.95 billion of the tax cuts went straight into the pockets of Bay Street corporations—corporations that already have obscene profit levels, but the Liberals and Conservatives believe they need more. Forty-two of the 67 so-called tax cuts went straight into the pockets of corporations that already have the most obscene of profits.

The Liberals in Ottawa helped their wealthy friends by cutting corporate taxes by 7%. The Conservatives are going to help their wealthy friends by cutting corporate taxes in the same way, giving away \$3.95 billion in corporate tax gifts to the well-off.

If ever there was a tax which is aimed at getting at some of the wealth, it's the capital gains tax. The Liberals in Ottawa cut the capital gains tax by two thirds of taxable income. The Conservatives weren't quite as bad. They only cut it 50%. I have to say, on this one you're not up to your Liberal cousins yet. You're not quite there in terms of your desire to reward the wealthiest of the wealthy, but I have no doubt that you're going to get there.

The Liberals in Ottawa give tax breaks to those wealthy enough to play the stock market; so did the Conservatives.

The Liberals in Ottawa helped their wealthy friends by upping the foreign content limits on RRSP contributions to 30%. I know that this won't mean a lot to the average Ontarian because the average Ontarian probably doesn't have enough money that they can start to worry about the foreign-content part of the RRSP.

Not to be outdone by the Liberals, the Conservatives want to raise the RRSP contribution limit to \$15,500 a year. That's more than someone on minimum wage makes. This government wants to give a gift to the wealthiest in this province which amounts to more than what someone working the minimum wage will make in a year. I have to tell you, you're going to have to go some to catch up with the Liberals, because they're ahead of you on that one.

The Liberals in Ottawa got rid of the 5% upper income surtax on those in the \$85,000-a-year income bracket. The Conservatives gave one third of their tax breaks to the 5% who were at the top of the income ladder. Those with incomes of \$330,000 a year or more got \$733 million. Sorry—the top five is actually in excess of \$95,000, just to show you again how similar the agendas are of the Liberals in Ottawa and the Conservatives here in Ontario.

I haven't talked about health care yet, I haven't talked about education yet and I haven't talked about protection of the environment yet, because when you read the Liberals' budget and the Conservatives' budget, they're all about tax cuts for the well-off, tax cuts for corporate Canada and corporate Ontario. There is very little mention of things like protecting the environment, education and health care.

Both the Liberals in Ottawa and the Conservatives here have tried to package their tax cuts to make them look like they are going to benefit low- and middle-income families. But we now have had a chance to do the numbers, and the truth is that both the Liberals' budget and the Conservatives' budget are tailored for the well-off, and I want people at home to understand this. As an example, when you do the numbers on the tax cuts that were announced on Tuesday, someone who has an income of \$330,000 a year—I don't think anyone in my constituency has an income of \$330,000 a year—is going to get a \$10,000 tax cut. For someone who has an income of \$30,000 a year or less—and here I'm talking about 40% of Ontario taxpayers—their tax cut is going to be \$194 or less, about 50 cents a day. So 40% of the people in Ontario get a crumb while the 0.5% who have an income of \$330,000 a year walk home with \$10,000 courtesy of this government—again, about equal to what somebody working hard for the minimum wage would get in a year. That is how unbalanced this is.

I say again, the Liberals in Ottawa think this is a wonderful budget. Jean Chrétien and Paul Martin are on your side. They think this is a wonderful budget.

There are more details. The government handles their budget as if it is a Monopoly game. They're going to be

mailing out this one-time-only \$200 cheque, but there is some fine print that people need to know. The people of Ontario who are at the lowest end of the income scale aren't to get the \$200. In fact, the people in Ontario who work for the minimum wage, who work for low wages, seniors and those whose income is so low that they don't pay provincial income tax get nothing. So 25% of the people of Ontario who are the bottom of the income ladder get nothing.

Again I want to mention, if you have an income of \$330,000, this government is going to give you \$10,000 on top of the money Jean Chrétien and Paul Martin are going to give you. But if you are at the bottom of the income scale, you get nothing. You don't even get the \$200 for passing Go. By the way, that's a million people. At least a million people in Ontario are essentially being told: "Your income is low. You don't get anything."

The reality behind both the budget tabled by the Liberals in Ottawa and the budget tabled by the Conservatives here is this: They both have unbalanced priorities on giving mega tax cuts to corporations and the well-off at the expense of the health care system we all need, the education system we all need, the strong community services we all need and the protection of the environment we all need. That is what I want to talk about now. I want to talk a bit about health care.

When you look at health care, that's where the childish hypocrisy and finger-pointing practices of both the Liberals in Ottawa and the Conservatives in Ontario converge into the theatre of the absurd. In the weeks leading up to the last federal budget, the Harris government—surprise, surprise—ran a whole bunch of TV ads. Were they asking for more health care funding? Were they saying that health care should be a priority? No. They were saying that tax cuts for the well-off and corporations should be the priority. And what did the Liberals in Ottawa do? The Liberals in Ottawa listened to them. For every dollar in tax cuts for corporations and the well-off, they could find only two cents for health care. That is the Liberal record on health care: For every dollar in tax cuts for the well-off, they could find only two cents for health care.

1530

When we examine this budget, go through and count very carefully, what we find is that for every dollar the Conservatives in Ontario had for corporate tax cuts and tax cuts for the very well off, they had one cent for health care. So I have to say the Liberals are one penny better than you are for health care, and that's about it. That's about the difference between your collective agendas for health care that all people in this province need.

We need to go through the line that this government is trying to put out there for health care. They're saying, "We're spending more on health care than ever before." What they've done is this: They took a whole bunch of lump sums and tried to spin the story that this is all going to happen this year. For example, for research on safe blood supply they say \$21 million. But when you look at it, it's only \$7 million this year. It's \$21 million spread

over three or four years; only \$7 million this year. Then they say expansion of Ontario's primary care system, \$100 million. But when you read the fine print, it's only \$25 million. When you read all of the numbers and you read the fine print, you discover that this government says they're investing \$655 million in new health care programs, but it's only \$168 million. The other money might be spent in some future years; we don't know. So it's really the case of a wonderful spin line, but when you examine the numbers it ain't there.

We talked to some nurses. We asked the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario and the Ontario Nurses Association, "What do you make of this?" They said: "You know, a year ago this government said they were going to hire 10,000 new nurses. We've been out there looking for the 10,000 new nurses and we can't find them." Actually, this government has a history of this. They've got a history of making health care announcements and then nothing happens. That's exactly what it is here. They announce \$655 million in new investment in health care, but when you read the fine print it's \$168 million.

What comes out of this? A lot comes out of it. Let's look at hospitals, for example. We know that hospitals in Ontario are right now carrying a \$1.8-billion deficit. That is how much they are underfunded as a result of the budget cuts imposed in the last five years by this government. So they've got a \$1.8-billion budget deficit. This government says, "We're going to fix that." When you read the fine print, all they have for hospitals this year is \$300 million. When you talk to the Ontario Hospital Association, they say that the \$300 million in actual money is closer to \$100 million, meaning that Ontario hospitals are still going to be left with a deficit of at least \$1.5 billion, probably closer to \$1.7 billion. What does that mean for patients across Ontario? I think they know what it means. It means when you go to the emergency room, you wait and you wait and you wait. When you need a hospital bed, very often you're going to be told there isn't one. When you need a nurse you're going to be told, "Sorry, there isn't one." What it means is the cracks and the holes that have been appearing in the hospital system are going to continue. That's what it means.

Then there's the issue of nurses. Last week, the government's own report indicated that because of this government's cuts and because of their underfunding of health care, there's going to be a shortage of nurses—a critical shortage of nurses. Was there any money, was there any plan, any strategy in this budget to deal with the shortage of nurses? We read the fine print. The media asked the Minister of Health. What's the answer? There is no strategy, there is no plan—a chronic shortage, a crisis in terms of a shortage of nurses and this government has no plan.

I want to talk just a bit about the people who are closest to me, the people I represent from my own part of Ontario. There are 100 communities in northern and rural Ontario that do not have sufficient doctors. The shortage

is actually in excess of 415 doctors. Kenora in my constituency, Dryden, Sioux Lookout, Red Lake, Atikokan—these are all communities that are short of doctors. Is there a strategy in this budget, when this government has so much money to give away in corporate tax cuts, so much money to give away to the wealthiest in Ontario, to deal with the doctor shortage?

The government says, “We’re going to pay the tuition fees of those people who are going to medical school who agree that when they’re done they’ll go to northern Ontario and rural Ontario to practise, to areas where there’s a shortage.” Underserviced areas, they’re called. That’s the one thing. Even if you want to be charitable, even if you want to be generous to the government, it amounts to paying—they’re going to provide no more than \$750,000 a year, and what this might do, seven or eight years from now, is generate some medical school graduates who are prepared to go north or into rural Ontario. The well-off get their tax cuts now; people who are facing a doctor shortage in Ontario are being told by this government to wait seven or eight years. That’s how long it’s going to take to produce one physician, and in terms of specialists it will take even longer.

I have to let people know this idea of paying the tuition fees is not new. It was actually tried in the early 1980s by a former Conservative government, only then they called it a bursary. You got a bursary at medical school if you agreed to go north to practise. But there was a problem with it. Most people, when they go to medical school, are young. They haven’t really thought about where they want to practise; they haven’t thought about what kind of medicine they want to practise. Maybe while they’re in medical school they meet someone and they get married, they form a relationship. Their partner says: “I don’t want to go here or there. I want to live somewhere else.” The bursary strategy that was tried by a former Conservative government in the early 1980s was a complete failure.

I know that this strategy is very much favoured by this government and very much favoured by the Liberals because they can’t come up with any other idea, but I just say to people, it will be seven or eight years before this produces any physicians at all, and I doubt very much if it’s going to be any more successful this time than it was last time. But that is the sum total of their strategy. With \$5.2 billion in corporate tax cuts and tax cuts for the well-off—if they’d taken only 1% of that, \$50 million, and devoted it to working out a strategy to ensure that people in their own community had physicians, it would have made a huge difference. Just 1% of what you gave away to the corporations on Bay Street and the wealthiest of the wealthy, and that is too much to ask.

Then there’s the issue of cancer patients. I want to quote the vice-chair of Cancer Care Ontario, Mr Gerry Lougheed. Cancer Care Ontario is a government agency. This is what Mr Lougheed had to say about this government: “This government, in respect of cancer patients, is practising health care apartheid.” I want people across Ontario to know why he said that and why he’s right.

We know that this government has made huge mistakes in cancer strategy. We know that this government, when they came into power, cancelled the new cancer treatment centres in Durham, Mississauga and elsewhere in southern Ontario. Not only that, but they cancelled the training programs for technicians and nurses and other health care providers who would then be able to work in those cancer centres. So four years later, they discover that there are literally tens of thousands of cancer patients in southern Ontario who cannot get cancer treatment. It is not good to admit to the public that they made a big mistake, that they literally cut a critical element of Ontario’s health care strategy and have left tens of thousands of cancer patients out in the cold.

1540

So right away they strategize, “How do we cover this up?” They come up with a plan. They’re going to pay the full cost to send cancer patients to Buffalo, to Detroit, and also they’re going to pay the full cost to transport cancer patients from southern Ontario to Sudbury and Thunder Bay. So a cancer patient from southern Ontario who has to go to Thunder Bay or Sudbury gets their complete airfare paid, gets their taxi fare paid, gets their hotel paid for, gets their food and everything else paid for—thousands of dollars for each trip.

But the problem is, if you’re a cancer patient from Pickle Lake, from Red Lake, from Kapuskasing and you have to go to Thunder Bay or Sudbury, this transportation allowance doesn’t apply. You find your own way there. Yes, you can apply to the northern health travel grant and maybe get \$100 to offset some of the cost. When the cost is in the thousands, you can get \$100. That’s this government’s sense of equity.

What is really outlandish about this is that I know cancer patients who are travelling six hours in the middle of winter, at 30 below zero over icy highways, to get to Thunder Bay. They have to go in their own car to the treatment centre because they can’t afford the \$600, \$700, \$800 airfare. One patient from southern Ontario, where this government is trying to cover up its disaster, gets a \$2,000 expense allowance to get to cancer treatment in Thunder Bay and back, and somebody who lives in Pickle Lake, Donna Graham, spends six hours in 30-below weather on an open highway travelling there and pays the rest of the cost out of her own pocket.

I can give you lists of cancer patients who have said: “I can’t go to my next appointment with the cancer specialist. I can’t go for my next treatment. I don’t have the money.”

This is health care apartheid. But what is really outlandish about this is that this government knew what it was doing. It specifically provided a special allocation to pay for cancer patients from southern Ontario and said: “We don’t care about the cancer patients in northern Ontario. Let them find their own way there, and if they can’t afford it, we don’t care.”

Probably \$1 million, \$2 million would have done away with this health care apartheid. At a time when this government gave away \$5.2 billion in tax cuts to Bay

Street corporations and tax cuts to the wealthiest of the wealthy, they were unwilling, they didn't care enough to do away with this health care apartheid. They're saying to the cancer patients in northern Ontario, "You don't count; you don't matter." Disgusting, outrageous, shameful, ugly, odious.

It doesn't end there. However, I don't just want to talk about health care. I want to talk about education, because just as in health care this government duplicated the Liberals in Ottawa in terms of education, two years ago the tally for post-secondary education cuts by the Liberals in Ottawa reached a whopping \$1.5 billion a year. That's how much the Liberals in Ottawa have taken out of post-secondary education: colleges and universities. That hasn't changed today. We saw in the Liberal budget two months ago once again that for every dollar they had for corporate tax cuts and tax cuts for the well-off, they could only find two cents for health care. They could find nothing for education, nothing for universities and colleges.

What do we see in your budget of this past Tuesday? True to the theme, you followed the Liberals' lead. There was nothing in your budget to provide the investment in post-secondary education that our university and college students need, nothing to ease their debt load. I can tell you that there are college and university students out there with \$30,000 debt loads, \$40,000 debt loads, \$50,000 debt loads. Imagine this. All these people want is to access an education so they can make a contribution to our society, so they can participate in the economy. At the same time that this government has \$5.2 billion in corporate tax cuts and tax cuts for the well-off, they say to the college and university students, "You don't matter." The shame of it is, the Liberals in Ottawa had exactly the same answer: nothing for post-secondary education, nothing for students, nothing for the colleges and universities which are more and more the foundation of our economy.

The reality is that when you sit down and look at the education budget, this government is going to invest less in our elementary and secondary schools this year than they did last year. I know they made some announcements about kindergarten and they made some announcements about some other specialized things they want to do, but when you look at the overall number, there is no more money in the education budget this year than there was last year; in fact, there's a \$104-million cut.

What does that mean? I'll tell you what it means. In order to put some money into kindergarten, they're going to go to the high school level and take money out of there. They're going to go to the grade 6s, the grade 7s and the grade 8s and take money out of there.

Just to illustrate the point—this is from today's Brantford Expositor. The headline is, "Teachers Get Layoff Notices: Public Board Cutting Nearly 160 Teachers and Support Jobs.

"The Grand Erie District School Board announced an across-the-board cut to school staffing levels Wednesday,

slashing more than 157 teachers and support staff positions."

Support staff positions are special education assistants, to help kids who need help the most. This is not unique. The Keewatin-Patricia board sent out notices two weeks ago to their special education assistants, saying to them that literally 100 of them are either going to face reduced hours or they're going to be laid off.

That's what's really happening in education. At the same time that this government had these megatax cuts for corporations and the well-off, what they're going to do in education is take from the grade 6s, the grade 7s, the grade 8s and the high school students in order to make some announcement about what they might be doing for kindergarten students.

The announcement for kindergarten students means that you might actually reduce the class size by one. In classes that are already too large, reducing it by one frankly isn't doing much, at a time when investing in education is more important than ever before, because it is the foundation post of our economy. We now live in a knowledge economy.

I next want to turn to the environment. God knows, we've got some environmental problems in Ontario. We have the second-worst environmental record in North America. Only that hero of the right-wing rednecks, George W. Bush in Texas, has a worse environmental record. All I can conclude from this budget is that this government wants to overtake George W. Bush for having the worst record on the environment, because at a time when they had so much money to give away to corporations, what did they do in the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Natural Resources, the two ministries, the two parts of government that are supposed to protect the environment? They cut another \$100 million out of the budget, at a time when we have some of the worst air pollution problems in North America. At a time when the amount of hazardous waste that is being brought into Ontario from outside has quadrupled, at a time when more and more illnesses among children and breathing disorders among children are linked to bad air, this government cuts, in a surplus situation, a further \$100 million from environmental protection.

That's on top of the cuts of the last four years. It means that the enforcement staff in the Ministry of the Environment—the people who are supposed to be out there protecting our environment, enforcing the air pollution rules, the water pollution rules, the toxic chemical rules—has been cut by 40%. It means, in the Ministry of Natural Resources, fewer foresters, fewer biologists, fewer conservation officers out there to protect the natural environment. That's what it means.

1550

Then there is the big announcement about infrastructure. But I want people to understand what the SuperBuild fund is. The SuperBuild fund is sort of like a 50% fund: 50% of the money is there, it's government money, but 50% has to be raised in the private sector.

There's a problem with this and I want people to know exactly what the problem is.

You see, the private sector will only invest where they know they can make a profit. Let me give you an example: Highway 407 is an example of SuperBuild, of how this government's SuperBuild fund would work. The private company bought into Highway 407 under this government because this government said: "You can raise the tolls as high as you want. There is no limit on the tolls. There is no limit on how much money you can charge people who need to use their cars or trucks to get to work or to transport goods."

SuperBuild isn't going to save people money. It's not going to result in the efficient construction of sewers and water or hospitals or schools. What it's going to do is cost taxpayers and citizens more money, because private sector companies, whether they be construction outfits or whether they be financing agencies, are going to want at least a 15% return on their costs, and 15% paid over a period, say, of 20 years is an awful lot of money. What this means is that people, taxpayers, citizens of Ontario are not going to get a SuperBuild, they're going to get super-taken, just as the Highway 407 is a super-take job for citizens who have to use it. People need to understand that.

Both this government and the Liberals in Ottawa like to give the illusion of helping modest-income families, middle-income families, low-income families. I invite anybody to look at the real impacts of this budget. This budget and the budget of the Liberals in Ottawa are all about helping out the wealthiest corporations, the wealthiest of the wealthy individuals at the expense of working families, at the expense of modest-income families, middle-income families, lower-income families.

Neither the Liberals in Ottawa nor the Conservatives here in Ontario have a positive, progressive strategy for how to sustain medicare. Neither of them. The fact that they are simply battling it out back and forth in these television ads is proof of that. My God, if one of them actually had a strategy, I wouldn't mind if they put forward a television ad saying: "This is what we're going to do. This is how we're going to ensure there are enough nurse practitioners. This is how we're going to ensure there are enough nurses. This is how we're going to change primary care. This is how it will benefit you." But they're not doing that. Neither of them has a strategy, so they can't do it. Instead, they just blame one another.

Neither of these outfits, neither the Liberals in Ottawa nor the Conservatives here, has a strategy for post-secondary education; has a strategy for our universities, our colleges, and our students. Neither of them.

Neither has acted to resolve the problem of child poverty, and child poverty has increased by 118% in Ontario since 1989. Child poverty is growing faster in Ontario than anywhere else. I looked in the federal Liberals' budget, I looked in this government's budget to find some response. There was nothing. At a time when Liberals in Ottawa were giving mega millions away to corporations and the well-off and this government was

giving \$5.2 billion away to corporations and the well-off, neither of them has a strategy to deal with child poverty.

Then there's the issue of affordable housing. In our major cities we have a housing crisis that is upon us and getting worse by the day. CMHC tells us that in Toronto an average two-bedroom apartment now costs \$1,236 more than it cost two years ago to rent. People's wages haven't gone up by that amount, especially for someone who's working for minimum wage or close to the minimum wage. This government takes pride in freezing the minimum wage for 5½ years.

There is a crisis in affordable housing and neither this government nor the Liberals in Ottawa has any strategy whatsoever to deal with it. Both Liberals and Conservatives say, "Let the private sector do it." But the private sector spokespersons have come forward and said: "We're not going to do it. We can't make a big enough profit building homes, building apartments for modest-income families. We can't even make enough money building apartments for middle-income families. We're building housing for people at the top end." What does it mean? The private sector is not going to build housing for lower-income families, modest-income families, even middle-income families. That's why we have a housing crisis and neither the Liberals in Ottawa nor the Conservatives here have an answer.

Neither the Liberals in Ottawa nor the Conservatives here have a strategy for child care. In an economy where more and more often both women and men, wives and husbands, have to work to put food on the table and pay the rent, this government has no strategy for child care. The Liberals in Ottawa, despite talking about it for nine years, have absolutely no strategy for child care. At a time when both of them are giving away billions of dollars to the corporate wealthy and the wealthiest of the wealthy, neither the Liberals nor the Conservatives have a strategy for child care.

But they do share something. The Liberals have been converted to the mantra and the Conservative mantra goes like this: If you cut taxes for the well-off, some of the money will trickle down to the hard-working people at the bottom. This is called the horse and oats experiment. If you feed the horse some oats, the sparrows might get something at the tail end.

It doesn't work. The reality of what is happening is this: There is a growing gap. Your tax cuts, the federal tax cuts, your policies, mean that more people who are already well-off are becoming wealthier and that people who are in the modest income category and the lower income category are falling behind, and that more and more middle-income families are having to work longer and harder just to keep their head above water. That is what is happening.

Let's be clear about what is happening currently both in the Ontario economy and the Canadian economy. Tax cuts have had nothing to do with the surpluses in income that both governments are experiencing. Read the business pages of the Globe and Mail. The Globe and Mail, right-wing piece that it is, doesn't fret about

whether Mike Harris does this tax scheme or that tax scheme or the Liberals in Ottawa do this tax scheme or that tax scheme. What they fret about is simply this: They ask, almost on a daily basis: "Will the economic boom in the United States continue? Will the Americans continue to buy up all the cars, all the trucks, all the airplanes, all the trains, all the pulp, the paper, the lumber we produce? If they continue to do that, our economy will continue to expand and jobs will be created. If they stop doing that, there will be layoffs in auto plants, in airplane manufacturing plants, in paper mills and pulp mills and lumber mills." We all know it.

Even your best supporters on Bay Street don't buy your line about your ridiculous tax cuts. Yes, they'll take the money. Yes, they'll stuff it in their pocket. Yes, they'll buy another time-share in Hawaii or the Caribbean. Yes, they'll take another vacation. Yes, they'll buy another expensive foreign car. They'll do all those things, but even they don't buy your hogwash that the current economic expansion has anything to do with your policies.

It has everything to do with the fact that 10, 15, 20 years ago the United States made the deliberate choice to invest a lot of public money in telecommunications, computers, the Internet and the so-called new economy. After they invested hundreds of billions of dollars of public money, taxpayers' money, to essentially start the new economy, thousands of corporations in the United States are getting the benefit of that. Citizens now get the benefit of it. They're spending like never before and that spending is overflowing into Ontario.

But both Liberals and Conservatives now believe that line of hogwash. I hear it from Paul Martin. I hear it from Jean Chrétien. I hear it from Ernie Eves. I hear it from Mike Harris.

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I want to be very clear with people across Ontario. What has made us one of the best places in the world to live—the United Nations has been telling us that for several years now. When this government refers to 10 lost years, the United Nations was telling us we'd become the best place in the world to live, with the highest quality of life in the world. What made us one of the best places in the world to live was that we were smart enough to invest in an efficient, effective, publicly funded, publicly administered health care system which is far superior and far more efficient than that hogwash of private corporations they have in the United States.

The auto companies will tell you that. Every time they produce a car or truck here in Ontario, they save close to \$1,500 per vehicle. They save it all on health insurance. The health insurance we offer under OHIP, publicly funded, publicly administered, is that much more efficient than the private for-profit stuff they have in the United States, an incredible productivity advantage. But you're withering that away. You're doing away with it. That is one of the foundations of our productivity.

What's the other foundation? Having a very well educated workforce. It never surprises me—actually it

does surprise me but they've done it so many times it doesn't any more. When Mike Harris or Ernie Eves goes to Europe or Ernie goes to Harvard University business school and gives a speech about Ontario's productivity, he says: "It's because we've got a very well educated workforce. We've got one of the best education systems in the world."

If it's so good, why are you cutting it? Why are you taking money out of it? Why are you under-investing in education when you know yourselves that it is the source of our productivity? Why are they taking it out? Because the money they've got to find for their corporate tax cuts and their tax cuts for the well off has to come from somewhere. It's coming overwhelmingly from health care and from education. That's what's happened.

I want people to know where we stand as New Democrats. We wouldn't be mailing a \$200 cheque to 70% or 75% of the people in Ontario. We would take that \$200, and collectively that \$200 would give us \$1 billion to make the thoughtful, strategic, positive and progressive investments in our health care system and our education system that we need to make. As a result of that, people across Ontario would be better off. They would be much better off.

We wouldn't be giving mega tax cuts to corporations on Bay Street that already have obscene profits. We would be making the investments that we need to make in protecting our environment. We'd be making the investments in affordable housing so that all people would be situated so they could make a contribution to the economy and a contribution to our society. Those are the kinds of investments we should be making. Those are the kinds of investments that would benefit people.

If I may say, rather than giving the wealthiest of the wealthiest another tax cut, we would raise the minimum wage. We would say to the people who've had their wages frozen for five and a half years: "It's time that you, too, got to share in prosperity. It's time to be fair. It's time to be equitable. It's time to be reasonable."

In recognition of my comments today, I want to make an amendment to the Conservative budget motion.

I move that the amendment to the motion be amended by adding these words into the first paragraph of the amendment, following the words "the Minister of Finance fails to use today's wealth to secure tomorrow's prosperity":

Add the words "and recognizing that the Ontario government's budgetary policy is a carbon copy of the Ottawa Liberals' emphasis on tax cuts over investment in health care and education"

So that the opening paragraph to the amendment would read:

"Recognizing that the budgetary policy put forward by the Minister of Finance fails to use today's wealth to secure tomorrow's prosperity and recognizing that the Ontario government's budgetary policy is a carbon copy of the Ottawa Liberals' emphasis on tax cuts over investment in health care and education, condemns the government for:"

That is my amendment.

I have to conclude by saying that at a time when the Liberals in Ottawa had an incredible surplus, at a time when the Conservatives here in Ontario have an incredible surplus, shame on both of you for only recognizing the corporate well-off and the wealthiest of the wealthy. And shame on you for abandoning child care, for abandoning an attack on child poverty, for abandoning affordable housing, for underinvesting in health care, for underinvesting in education and for continuing to cut the environment.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Tony Martin): Mr Hampton moved that the amendment to the motion be amended by adding these words into the first paragraph of the amendment—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker: Do you mind if I read the amendment into the record here without being heckled?

Following the words “the Minister of Finance fails to use today’s wealth to secure tomorrow’s prosperity,” add the words “and recognizing that the Ontario government’s budgetary policy is a carbon copy of the Ottawa Liberals’ emphasis on tax cuts over investment in health care and education.”

Further debate?

Mr David Young (Willowdale): One of the challenges when a government tables the sort of budget that we did on Tuesday, an excellent budget of this sort, is that there are so many members who wish to speak to it from this side of the floor that we must—and I am willing to—share our time. So, Mr Speaker, at the outset let me ask or advise you, if I may, that I will be sharing my time with the member for York North.

It is an indeed an honour to stand before you today and I am happy to have a chance to contribute to this debate, a debate that arises out of the budget that the Deputy Premier tabled on Tuesday, a budget that is worth talking about, worth reading and certainly worthy of widespread praise. And we’ve been receiving that praise from across Ontario, from taxpayers, from organizations, from institutions throughout this great province. Why is that? It’s because this is in fact a milestone budget in Ontario’s history. Not only does it highlight our successes over the last five years, but it sets out a framework for continued success in the future.

As proud as I am to stand here today, I do have some reluctance, and that is because I was not a member of this Legislature between 1995 and 1999. There are many who preceded me on this side of the floor who sacrificed a great deal in order to right this province, in order to turn this province around from what was, without exaggerating, the abyss. We were headed straight towards financial ruin. And many of my predecessors, some of whom are not here today, sacrificed a great deal to get us to this point, and I would be remiss in my remarks today if I did not acknowledge that and thank them for that, not just on my behalf but on behalf of the people of Ontario.

I heard the leader of the third party talk at some length about what he viewed as very similar budgets emanating

from Queen’s Park and Parliament Hill. I think what he meant to say, as I reflect upon it, is that he was hoping that Paul Martin and Jean Chrétien and their Liberal colleagues in Ottawa would have tabled a budget that did what the budget that was tabled this week in this assembly actually did. I think what he intended to say, and what he would say with some thought and reflection upon the matter, is that what Ottawa should have done is tabled a budget, as we did, that prioritizes health care, that allows for there to be increased funding on health care, a budget that understands that this province requires some significant funds spent on infrastructure in order to accommodate the growth that has begun and continues at an exponential rate, a budget that focuses on children and has various initiatives to help the young of this province, and yet at the same time a budget that continues to cut taxes. As you are well aware, this budget brings forward 67 further tax cut initiatives that, if passed by this House, will bring the total number of tax cuts initiated by this side of the House to 166.

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This budget also does something that has not been done in this province in decades, and that is, it begins to pay down the debt. For that reason, it is indeed a milestone in this province’s history and I am indeed very proud to speak to it.

Mr Speaker, this chamber that we occupy is full of partisan rhetoric from both sides of the floor, and undoubtedly we will hear a great deal of it over the next number of weeks on the subject matter of the budget. But I thought it might be of some assistance to you and to the other members of this Legislature, and to anyone who might be watching at home, to talk about what those outside of this partisan assembly say about the budget.

Let me quote from the president of the North York Chamber of Commerce. You will appreciate that that’s of particular interest to me because I am a representative from what was the city of North York and is now part of the great city of Toronto. Here is what Elie Betito said upon reviewing the budget: “Clearly the Ontario government has heard our message of implementing business tax cuts and has acted on it. Reducing the corporate tax rate to 8% by 2005 is a significant improvement and is welcomed by the business community. This should stimulate further job creation and expansion needed to maintain the growth in Ontario.” That’s what the president of the North York Chamber of Commerce had to say.

His views were echoed by Judith Andrew. Everybody in this Legislature at various times wants to associate themselves with small business, independent business. You know that Judith Andrew is the president of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, quite an advocate for the small business person and a very effective advocate. She has come forward and said: “This is a bold and positive move. We’re just delighted to see that after almost 20 years the government has raised the income threshold for small businesses.” Judith Andrew understands. She also understands that the Liberals, while

they were on this side of the floor, while they were the government in this province, did not consider or act upon raising that threshold in spite of the pleas from small business. They further understand that the NDP took no such action, but she does thank us. And I thank her for her comments that clearly indicate that we are being responsive to small business. We know that most in this province who have jobs are employed by small businesses.

Let me also touch upon comments that were made about the cuts—one, by the way, of 67 further cuts, as I think I indicated earlier—we have made to sales tax on automobile insurance and on warranties involving motor vehicles. I'll quote from an individual who I believe one of the members opposite quoted from earlier today. It might have been the member for Scarborough-Agincourt who brought forward a petition that emanated from the Canadian Automobile Association, or perhaps one of his colleagues brought forward this petition. But this is the same source, and this is what he says. "This is the first time a budget—provincial or federal—reduces the tax burden on motorists. We asked the government to remove the special tax on auto insurance premiums and that's what it's doing. Motorists will pay less for insurance without the tax. The auto insurance tax cut tells motorists the government is willing to help ease the cost of mobility in Ontario."

That was echoed by Mark Yakabuski, who is the acting vice-president of IBC, the Insurance Bureau of Canada. He had similar comments to make about what is generally viewed as a measure that will help, in a meaningful and substantial way, motorists across this province.

Health care: When I talked about how proud I was about this budget, I started, as all should, with health care, because that is a priority. David MacKinnon, the president of the Ontario Hospital Association, said, after reviewing what we proposed, "Hospitals will be significantly better off due to more stable funding and a net increase of \$100 million over last year's operating budget."

The president of St Joseph's hospital, Cliff Nordal, said the following about health care after reviewing this budget: "There are some positive steps here, but we're still going to need the federal government"—I'll insert the word "Liberal," the federal Liberal government—"to step up to the plate and increase its funding for health care."

Dr Ronald Wexler, president of the Ontario Medical Association, said, "The government has laid solid groundwork for long-term solutions to the challenges facing our health care system."

Regardless of what part of the budget one turns their attention to, the result is the same.

Community safety is another priority of this government. It has been since we took office in 1995 and continues to be, and it certainly was in this budget. We have Vince Bevan, the police chief of Ottawa-Carleton, saying, "It sounds like a good-news budget as far as policing is concerned."

Toronto police chief Julian Fantino said, "Being able to be more effective with regard to things like, say, organized crime is going to give quality of life an enhancement at the community level."

The quotes go on and on.

In a moment I'm going to have to relinquish the remainder of my time to the member for York North, but I can't resist sharing a couple more quotes with you, if I may, before I take my seat.

I want to share with you what even prominent Liberals, right-thinking individuals in the community, are saying about this budget. Former Liberal MPP Bob Chiarelli, who I believe is currently the regional chair of Ottawa-Carleton, had the following to say: "It's a very good balance between tax cuts, debt reduction and new spending." As if that wasn't enough, Mr Chiarelli says, "I find it hard to identify anything bad in this budget." Pointing to the money Ontarians will save as a result of further tax cuts, Chiarelli is quoted as saying, "That's great news for young families and first-time home buyers."

I have more, and I hope I will get to share those quotes with members of this assembly and the viewers in the near future. Suffice it to say that I am very proud to support this budget initiative, and I look forward to hearing the remainder of the debate on this. As indicated by the quotes, this is a budget that all parties can and should embrace.

Mrs Julia Munro (York North): I rise today to speak about the budget that was presented by the Minister of Finance, the Honourable Ernie Eves. This is a budget that many said could not be done. It shows how much Ontario has changed in the last five years. Not long ago, Ontario was on the brink of bankruptcy. Ten years of mismanagement had created a situation of high deficits, high taxes, high unemployment and low morale.

In 1995 we campaigned on the Common Sense Revolution. We talked about fixing government, cutting taxes to create jobs, eliminating the deficit to create prosperity and paying down the debt to strengthen our children's future. Many people in Ontario were excited by this plan. There were also naysayers who said it could not be done. There were many naysayers who said it was not possible to cut taxes, balance the books and improve the services such as health care and education that Ontarians hold dear.

On June 8, 1995, Ontario embraced this plan—the Common Sense Revolution in 1995 and the Blueprint in 1999. Here we stand today, five years later. The plan worked. We were able to cut taxes to create jobs, balance our books, inspire economic prosperity and increase funding in priority programs.

Let me take a moment to outline some of the keys to this successful program.

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This budget contains 67 additional tax cuts, bringing the total to 166 since 1995. We are giving back to Ontarians more of their own money with a \$1-billion taxpayer dividend. That means that each Ontario

taxpayer will get up to \$200 by the end of this year based on 1999 personal income tax paid.

We are also phasing out our retail sales tax on motor vehicle insurance premiums, as well as repairs and replacements made under warranty, by one point a year until eliminated.

We are making permanent the land transfer tax refund of up to \$2,000 for first-time buyers of new homes.

We are cutting the general corporate income tax rate and the manufacturing and processing rate to 8% by 2005, which by the way will make it the lowest in Canada.

Something of particular importance to many of my constituents is the ability to convert the retail sales tax exemption for farm building materials to a point-of-sale exemption. This means quicker tax relief and less paperwork for our hard-working farmers.

We will cut the small business tax rate even further. It will be reduced from 8% today to 4% by 2005, again the lowest in Canada. We will also extend this rate to greater numbers of small businesses.

We plan to restore the full indexation to our personal income tax system to eliminate bracket creep. No one should pay a higher tax because they received a cost-of-living pay increase. A family of four earning \$60,000 a year would save \$195 this year, plus \$45 from the elimination of bracket creep. This is on top of the \$1,630 that this family is saving thanks to our original tax cuts and the 1999 tax cuts.

One of the features of our budget and the principles behind this budget is to balance the budget and pay down the debt. In 2000-01, we will give Ontarians back-to-back balanced budgets for the first time since 1942-43. Our new debt reduction goal is at least \$5 billion during this mandate, and this is up from the \$500 million that we promised in our Blueprint document. Most of all, I think it is important to recognize that earlier we passed the Taxpayer Protection and Balanced Budget Act, which ensures that Ontarians in the future will not have to deal with this issue.

Health care has been identified by our government from the very beginning as a priority item and it certainly received a boost in this budget. Health care spending will rise to a record \$22 billion in 2000-01, including \$100 million over four years to expand Ontario's primary care system.

We recognize that many hospitals are facing transition issues and to them we have added an additional \$235 million.

We recognize the importance that medical research and development plays in providing the best care for all Ontarians. To that end, there is a \$500-million endowment to the Ontario innovation trust, including investment in cancer research facilities.

For priority programs, such as cancer, cardiac and end-stage kidney disease, there will be an additional \$54 million, along with \$45 million to expand toll-free telephone health services.

In underserved areas, such as mine, there is a provision for a total of \$4 million each year for free tuition

for medical students moving to rural and underserved areas.

We've also committed to several other of our priority areas, including investing in Ontario's children by expanding our children's health initiatives, such as infant hearing screening, preventing and fighting eating disorders and addressing asthma in children, and the enhancement of the preschool speech and language program, with a \$6-million investment. We are also launching the \$30-million early years challenge fund this year to increase the learning potential of children.

One of the most important features for me in this budget was the opportunity to see the building of strong rural communities. As someone who was on the rural task force, it was of course particularly important to see the appearance of the Ontario small town and rural development initiative that grants \$600 million of investment to help share the benefits of strong economic growth across rural and small-town Ontario. This is the kind of thing that you can see has been the basis of principles that stand behind our budget.

We have proven that tax cuts create jobs. We have proven that you can balance the books, invest in quality programs and cut taxes all at the same time. The people of Ontario are the ones responsible for the economic success and for this budget.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Questions and comments?

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): I'm sorry, Mr Speaker. My understanding was that it was not questions and comments.

The Speaker: Earlier in the leadoff there wasn't, but there is on the other ones after that. It's the way this goes.

Mr Phillips: Fine. Just to comment on the two speakers, then, the first thing I would say is that, in my judgment, the single most important thing that has been driving the Ontario economy has been exports, and neither of the two speakers mentioned that in their remarks.

It was interesting today—the headline was “Claim of Tax Cut Boost to Economy Disputed”—that in his summary of the Ontario economy the chief economist at the Bank of Montreal, Mr O'Neill, when asked whether the tax cuts have been driving the economy, said: “I don't think they have been a major influence in stimulating the economy. If you look at the growth in the Ontario economy over the last five years ... by far the dominant influences have been the US economy and the exchange rate.”

I mention that because when you look at how the government encourages business to locate in Ontario—Why should you be in Ontario?—they say there are two major reasons: the quality of our health care system, funded out of public funds, accessible to everyone, and the quality of our education system, accessible to everyone.

These are the facts. The exports have driven the Ontario economy, not tax cuts—that has not been the primary driver of the economy—and the reason com-

panies locate and expand in Ontario is because they have access to a universal, quality health care system and a universally accessible education system. In response to the comments of the two members, neither of them mentioned what I and most economists regard as the most important element that has been driving Ontario's economy.

Mr Christopherson: It's interesting to listen to the government talk about their budget as if they were the first ones to ever create this sort of very lopsided approach to what to do with the economic boom that the American economy has given us. Yet here we have the Liberal Prime Minister of Canada saying about Mike Harris's Tory budget, "The best form of flattery is when a government is copying another government."

The fact of the matter is that while I appreciate and have some concern for the difficulty that this gives my counterpart in the official opposition Liberal caucus in terms of condemning this budget, the reality nonetheless is that it was Mike Harris who ran ads urging Chrétien to make tax cuts the number one priority—not health care, not education, not the environment, not the disabled, not the homeless, nothing else. Make tax cuts the priority. Harris spent our money, taxpayer money, to convince Chrétien to make that his priority, and he listened. Jean Chrétien came out with a budget that put two cents into new health care spending for every dollar it gave in tax cuts that will benefit the very wealthy. For every dollar the Tories put forward for tax cuts for the very well-to-do, one cent goes into health care.

There is nothing on the government side, and I would argue on the official opposition benches, to crow about. You have abdicated your responsibility to the majority of Ontarians with this budget.

1630

Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke North): The continuing saga across the way is absolutely fascinating but bizarre. We have the finance critic of the opposition Grits maintaining, because Mr O'Neill from the Bank of Montreal said that tax reductions have had hardly any influence in terms of the economic agenda or the prosperity brought to this province—it's really health care or adjacent geography or whatever. If that is true, then one could argue the reverse: that the higher tax rates we had in the 1970s, 1980s and early 1990s actually were conducive to greater economic growth. If that is the reality you believe, then why has every competitive state throughout the world, whether it's the United States, the United Kingdom, France or—imagine—the British Columbia NDP and even the Saskatchewan NDP, bought into the concept of modest, limited tax relief?

Then we have the federal Libs in Ottawa, who maintained all along that a lower tax agenda is absolutely a bad idea for the economic prosperity of this country. If that is so, why did Mr Martin accept our advice and the leadership of the Premier in starting to reduce not only personal income tax but corporate and capital gains? What is it that the members of the official opposition believe in? You're either for lower taxes, which your

federal cousins are starting to move to, or you can both continue to foster and sustain a high-tax economy, which is where we were before 1995. What did it bring us? A mess.

Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East): I want to comment on the remarks made by the two speakers. Interestingly, they wouldn't point out that the Harris government has increased Ontario's debt by \$24 billion. The member for Willowdale read some very select quotes. He wouldn't want to quote the mayor of Toronto, who said: "Where is the support for public transit? Where is the support for affordable housing? We have a crisis in Toronto." We have a crisis in Ontario when it comes to affordable housing. The member for Willowdale wouldn't want to acknowledge that. You can imagine that if this budget had gone any way towards addressing some of those issues, and the mayor had given glowing comments or had positive things to say, he would be the first person quoted by each and every member of this government. But it did not. It rings very hollow.

We have an enormous debt in this province. We also have a huge human deficit. At a time of great prosperity, we have some of the worst poverty conditions we have ever seen. We have a crisis where people are on the streets. We have a government that provides \$4 billion in health and assistance, and a gift to the wealthiest, people who are doing the best in our society, but not one cent for the people who are the most in need, the most vulnerable, and not one penny for affordable housing in this province. That is an absolute shame. I cannot believe that any member of this House would not stand up and agree that these are important matters that we need to take action on. These are important not only to a socialist, as the finance minister said; anyone with a social conscience would want to do something about this.

The Speaker: Responses.

Mrs Munro: Thanks to those members from Scarborough-Agincourt, Hamilton West, Etobicoke North and Don Valley East who have responded.

I would like to make a couple of comments, particularly on the comments made by the member for Scarborough-Agincourt, who has focused his comments on the issue of export and the issue of the American economy. I don't believe that anyone has ever denied the influence of the American economy on Canada. What has been left out of that equation, though, is the fact that in this province we've had growth that surpassed any country in the G7 for two years. That's looking at the province. When you look at the province and that growth, you have to look at what has made Ontario different. Very clearly, the political leadership we have had in this province for the past five years is the difference. We have led in the G7 for two years. The job growth in this province exceeds 700,000. That's job growth that is greater than in the rest of the country.

The member from Don Valley East referred to the selectivity of the comments of other members. I would suggest to him that he conveniently omitted the commitment by this government in the budget for \$1 billion to

be spent in the Toronto area over the next five years. That strategic investment is clearly aimed at making sure Toronto remains the vibrant, world-class city that it is.

The Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Phillips: In entering the debate on the budget, I hadn't planned to get into this aspect of it, but one of the other members made some comment on it.

The first thing I'd say to the people in Ontario is that the budget is balanced, and that's great. Now, seven of the other nine provinces already balanced their budgets well ahead of Ontario, but Ontario has finally made it across the line, as did the federal government.

When someone says, "We inherited a tough situation," let me guarantee you that when you got elected the deficit situation federally and in Quebec was worse than it was in Ontario. But both the government in Quebec and the federal government balanced their books well ahead of Ontario. So I say to the public that we have paid an enormous price for the way Mike Harris has chosen to go about it.

You simply have to turn to the budget. You'll find, if you look in the budget, the debt of the province of Ontario since Mike Harris became Premier has gone up by \$24 billion. It has gone up by 25%. At the same time, we have had to borrow at least \$10 billion for the tax cut. I say that was the wrong way to do it. There is not another jurisdiction in North America that followed this route. Every other jurisdiction said: "Listen, let's get our fiscal house in order. Then we'll cut taxes." But Mike Harris said, "No, I'm going to go out and borrow \$10 billion to cut taxes." No other jurisdiction in North America did it that way. They all balanced their books. Alberta balanced its books, Quebec balanced its books, the federal government balanced its books, but Ontario decided to add \$24 billion of debt to the province.

Harris would say, "Well, I had to do that to stimulate the economy." That's why I go back and quote, among others, the chief economist of the Bank of Montreal, who said today in the paper that it wasn't the tax cuts that have driven Ontario's economy. He says, "I don't think they have been a major influence in stimulating the economy.... If you look at the growth in the Ontario economy over the past five years ... by far the dominant influences have been the US economy and the exchange rate."

So we have taken the debt up by \$24 billion. We borrowed \$10 billion for the tax cut, and it has not been the primary reason why the Ontario economy has grown so dramatically. As a matter of fact, on page 13 in the budget it says that 10 years ago exports in Ontario represented the equivalent of 29% of the gross domestic product. Today, the equivalent of 55% of the gross domestic product is represented by exports. So I say it has not been the tax cut that has driven the Ontario economy, it has been exports.

1640

The reason I get into this issue is because when the government of Ontario talks about why you should invest in Ontario, what things you should look for in Ontario,

they say specifically the reason you should invest in Ontario is this: "Ontario is one of North America's most peaceful and secure communities, and our remarkable health care and education systems are publicly funded and open to everyone." The document goes on to point out that in Ontario, US manufacturers pay on average more than \$3,100 per employee for the kind of health care coverage provided by Canada's publicly supported system, whereas Ontario employers pay about \$540.

So the very things this budget attacks are the very things that have been driving Ontario's economy. I say to the public, the litmus test of how Mike Harris has managed the finances of the province—if you want to look for an independent evaluation of it, look to the credit rating agencies. These are the people who are paid big money to evaluate the credit worthiness of companies and governments.

I remember Mike Harris when he was Leader of the Opposition and Ontario's credit rating was dropped by three points, from AAA to AA+ to AA-. He was so angry at Bob Rae. He said, "It's a disgrace to Ontario." Five years later, Ontario still has the same credit rating it had under Bob Rae. Why is that? It is because Mike Harris has chosen to add \$24 billion of debt to the province of Ontario rather than get our fiscal house in order.

As I said, I hadn't planned to get into this, but one of the other members raised it. Harris or probably Minister Eves will be on the plane tomorrow to New York to try to meet with S&P and Moody's and convince them to change the credit rating of the province. After five years, surely we should see some progress on the credit rating. But it is incredible that after five years we still have the same credit rating in Ontario as we had under Bob Rae.

So when Ontario looks at the price we've paid so far for the tax cut, here's what I would say to all of us in Ontario: There is \$8 billion of tax cuts in this budget—\$4 billion for the corporate tax, taking the tax from 15.5% or 13.5%, depending on the type of business, down to 8%; there's \$1.2 billion of tax cuts on capital gains. Both of those are tax cuts that will reward, oftentimes, relatively well-to-do people. There's about a \$3-billion cut in personal income tax. Plus there is the \$1-billion gift repaid to the taxpayers. It was intriguing to me that some of the other governors have already moved on it: Governor Ridge in Pennsylvania has sent his cheques out already, I think, and Governor Ventura. Governor Harris will have his out, I would speculate—he'd love to send it out at Christmas.

By the way, we have a bill before us that says: "Here's what we're going to have to do. We've got to send out a letter to everyone, and it has to explain why we're doing this." That's going to be in the legislation. That will happen, and it may, frankly, be politically very popular. I gather Governor Harris has talked to—

Mr Hastings: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: As I observed before, we seem to have a lessening decline of formality in the House. We heard the recent speaker say "governor." He is Premier. I would think he ought to say "the member for Nipissing."

The Speaker: I thank the member and all members. I apologize. I actually was talking with somebody and missed it myself. But all members will know to call members by their ridings, and I'm sure the member will adhere to that rule.

Mr Phillips: Thank you, Speaker. I didn't appreciate we had a lessening decline, but if it is, I'll take that as notice from the member.

The reason I point out that there is an \$8-billion cut in taxes is that you would think with that amount of money available for tax cuts, we could have invested in some of the areas where we clearly need to be investing. I said to myself, "I never listen to what the government says; I watch what they do." In the budget, there are probably 150 different specific things the government says it will do, but I always go to the numbers.

Let me take the first area of investment, and that is in our colleges and our universities. If you look at the budget, five years ago in that area the taxpayers invested \$3.568 billion. Today we are investing \$3.387 billion, roughly \$200 million less in our colleges and universities than we did five years ago. If you want to look at what virtually everyone says about how you build a strong future economy, as everyone says, it used to be that the economy of Canada was in its ground—its mines, its minerals, its agriculture—and now it's between our ears: our brainpower. That has been a shift. But why, if that is the case, would we be spending \$200 million less today than we did five years ago on our colleges and universities? Without question, when we can afford \$8 billion in tax cuts, this is an area where we should be investing.

I go back to this document, the provincial government's document on why you should invest in Ontario. It spends a lot of time talking about the quality of our education system here in our Ontario. It talks a lot about—this is a chart that says "Selected Tuition Fees in Ontario versus Neighbouring Jurisdictions." This, unfortunately, was three years ago. Since then, the fees have gone up dramatically in Ontario. It talks about the basic tuition fees being substantially better than in the neighbouring US jurisdictions. But we've chosen to change that, to undermine what I regard as a fundamental strength of Ontario—\$200 million less we're investing in colleges and universities than we did five years ago.

In our elementary and secondary schools—we've not talked a lot about that in the budget debate over the last few days, but the public may remember that last year the government said: "We are going to cut residential education property tax by \$250 million and commercial education property tax by \$200 million—\$450 million. We'll cut that off property taxes and we, the province, will replace it with grants." Well, it hasn't happened. If you look in the budget, you'll find that in the provincial support for elementary and secondary schools—I would have thought that we would have seen a line in there which would have indicated that our support had gone up at least by the \$450 million that the province had said it would replace in property taxes. In fact, the expenditures in elementary and secondary are far less than that. So in

the other area we talk about—investing in the future of our young people—we haven't even replaced the amount of money that was cut off property taxes.

1650

There's a good deal of talk in the budget about infrastructure and the need to build infrastructure, and that is absolutely correct. We probably need to be spending at least \$4 billion a year on infrastructure. But the province has cut support for infrastructure from \$4.5 billion last year to \$2 billion this year. What they have said is, "We'll find the private sector to step in and make that up."

I remind the public of the number one example of private-public sector partnerships that the government uses, and that is Highway 407. The government sold Highway 407. I remember it very well; the deal closed the day the election was called, May 5, 1999. The government got a—

Interjection.

Mr Phillips: Is this May 5 as well? It was exactly a year ago. Is this May 5?

Mr Caplan: May 4.

Mr Phillips: It closed a year ago tomorrow.

Applause.

Mr Phillips: Government members are clapping. The government is very proud of the deal. I say to the 407 users: "You got ripped off. You are going to pay for 99 years for a pre-election cash grab by Premier Harris." Without a question of a doubt, when the arrangement was announced—and the reason I spend my time on this is that it is the flagship of the Harris government's private sector partnership. When this was announced, they said, "Tolls will go up by three cents a kilometre over 15 years." After nine months, tolls for most hours of the day have already gone up by 4.5 cents per kilometre. The government said it was going to regulate tolls. We see from the owner that the tolls can go up "without limit."

If the government believes the 407 is a model for private sector partnerships, I guarantee you that when the users of the 407 finally get access to the deal, which has been hidden from them—it's a secret deal that so far we can't pry out of the government, although the investors on that deal have had access to it. If you are investing in the 407, you can look at this secret deal, but we the public have been refused access to it. That's the third area of missed opportunities in the budget.

The fourth area is the environment. If there's an issue that people are growing dramatically more concerned about, I think it is the environment. The low water levels are certainly a disaster for our tourism and shipping industries. Our plan to sell off our coal-fired electrical generating plants is a disaster. What have we done with the Ministry of the Environment? Once again, the government has said: "This is an area where we're going to cut spending. We're not going to invest in the environment." This was an opportunity to seize the future.

I'm proud to say that I don't like the budget. You may think it's very popular today. You may think people will thank you for \$8 billion in tax cuts. I will say to the

public of Ontario, recognize this: There is no solution in here for health care, no real improvement in our health care system built into this budget, and the agreement that the government signed last week with the doctors provides no progress on it. They can say, "We will go to the federal government and get more money." Are you saying to us that you're not spending enough money on health care? Is that what you're saying? If it is what you're saying, then spend it. If you're saying that we should spend more money on health care, come on and do it rather than the \$8-billion tax cut. If you think you should spend more money on health care, I agree, that's the priority. If you think that because the federal government didn't give you the money you wanted, you therefore aren't spending as much as you should on health care but you can spend \$8 billion on tax cuts, I want to hear that. What is the answer to that? Is it that we think we should spend more money on health care but we're not going to do it? I'd like to know that. I'd like to know that from the government.

So you still have not figured out how to manage the health care system, and one of the reasons for that is—I remember it very well—within weeks of getting elected the first thing the government did was to dramatically cut the hospital budgets. That was the start of an enormous problem in health care.

If you look where we should have been investing and looking to our future, tax cuts are fine, but fixing our health care system, investing in our young people and post-secondary education, ensuring that our elementary and secondary schools are adequately funded, making sure we have the right infrastructure, making sure we have enough resources to manage our environment—surely those have at least as high a priority as an \$8-billion tax cut. So go out, sell the tax cut, give your \$1 billion back, but I say you will be judged on the basis of what will be the quality of life in Ontario in three years. I think you've missed an opportunity to invest in the future, and I think time will prove us right.

The Speaker: Questions and comments?

Ms Marilyn Churley (Broadview-Greenwood): I know the Minister of Labour is going to get up and say: "The debate is over. Tax cuts work." I heard him say that over there for a moment. I hope I pre-empted him on that.

I have to say that I have a lot of respect for the member for Scarborough-Agincourt and I mostly agreed with his analysis, but what he forgot to say, and I'm going to take this from an article in the Sun today, is that: "Paul Martin said Ontario's Tories ... copied the federal Grit plan—including eliminating the deficit and reducing taxes." That's what Paul Martin said today. Furthermore, the member for Scarborough-Agincourt slammed the Tory government for the \$200 tax giveaway that's going out in the mail to buy people's vote.

But what else did Paul Martin have to say? He said: "The federal Grits, looking at an election next year, may clearly follow Ontario in that area.... Martin told the Sun Tuesday he may give special surplus tax refund cheques to Canadians in future budgets—along the lines of the rebates of up to \$200" that Eves promised in his budget.

The member for Scarborough-Agincourt didn't tell us whether he liked the federal Liberal budget or not, but we got Tweedledee and Tweedledum here today. We'd like to hear, maybe in your summary, member, how you feel about that budget.

The fact is the Minister of Labour is smart enough to know that the debate really isn't over. It's going to be a lot of fun watching you guys squirm, if you're still in power, unfortunately, when the next recession happens in this province, to see who you're going to try to blame then. The debate isn't over, and one day you're going to see that happen and you're going to have to answer to the people of Ontario.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour): Off the top, I have a great deal of respect for my friend from Scarborough. I know full well that his position is—I've known his positions over the years when in opposition to the NDP and his opposition to this government.

In 1994, leading up to the 1995 election, we had a full and vigorous debate with respect to tax cuts, job creation etc. The debate was a good and fulsome debate. We had an election based on it. The member opposite I think is a little contradictory, because in the 1995 campaign document the Liberals offered up, there were tax cuts. There were tax cuts in hope of buying into the public, with respect to—now, they weren't as vigorous as the tax cuts offered by the Conservatives, I admit. By the same token, you did offer tax cuts at that time, suggesting that was possibly a solution to the problem.

1700

In 1999, with great respect to the member for Scarborough, not to mean to be too contradictory, you offered tax cuts once again as a solution to the problems facing Ontario. It is somewhat disheartening for me to hear, from a party that offered tax cuts similar to the ones offered by this government, that now this was not the route to go.

Further, the fact is, that debate happened. To some degree it's a time warp we're speaking about here. The debate took place. We had a vigorous debate in 1995. That process was carried forward. We went back to the people in 1999 asking them to endorse our policies as fundamentally the same for the next four years. They were endorsed by the people of Ontario. With great respect to the member for Scarborough, these debates have happened. It's something that has already taken place.

As far as the increase to the credit rating is concerned, yes, it's been stagnant. I believe this year it will be increased. You suggest it should be increased. So there doesn't seem to be a win for us, because when it doesn't go up, you're mad at us, and when it does go up, you're mad at us. There doesn't seem to be a big win for the government.

Finally, to the member for the NDP, I heard your leader say if he had the \$200-rebate cheque to give, he wouldn't have done it the way we did it. He'd have about as much chance of that happening in an NDP government as monkeys flying out of his nose.

Mr Caplan: I want to comment on the remarks from the member for Scarborough-Agincourt. He points out quite correctly that what a budget document talks about are the investments that we make in the province, what our priorities are.

Look at Ontario compared to our neighbouring jurisdiction. Look at Ontario and look at what every other province, what every other state, federal, both countries, is doing. Down in the United States and in other provinces they're investing in post-secondary education. You look at what Ontario's doing and we're spending less now than we were in 1995 on post-secondary education. All of our competitors—we are now 59th out of 60 in investment in post-secondary education.

If you think that our sister provinces, that our cousins in the United States are not clapping their hands with glee saying, "Ontario is becoming uncompetitive because its leaders refuse to recognize the investment that is required to ensure that not only competitiveness but prosperity are maintained"—it was a golden opportunity to be able to make a serious investment in post-secondary education.

It's also interesting to hear some of the government ministers prattle on. I can tell you that when the Harris government took over, Ontario's record on the environment was quite good. We have sunk from an excellent record to third worst polluter jurisdiction in North America. We're now second. I understand now that the move to cut the Ministry of the Environment is because Mike Harris and his Minister of the Environment will not be satisfied until we're number one, until we have the worst environmental record and the dirtiest jurisdiction in the entire North America.

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): I'm standing out of respect for the member for Scarborough-Agincourt. I do respect his views on the financial debate, the deliberations before us. He's probably more comfortable with the position his federal cousin Paul Martin has taken. I don't want to put words in his mouth. He will have two minutes to respond. I know him to have a good insight into the financial world and its workings.

The only thing is, I would say that he has been heavily influenced by a leader with absolutely no direction on the tax debate. He has had to relinquish that privilege. In the fullness of time, if you were listening to the member for Etobicoke Centre, you'd know he's been hearing you longer and realizes too that you have something to add to the debate.

I would put to you that in your summation you should respond to your federal cousins. Perhaps Paul Martin will listen to you on the debate on health care and increase those transfer payments and work with the provinces, especially the province of Ontario that we're all elected to serve, and try to make sure that we put patients first and politics last. As you know, several times in the budget is some reference to encouraging the federal government, whether it's the tax on small business or a number of other initiatives—specifically, the agricultural sector is one—to give Ontario farmers their fair share of the support payments in income stabilization.

For me personally, I always like to drive it down and I know that tax cuts really do create jobs. It's really quite clear in my riding. By looking at the economy and looking at the revenue, clearly by giving people back their money they'll spend it, and I'm telling you that when they spend it, they create jobs.

Mr Phillips will have the opportunity to respond, I'm sure, but out of respect I will be listening to what he has to say.

The Speaker: Responses?

Mr Phillips: Thanks for all the comments. The Minister of Labour says the debate is over. It's always fun. I've been on both sides and your IQ goes up a lot when you win and it drops when you lose. I just suggest to you to be a little bit cautious of the arrogance of government. I think the debate probably isn't over. I can guarantee that from our side it's only beginning. I guess when you're in government you assume that whatever good happens you're responsible for it and whatever bad happens it's somebody else's fault. So I point out what I believe to be the case. I agree with the chief economist at the Bank of Montreal, who says that—

Mr Hastings: One.

Mr Phillips: The member says "one." I was at pre-budget hearings and every economist said the major force driving the Ontario economy is exports. Now, you can ignore that and say, "No, no, no," and that's fine. But in the end truth will kind of win out: Who was right on this thing. If you accept what Mr O'Neill and others say, and that is that the exports have driven our Ontario economy—it hasn't been the tax cut—you would then start to look at why we have been successful in that area and maybe you would challenge yourself to say, "Maybe we should look at whether we are investing enough in the areas" that in the Liberal caucus's judgment you're not. I don't think we're doing enough in post-secondary education. I think we've got some significant problems in elementary and secondary schools. I don't think you've even begun to solve the health care issue and on the infrastructure I don't think you've got one good example yet of private-public sector partnerships.

So the debate isn't over from our side and I'll keep working as best I can.

The Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): As the member for Willowdale said earlier, this is such a good-news budget that every member on this side of the House wants to join in the debate, and I'm happy to allow part of my time for the member for Guelph-Wellington.

When the PC government was first elected in 1995, the province of Ontario stood on the brink of financial ruin. Let's remember what it was like in those days. Even though I don't like to remember, I think we must go back to see that we're heading forward. Ontario's deficit topped \$11 billion a year. Ordinary families saw more and more of their paycheques taken away by wasteful government.

Interjections.

Mr Gill: A couple of my members are saying I must share the time with many more, but I'm sorry, I've only got 20 minutes and I'll only be able to share it with one good member from Guelph-Wellington.

After the 10 lost years of economic mismanagement under the NDP and Liberal governments, Ontarians had had enough. They elected Mike Harris and the PC government to set the province's finances in order and restore hope and opportunity in Ontario. Just five short years later, Ontario is back on track, thanks to our plan to cut taxes, reduce red tape and do away with the barriers to economic growth.

1710

Since 1995, our finance minister, the Honourable Ernie Eves, has delivered a succession of budgets that have benefited all Ontarians. I would like to offer my congratulations to him for the excellent fiscal management he has provided for this province. History will note him for providing not only the first balanced budget in decades but actually for two balanced budgets in a row, the first time that has happened since the 1940s.

Ontario's strong economic growth, with more people working and spending, actually meant that we had a surplus last year. The budget is now in its second year of being balanced, a whole year ahead of schedule. Minister Eves, I join with the people of Ontario in giving you our thanks. Under the strong leadership of Premier Mike Harris, Ontario is prospering again. He deserves our thanks for the courage and vision he showed in adopting the Common Sense Revolution, six years ago to the day, and spreading the Common Sense message throughout the province.

To the 82 Tory members of the last Legislature, both those in this House today and those not here, I also give my thanks. That of course includes you, Mr Speaker. You fought hard to make the changes needed to save Ontario during the days when every commentator and every special interest group seemed to be against change and were only for the status quo. You didn't turn away from necessary changes then and I can assure the members of the current caucus they are also not turning away from making those hard changes. That is my commitment to the members of this House and to my constituents.

I can tell this House today that my constituents in the riding of Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale are ecstatic about this budget. It is a good-news budget for Brampton and Mississauga and for all Ontarians.

Fast-growing communities like my riding will benefit strongly from this budget's combination of targeted tax reductions with new investments in health, education and infrastructure. Why are my constituents so happy? Let us count the ways.

My constituents will benefit from 67 additional tax cuts in this budget. Now, that's on top of the 99 tax cuts brought in since 1995. The grand total will be 166 tax cuts in five years. Who could have imagined 166 tax cuts under the Liberal government or the NDP government? All we ever got from them was tax hikes and high

deficits. For the first time in years, Ontario's government is actually giving people back their own money to spend or to save or invest, as they see fit. The economic effects of this are obvious.

It can no longer be denied that tax cuts are creating jobs in Ontario.

Interjection.

Mr Gill: The member for Durham agrees with me, and so do the other people in this House. I'm sure the Liberals and the NDP will finally agree.

More than 701,000 net new jobs were created since 1995—701,000 jobs. That's 701,000 of our fellow citizens who are contributing taxpayers, able to support their families, to buy their own homes or cars, to invest for their retirement and for their children's future, to make the best choices they can make better than any government agency or any bureaucrat.

Ontario has seen almost 200,000 jobs created in 1999 alone, with the last two years being the two best years of job creation in the province's history. Economic growth in the province hit an impressive 5.7% last year, the highest in the G7 countries, and this year the forecast is to be 4.6%.

In addition to the continuing cuts to income taxes and the end of bracket creep, which helps every Ontarian, my constituents are very happy with several specific changes. As a riding of commuters, where a car is a necessity, the phase-out of the sales tax on car insurance is welcomed. People moving into my riding are happy to see the land transfer tax refund on new homes made permanent.

Hard-working Bramptonians are delighted to see that the government is giving Ontarians back more of their own money with a \$1-billion taxpayer dividend. That means each Ontario taxpayer will get up to \$200 by the end of this year, based on 1999 personal income tax paid. If this was Ottawa, that money would be wasted on ceremonial fountains in Shawinigan. But this is Ontario, where the government recognizes that tax dollars are the people's money, not the government's.

To ensure jobs are there for our children and for generations to come, we're cutting the general corporate income tax rate and the manufacturing and processing rate to 8% by 2005, which will make it the lowest in Canada.

The small business tax will be cut even further, and be reduced to only 4% in 2005—the lowest rate in Canada, if I can say so again. I know that Brampton's businesses will prosper with these cuts and that my riding will benefit with its share of all of the new businesses that Ontario will be attracting.

As a matter of fact, yesterday morning I attended my first Brampton budget breakfast with my local colleagues, Mr Joe Spina and the Honourable Tony Clement. The budget received overwhelming support from local business people because they know that Brampton will benefit.

To help investors of all income levels realize gains, there will be a reduction in the taxable amount of capital

gains from two thirds to one half over four years, starting January 1, 2001. This helps anyone saving for retirement.

It is vital that Ontario do what it can to fight the brain drain of talented young professionals to the United States. We all know too many people who have left because of high taxation in Canada. I call on the federal government to join Ontario in its tax reduction initiatives.

Allowing Ontarians to keep more of their hard-earned money to spur economic growth also allows us to increase funding to key government services such as health care and education, services that people rely on. We recognize there are new demands, including extraordinary advances in technology and drug therapy, along with an aging and growing population.

The government is acting to ensure that health services are in place to meet the needs of everyone in the province today and tomorrow. This budget will see health care spending rise to a record \$22 billion. One hundred million dollars will be spent over four years to expand Ontario's primary care system. We are providing hospitals with an additional \$235 million to help them continue restructuring to provide better services. It means more money for new hospitals in Brampton to meet the health care needs of my constituents. I was very happy recently to join Minister Witmer when we announced \$75 million for the new hospital structuring in Brampton.

To enhance opportunities for medical research and development, there will be a \$500-million endowment to the Ontario Innovation Trust, including investment in cancer research facilities. For priority programs such as cancer, cardiac and kidney disease, there will be an additional \$54 million, along with \$45 million to expand toll-free telephone health services. We will also provide \$10 million for a patients' bill of rights.

1720

As the father of two daughters in school, I know that no investment we make today will mean more for us in the future than our investment in our children and young people. We are expanding children's health initiatives such as infant hearing screening, preventing and fighting eating disorders, addressing asthma in children and enhancing the preschool speech and language program with a \$6-million investment. We want to provide relief for working single parents by augmenting the child care support benefit by \$50 million over five years. We are launching the \$30-million early years challenge fund this fall to increase the learning potential of children.

Class sizes for junior kindergarten to grade 3 students will be reduced with an additional \$101-million investment. Investment in reading programs will be \$70 million annually. Another \$70 million will be provided for early intervention and remediation in special education.

University and college students will benefit from a 50% increase in the number of Ontario graduate scholarship awards and an increase in the value of each scholarship to \$15,000. A total of \$1 billion is being invested to create 73,000 spaces in Ontario's colleges and universities.

We will introduce opportunities in new trades and modernized classroom training with \$15 million over three years.

We must ensure the best possible education system for our young people, to give them all of the opportunities that they deserve. Our economic success depends on every individual being able to make their contribution to the community, and for that, a strong education system is very vital.

Communities not only need to be strong and prosperous, they need to be safe. We are announcing several measures to support safe communities. We will make the community policing partnership permanent and increase funding to \$35 million per year. In fact, I can tell you that in Peel region we have one of the best police forces in Ontario, led by Chief Noel Catney. The women and men of the Peel police force work hard to keep our community safe, and we must continue to show them the support they deserve. They have a tough job to do.

Part of supporting our local police is making sure that when criminals are convicted they are removed from the community and, if paroled, are not allowed to return to a life of crime. We intend to enhance safety and security by establishing a new, \$18-million strict discipline model for community corrections annually, including 165 new probation and parole officers.

We will also address the safety of women and their children who have experienced domestic abuse with \$10 million annually, as well as another \$10 million to expand the domestic violence court system.

I can go on and on—it's such a good-news budget—but my colleague wants to share the time. I want to assure you, you ain't seen nothing yet.

Mrs Brenda Elliott (Guelph-Wellington): I am very pleased to have an opportunity to speak to the budget today.

I was excited when I got up on Tuesday morning to come to the House because, for many of us who were elected in 1995, we ran very clearly on an agenda to do our part to help turn Ontario around.

I have four children: Jenny, Jim, Dan and Greg. They were part of my motivation for becoming involved in politics, because before I was an elected member I was, quite honestly, like so many people in Ontario, heartsick at what was happening to this province. Several of our colleagues indicated that they were concerned we were on the brink of bankruptcy, and in fact that was quite true. Former governments in this province were spending recklessly. They were spending money we didn't have in this province, and they were building a debt and deficit that were robbing our children and our grandchildren of future opportunities for growth and prosperity in this province. That bothered me. It wasn't the kind of Ontario I anticipated when I was growing up as a child, and I did not think it was the kind of Ontario I wanted to leave for my children. Quite honestly, that is why I got involved in politics, and why a lot of my colleagues who were elected in 1995 got involved. So on Tuesday afternoon, when Minister Eves delivered the news that not only do

we have a balanced budget this year but for the past year, it was exciting and I don't think I've stopped smiling yet.

My constituents in Guelph-Wellington are very pleased about this. I guess the good news was not only having a balanced budget but also that we now have the Taxpayer Protection Act so that future governments will not be able to recklessly spend as they have. They will not be able to leave the crushing legacy of debt and deficit that we have had to cope with. I use the word "cope" sincerely. For those of us on this side of the House in government, the past few years have not always been easy. We have had to make some very difficult decisions about how to manage this province's finances, and at each decision point we were hoping that we were making the right decisions.

My colleague across the way spent some time talking about our debt rate. What he forgot to talk about was, yes, tax cuts—very important as a stimulus to our economy. But he forgot to talk about the jobs that have been created. Yes, we set about balancing our budget, but we also set about creating jobs, and our record now is over 700,000 jobs. We promised that 725,000 jobs would be created, and we're going to exceed that target. The member opposite conveniently forgot to mention those kinds of things.

When I read through the budget on the first day, I want to say to my constituents in Guelph-Wellington that there was not a page turned in this budget that did not speak to constituent issues that have been raised with me over the past four years, whether it was class size; the Ontario Innovation Trust fund, which my own riding has benefited from at the University of Guelph; eating disorder issues, which our own Homewood is a forerunner in addressing; investments in programs for small children; benefits for single parents or \$600 million for rural Ontario. People might think, "What does that have to do with Guelph?" My community is for the most part a city, but we have a great deal of agricultural influence in our city. Most producer organizations are based in the city of Guelph.

This budget is comprehensive and far-reaching. What particularly excited me about this budget was that it addressed immediate needs and is fiscally sound, but it also put in place things like reductions in corporate tax rates which are the kinds of impetuses that companies which are looking to invest, looking to establish, are critically examining around the world.

This budget is entitled, "Balanced Budgets, Brighter Futures." I'm very proud to speak in support of this budget, because I believe it will bring a brighter future to Ontario.

Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale): I want to comment on the remarks by the member for Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale. I found his comments that related to public transit and the need for public transit to make the greater Toronto area a better place in which to live and work very interesting—we've been joined belatedly in the House by the member for Brampton West-Mississauga, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

I found it very interesting that the member for Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale, the MPP for several members of my family, said in his speech that he liked what the budget did for commuters, and that cars are a necessity in that area. I think it's a really good opportunity to point out that this budget makes cars an even greater necessity and the likelihood that roadways will be even more clogged than they are now for commuters in the greater Toronto area, because this government has failed to seize the opportunity presented to them to make modest long-term capital investments in the GO Transit infrastructure.

GO Transit has presented a practical, workable 10-year plan. It is a plan which, if you make the capital investment, the operating dollars will be provided at the fare box with no ongoing subsidy required from government. Yet this government opposite, so lacking in vision for the long-term effectiveness, quality of life and viability for the greater Toronto area, has chosen to ignore what was the number one issue in a recent poll I saw for residents of the 905 part of the GTA. The members from that area stand up day in and day out and ignore the wishes of their constituents on this point.

We know from the mayor of Brampton, as an example, who has been very vocal on this point at the Greater Toronto Services Board, that Brampton is underserved from the standpoint of GO Transit. But where on the opposite side were the members of the government who represent that community? Where is their voice in saying to their government, "Put some money into public transit, because the citizens of Brampton require it"? He's silent on that point.

1730

Ms Churley: Let me dispel a couple of the myths—let me call them "myths" in this House—that the government members are spinning about this budget. Let's start with the comments on the early years education in this budget, because despite claims to the contrary, the government isn't spending a single new penny. Yet they make it sound like they are. The \$30 million you say you'll spend on early years programming is actually a reannouncement of an announcement that you made last year. You made it in last year's budget and you brought it back in this year's budget to make it look like you're doing something when you're actually doing nothing. To make it even worse, they don't even plan to spend that \$30 million now. They put it in the budget again, but they're waiting until the early years task group reports back in May of next year. Yet you're giving away billions to your corporate friends and putting out myths around spending money on early childhood education. It just doesn't wash. You're not doing anything new here; it's a reannouncement.

There was an article in the Star today, "Budget a Blow to Child Advocates." They say:

"The budget offers no income support, no social housing and no affordable child care to help parents get to work...."

"Ontario is spending 13% fewer dollars on regulated child care than it did in 1995."

You haven't put any money into public transportation. It has been starved. Fares are probably going to go up again in Toronto, and services are going to be cut. No new money, no money at all for affordable housing, when there are thousands and thousands in Toronto alone waiting for affordable housing, for child care. You actually cut money from the Ministry of the Environment. It goes on and on and on. Let's get the facts on the table here and tell people who's losing and whose backs the deficit was broken on.

Mr Young: I appreciate having some additional time to talk about this very important issue, in particular the comments made by the members sitting on this side of the floor from Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale and Guelph-Wellington. I should add that I had the opportunity of attending a meeting in Guelph this very day to discuss this budget. Just as the member from that great riding indicated to you and to the members of this assembly earlier this afternoon, there is a general level of satisfaction, in fact a great relief that exists within that community about the fact that we have turned the corner, about the fact that this economic juggernaut that was heading into the abyss five years ago has turned the corner and that we now have wonderful opportunities ahead of us, not just for us, not just for the people in this assembly, not just for the adults in the community, but in fact for the children. There is hope and there is confidence again. The people in that community, as did the two speakers on this side of the Legislature earlier today, understand that tax cuts played a great role in that.

I want to share with you one further quote, if I may, from a group that purportedly understood that as well.

Interjection.

Mr Young: Keep guessing, member.

"Rising taxes also kill jobs. Paying higher taxes than their competitors is the last thing Ontario businesses can afford. As for Ontario families, many can't afford the taxes they're paying right now." That quote was from the Ontario Liberal plan. That was 1995. That was then; they had a moment of clarity. Now, no vision.

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): I'd like to give a bit of a different perspective on what common sense means. I found it in an article by Jim Coyle. It speaks about it in this way: "Carlin Romano wrote a few years ago in the New Yorker magazine that common sense in any culture tends to be tacit, assumed, unchallenged" and that "common sense has over the centuries, after all, included the view that blacks should be subjugated, heretics and witches burned, women oppressed, and that the earth was flat, not to mention being the focal point around which the sun orbited."

Another aspect is from the Italian philosopher Vico, who "labelled common sense 'judgment without reflection.' Thoreau said 'common sense always takes a hasty and superficial view.' Somerset Maugham called common sense 'another name for the thoughtlessness of the unthinking, the prejudices of childhood, the idiosyncrasies of individual character and the opinion of the newspapers.'"

As I said, I found this perspective quite interesting because I have heard the words "common sense" mentioned often in this chamber. It also says:

"And, truly, there can be little doubt that the claim to common sense has, both in the case of some MPPs ... relieved them of the burden of thought, the responsibility of debate, the merest consideration of compromise."

I found that this approach to what common sense is would be a bit thinking out of the box of how common sense is actually viewed by some of the great philosophers.

The Speaker: Response?

Mr Gill: Mr Speaker, as you realize, many members want to take every opportunity to speak on this great bill, and I thank the members for Toronto Centre-Rosedale, Broadview-Greenwood, Willowdale and Sarnia-Lambton, who took part in this debate.

One of the things the member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale mentioned was he talked about the great mayor of Brampton, and he is so right. We had a meeting with him the day after the budget. He's so supportive, so happy about the budget we presented that he wants three members from Brampton—myself, Honourable Tony Clement and Joe Spina—to come in front of the council so that he can honour us. I know it's hard to believe. The reason he wants to do that is because of the environment of prosperity and hope that this government has initiated, where we are getting our fair share, and more, of the investment Ontario is attracting.

The member from Scarborough-Agincourt talked about credit ratings, that credit was A-, A+ or whatever. You talk about that to the people of this province, to 701,000 people who have got new jobs. They don't care about credit ratings. They want to work. They want to put bread and butter on their table. You talk about credit ratings to 500,000 people who are off welfare. They come home and they say: "You know what, family? I got the job." Do you think they care about the credit rating?

We are the government that is putting \$22 billion into health care, a record. We are the ones who are putting \$1 billion into infrastructure, the highways that lead to Brampton.

The Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Smitherman: Mr Speaker, I'll be splitting my time with the member for Sarnia-Lambton.

I want to frame my comments in this debate in the context of my constituents. I want to talk a little bit about a balanced approach, because I think what we have here is an absence of balance, an approach which has led to parts of our community being conveniently ignored. The fault I find with this budget: It's a long budget and there are many things in it that any of us could embrace. I choose to find fault with the effect this has had on the plight of thousands of citizens in my riding, my constituents.

One only need look at the \$200 tax rebate to understand that there are now in the mind's eye of that government two different classes of people: There are taxpayers and there are citizens—mere citizens, it seems.

You see it clearly. The government didn't decide what it should do in the best interests of our citizens; they framed the discussion in the context of their taxpayers. This follows on the tradition of narrowcasting that this government established in its first term, which is to say that it not only makes good sense in an election campaign to focus on a strategic group of people who will support you but also to govern ignoring the needs of people who are not your natural supporters.

1740

I represent a very diverse riding and I'm proud of that. I'm proud that my riding includes many of our country's wealthiest people, individuals and businesses, people who put it on the line, who are entrepreneurs and who work hard every single day to create wealth. Before I came to this place I was a small businessman. I was an independent contractor and I continue to be a partner, not an active one, but a partner in a small business. That's the life I grew up in. My father built, from one dump truck, a business that had 100 power units, 100 trucks, and he's my hero in that sense. I invite members to come to my office and I'll happily show you the pictures there.

This government stops at that point of serving those people. I can't simply ignore those in my constituency who are not doing so well. Maybe to a certain extent that's the biggest fault I find with this government in general, and it carries over as well to the budget they have before us. The misconceptions fuelled by the speech to the Empire Club yesterday by the Minister of Finance continue to move along a myth that the budget did a lot to help people, but in fact the people at the lowest end, the underclass, many of the constituents in my riding, have been left behind.

I believe that this government, by its very policies, seeks to entrench an underclass in Ontario. There's no doubt that there are fewer people on welfare, and we should applaud the effect that there are more people working. This is a good thing. I don't stand here and say that it is not. But there are people being left behind. They're being left behind deliberately and they're being left behind by this government. The policies of this government are having the net effect of creating ghettos of poor people and all of the problems and challenges that are associated with that.

We have worked so hard in this province and in this country over time to measure the effectiveness of our government and our society not on the basis of how well the wealthiest do but on the basis of how well the least fortunate do, and we have lost sight of that. If members doubt that, if they doubt my sincerity on this point, then I urge them to lay down their partisanship and come with me, walk through my riding, spend a night as I did on the floor of Council Fire, a shelter that supports those people who have not just fallen through the cracks but who have had the cracks plastered over them once they had fallen through. This government has managed, it seems to me, to turn a blind eye towards people whom governments of all political stripes, through the history of this province, always sought to try and help. I think that's something

this budget has continued to do. It's a Tory tradition, and this government continues it.

What did this budget do to help the people at the Regent Park Community Health Centre at the corner of Dundas and Parliament streets in my riding? This is a beautiful new facility supported by this government but one that is overrun with people seeking assistance for their problems relating to addiction and mental health issues, a facility that is inadequately provided with resources to do anything about that. They do not specialize in these areas, and yet every single day health care workers in that environment are being asked to provide those kinds of services.

I mentioned earlier that I got tossed out of the House yesterday because I took some umbrage at the comments of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, who is with us now, when he said that the effect of the budget was to do more for homelessness, and mentioned the amount of money the province is spending on its housing portfolio. It is a significant number, no one can doubt that, and it helps to provide some extraordinary housing and some extraordinary communities. I'm the beneficiary of 5,500 units of co-op housing in my riding, and the government on many occasions seeks to highlight the extent to which they believe it's an inefficient way to house people. But one thing there is no doubt about is that that kind of housing has created extraordinarily good communities and good neighbourhoods in many parts of my riding.

Here again I offer to members, who perhaps haven't been exposed to neighbourhoods like the St Lawrence neighbourhood where I visited last night to attend a meeting dealing with a threatened school closure, where we've got people of all income levels cohabiting, living together, sharing community resources, sharing the neighbourhood, that this is a model people from all over the Western world have come to look at and copy and replicate in their very own communities.

What did the budget do to help to create that stuff, to try and deal with the very real needs of those people who tonight will be crowding into Council Fire and sleeping on a cement floor with only one thin blanket? The budget did nothing for those people.

What will the budget do to deal with the absence and declining nature of recreational opportunities for youth at risk in my riding? Mr Speaker, you've been very good. We've been talking about trying to build hockey programs for kids in Regent Park and in St James Town. But the government, through its policies and down-loading to the municipality, has forced the municipality of Toronto to diminish the amount of recreational opportunities available, when we all know that kids, adolescents in that urban environment, are at risk and that one of the most inexpensive and sensible ways to divert their attention is through recreational programs, and those are in decline.

I've asked questions in this Legislature of the Solicitor General with respect to the problem in the city of Toronto of the declining number of police. The

government hasn't been trumpeting its own horn in the last few days about more police for Toronto, and I wonder why. They talk a lot about crime and safety, and I'm beginning to wonder whether it's fair to say that they just talk loud on crime and safety, that they don't talk tough, they talk loud.

I want to know where the money is in this budget, that healthy dividend that was evident the other day, to deal with the problems of murder and crack cocaine which are killing downtown neighbourhoods, those same neighbourhoods I commented on earlier that are at such incredible risk of being ignored by the policies of this government.

I believe this is further evidence that the government has decided there are some people, some underclass, some percentage of people who are just too much trouble to help and they turn a blind eye towards them. They've fallen through the cracks and this government has plastered over the cracks. Perhaps they stick cotton batten in their ears as well to ignore the real plight of those sorts of people.

I work for those people and I am proud to say that I do. I stand here whenever I can to highlight their plight. I don't do that at the expense, in my view, of supporting programs that will create wealth in Ontario. As I said earlier, I have a riding that is a great wealth creator and I am lucky to have that. I have in my own riding a laboratory, if you will, where I can take a look at wealth that is created and at the need to distribute that wealth in such a way that we can help those people at the bottom who are so desperately in need. Yet I wonder whether with all the government ministers who drive across the streets in my riding on their way to the 404 and on their way to the Gardiner Expressway, the window tinting which is generally designed so you can't look in has been designed so they don't have to look out, in the very same way too many people have found a comfortable way to cross over people who are literally on the streets.

In closing, I want to say one thing. The \$200 may turn out to be a very effective ploy. There are certainly people who will be happy to receive those cheques. For my part I believe and I'll be encouraging people to stand up and say, "I can't be bought for \$200," and to understand the extent to which that \$200 cheque is written on the backs of the underprivileged people and the people I represent.

I'm encouraging people who are watching today and my constituents to take that \$200 and contribute it to the United Way or to the Daily Bread Food Bank, and in doing so to recognize that we have a government in Ontario that has chosen to leave an underclass, to allow it to grow. In place of that, we need to restore a sense of community support for those people. I encourage people to take that \$200 and contribute it to the underclass, to the poorest people in our province.

1750

Mr O'Toole: On a point of order, and with your permission, Mr Speaker: I would like to recognize the alumni of the Forum for Young Canadians. Some of the members are in the visitors' gallery here today.

The Speaker: That's not a point of order. The member for Sarnia-Lambton.

Ms Di Cocco: I'm pleased to speak to this budget. I'm proud to say that the members on this side of the House—from Scarborough-Agincourt, Etobicoke Centre and Toronto Centre-Rosedale—believe that the context of the debate—and this is where the context of my debate's going to be—is the quote in the speech that says a budget is "a deliberate instrument of social and economic guidance." In listening to my colleague from Toronto Centre-Rosedale, the context of that social and economic guidance is based on the premise that we are here to help the weak to become strong, the strong become just and the just become compassionate. That is the context that I believe our social and economic guidance should be based on. This simply means that government does shape our society.

The Liberal caucus and Dalton McGuinty believe in sustainable economic prosperity. Sustainable development is more than just tax cuts. It's about a clean environment. It's about competitiveness through a well-educated population. It's about affordable housing. It's about valuing culture and heritage, and at the heart of our sustainable prosperity is our medicare. These are the values that we on this side of the House believe in. This social conscience is, in my opinion, what is missing from this budget.

The opportunity to invest in sustainable development is found in the capacity to continuously improve and invest in protecting our environment. The track record over the last five years is that Ontario has become one of the worst polluters on this continent. What has the budget done to improve on this poor, dismal record? It's cut the ministry another 8% and the Ministry of Natural Resources another 18%. Remember, this is after the environment ministry is limping badly from a previous 50% cut.

There's a fundamental understanding in our caucus that the environment is one of the most important aspects of sustainable prosperity and the well-being and health of our communities. Why is it that in good economic times there's not even a small semblance of intent to improve or to invest in this ministry whose responsibility it is to protect our environment? Instead, we have \$4 billion that is going to be spent in tax cuts over the next six years to assist corporate Ontario, some of whom are probably huge polluters to our environment. As a matter of fact, by disregarding the importance of the environment we are directly jeopardizing our future.

The other aspect of ensuring sustainable development is all about competitiveness. The Liberal caucus and Dalton McGuinty believe that our best chance for competitiveness that goes hand in hand with sustainable prosperity in a well-educated population. Accessibility and affordability for students, plus increased investing in public post-secondary education, is how we develop a well-educated, highly skilled people in a society.

How does the budget deal with this? It deals with it by having very little money directed to operating costs. Our

primary, secondary and post-secondary education systems have been under siege for a sustained period of time, and this budget does very little to alleviate the hardships imposed by this government. With all this money raining down on the province, why is it this government is still attacking educators at all levels? These attacks are not subsiding. How can this government, with any conscience, speak of bright futures for the young generation when it has put education and the environment at the bottom of its priority list?

I only have a short time left to speak, but I must say that I want to highlight that the social and economic guidance provided in this budget is basically about privatization: privatize jails, privatize universities, and I believe we're privatizing health care by stealth.

Economic guidance is by advertising and pointing fingers. I would like to speak to this huge advertising campaign that has been in place, pointing fingers at the federal government. When words are used merely as an instrument of publicity or propaganda, they lose their power to persuade, and soon they cease to mean anything at all. I believe that this is what is happening in this province.

Good fiscal management is about balancing the budget and paying down the debt. On this front, the Conservatives have balanced the budget but they have balanced it behind seven other provinces and the federal government. But they have balanced the budget nonetheless; better late than never.

The other end of the spectrum is about the debt. But the debt, under the Conservatives, has increased from \$90 billion to \$114 billion. We are now in three digits. The provincial debt per capita has gone from \$8,000 per person in 1994-95 to almost \$10,000 per person in the

year 2000-01. Please understand that if we agree that the budget is a deliberate instrument of social and economic guidance, then this government has presented a budget that is unbalanced as the tool of its social and economic direction.

The unbalance is not just about tax cuts. Taking care of business interests is important, but good government is also about taking care of people development. Fiscal responsibility must go hand in hand with responsibility to protect the environment, the values of quality public education and to protect, with all our public voices, accessible quality health care. The provincial Liberals understand this.

Mr Caplan: We do.

Ms Di Cocco: We do understand this. All of this, in combination, is what sustainable prosperity is all about. Tax cuts are one aspect, and I must say that this government's mantra is unbalanced on that end. There is a whole social spectrum that is sustainable development, and anyone who understands what sustainable prosperity is about understands it's commitment to the environment, commitment to affordable housing, to education, to health care, and understands it's commitment to the underprivileged. This government is unbalanced.

Hon Frank Klees (Minister without Portfolio): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I think it's only appropriate that we recognize the Honourable John Nunziata in our gallery.

The Speaker: Actually, I was going to say that, and I was going to say his riding too, which I know is York South-Weston. We welcome him.

It now being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock on Monday.

The House adjourned at 1800.

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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	Timiskaming-Cochrane	Ramsay, David (L)
Parkdale-High Park	Kennedy, Gerard (L)	Timmins-James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	Bisson, Gilles (ND)
Parry Sound-Muskoka	Eves, Hon / L'hon Ernie L. (PC) Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances	Toronto Centre-Rosedale / Toronto-Centre-Rosedale	Smitherman, George (L)
Perth-Middlesex	Johnson, Bert (PC)	Trinity-Spadina	Marchese, Rosario (ND)
Peterborough	Stewart, R. Gary (PC)	Vaughan-King-Aurora	Palladini, Hon / L'hon Al (PC) Minister of Economic Development and Trade / ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge	Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet (PC) Minister of Education / ministre de l'Éducation	Waterloo-Wellington	Arnott, Ted (PC)
Prince Edward-Hastings	Parsons, Ernie (L)	Wentworth-Burlington	Vacant
Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke	Conway, Sean G. (L)	Whitby-Ajax	Flaherty, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Sarnia-Lambton	Di Cocco, Caroline (L)	Willowdale	Young, David (PC)
Sault Ste Marie	Martin, Tony (ND)	Windsor West / -Ouest	Pupatello, Sandra (L)
Scarborough Centre / -Centre	Mushinski, Marilyn (PC)	Windsor-St Clair	Duncan, Dwight (L)
Scarborough East / -Est	Gilchrist, Steve (PC)	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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